

**NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY  
(POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS)**

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Greenwich School of Theology UK

**Covenant, Christology, and Kingdom as Context  
in Matthew's Use of *Plērōō***

Paul R M<sup>c</sup>Cuiston, BA, MA

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**Promoter:** Prof. Dr. Colin Warner  
**Co-Promoter:** Prof. Dr. Francois P. Viljoen

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## Abstract

Matthew's Jewish audience was looking for continuity in the newly revealed kingdom. Thus, Matthew needed to connect faith in Jesus to the covenant ideal that was the foundation of their heritage. However, the Matthean community was blended to include formative, common, and Hellenized Jews along with non-Jewish believers. Within this context, Matthew used the concept of *plērōō* to connect this varied audience to the Jewish heritage. An examination of Matthew's use of *plērōō* determines that it reveals the Christological characteristics that endorse Jesus' divine initiative of proclaiming the coming reign of heaven within the hermeneutics of covenant.

After the introduction to the aim, objectives, and methodology, chapter two evaluated the cultural influences on the form and structure of Matthew's Gospel, demonstrating how this may have motivated his use of *plērōō* to support the Jewish heritage of covenant, Christology, and kingdom. This study contends that the concept and historical background of Greek drama is the most suitable structure for Matthew to relate the story of Jesus. The Matthean community would be familiar with this literary form and its capacity to depict the drama of Jesus' life. Chapter three sets the story of Jesus in the dramatic context of his contemporary, Jewish culture. The drama builds on conflict, with many characters taking part in the story. The most prominent is the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees that demonstrates Matthew's intent that Jesus is the only logical choice to satisfy (fulfil) the requirements of righteousness, law, and prophecy.

Prior to the investigation of the *plērōō* statements, chapter four examines the foundation of the cultic background for the Matthean milieu through the study of the prophets to whom Matthew referred in his *plērōō* statements. The final chapter is an exegesis of the *plērōō* statements, dividing them into contextual and prophetic perspectives. The former are statements regarding righteousness and law (Matthew 3:15 and 5:17-20, respectively) in which Matthew speaks to Jesus' ontological essence set in the events of his baptism and the Sermon on the Mount. The latter reveals the key prophetic fulfilment passages (2:17, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:14), supporting the Matthean theme of Jesus, son of David, son of Abraham.

This study concludes that Matthew structured his Gospel like a Greek drama in order to attract both Jew and Gentile to Jesus, who is God's anointed for both groups. Matthew

uses the *plērōō* statements to confirm Jesus' ontological nature, which was important to his Hellenized audience, and to confirm Jesus as the fulfilment of the Jewish (messianic) hope of Israel. This bonded both elements of the Matthean community to the nature and purpose of Jesus.

### **Key Words**

Covenant, Christology, culture, fulfil, Hellenization, kingdom, law, Messiah, Pharisees, righteousness

## Preface and Acknowledgements

The Jewish covenant has long been an interest of mine. When given the opportunity to study at Greenwich School of Theology (GST), it was natural to use this as the foundation of the research. However, pursuing a degree in New Testament required that I find the best setting for this topic within the writings of the NT. While Paul and Hebrews would certainly provide this opportunity, my love for the Gospels sent me to Matthew. After almost a year of research and with the careful guidance of Dr. Francois Viljoen of North-west University, Potchefstroom, South Africa, the title of Covenant, Christology, and Kingdom in Matthew's Use of *Plērōō* was formulated and the research begun.

The process of chapter development proceeded under the watchful and scholarly direction of Professor Colin Warner of GST and Dr. Viljoen of North-west. As my promoters, they provided specific feedback regarding the content of my work. They were clear and the suggestions for research proved to be invaluable. I am especially appreciative of the quick responses I received from each.

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In an extended form of acknowledgement, I dedicate this work to the memory of Dr. Floyd Clark. Dr. Clark was the first to instil in me a desire for higher academic studies in scripture. His teachings still resound in my mind and his leadership drives my desire for the Word today. Thank you, “Dean” for showing me the work of the Spirit.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Matthew's Gospel opens with the immediate declaration that Jesus is the Messiah, son of David, son of Abraham (1:1). He supports this statement in a variety of ways, but one of the most notable is with the use of the verb *plērōō*. Specifically, Matthew offers three distinct characteristics that qualify Jesus as God's anointed (*Christos*) whose divine initiative is to introduce the kingdom of God. As will be shown later (chapter four), the concept of the kingdom of God is derived from the Davidic covenant and reinforces the ideal of God's sovereign power. To better express this, the term reign of heaven will be used as this is more expressive of the authority of God. These are virtue (3:17, *plērōsai pāsan dikaiosunēn*), authority (5:17, *plērōsai [tòn nómon]*), and covenant endorsement (2:17, *eplērōthe to rethèn dià tou prophétou*; 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:14, *plērothē to rethèn dià tou prophétou*). The purpose of this examination is to show how these characteristics substantiate Matthew's bold proclamation of the messiahship of Jesus as it specifically relates to his introduction of the reign of heaven. The vehicle for the study will be in the term *plērōō* and the context of this term is found in the Jewish covenant, messianic expectation, and the ever-anticipated reign of God.

Matthew's Jewishness is a matter of much debate. Nonetheless, it is the most fertile of the Gospels for discovering the relationship between the Hebrew ideal of covenant and the Christological understanding of the reign of heaven. The primary reason is Matthew's Gospel is dominated by a structure that provides, for the most part, a Jewish viewpoint for his work. Guthrie (1990: 32) maintains that this dominance is realized in the Old Testament citations and allusions that must obviously be a prime consideration in discussing the author's purpose. However, scholarship as a whole does not agree with the Jewish nature of the Gospel. The debate regarding the Jewishness of Matthew ranges from a true respect for Judaism where Jesus' teachings mirrors their law, "making Matthew the most Jewish of the Gospels" (Elliott, 1992: 359) to Matthew as an *anti-Jewish* Gospel that rewrites Mark, allegorizes the key parables, and gives the commission to evangelize Gentiles, not Jews (Cook, 2008: 192-202). The Gospel is, nevertheless, Jewish in orientation in order that the author can support his opening statement and its ramifications, especially in relationship to *plērōō*.

Senior (1996: 19-20) reviews the scholarly studies regarding the Gospel of Matthew for the two decades prior to the end of the twentieth century. In this survey, the full range of views regarding the setting of Matthew is assessed. He concludes that that the

differences of opinions seem irreconcilable on the participation of the Matthean community with their Jewish brothers. However, Senior presents three areas of common ground among the scholars. 1) Matthew's church is in transition, 2) Matthew and his community have strong roots in Judaism, thus was concerned with the Jewish issues of the law and the covenant, and 3) Matthew's community believed that Jesus was the Messiah. He concludes: that the primary purpose of Matthew's Gospel is to promote his mixed audience to understand Jesus in the cultic experience of Judaism. Central to that experience and essential for Matthew's *plērōō* concept is the idea of covenant. Additionally, covenant provides a context for Matthew's conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. Thus, it is necessary to understand the cultic experience of the covenant.

Covenant is at the very core of Hebrew theology. Eichrodt (1961: 36-45) believed that covenant was the controlling idea, or "center", of all Old Testament theology. Boadt (1984: 175) insists that covenant (*berith*) captures the "heart of Israel's religious beliefs". However, one compelling fact becomes obvious when reading Matthew. If covenant was so important to the Jews, why did Matthew not incorporate it more into his narrative? *Diatheke* is the most common translation for the Hebrew *berith* in the LXX. Guhrt (1999) states, "It is noteworthy that while covenant is found almost 300 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, it occurs only 33 times in the NT". Matthew uses the term only once and that is at the inaugural, Eucharistic celebration in the upper room. It is used without the adjective "new" indicating that Matthew may have made a more direct tie to the original covenants than did Luke whose audience may have been more attracted to a new covenant that included his Gentile audience.

Matthew's avoidance of this term may be understood in at least two ways. First, it may be that Matthew is not concerned with the covenant for the sake of his Gentile audience. This would not seem likely as will be revealed when Matthew's *plērōō* statements are studied in their prophetic context. The second reason may be more plausible. Since Matthew's audience is most likely a blend of Jew and Gentile, he assumes the covenant is a familiar concept to his Jewish contingency, even the Hellenized, and introduces it for the rest via the *plērōō* ideal. Using the Jewish history and the prophets to introduce the covenant idea allows Matthew to involve his non-Jewish audience into the cultic experience. After Matthew introduces Jesus (1:1-4:16), he immediately puts Jesus in the position of prophet/preacher. "From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Mt 4:17). The prophetic message/messenger

becomes the authoritative voice of God regarding the covenant with a message steeped in covenant faithfulness, honouring God by keeping the (new) covenant.

Nevertheless, the use of prophecy is problematical in that it does not present a clearly defined imagine of cultic expectations as noted by the myriad of writers and perspectives from the mid-to-late-1980s through 2002, revealing a prophetic phenomenon dubbed as “double fulfilment” (Blomberg, 2002: 17-20). This means that an exegesis of an Old Testament text gives an immediate time frame for fulfilment while the same text within the larger context is not satisfied in any OT event. For example, he concludes that Matthew understands Isaiah to have intended his oracles to refer to events both in the near and in the more distant future and that the Old Testament prophet would have intended that his audience have the same understanding (Blomberg, 2002: 20-21).

This cultic background is the perfect backdrop for the Matthean drama that presents Jesus to both Jew and Gentile. The presentation draws on the cultic experience as a reminder to the Jew in his audience, both traditional and Hellenized, of their covenant heritage and that the messianic expectations are part of that heritage. For the Gentile, they needed to know that their faith in Jesus as their Christ does not come from religious pluralism but from the one God of the Shema (Deut 6:4) who extends covenant benefits to the *ethnē*. Matthew utilizes the prophetic ideal of fulfilment to show God’s intentions and demonstrate that Jesus is the subject of the *plērōō* ideal.

Hagner’s (1996: 47) conclusion that his Jewish audience was looking for continuity in the newly revealed kingdom supports the notion that Matthew was trying to connect faith in Jesus to the covenant idea. However, the conflict was less with formative or common Judaism and more with how to include the non-Jewish believers. If indeed it can be shown that this was the nature of Matthew’s community, the question of the covenant becomes central to understanding the use of *plērōō* in the Gospel. Hence, an examination of the word group *plērōō* within the context of covenant, while considering the Christology, and the reign of heaven becomes a viable subject worthy of research. The problem faced is how to unpack Matthew’s intentions regarding the concept of *plērōō* within this context and then apply this to the Matthean community in their understanding of their calling, discipleship, and collective identity.

The central question of this work, therefore, is: “How does Matthew use *plērōō* to demonstrate that Jesus’ nature satisfies the Christological design for the prototype apostle who introduces the reign of heaven as the new covenant community?” The questions that naturally emerge from this problem are:

- Since *plērōō* represents a Greek perspective and Matthew’s intent is to defend Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, how does Matthew reconcile the cultural differences?
- What is the impact of the Jewish culture as it may have set the stage for the use of *plērōō* to demonstrate how Jesus fulfils the cultic expectations of Matthew’s contemporary Judaism?
- How does Matthew employ the concept of *plērōō* in relationship to the three distinct categories of prophecy, righteousness, and law?
- How does Jesus fulfil “all righteousness”, “the law”, and “the prophets?” What did Matthew intend by the use of *plērōō* in relation to these themes? Is the context the fulfilment of the Hebrew covenant or is there a new covenant that supersedes the original?

The aim of this thesis is to examine Matthew’s use of the verb *plērōō* to determine whether it reveals the Christological characteristics that endorse Jesus’ divine initiative of proclaiming the coming reign of heaven within the hermeneutics of covenant.

The objectives of this study must be seen in their relationship to the aim. The approach to the subject will be from the following angles:

- i) To evaluate the cultural influences on the form of Matthew’s Gospel in an attempt to understand how this may have motivated his use of *plērōō* to support the Jewish heritage of covenant, Christology, and kingdom;
- ii) To appraise specifically, the impact of Jewish influences that may have directed the structure to set the stage for the use of *plērōō* to demonstrate how Jesus fulfils the cultic expectations of Matthew’s contemporary Judaism;
- iii) To evaluate the use of *plērōō* within the context of the three distinct categories of prophecy, righteousness, and law and their relationship to covenant, Christology, and kingdom;

- iv) To exegete Matthew 3:15, 5:17, and key prophetic fulfilment passages (2:17, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:14) in order to ascertain a fuller understanding of what Matthew may have understood as being fulfilled and how this was accomplished in Jesus;

The central theoretical argument of this study is that Matthew envisions the fulfilment of the covenant hope of Israel and the nations in the reign of heaven proclaimed by Christ. This argument is based on the following salient concepts: 1) God reveals his true nature best in keeping covenant and loving-kindness. God demonstrates this nature in the covenant relationship to the Jewish nation and the Christian community, expressed most succinctly in the Matthean reign of heaven. 2) The covenant of the prophets envisions a broader expanse of God's reign beyond the cultic limitations of a single nation. God's rule is supra-cultural in that it brings the nature of heaven to all cultures. 3) Matthew depends on the concept of fulfilment to lay the foundation upon which Jesus establishes the reign of heaven. In this, God's unique nature pledges faithfulness to Israel and the nations via his elect community, which comes to maturity in the church and is faithfully represented by Matthew's community as evidenced in this Gospel.

While my Christian background is one that is solidly within the Reformed tradition, I am broadly sympathetic with the Catholic tradition. This being so, I recognise a duty to afford due respect to sources of information that are not written exclusively by those of that persuasion in order—as far as is practicable—to arrive at deductions that might otherwise be subject to claims of unnecessary bias. Therefore, the methods proposed in this theological study include:

- The concept and historical background of Greek drama as the probable structural design used by Matthew to relate the story of Jesus in the role of fulfiller. The evaluation will be supported by the use of examples of Greek and Jewish dramas, Greek lexicons, theological and non-theological word searches of Greek writings pertinent to the subject, the literary contributions of those who have specialised in Greek drama, biblical theology resources, and specialized study resources such as commentaries and monographs;
- The historical and theological development of the plot of Matthew's story with special emphasis on the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees to demonstrate Matthew's intent to show Jesus as the only logical choice to satisfy (fulfil) the requirements of prophecy, righteousness, and law. This

evaluation will be supported by the literary contributions of those who have specialised in rabbinic law as evident in the Gospel, Greek lexicons, theological word searches of the Greek New Testament, and specialized study resources such as commentaries and monographs;

- Evaluation of the use of *plērōō* using Greek lexicons, theological and non-theological word searches of Greek writings pertinent to the subject, the literary contributions of those who have specialised in fulfilment concepts, biblical theology resources, and specialized study resources such as commentaries and monographs;
- Matthew 3:15, 5:17, and key prophetic fulfilment passages (2:17, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:14) will be exegeted using the methods of biblical interpretation of Mark Allan Powell's *Methods for Matthew (Methods in Biblical Interpretation)* (Powell, 2009);

## **2.0 GREEK INFLUENCE ON MATTHEW’S STRUCTURE**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The central question of this work is “How does Matthew use *plērōō* to demonstrate that Jesus’ nature satisfies the Christological design for the prototype apostle who introduces the reign of heaven as the new covenant community?” Before an examination of this term can be undertaken, preliminary steps must be taken to clarify the fundamental nature of the Gospel. This introduction to the Gospel will examine the structure and methodology used by the author/compiler/editor. The commonly accepted nomenclature of Matthew will be used to represent both the author/compiler/editor and the writing. The nature of this study does not demand attention to the author, his background, or qualifications. Rather, this work will be served best by a discussion of the structure to find the necessary organization to support the claims for the context of covenant, Christology, and kingdom. The steps necessary to accomplish this will be to examine the importance and details of the structure, principle characters, and literary markers. Chapter 3 will build on this foundation with an examination of the logic utilized in Matthew’s work. However, it is first necessary to discuss the impact of culture on the writing.

### **2.2 IMPACT OF CULTURE**

Mark Powell (2009: 44-45) makes an interesting observation regarding a literary approach to Matthew. He notes that this method is like a mirror reflecting the contemporary setting for the audiences for which it was written. From the perspective of Matthew’s Gospel, this mirror has the potential of reflecting two cultures—Hebrew and Greek. Did Matthew write only for his Christian community or was his work intended for universal appeal/acceptance to support the advancement of the Gospel to all cultures and communities? Following the leading of the apostle Paul, Matthew’s Gospel was to the Jew first (10:5-6; 15:24). This is obvious from the major emphasis on the law and pre-rabbinic (Pharisaical) logic. However, Matthew does not exclude the Gentiles. His repeated allusion to the non-Jewish cultures (2:1-10; 8:10-12; 15:21-28) opens the door for their inclusion. This is also inferred in the parable of the wedding feast in 22:1-10 and stated clearly in Jesus’ rejection of the religious leaders (21:43). It would seem necessary then to conclude that, while Matthew’s major intent is for the Jewish culture, he is also intended to offer the non-Jew a Gospel applicable to their culture.

### 2.2.1 To the Jew First

Matthew's work remains only in the language (and thus the culture) of the Greeks. However, there is indication that this Gospel was first written in Hebrew, appealing to the Jewish culture. Papias' non-extant writings referred to by Eusebius (Eusebius, III. 39) are the first indication of this. Irenaeus confirms this in *Adv. Haer.* 3.1.1 Another compulsive evidence of a Hebrew text is from the writings of the 14th century treatise written by Shem-Tob ben-Isaac ben-Shaprut Ibn Shaprut. Shem-Tob, a Castilian Jewish physician, included a Hebrew version of the complete text of Matthew, which, according to Tabor (1999), appeared to be preserved by the Jews and not the Christians. Howard (1998: 3) maintains that it is older than the 14<sup>th</sup> century, handed down from earlier generations of Jewish Scribes. Textually, it agrees occasionally with such texts as *Aleph*, Second Century Syriac, and MMS dating to the fourth and fifth centuries. Howard (1989: 240) concludes that the text is not translated from the Koine, Byzantine, or Vulgate but contains an old substratum originally composed in Hebrew. This substratum is not always present because of revisions. This is supported by Shedinger (1999: 687). Howard (1998: 9-10) lists four distinctions of this text in comparison to the Greek text. First, it emphasized a strong allegiance to John the Baptist. Next, John's baptism seemed to have more significance than Christian baptism. Third, the inclusion of the Gentiles is delayed until the golden age of Judaism. Finally, the text did not introduce Jesus as the Christ until 16:16. While these are noteworthy, none of these influences the structure of the text. The Hebrew text opens with the same thesis that Jesus is the son of David and Abraham. The only difference is the absence of the word for Messiah. As noted above, this is not introduced until later. However, the later introduction does not change Matthew's intentions of giving witness to Jesus as the Messiah.

Matthew's use of certain literary markers (4:17, 16:21; 7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1), which will be discussed in detail later, helps his readers establish not only the structure but some of the intent of this Gospel. These markers plan an important role in Matthew's structure. Schonfield's (1927: Part II, pg. 3) translation, "as far as it was consistent with accurate translation", used the English of the Authorized Version. Regarding these markers, they are consistent with the AV. Thus, even in an original Hebrew version, the author was intent on using these markers. Based on Schonfield's translation, the markers in Hebrew or Greek are consistent, giving us the impression that

whichever language was the original, the author/editor intended that these markers set the pace of the account. Additionally, when comparing the differences given by Schonfield, it will be obvious that while they may vary the emphasis of the Greek text, they do not change the structure. Thus, both language versions suggest the same structure.

Bishop Jean de Tillet and Jean Mercier published another Hebrew version of Matthew in 1555. The book had been taken from Jews in Rome. Hidden in their homes, the books were forbidden because they were often polemic in nature (Burnett, 2005). Using the translation published by Wellsprings of Torah (2004), the literary markers are consistent with those of the Shem-Tob text and translations.

In light of the history of the text, the natural question raised is the identity of Matthew's original readers. Were they Jews or Gentiles? If the former, why would Matthew choose a Greek genre to structure his story of Jesus? However, there is a third possibility that this work will attempt to demonstrate as the more likely first readers. These readers would be Hellenized Jews. This does not dismiss the probability of the Gentile element of Matthew's readership. Gentiles would naturally be drawn to or familiar with the drama genre of literature. However, it is vital to the study to determine the nature of the Jewish readers to ascertain their acceptability to this literary form.

Brown's (1997: 161) caution is noteworthy: "[T]he internal indications do not tell us whether we are dealing with the outlook of the author or that of the addressees or of both". That understood, there seems to be enough evidence that the editor (or school of editors; see Stendahl, 1954:11-12, Carson, Moo, and Morris, 1992:75) may have given suggestions regarding their intent and audience. Menken (2004: 3-5) defends the idea that Matthew as editor inserts the fulfilment passages as representative of the texts (Hebrew and Greek) with which he would be familiar. As opposed to Brown, this could offer some indication into the author's outlook, which will be demonstrated, has the specific purpose of defending his thesis of Jesus as Messiah to both Jew and Greek. Davies and Allison (1988: 33) expand this to note Matthew's familiarity with both Greek and Hebrew, as could be expected in his bilingual or trilingual milieu. Prabhu (1976: 105) leans toward an editor familiar with the Hebrew text "but with some reminiscence of the Greek". Stendahl (1954: 40-42) indicates that the study of the OT quotes of Matthew raises questions of originality and the editor's possible restructuring of the text for his purposes. He states in his comments on 2:15 that the text is from the

Masoretic Text (hereafter M.T.) not the LXX but in 2:18 it is an abbreviated translation of the M.T. influenced by the LXX (Stendahl, 1954: 101-102). Additionally, in his treatment of 27:9-10, Stendahl (1954: 122) states that Matthew “went his own way” in translating the Hebrew. I believe it is Menken (2004: 282) that draws this together. He concludes that Matthew’s quotation texts are a revision of the LXX to bring it closer to the Hebrew, noting that this was a “widespread phenomenon”. The significance of this in indication of his readers is that it may be assumed that his audience would be familiar enough with either text to both understand and appreciate the editor’s efforts. The intent would seem to be to draw together the two communities into a common cultural bond of language that depends on both cultures. Further, this would be aided by using a literary genre common to both (see below for the Jewish familiarity with the theatre). For a fuller discussion of the relationships between Matthew’s texts and his knowledge of the Hebrew and LXX, see Davies and Allison (1988:33-57).

Additionally, the locale in either Antioch or Palestine, because of the centuries old Diaspora, would accommodate this literary blend. As shown below, Palestine was not without the Greek influence. However, according to Kümmel (1973: 119) and Brown (1997: 212), most scholars locate the writing from Syrian Antioch. Brown (1997: 213) clarifies our first reader question more by dealing with the Jewish/Gentile interests by contrasting the Jewish concerns with the distancing from the Jews, concluding that the Jewish/Gentile balance shifted in favor of the Greek interests. If this is true, it would explain both the theatre attraction and the need to bring the Greek audience into a greater understanding of their Hebrew heritage (which will be discussed later). Carson, Moo, and Morris (1992: 75-76) remind us that early references from the Fathers regarding Matthew’s Hebrew text would naturally favour the Palestinian origin. However, if the post-70 date is accepted, Palestine becomes less likely in light of near total destruction by the Romans. For his support of Antioch, see Carson, Moo, and Morris (1992: 75-76)

Regarding Dispersion Judaism, Trebilco and Evans (2000: 283) note that the hostility toward the Jews prevalent in the earlier centuries had abated some by the first century A.D. By the second century, Jewish influence was more prominent. Of special note is their conclusion that the Jewish elements had become acculturated and integrated while still remaining faithful to their Jewish tradition. Walls (1996: 278) reminds us that the Dispersion was not limited to the Roman Empire. Josephus (*Ant.* 20.17ff.) provides accounts of Jewish influence even to the conversion and circumcision of the king of the

buffer state of Adiabene. This may explain the presence of the Matthean Hebrew text in India (see below, 2.2.2) used for preaching in that country. Further, Walls (278-279) notes their faithfulness to the law and their cultic practices. They paid the temple tax, stayed in contact locally and with Jerusalem, attending the great feasts in Jerusalem. More importantly, their dedication to Judaism encouraged the building of synagogues, which were the stepping-stones of early missionaries.

It is necessary to see the relationship between Jerusalem and Athens, philosophically. Aristobulus claims that Plato borrowed from Moses. For Philo, it allowed for a syncretistic view of Greek and Judaic thought forms that allowed Moses to be interpreted using Greek philosophy. Even further, Aristobulus taught that the Greeks and Jews share the same God (Collins, 2000: 189). Collins (2000: 191) points out that this idea is also maintained in the *Letter of Aristeas*. Contrary to this, the *Wisdom of Solomon*, a product of the Egyptian Diaspora, dated from second century B.C.E. to 40 C.E., does not attempt to equate the gods of the Jews to those of the Gentiles. The emphasis is on wisdom, a well-known, pre-historical concept that is distinctly coloured by Greek philosophy (Collins, 2000: 196).

Cohen (2006: 30-37) describes three manifestations of the integration of the Jews into the Hellenistic world. They are material culture, language, and philosophy as a way of life. Regarding language, he states that the “essence of Hellenization, of course, is the Greek language”. Possibly the greatest contribution to the Hellenism of the Jews is the LXX itself. It was not written to attract the Greek speaker to Judaism (Collins, 2000: 274). Rather, it helped the Jew satisfy their self-understanding while in a Greek environment. The *Letters* assert the adequacy of the Septuagint against the Hebrew. Thus, “There is no reason for Egyptian Jewry to rely on the Hebrew text or to correct their translation on the basis of the Hebrew” (Collins, 2000: 103).

As a final point before conclusions are drawn, it will be beneficial to bring E. P. Sanders concept of *Common Judaism* into the conversation. Defining *Common Judaism* as “what the priests and the people agreed on”, Sanders (1992: 47) is drawing a common line of cultic understanding between the everyday Jew and the religious leader. This middle ground is where Jesus met the Pharisees as they shared the beliefs common to the Jews. Sanders (1992: 241-278) defines this common ground as worship of God, sacrifice and offerings, summaries of the law, and prayer. Each of these have a parallel in Matthew and the teachings of Jesus: Worship (4:10, 15:9), sacrifice (9:13, 12:7) and

offerings (5:23-24, 8:4, 23:18-19), summaries of the law (5:2-7:27), and prayer (5:44, 6:5-7, 9-15, 26:41). McCready and Reinhartz (2008: 7) remark that the Pharisees did not control Jewish life but did exercise authority. This is why so much of Matthew's character interaction is between Jesus and the Pharisees, the authority for the common man. There was a later shift in this relationship to common Judaism (Baumgarten, 2008: 96) that led to the rabbinic authority, but for Matthew's milieu, they held this common position. The key to the current topic is that this common Judaism would bond the Jews of the Diaspora and give Matthew a common ground with them to build his case for Jesus as Messiah.

To conclude the discussion of the first reader, it is admitted that the complexity of the Jewish/Gentile interests are difficult to separate when viewed in a holistic perspective. While the Jewish element may dominate the majority of Matthew's work, the Gentile influences are observable (8:5-13, 15:28, 28:19). As will be seen when the *plērōō* statements are analyzed, the dominant prophet (Isaiah) will represent universalism in the covenant, messianic, and kingdom context. In this, there is a blending of cultures that works well with Matthew's drama. Thus, the reader must take Jesus' advice from the Parable of the Tares in response to the question of separating them. He says, "No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them" (13:29). This advice encourages the reader to accept the existence of both groups and the interplay of their cultures, making the dramatic structure (this is not just Greek but, as shown below, also belonging to the Jew) an understandable and appropriate form for sharing the story of Jesus.

While the theatre may be Greek in origin, it is human in nature. Based on the suggestions of Bridges (2012), there are at least three possible conclusions that can be drawn regarding Matthew's structure and intent:

1. The way Greeks structured drama comes naturally out of human events and it would be hard for Matthew to avoid some affinities with the drama when he told Jesus' story.
2. Matthew absorbed such a structure from the cultural environment and used a commonly understood pattern.
3. He deliberately imitated a dramatic structure about which he knew

As a Hellenized Jew, Matthew used what he considered the best available tool to tell the story of Jesus in the most dynamic fashion. The early church realized the value of this

and thus, Matthew becomes one of the most popular Gospels, quoted more often by the church fathers than any other. Ultimately, it becomes the perfect evangelistic tool for defining the universal Messiah who was a Jew sent for both Jew and Gentile.

### **2.2.2 And Then the Rest**

Eusebius Church History (V.X.3) records the missionary activities of Pantaenus who was sent from Alexandria to India. The following is the report of Eusebius regarding Pantaenus' discovery in India:

It is reported that among persons there who knew of Christ, he found the Gospel according to Matthew, which had anticipated his own arrival. For Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached to them, and left with them the writing of Matthew in the Hebrew language, which they had preserved till that time (*Hist. Eccl.* 5.10.2).

While the exact dates of the first Jewish communities in India are in dispute, it is known that there was an established settlement in Cranganore by the 6th century BCE (Menchel, 2000). However, Smith (1893: 14-15) makes special note that the Evangelist (Bartholomew) was Greek. This is noteworthy in light of the fact drawn by Menchel (2000) that the Jewish communities had synthesized their traditional culture with the Indian, creating "a rich community of their own". This is early evidence that Matthew's Gospel was multi-cultural in outreach. Schaff (1997) supports Matthew's universal appeal with the following: 1) He used the widest range of prophecy, 2) He introduced the Magi at the "very cradle of the infant Jesus" as the forerunners of a "multitude of believing Gentiles", and 3) the introduction of faith among the heathen (centurion and the Canaanite woman).

Below, I will demonstrate that the Greek tragedy provides a credible form for understanding Matthew's structure. Obviously, the "Greek" descriptive indicates that this is not standard to the Jewish tradition. Oppenheim (2007) reports that the theatre, emerging in ancient Greece, celebrated the gods by holding plays on religious holidays. The intention was to connect the spectators to god and the actors through observation. Jews, however, strictly adhered to monotheism, modesty, and *mitzvot* to connect to God, which contradicts the Greek purpose.

The prohibition of theatre going was based on the second commandment that forbade the making of graven images (Exodus 20:4) and the Talmud (Avodah Zarah 18b; Shabbat 150a). However, Oppenheim (2007) points out that the concept of drama and

theatrics appear in a number of situations in the bible. He mentions the use of costumes to hide identity such as when Rachel dressed Jacob to appear as his brother (Genesis 42) and when Joab had a woman act as if she were in mourning to trap Absalom (2 Samuel 14). As the Roman theatre became vulgar and violent, prisoners, which often included Jews, were killed as part of the performance (Oppenheim, 2007; Free, 1999: 149). Thus, rabbinic writings discouraged participation. However, “Performance with spiritual potential was sanctioned within the confines of the temple. For example, *Simhat Beit Hasho'eva* (The Water Drawing Festival) was a carnivalesque celebration held in the Temple during Sukkot”. Even after the Temple was destroyed, the Talmud in nostalgic terms longed for these days of celebration (Oppenheim, 2007).

### **2.2.3 Jewish Theatre**

Somewhere at the end of the third, beginning of the second century BCE, a Jew name Ezekiel wrote a Greek play named *Exagoge*. Ezekiel is the first known playwright and this play the “forerunner and remote ancestor of all biblical drama, both Jewish and Christian” (Free, 1999: 149). This drama follows classical dramaturgy, showing familiarity with classical tragedy but departing from some common conventions (Free, 1999: 150-153).

Herod the Great introduced the theatre to Jerusalem. Jews objected to the decorations of the theatre. There is no indication that they objected to the idea of theatre. Outside Palestine, the acceptance of the theatre was greater. Philo was known to frequent the theatre (Barclay, 1996: 161; Free, 1999: 150). Additionally, archaeology supports the presence of Jews at the theatre. Barclay (1996: 237-238) discusses the possibility of a structure at Berenice which was either an amphitheatre supported by the local Jews or a Jewish building used by them for political meetings. Showing Jewish participation in the theatre are two inscriptions indicating reserved seating. One is in Miletus where there is an inscription that reads “*topos eioudeon ton kai theosebion*”—“place of the Jews who are also god fearers” (Deissman, 1910: 446). The inscription is located on good seating, in the fifth row. This inscription dates from the late second or early third century. The second is in the *odeum* at Aphrodisias in Caria (Goranson, 2007: 363-364).

## 2.2.4 Matthew's Intent

This and the Jewish nature of the book raises the question as to why use a Greek literary genre to defend the position of Jesus as the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham. While there were Jews in his community, his universal appeal proposes that his intent is not limited just to the Jews. Rather, his intentions are to maintain the integrity of the Jewish heritage of Christianity. After all, Jesus was a Messiah promised to the Jews whose kingdom intent is to *mathēteuo panta ta ethnē* (Mt 28:19). Again, following the apostle Paul, the Jews have blasphemed the name of God among the Gentiles (Romans 2: 24). This verse is a resounding conclusion to the first sixteen verses of Romans 2 regarding judgment in which God shows no partiality to the Jews (Schreiner, 1998: 127). Essentially, they have embarrassed God in that they rely on the law but do not keep it. Toews (2004: 83) lays this out in a very revealing matter:

### **Jewish Privilege**

*The Claim: and if you are sure you are*

if you call yourself a Jew .....	a guide to the blind
and rely upon the law .....	a light for those in darkness
and boast in God .....	an instructor of the foolish
and know his will .....	a teacher of little ones
and discern good and evil.....	having the embodiment of taught by the law knowledge and truth in the law

### **Role for Others**

*The "Reality"*

you teach others.....	do you fail to teach yourself?
you who preach not to steal.....	do you not steal?
you say not to commit adultery.....	do you not commit adultery?
you who despise idols .....	do you rob temples?
you who boast in the law.....	do you not dishonour God by breaking the law?

In light of this, Matthew is restoring the Jewish origin of Christianity and the heritage that is distinctive in the chosen people of God. This gives greater validity to the Gospel. Instead of being a new, upstart religion, it is based on over two thousand years of God's working in a particular people. Matthew does not want his Jewish audience to forget their heritage. Additionally, Matthew wants his Gentile readers to see that God has built their hope on the covenant promises he made. This is the intent of Jesus' response to the centurion: "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (8:11). The same is inferred in the eschatological prophecies of chapter twenty-four when Jesus warns against the appearance of false Christs. The implication is that there is only one, the Jewish carpenter of the family of David. Specifically, 24:31 endorses this with the gathering of

the elect, a covenant concept found only in the chosen of God, Israel. Additionally, the judgment scene of 25:31ff paints the picture of the culmination of God's work in Israel. In Matthew's mind, all this is possible because Jesus is the son of David and Abraham.

The rejection by the Jews shifted the outreach to the Gentiles. These non-Jews were asked to believe in a Jewish Messiah, who was sent to the lost house of Israel (15:24). It was necessary for the Christian teachers to expose the Gentiles to the work of God begun in Israel. Paul provides the principle underlying this (1 Cor 10:5). That is, that Israel provided an example for all. While the example was not always good, it was an example. Paul in Romans and the Hebrew writer rely on Hebrew history to teach the principle of Christ. Thus, Matthew is doing the same by teaching Gentiles and refreshing the Jewish memory regarding the Judaic background of Christianity.

With this as the backdrop, it is necessary to examine the importance of structure to prepare us for understanding Matthew's use of the Greek tragedy as the form for his Gospel presentation.

### **2.3 IMPORTANCE OF STRUCTURE**

The literary character of Matthew becomes evident in the structure. From here, some intentions of the author can be realized. Two of the most obvious competing structures in Matthew are the well-known five-fold formula based on the repeated expression *Kai egéneto hote etélesen ho Iēsous* (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1), and the repetition of the phrase *apo tote ērxato ho Iēsous* in 4:17 and 16:21. Supporting the two-part division (*apo tote ērxato ho Iēsous*) are Kingsbury (1975) and with variation, Luz (2005: 9-13) loosely but directly opposed to the five-part structure. Supporting the five-part division are Carson, et. al (1992: 62-63), Bacon (1930: 81-83), and Harrington (1991: 4). Kümmel (1973: 106-107) lists this as a prominent structure and offers some support by inference in that he contends that Matthew reworks Mark and is fond of formula statements. Admittedly, he holds that three is Matthew's favourite but that five is oft used. Blomberg (2001: 24) suggests a combination of the Bacon and Kingsbury's but moves beyond them. Keener (1999: 36-37) concludes that the two are not incompatible. For a more comprehensive overview of the differing structures, see Senior's (1996: 21-37).

While no common ground can be found, it seems apparent that these scholars would build Matthew's structure primarily on these literary markers. Kingsbury (1998: 29-30; 1975: 12-25) and Carson *et al* (1992: 62) tie Christological development to them. Bacon (1930) is well known for his comparison of the five books of the Pentateuch. The popularity of this formula is evident by the fact that it can be found in any number of Introductions or commentaries.

These markers alone do not provide insight into Matthew's structure. This work suggests that the better method for discovery of his structure would be to discover the underlying logic that would prompt the use of these literary markers. After the logic is discovered, the structure and use of the literary markers may provide a fuller understanding of Matthew's work. To determine this logic, it will first be necessary to examine the cultural influences that contribute to the structure. First will be the Greek, followed by the Hebrew.

#### **2.4 CULTURAL INFLUENCES**

Dunn (2005: 43-44) is adamant about the nature of oral transition of the traditions of the Gospels, maintaining that the traditions formed some of the beliefs and identity of the early church. He says this in response to recent works regarding the place of memory in the transition of oral tradition. He contends that the "flawed" work does not take into consideration the personal impact of Jesus on his followers, who would have greatly valued the accounts with which they were familiar. Included in Dunn's misgivings about memory studies is what is termed "social" or "cultural" memory that he feels is more *creative* than *retentive* (both italics are Dunn's emphasis). His contention is that in a culture where oral tradition was propagated by trained mnemonic devices that protected the information ensuring "the preservation of memories important to these groups, the dynamic of memory was bound to be different".

While Dunn's arguments may seem convincing, one must never deny the cultural *Sitz im Leben* that prompt the need for the mnemonic devices. Matthew's broader *Sitz im Leben* is found in two cultural arenas—Greek and Hebrew. Both of these have means of transmitting important information. Exploration of these means will disclose the structure and purpose Matthew chose for his defence of the premise that Jesus is the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.

This chapter will discuss the Greek influence and the next, the Jewish. It would seem necessary to defend this order in light of Matthew's apparent Jewishness. The reason for this order is that Matthew's audience, no matter their location (which, of course, is a matter of dispute), cannot avoid the secular influences unless they have cloistered themselves as the Qumran community did. Stanton (1993: 91-98) suggests this as a possibility with his comparison of Matthew's work with the Damascus Document. If this is true, then the community may have been able to avoid the influence of Hellenism. If not, the secular influence of Athens would be unavoidable. Even in Palestine, the influence would be obvious. Two of Stanton's three suggestions regarding Matthew's community—is it a diverse element of Judaism, split from Judaism, or a Christian community dominated by Gentiles—supports the possibility that the Hellenistic influences may have had inroads into the church (Stanton, 1993: 113).

Even if it is true that there was a Hellenistic influence, why study it first? It is the contention of this study that Matthew used a familiar literary medium to outline his work, giving a popular format for an unusual story. As will be shown, the format of the Greek theatre provides such an outline. It is not even necessary that his community be familiar with it. It is necessary only for Matthew (or the editor(s)) to be familiar. Additionally, if there is a Gentile concern, either because there are Gentiles in the church or the desire to reach Gentiles, then this would give Matthew a common ground with them to tell the story of Jesus. This outline provides a way of dramatizing the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees who are used by Matthew to represent the covenant community. The drama presented by this conflict emphasizes Matthew's Christological claim, giving Jesus kingdom authority to represent God in the new covenant.

#### **2.4.1 Greek Influence—Genre of the Text**

Greek culture is the first source for the consideration of Matthean structure. However, this is not found primarily in Platonic propositions or Aristotelian dialectics. Rather, the influence is found in Greek tragedy. The reason to begin here lies in the accepted fact that Matthew is a story. Kingsbury (1988: 1-2) maintains that Matthew is a unified narrative or "artistic whole". The plot logically unites action, thought, and characters.

This work contends that Matthew's "evaluative point of view" is in 1:1—Jesus the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham. Whether this is viewed as the title to the book or

the introduction to the first section of Matthew, it is obvious that this phrase lies at the heart of the kingdom message and Matthean purpose (cf. Kingsbury, 1998: 19-20). This simple phrase condenses the context, showing Jesus as the Christ (Christology), son of David (Kingdom), son of Abraham (Covenant).

Matthew takes these vital Jewish issues and clothes them in such a way as to have appeal to the Hellenized Jew, synthesizing with his new culture and the non-Jew of that culture. What better way than to appeal to human drama? Thus, Matthew's story of Jesus appears to be one of tragedy as mounting tension against Jesus increases, popularity wanes, and his message of the kingdom is ignored. It is not until the exode (exit ode) of the Resurrection and ascension that there is a victorious turn. Regarding the miracle narratives of Matthew 8-9, Pasala (2008: 299) proposes that there is a dramatic structure in the arrangement of the miracles narratives. Using the Aristotelian definition of tragedy, he divides Matthew 8-9 into three parts, creating a drama that clarifies the Gospel. This work proposes that what Pasala attempts to do for chapters 8 and 9 may be done for the entire book, providing a basis for the structure. This approach is justifiable in that Matthew is story; it is narrative. Pasala (2008: 13) confirms that text is a "linear set of signs" between author and reader designed for communication. This results in the Gospels being unique and dynamic.

Thus, it is justifiable to look to this literary genre to find one of those meanings and, more importantly, the structure for Matthew's Gospel. Jean Risley (2009) gives an excellent examination of drama, the theatre, and its application to Luke as the probable genre of literature.

#### **2.4.1.1 Greek Tragedy**

In order to see the similarities between Greek tragedy and Matthew's Gospel, it is necessary to examine the basic make up of Greek tragedy. The best starting place will be at the theatre because the theatre represented life in the form of tragedy and comedy. Tragedy normally dealt with heroic legend played out in the dilemma of noble families. It was usually set in a quasi-historical time (within two generations on either side of the Trojan War). For the Greek, this was a time "when gods took a more direct interest in human affairs" (Csapo and Slater, 2005). Similarly, Matthew's tragedy followed Jesus, the son of David, the royal family of Israel. Matthew's lack of interest in chronology would make the setting quasi-historical. Blomberg (2001: 23-24) suggests that looking

at the Gospels in any synoptic harmony, such as Aland, would easily recognize that the work is not chronologically motivated. Stein (2001: 24) provides a helpful introduction to the history of the development of synoptic harmonies, noting that what he calls the first “pure” synopsis should be credited to Johann Jacob Griesbach in 1776 in which Griesbach states in his introduction that he doubts that a harmonious narrative is possible for the chronological arrangement of the pericopes of the Gospels. Obviously, Matthew demonstrates God’s involvement. He does this through his use of the OT prophetic message that demonstrates involvement stretching from Israel’s exilic setting through Matthew’s contemporary situation.

Further, Greek tragedy was closely associated with religion. The stories were based on myth or history but had varied interpretation of the events that leaned toward idealization (Trumbull, 2007). Matthew’s tragic story of an expectant, messianic hopeful emphasizes the strained relationship evident between his various antagonists and the dynamic apostle of the new order. Matthew’s drama elevated Jesus to the heroic stance of God’s son as sacrificed herald (*kerux*) of the kingdom message. Such stories about heroes and gods were at the heart of drama (Webster, 2004) that portrays the downfall of the hero, usually influenced by fate, human imperfections, or nature.

Joseph Campbell (1988: 123) contends that the usual hero adventure begins with the loss of something of value (such as childhood at puberty when youth is lost and adulthood begins). His adventure is to regain that which was lost. Jesus’ stated mission was to the “lost house of Israel” (Mt 15:24; cf. 10:6 where Jesus sends his disciples to Israel rather than the Gentiles). Unfortunately, the hero does not always win, especially if controlled by fate (*hubris*). Campbell (1968: 25-26) further notes that Greek tragedy celebrates the mystery of dismemberment. “The happy ending is scorned as a misrepresentation...yields but one ending: death, disintegration, dismemberment, and the crucifixion of the heart...” However, unlike Greek tragedy and Campbell’s hero, Matthew celebrates the victorious resurrection, with the hero returning home, fully satisfied. On the other hand, much like that to which the world is accustomed, Matthew’s victorious message was not overwhelming accepted, since no one had seen anything like this before (chief priests and elders, 28:11-15; some of the disciples, 28:17).

#### 2.4.1.2 Greek/Roman Biography

This raises the question of whether Matthew's account draws from Greek tragedy giving us a tragic story with a hero, plot, and antagonist or if the similarities are too few to have an influence on his structure. This question is raised in light of the fact that many would agree that the acceptable form of Matthew's Gospel as biographical, which is another genre of story (Nolland, 2005: 19; Stauffer, 1964: 54; Weber, 2000: 10; Blomberg, 2001: 45-46; Aune, 1987: 17-76; Shuler, 1982). However, some would think that writing a biography was not Matthew's purpose (Hendriksen and Kistemaker, 1953-2001: 710-711; Gardner, 1991: 421; Walvoord, Zuck and Seminary, 1985: 96, 268; Utley, 2000: 28, 34).

Blomberg (2001: 45-46) suggests that Matthew's Gospel "measures up quite well when compared with ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman histories and biographies". He does not say, either quantitatively or qualitatively, how they "measure up". Thus, it is necessary to define what is meant by biography. In Burrige's (1995: 59) comparison of the Gospels to Greek-Roman biography, he prefers to use the term "Lives"—*Bios*. He notes that the word biography does not even appear until the fifth century AD but was "only preserved by the ninth-century writer, Photius". Momigliano (1971: 12) notes that during the Hellenistic age and beyond, "Lives" (*bios* [GK], or *vitae* [Latin]) was the most popular description. An example of this would be in Plutarch's *Alexander* where he writes, "*hóute gàr historías gráphomen, álla bíous*" (*Alex.*, 1.2). Burrige (1995: 61) notes that Plutarch attempts to distinguish *historías* from *bíos*, by stating that history is "concerned for the famous actions and illustrious deeds of men and for great events like sieges or battles; *bíos* is interested in men's character, which may be revealed by little like the odd phrase or jest". Notably, Plutarch's distinction between *historías* and *bios* comes about one-third of the way through his book. This raises question regarding his reasons. Baldwin (1979: 103) and Russell (1972: 115-116) conclude that his subject matter was just too broad to cover every detail.

Geiger, (1985: 12-15) criticizing Momigliano's definition of biography as the account of a man's life from birth to death, considers it futile to attempt the reconstruction of ancient literary theory, suggesting the use of modern conceptions is preferred. Thus, he prefers the definition offered by the *Oxford English Dictionary*: "the history of the lives of individual men, as a branch of literature". Burrige (1995: 60) states that

Momigliano's definition is not profound but has the merit that it excludes dictating how biography is to be written. Further, he notes that the definitions of Talbert (1993: 714-715) and Aune (1981: 9-60) assert that biography must be prose narrative and include purpose and historicity. From this, he concludes that there is a distinction between biographical elements found in various literary forms and literary form devoted to biography.

The question raised is whether Matthew's Gospel is a biography or a Greek drama. As indicated above, this may not be an easy decision. It can certainly be admitted, that there are biographical features like those of Matthew's contemporaries. However, the greater question is what drives the structure, since this will help us better identify Matthew's context. Nolland (2005: 20-22) suggest that it must be considered to what Matthew intended to relate his Gospel. He concludes that Matthew may have understood his work as foundational. Thus, Matthew's community as well as future church communities would feel the need to return again and again to this book as a catechetical tool. Of interest is that Nolland questions if the Gospel could be seen as a performance. He suggests that the story line is very strong, perhaps like the Greek drama that has been discussed. However, the extended discourses of Jesus present a problem for him in this regard, creating the need for other ways of relating.

The discourses do not need to be problematic. The structure of the theatre easily handles this difficulty as will be revealed with an examination of the structure of tragedy in the Greek theatre. This argues that Matthew's structure and character analysis resembles Greek tragedy making it more understandable for the common (*koine*) audience. Additionally, the character analysis will demonstrate a second cultural influence that drives the structure. To begin, it is necessary to examine the theatre.

### **2.4.1.3 Elements of Greek Tragedy**

Greek tragedy has five basic elements. These are Prologue, Parodos, Episode, Stasimon, and Exodos. Matthew's structure, uses five literary markers of *Kai egéneto hote etélesen ho Iēsous* (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1) to move from episode to episode after introducing his primary character, Jesus. The following chart is a comparison of a Greek tragedy to Matthew.

## Comparison of the Structure of a Greek Tragedy and Matthew

Element	Greek Drama (Englert) (MacLennan, 1999)	Matthew's Structure
Prologue	The prologue presents the primary topic and gives the mythological background needed to understand the play.	Jesus the Messiah, son of David, son of Abraham is the topic. The genealogy provides the background. (1:1-17) Additionally, the birth account establishes the metaphysical background.
<i>Parodos</i> (Entrance Ode)	The entry song of the chorus. This helps set the stage for the episodes.	Matthew holds the position of chorus in our Gospel. Among other things, the chorus provided for scene changes, offer important background and summary information that facilitate an audience's ability to follow the story, and offer commentary about and underline main themes animating the action (Wiemelt). The purpose of the chorus was to depict the reaction of the people in the audience. Using narrative, the chorus gave necessary background information that helped the audience follow the plot. It also identified the reasons behind the extreme behavior of the principle characters. One final function was to make observations or drew conclusions about the play (Stephens, 2006).  Matthew's opening chorus further establishes the "mythological" background by presenting the unusual events at Jesus' birth, introduction of the main character, viz-a-viz, his herald (John the Baptist), baptism, and temptation.
Parts of the <i>Parodos</i> (MacLennan, 1999)	<i>Strophê</i> (Turn), <i>Antistrophê</i> (Counter-Turn), and <i>Epode</i> (After-Song)  These are used to depict the positioning of the chorus	Matthew presents a turn and counter-turn of Jesus. First, Jesus turns to the metaphysical battle for supremacy with Satan, only to turn back to his intended earthy mission. Matthew's <i>Epode</i> is in 4:17, where Jesus begins to preach his intended message. The second is in 16:21 when the scene is directed toward Jerusalem and the final act.

<i>Episode</i>	<i>Episode</i> —Speeches and dialogues are typical in an episode (MacLennan, 1999).	Matthew’s five narrative sections contain movement, dialog, and other exchanges leading up to the discourse.
Stasimon (Stationary Song)	Stasimon—Englert notes that the ode is a reflection of the episodes, putting them into a larger context” (Ancient Greek Theater, 2012).	Kingsbury (1988: 2-3) draws this distinction between story (what is told) and discourse (how it is told). Matthew’s dialogues reveal Jesus in the choral ode (7:29; 9:8; 21:27; 28:18), responding to Jesus’ actions or words.
Epode	After-song to the Episode/Stasimon given by the chorus	The literary markers (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1) are used to move from episode to episode.

The Episode/Stasimon (with or without the Epode) are repeated as often as necessary to support the play. The number of episodes fluctuates. MacLennan (1999) determines the norm to be three to five and Csapo and Slater (2005) number them from four to six. The episodes involve both the chorus and the actors (Englert). Matthew’s five literary markers divide the episode/stasimon into five narratives, followed by five discourses, which follows the structure of the tragedy.

If, following Luz (2005: 23), it is accepted that Matthew compiled the discourses given at different times and in different settings, then this could mimic the episode/stasimon structure nicely.

Exodos	The exit song that offer “words of wisdom related to the actions and outcome of the play” (Englert).	Matthew’s exit song is powerfully portrayed in the passion with the great crescendo of “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth; therefore, Go!” (28:18-19a)
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Sophocles *Ajax* provides an example of how the play is organized and allows us to view the similarities with Matthew. The prologue is between the hero, Odysseus and the goddess Athena. Their dialogue has Athena advising Odysseus regarding his primary opponent Ajax, who was considered the finest warrior, second only to Achilles. The play is set the day after the decision is made to award Odysseus the armor and weapons of Achilles, who was killed in battle. The introductory dialogue has Athena telling how she rescued Odysseus from Ajax’s attempts on his life. She states that she turned his anger against Odysseus and toward some sheep and cattle. (This reminds us of the instance where Jesus cast demons into swine (Mt 8:30-32)). Athena encourages Odysseus, assuring him of her favor by complimenting him. “Like a keen-nosed Spartan hunting dog your path is taking you straight to your goal” (Sophocles, 2010: 9-10).

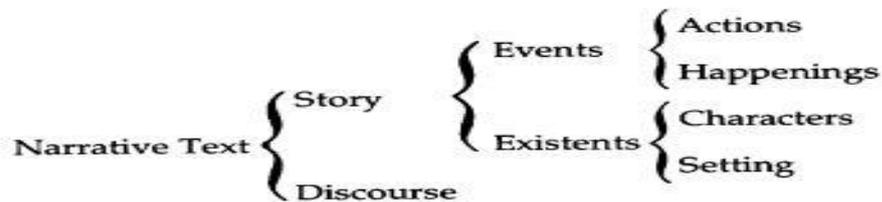
In Matthew's prologue, the stage is being set for the introduction of the hero. This hero is praised via his genealogy and the circumstances of his birth. The prologue continues with the hero forced to go to Egypt and return to Nazareth. Thus, both prologues set up the hero and their stories. Further, Burian and Shapiro (2008: 81) inform us that the exchanges between the principal characters are the "episodes", and the choral songs are the "stasima". This aligns perfectly with the narrative/discourse found in Matthew. In the narrative portions, the primaries (Jesus and Odysseus) are in conflict with an antagonist (i.e., Jesus and the Devil (4:1-11); Ajax). While the details of the dialogues that comprise the episodes are different in nature (Greek tragedy is intended to be set to music; Matthew may have been read), they both function in the same way. So it is with the stasima. Matthew's summary discourses are set in fashion to complete the stories that have led to them.

Burian & Shapiro (2008: 82) also point out that in the first half of the play all but one of the choral stasima occurs and that there is a "dramatic heightening between a principal character, such as Tekmessa or Aias and the Chorus, who becomes a virtual second actor in the first part of the drama". This same type of crescendo is obvious in Matthew with Jesus building from the Sermon on the Mount to the Parables of chapter 13. As will be shown when the literary markers are examined, this break (13:53) gives Matthew the opportunity to make summary statements that complement the first peak of his plot, the law of the new covenant (Mt 5-7). This would seem to present a problem with the structure in that Jesus is the one delivering the discourses, while in Greek tragedy it is the chorus that has already been compared to Matthew. In reality, while Matthew puts these words on Jesus' lips, Matthew is the compiler/editor who is collecting sayings of Jesus made at various times during his ministry. Thus the chorus, Matthew, is singing a chorus of the collective sayings of Jesus as if Jesus himself is saying them. This becomes even more convincing when it is considered that the chorus had diminished by Matthew' day and the chorus leader becomes one of the actors (Foley, 2010).

With these comparisons in place, the discussion can move to yet another Matthean reflection of two key elements of Greek theatre—storytelling and imitation. (Stephens). Matthew (as author, editor, or redactor) sings the exploits of the god or hero, Jesus. Chatman (1978: 19) contributes to our understanding of this. Comparing poetics and linguistics, he insists that it is necessary to ask "What are the necessary components—and only those—of a narrative?" He concludes that structuralist theory of narrative

contains story (chain of events and existents [characters, items of setting]) and discourse. Simply, the story is the “what” and the discourse the “how”. The following diagram suggests this:

### Structuralist Theory of Narrative



Matthew uses five distinct episode/discourses to build the plot of his story. Especially from a Jewish perspective, Matthew would certainly be tragic since the heralded, messianic hero satisfies none of the normal expectations, is compassionate toward Gentiles, and dies. If 1:1 were Matthew’s thesis, then one would think the plot would be less tragic and dominated by a conquering hero. In Matthew’s story, Jesus is assaulted immediately, in the prologue, setting a pace that is heightened as the story develops. In *Poetics*, Aristotle (350 B.C.E.) defines tragedy in this way:

Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions. By 'language embellished,' I mean language into which rhythm, 'harmony' and song enter. By 'the several kinds in separate parts,' I mean, that some parts are rendered through the medium of verse alone, others again with the aid of song.

Certainly, Matthew would fit easily into Aristotle’s idea of tragedy. Jesus and his antagonist actions reveal the tragedy. The soul of the tragedy is the plot (Aristotle, 350 B.C.E.). It is here that the characters develop; protagonist and antagonist rise up against each other in the form of actions that define both of these.

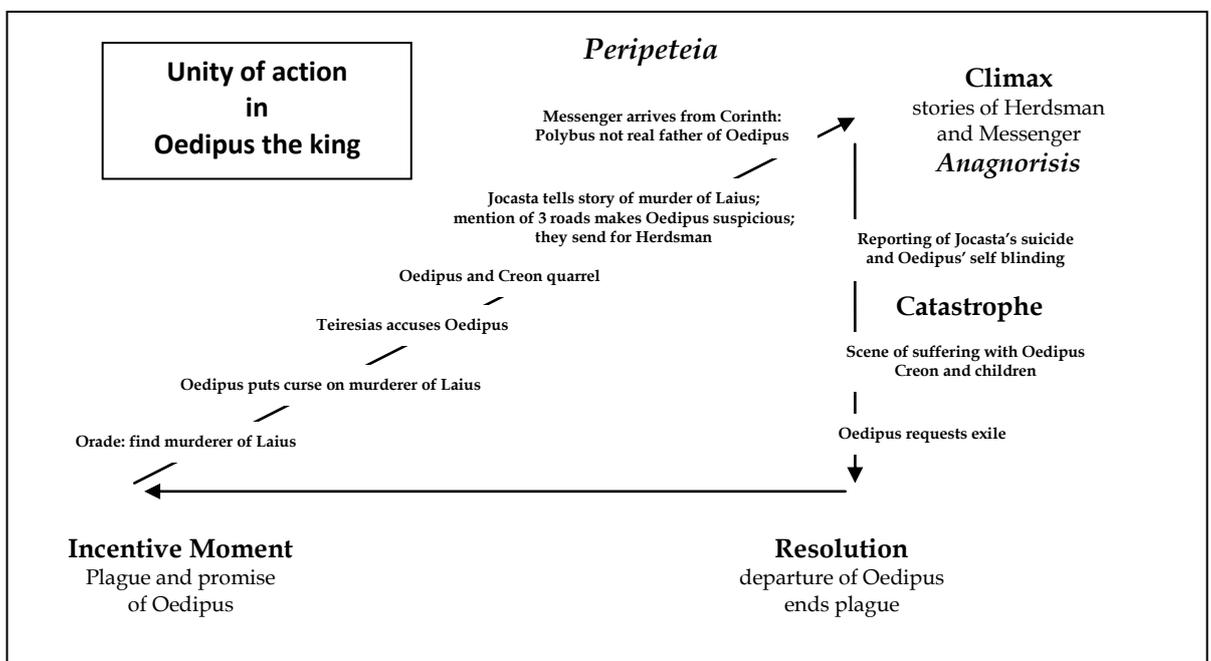
Further, Aristotle determined that plot is the most important of all the structures and character is second. Regarding plot, McManus (1999) notes four qualities detailed by Aristotle. First, plot is built around a beginning (incentive moment that starts the cause and effect), middle (climax that is caused by the earlier incidents), and end (solves the problem). Second, the plot maintains a unity in action bound together by internal necessity. Third, plot must have what Aristotle calls a “certain magnitude”. By this, he means it is both quantitative (length and complexity) and qualitative (serious and universally significant). Fourth, while a plot can be either simple or complex, the latter

is better. She also notes, “Complex plots have both ‘reversal of intention’ (*peripeteia*) and ‘recognition’ (*anagnorisis*) connected with the catastrophe. Both *peripeteia* and *anagnorisis* turn upon surprise” (McManus, 1999).

Regarding Aristotle’s concept of magnitude, Pasala (2008: 96) maintains that Aristotelian tragedy or drama is action characterized by unity and fullness, not by the scale of the work. Beginning, middle and end are essential for a unified work and are interdependent, connecting actions and consequences. “Hence, the essential quality of drama is the consequential nature of events that give meaning to the multiple elements of a story”.

This flow is driven by the characters. Gustav Freytag (2008: 22) sees three distinct qualities about the characters of a drama. Each character is related to the whole of the story, has a distinct personality, and the audience can identify with them. Freytag’s Pyramid gives a graphical illustration of how this works. This graphic illustrates elevated complication and emotional tension, culminating in the climax. The descending side of the pyramid depicts the decrease in tension and complication as the drama reaches its conclusion.

### Unity of Action in Oedipus the King

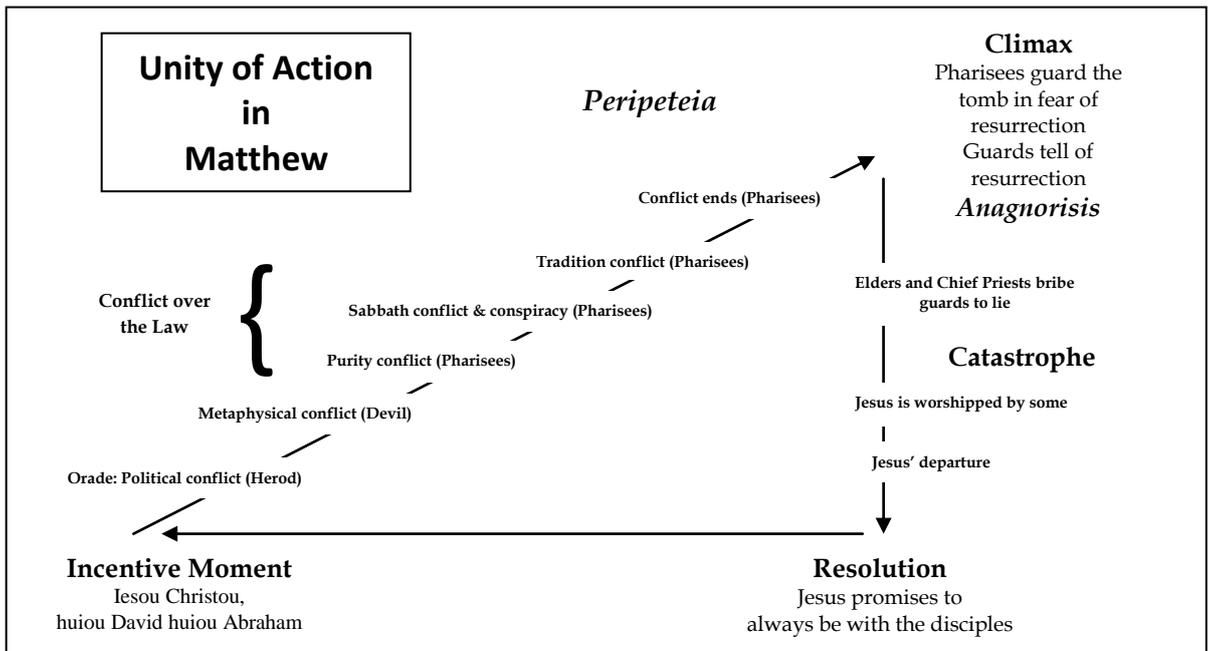


In this diagram, McManus (1999) uses Freytag’s Pyramid to illustrate the unity of action in Oedipus Rex. In this structure, the causes and effects are stressed in the climax. While not indicated in her chart, Oedipus demonstrates this concept of reversal

by realizing that he was the one who killed the king. This self-realization ends with Oedipus sending himself into exile.

Matthew's structure is built along the same lines. As in the example above, the plot is developed in conflict. This is no less true with Matthew, as his plot follows four types of conflicts with four different antagonists. Using Freytag's Pyramid, the unity of action in Matthew builds a plot based on the conflict with primary characters in the book. These lead, as above in the unity of action in Oedipus Rex, to the climatic events of the death and resurrection. However, this climax was not the realization of a fault or weakness. Rather, it was a reversal of the expected that elevated Jesus, thus validating Matthew's claim of Jesus as Messiah. The following diagram demonstrates how Matthew's drama fits well into the Freytag Pyramid.

### Unity of Action in Matthew



Matthew's realization comes in the resurrection that verifies and validates Jesus' divinity. Thus, to the benefit of his audience, his story is not dominated by Greek pessimism, which, as Wright (2008: 41) points out that, as illustrated in Homer, life after death is bleak. However, for Matthew, it is governed by the resurrection, avoiding catastrophe. This would align with Jewish expectations that Matthew represents so well. Levenson (2006: 10) argues that according to rabbinic tradition, resurrection permeates the Hebrew Bible. A primal insistence of that tradition is that resurrection is found in the Torah (Brueggemann, 2007: 31). Elsewhere, Levenson (2006: 23) cites *Midrash Sifre* 32 as support for the frequency of the subject in the Hebrew writings. His

contention is that scholars often “lack the capacity to interpret properly”. In this chapter, he argues “that within their own theological universe and their understanding of biblical interpretation, the rabbis had good reason to find resurrection in the Torah itself and, in doing so, they exposed some important aspects of biblical thought” (2006: Introduction, x). As noted in the “Unity of Action in Matthew” chart above, the climax is driven by the reaction of the Pharisees sending guards to the tomb. They were so concerned with Jesus’ followers stealing the body and claiming a resurrection victory, they underestimated Jesus’ promise to rise again. Satisfying this promise, Jesus turned the tables, validating his divinity, avoided catastrophe, and claimed absolute authority (Mt 28:18).

It is important to realize that growing the plot via various antagonists is not a straight, ascending cycle as the Freytag’s Pyramid pictures. The plot line, while ascending should be visualized more like peaks and valleys of a large mountain than the steady climb up the side of a single hill. As Matthew leads us through this drama, each character encounter takes us to a height greater than the last. Yet, to get there, there is descent into peaceful ravines where Jesus takes time to talk with his followers about the events, giving the oracles of God to guide and comfort. Then, leaving this serene respite, the next peak must be conquered, offering yet unviewed vistas that are more revealing than the last.

As demonstrated, storytelling is at the heart of the theatre. Oedipus’ story is one of tragedy and deception. Matthew’s gives hope that is not normally present in tragedy. The reason is that the second element of the theatre, imitation is realized in Matthew’s fulfilment motif that anticipates heroic expectations of the Jewish people—their Messiah. Jesus, the Deity/Hero, (This is implicit in the titles given him—son of David, son of Abraham, son of Man, etc.) announces his destiny as he informs his disciples of his ultimate fate in Jerusalem (16:21). Matthew emphasizes this by the use of *dei*. Arndt (2000: 214) notes that this word carries the idea of compulsion based on a desired result. TNDT (Grundmann, 1964: 21) expands this to understand that “The term itself does not denote the authority which imparts this character. It is thus given its precise significance when conjoined with this power”. Matthew will later reveal (at the temple cleansing, 21:23-27 and on a Galilean mountain, 28:18) the authority that is inherently Jesus’, giving him the right to declare the divine necessity of his sacrifice. Matthew’s hero is not doomed by this destiny, as in the Greek tragedy. Rather, there is a victory of resurrection that culminates in a continuation of the kingdom quest as evident by the

command to make disciples. It is noteworthy that Campbell (1976: 55) insists that resurrection is one of the common elements of the nature of gods and heroes. He (1990: 127) also notes that resurrection is a principle feature of the ritual for the hero. However, he implies it by stating that the body is not buried. In numerous illustrations (Greek: Oedipus, Theseus, Romulus, Heracles, Perseus, Jason, Zeus, etc., Biblical: Joseph, Moses, Elijah and others such as Robin Hood), he demonstrates the patterns of the hero, giving points for each element of the pattern that they show. By the way, Joseph scored only 12 points but Moses scored 20 out of 22.

#### **2.4.1.4 The Antagonist**

Of course, every good story must have an antagonist. Matthew has several. This is not unusual since the Greek actor may wear several masks, depicting several characters pertinent to the play. Originally, the play had only the chorus (50 people) and one actor. Later (525 BC), the chorus was reduced to 12 members and a second actor was added. Sophocles (496-406 BC) adds a third actor and raises the chorus to 15 (Stephens; Byrum).

Matthew's antagonists, by order of appearance, are Herod (2:3, 12, 13, 16), the Devil (4:1), Pharisees (9:10-13), John's disciples (9:14-17), Sadducees (16:1-4), Peter (16:22-23), the priests and elders (21:23-27), and Pilate (27:2). Matthew builds his structure around conflict with these characters, setting the stage with them, climaxing in the discourses. As this develops, you will note that the characters, conversations, and events prior to the discourses are more than just narrative. Matthew is using the drama of life to set up the oracles of God given by Jesus. In Matthew's story, each of these sequences are essential to his climatic conclusion.

Blomberg (2001: 25) supports this when he notes that the pairs of narrative/discourse develop a unified plot. This unified plot is not based on narrative. Rather, it is developed by the conflicts that Matthew provides. If Jesus did all that John declares that he did (21:25), why did Matthew choose to record the conflicts?

It would seem to be more beneficial to present Jesus schooling the apostles, preparing them for ministry. Rather, he builds his story on conflict because conflict builds drama! Drama catches our attention. Thus, conflict makes us pay attention! We analyze the conflict to see what caused it. Why did it develop? What is the solution? Matthew

builds the drama, taking his audience into the very heart of Jesus' ministry. To understand his plot and his structure, it is necessary to examine the characters.

## 2.4.2 The Characters

If Matthew's structure is to be properly determined, the characters are best studied as they appear in conflict with Jesus and Matthew's claim of Messiah, king (son of David), and covenant ideal (son of Abraham). Following is a table listing the primary conflicts in Matthew that have a direct bearing on his claims regarding Jesus:

### Primary Conflicts in Matthew

Character	Text	Detail
Herod	2:3, 12, 13, 16	Political (Jews & Rome)
Pharisees/Sadducees	3:7	Religious heritage
Devil	4:1	Led to Satan by Holy Spirit
Tempter	4:3	If/then...Raising doubts
Pharisees	9:10-13	Eating with sinners (Purity)
Disciples of John	9:14-17	Fasting
Pharisees	9:34	Jesus uses demons (Purity)
Pharisees	12:2	Criticize Jesus' disciples (Sabbath)
Pharisees	12:14	Conspired against him
Pharisees	12:24	Casts out by Beelzebul
Scribes/Pharisees	12:38	We want a sign
Pharisees/Scribes	15:1-20	Traditions of the elders (Purity; not out/rather in)
Pharisees/Sadducees	16:1-12	Sign from Heaven
Peter	16:22-23	Between Jesus and Jerusalem
Pharisees	19:1-12	Lawful to divorce
Chief Priests/Elders	21:23-27	By what authority
Chief Priests/Pharisees	21:45-46	Control Jesus; feared people
Pharisees	22:15-22	Try to trap Jesus
Sadducees	22:23-32	Resurrection question
Pharisee (lawyer)	22:34-40	Which is the greatest commandment?
Conflict ends	22:46	Could not answer a word
Jesus retaliates!	23:13,15,23,25,27,29	Pharisees—Hypocrites
Pharisees	27:62	Sealing the tomb

There are two distinct grouping within the list of characters who serve as antagonist. First, there are those who are aligned with Jesus but may not fully understand who he is or the significance of his mission. John's disciples and Peter form this group. As antagonist, they play a less significant role in the overall structure of the story. The remainder of the list given above forms the second group. Each of these fit into the historical drama of Jesus life while adding both an actual and an allegorical significance

to Matthew's work. The reason for this is that each of these characters helps advance the story that Matthew is telling. This is evident in that the accounts of John's disciples and Peter could have been omitted and the story would still have flowed as Matthew intended. However, such is not the case with the second group—the antagonist who are vital into to the story, supporting Matthew's claim in 1.1. Had it not been for these, much of Matthew's reality would have been lost and the drama eliminated. Thus, it is necessary to discuss these characters.

#### **2.4.2.1 The Supporting Cast**

This group is composed of Herod and Pilate, the Devil, and the elders, scribes, and priests. Herod and Pilate characterize the political antagonist, representing both Jewish and Roman elements of the story. The Devil is the metaphysical antagonist, recounting the original battle for humanity in Eden. The elders, scribes, and priests play the cultic role. Their roles will become obvious as the way Matthew develops them is diagnosed.

Herod appears at the beginning (2:1ff) of the Jesus story and Pilate at the end (27:2). Both of these are coupled with the title attributed to Jesus—"King of the Jews" (2:2, 27:11, 29, 37). Blomberg (2001: 28) equates this title with that of Son of David, which occurs ten times in Matthew. One of these is in reference to Joseph and the others refer to Jesus. Of these nine, seven are not paralleled in the Gospels. Blomberg states that the number could be eight depending on whether Matthew's account of the healing of *two* blind men (9:27-31) is the same as Mark's record of the healing of Bartimaeus (10:46-52) and Luke's record of the blind man near Jericho (18:35-43). Aland (1982: 87-88) and Jackson (Jackson, 2009) put these in parallel in their synoptic Gospels.

The phrase "Son of David", reflects the Davidic messianic tradition of a king who would rule Israel (Blomberg, 2001: 28). For this reason, Herod is troubled. The reason for Herod's troubled spirit is that he is in the third stage of his reign (14-4 BC), which was characterized by domestic problems because each of his ten wives was vying for their son's right to the throne (Hoehner, 2000). Now Herod hears of another who would lay claim to leadership role of the Jewish nation. Nolland (2005: 109) notes that the phrase *ho tekthes* can be translated as born *to be* king, thus indicating a new beginning. Additionally, this "king" is greeted with celestial activity that has attracted and announced by foreigners who acknowledge this one with the intent of worshipping. Brown (1993: 6) likens these visitors to the OT foreign prophet, Balaam. His intent

seems to be that a foreign prophet was used to proclaim God's message (Numbers 22:5-13).

Herod's next appearance is in reference to John the Baptist (14:1-12). Luke has him taking part in the trial (23:8-12) but Matthew does not mention this. Thus, for Matthew, Herod's primary role is at the beginning of the story, setting the stage for further challenges to Jesus, the "King of the Jews".

Pilate comes into the drama at the time of climax. His part, according to Matthew, is more supportive than Herod's. Pilate is amazed at Jesus' silence (27:14), questions the Jews regarding any wrongdoing (27:23), and ultimately caves before the popular voice because he does not want a riot (27:24). At his crucifixion, a *titlos* is placed above his head reading, "*outos estin Iēsous ho basileus tōn Ioudaiōn*". John specifies that it was Pilate that wrote it (19:19) but the Synoptics simply say, "*epithēkan*", a third person plural, aorist active indicative—"they" placed it there. Nolland (2005: 1194) translates it as "was placed", noting that the soldiers had already settled into the "keeping watch" mode. He sees Matthew as just filling out the scene, not giving a sequential order. Nothing regarding the author is mentioned. However, since Pilate was no friend of the Jews (Hoehner, 1992: 615), one would suppose this to be a political jab at the Jews, showing contempt for them. Nonetheless, it was political in intent, satisfying our allegorical classification.

Matthew opens his drama with political intrigue, positioning Jesus against one of two powerful, political enemies. In both instances, Jesus did not oppose them. As a babe, he was not able to and as an adult, chose not to oppose them. This was not his purpose. Matthew uses these conflicts to show his claim of Jesus as Son of David rising above the political. It has a much higher designation.

Next, to enter is the Devil who is both a physical and metaphysical antagonist. This battle mirrors that original conflict in Eden that captures the sense of loss that is not just Jewish, but universal (Zwelling). With this, Matthew is showing that there is conflict on, if you please, a parallel plane that equates Jesus to God. This gives Jesus a divine nature that exceeds the current Jewish thought of *Christōs*. However, for the Greek, having a battle such as this falls well within their concept of the gods. They battle one another; they steal from and kill each other; they enter into human existence helping, hindering, or, at times, loving them (Webster, 2005). Campbell (1964: 9-41) paints a

vivid picture of the Eve’s serpent as a “deity in his own right, who had been revered in the Levant for at least seven thousand years before the composition of the Book of Genesis”. Campbell describes this history via pictorial stories left to us in a variety of civilizations that illustrate the idea of renewal associated with the serpent. Jung, Douglas, and Foote (1997: 1225) likens the serpent to Jesus himself as the healing serpent. This idea is supported by John when he wrote, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life” (4:14-15). John is stating here that Jesus is life and healing, esp. as related to salvation.

Matthew’s conflict revolves around the phrase “*ei huios ei tou theou*”. Robertson (1997: 31) notes that the noun *huios* (son) does not have an article, thus is “son”, not “the” son. He contends that this is a direct confrontation of God’s declaration at Jesus’ baptism where the article is used, affirming that this was “the” son. Weber (2000: 40) designates this confrontation as pleasant (God’s affirmation at his baptism) and unpleasant (fasting and temptation). The latter builds an anticipated climax (our first mountain peak; see above) as Jesus’ success would certainly destroy the adversary’s attempt at usurping God’s authority.

This confrontation parallels the Edenic temptation where the statements of God and the serpent are paired against each other:

<u>God</u>	<u>Serpent</u>
You will die-----	You <i>surely</i> will not die
Genesis 3:3 -----	Genesis 3:4

Regarding the Genesis passage, Matthews (2001: 236) reinforces this by noting that the negative immediately contradicts the preceding claim of “You will die”. He also notes that this is not the usual construction. He writes:

Unlike here, the negative particle regularly comes between the infinitive absolute and finite verb (GKC § 113v), which is taken as the negation of God’s command at 2:17; but Cassuto shows that the plural verb negates the woman’s claim, (“lest you die”), which rewords 2:17. The addition of the infinitive absolutely emphasizes the serpent’s negation, “will not surely die”.

An interesting parallel can be seen in the way Matthew constructs the temptations. The following table illustrates this (Walvoord, Zuck and Seminary, 1985):

## Satan's Temptations of Eve and Jesus

<b>Temptation</b>	<b>Genesis 3</b>	<b>Matthew 4</b>
Appeal to physical appetite	You may eat of any tree (3:1).	You may eat by changing stones to bread (4:3).
Appeal to personal gain	You will not die (3:4)	You will not hurt Your foot (4:6)
Appeal to power or glory	You will be like God (3:5)	You will have all the world's kingdoms (4:8-9).

In both instances, the slander questions the authority of God's word. Is it any wonder then that Matthew follows this narrative with the Great Sermon? Matthew's structure admits to the fact that he wanted the sermon to highlight these conflicts. Is this the King who would enforce the laws of the people? Is this truly the Son of God, having the authority to say, "*egō de legō humin!*"

Matthew's version of the conflict places Jesus at a crossroads. Does he continue his messianic venture as determined by his sonship or does he shift his authoritative base to more self-verifying position. Nolland (2005: 162) is correct in assuming that "the temptations are messianic as a heightening of the fully human; not a power struggle, but testing and temptation are the operative categories". This is a messianic-oriented conflict in which sonship is at stake. Does Jesus operate as the obedient son or disobedient, making him like the nation he came to redeem? The parable in Matthew 21:28-32 is, in essence, a recap of this temptation. Jesus was once again in a position to become the disobedient son.

After this battle of the transcendent, Jesus commands, "*Hupage, Satanā!*" However, he does not stay away. His reappearance is in Jesus' conflict with the demons that Matthew uses to verify the thesis of Jesus as Messiah. Matthew uses two different devices to accomplish this. First, in 8:16-17, he records an episode when Jesus was casting out demons to introduce a fulfilment scripture. The second is to use these episodes to associate Jesus with significant, messianic titles. The first mimics the original conflict, using the title Son of God (8:29, 12:23). The second uses the messianic title Son of David (15:22). After one of these conflicts, Matthew writes, "After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, *and were* saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel" (Mt 9:33).

On one final occasion, Jesus has to once again command “*Hupage, Satanā*” (16:23)! He says this to Peter after he opposes Jesus’ statement about going to Jerusalem to die (16:21). This time, he adds the phrase “*opisō mou*”. The first time he used this phrase was when he called Peter and Andrew (4:19). On this occasion, Jesus is asking them to follow him as he goes on his mission of preaching the coming kingdom (4:23). Nolland (2005: 179) is on target here by stating:

For the relevant picture of Jesus’ movements (as the one to be followed) we need to look forward to v. 23 rather than back to v. 18. What the first instance calls for is a quite literal following of Jesus. But what is in view is an apprenticeship which prepares these men for carrying out the same activity as Jesus himself.

The first time, Peter was asked to get behind Jesus and follow him in ministry. This last time, Peter has taken a position between Jesus and his intended mission—going to Jerusalem to die (16:21). Hence, the relevant picture of Jesus’ movement here is toward the death and he wants Peter to move out of the way. Luke’s account has Satan coming to Jesus, demanding the right to sift Peter like wheat is sifted (22:31). Robertson (1997: 270) gives the meaning of this word *demand* as “an old verb to beg something of one and (middle) for oneself”. Satan wanted to see if he could win Peter over to his side. Matthew’s account may have been another opportunity when Satan asked this. Also, Luke does not tell us when he and Satan had this conversation. This may have been only the first time for the sifting. Jesus reminds Peter that his proper place is behind him by stating to all of the disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me” (16:24). *Opisō mou* puts the disciple in relationship to Jesus’ ministry, just as he had asked when he first called Peter and Andrew. *Opisō Iesoun* is Matthew’s call to arms.

Our last group of supporting actors is the elders, scribes, and priests, whose role is cultic in nature. This group represents the covenant people of God. Together, they formed the supreme Jewish council in Jerusalem from Jesus’ time onward into the Second Temple Period. They were the religious, political and legal authority for the Jewish nation. It is in this sense that they were the cultic representatives. In the first century, the chief priests were the key figures, the scribes the second major component and the elders consisted of priests and lay members of nobility (Twelftree, 1992: 730; Marshall, 2001; Burge, 1988: 1903). During Jesus’ time, the Sadducees dominated the Sanhedrin (Brown, 1986: 1; Twelftree, 1992: 70). They are not listed among the antagonist because their primary role is within the Sanhedrin. With one exception, Matthew groups

them with the Pharisees (22:23). In this account, the Pharisees were present but were not actively part of the discussion between Jesus and the Sadducees. Matthew indicates that the Pharisees were listening because they formed a group after hearing that the Sadducees had little success in overcoming Jesus' logic (22:41).

As a rule, Matthew has the elders, scribes, and priests interact with Jesus as a group, either all together or in some combination. Only the scribes have an individual encounter with Jesus (8:19, 9:3) and this in association with the Pharisees (see below). Outside of these, they act as a group in a position of leadership. This is evident by Matthew's use of the phrase "of the people" (2:4, 21:23; 26:3, 47; 27:1). (Nolland, 2005: 112). Note from this list the split in occurrences in Matthew. The first is when Herod asks them to find out where Jesus was born (2:4). They do not appear again as a group (in an action sequence) until Jesus invades Jerusalem on the colt, and clears the temple. Matthew predicts this in 16:21 when he lists the group as those at whose hands he will suffer and be killed. Kingsbury is right to make a division here as this is a key point of interest in the Matthew Story. However, it is not a structure point. This is a key element in the final episode of Matthew's drama. This would be equivalent to the stories of the Herdsman and Messenger in *Oedipus Rex*. This event brings the story to a point of climax. Lohse (1964: 865) reminds us that the Sanhedrin had the authority to make judgments regarding the cultic community. Their authority to punish offenses against the Torah did not include capital punishment except for a pagan (even a Roman) who crossed temple barriers and entered sacred precincts.

This action in this episode begins the day after the temple tumult. Interestingly, Blomberg (2001: 319) considers it a debacle and wonders how Jesus got away with it. What Blomberg fails to see is the way Matthew is building the drama. Matthew notes their indignation (21:15) and Jesus' response. Jesus makes the next move. He leaves Jerusalem. He did not give the scribes and chief priests the opportunity to question him. He gained the control with his quote of the psalms (8:2). Matthew's drama here is excited by the two responses—ecstatic people and indignant leadership. Therefore, the leaders will wait for the next opportunity, which is given them the next day. Morris (1992: 553) also notes that this was not a chance meeting. They were out to encounter Jesus for a purpose. The elders with the chief priests immediately confront him. They approach Jesus as temple authorities, questioning his right to do and say what he did (Blomberg, 2001: 319; Morris, 1992: 553). From here, the action elevates, climaxing in the crucifixion/resurrection. This encounter appears in Matthew's next to last episode

from which Jesus demonstrates an even greater authority as he describes the kingdom destiny in chapters twenty-four and twenty-five. Later, a full list of the Matthean episodes will be given based on the literary markers used by Matthew. It suffices for now to say that each episode is building on the last, heading toward the climatic reversal so notable in Greek drama. The next episode has this leadership body in council to plan how to capture and kill Jesus (*hina ton Iēsoun dolōi kratēsosin kai apokteinōsin*). With the help of Judas (26:47), Jesus is captured and in 27:1, the plans to kill him are finalized.

Each in their supporting role plays an important part in the Matthean story. However, as illustrated in the “Unity of Action in Matthew” illustration, the conflict with the Pharisees is the primary drama that drives Matthew’s plot and reveals the most regarding Matthew’s structure. Thus, it is necessary to consider the leading antagonist, the Pharisees.

#### 2.4.2.2 The Leading Antagonist

Brown (1986.: 13) sets the stage for our discussion of the Pharisees. He comments: “We are reminded...that, although during his ministry Jesus may have argued with the Pharisees, those Jews who had the most direct involvement in his death were the priests, perhaps angered by his prophetic castigation of Temple practice”.

Brown’s perspective is true to Matthew’s account of the involvement of the Pharisees. Matthew constructs these actors in his drama as the primary catalyst for his structure. Below is a chart that lays out the issues Matthew’s Pharisees had with Jesus. These are put into their appropriate elements of Matthew’s drama. This gives us an overview of how they are incorporated into the overall structure. The text for the Episodes represents only the narrative portion where the conflict takes place.

#### Conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees according to Episodes

Element	Text	Issue
<b>Prologue</b>	<b>1:1-2:23</b>	Introduction of the Hero
<b>Parodos</b> (Leading antagonist introduced during the opening song of introduction)	<b>3:1-4:17</b>	Introduction of the Kingdom
Pharisees/Sadducees	3:7	Religious heritage
<b>Episode 1</b>	<b>4:18-7:29</b>	
	No conflict as Jesus introduces the Kingdom Constitution	
<b>Episode 2</b>	<b>8:1-11:1</b>	

Pharisees	9:10-13	Eating with sinners (Purity)
Pharisees	9:34	Jesus uses demons (Purity)
<b>Episode 3</b>	<b>11:2 -12:50</b>	
Pharisees	12:2	Working on the Sabbath
Pharisees	12:24	Casts out by Beelzebul
Scribes/Pharisees	12:38	Sign of Jonah
<b>Episode 4</b>	<b>13:54-17:27</b>	
Pharisees/Scribes	15:1-20	Purity; not out/rather in
Pharisees/Sadducees	16:1-12	Sign of nature; leaven
<b>Episode 5</b>	<b>19:1</b>	
Pharisees	19:1-12	Lawful to divorce
Chief Priests/Pharisees	21:45-46	Control Jesus; feared people
Pharisees	22:15-22	Try to trap Jesus
Pharisee (lawyer)	22:34-40	Greatest commandment?
Conflict ends	22:46	Could not answer a word
Jesus counters!	23:13-29	Pharisees—Hypocrites
<b>Epode</b>	<b>28:16</b>	
Pharisees	27:62	Sealing the tomb

It is significant that the entry of the Pharisees is in the *Parodos* (Entrance Ode) and that the encounter is with John the Baptist, not Jesus. This is appropriate for the way Matthew is building his drama. What better place to introduce them than through the messenger who is announcing Jesus. In the *Parodos*, the stage is set for the episodes. What better way to set up future conflict than to have them join (or lead) the crowds *erchomenous epi to baptisma*. The primary concern is not whether they were coming to the place of baptism (to watch or evaluate) (Nolland, 2005: 142, Blomberg, 2001: 77) or for the purpose of baptism (Morris, 1992: 57–58) since *eipi* carries both ideas (Arndt, Danker and Bauer, 2000: 6; Blass and Debrunner, 1961: 122). John’s response is the primary concern and appropriate for either. What drives his response is the question “who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?” Hendriksen and Kistemaker (1953-2001: 204) interpret the question as: “Who deluded you into thinking that it is possible to evade God, and encouraged you to try it?” In addition to this translation, Hendriksen and Kistemaker (1953-2001: 204) give four other ideas deserving attention.

Walvoord and Zuck (1985) comments that the Pharisees rejected John’s message, believing their covenant relationship via Abraham automatically qualified them for the messianic kingdom. Matthew does not set them up for conflict in this way. Rather, their presence produced a response of hypocrisy from the Baptizer (Weber, 2000: 35; Blomberg, 2001: 77). John’s response may have been prompted by his attitude toward the Pharisees, which was the same as Jesus. That is, they needed to do more than put on a show. Matthew will build this characteristic of the Pharisees until Jesus’ closing argument—the pronouncement of the eight woes of chapter 23. This follows Matthew’s

conclusion that “no one was able to answer Him a word” (Mt 22:46). That is, no logic could counter Jesus’ arguments.

It is not until Episode 2 that Jesus and the Pharisees square off. The reason is logical. Matthew had to have his hero set up the kingdom first. If there is no opposition, there is no conflict. Thus, in Episode 1, Jesus delivers the Kingdom Constitution (Sermon on the Mount) to the disciples he selected and the followers who gathered as he began to preach (*ērxato ho Iēsous kērussein*; 4:17).

Matthew’s logic now becomes more apparent. Jesus has authoritatively set up his kingdom (*egō de legō humin*), demanding that his disciples “righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees” (5:20). Robertson (1997: 44) calls this “a daring statement”, asking his followers to be better than the rabbis. “They must excel the scribes, the small number of regular teachers (5:21–48), and the Pharisees in the Pharisaic life (6:1–18) who were the separated ones, the orthodox pietists”. Later in the sermon, Jesus paints an uncomplimentary picture of a hypocrite that many may think would be referring to the Pharisees. Matthew puts the word hypocrite on Jesus lips four times in the sermon (6:2, 5, 16; 7:5). While none of these specifically mention either the scribes or the Pharisees, it would be difficult to image that Matthew’s audience would not picture them in this role. Later in Episode 5, this becomes Jesus’ favorite expression for the Pharisee, used nine times in reference to them (15:7; 22:18; 23:13-29). All but one (22:18) refer to the scribes and Pharisees. This certainly indicates a familiarity with the Greek theatre.

Along this line, it is known to most that the term hypocrite is a theatrical term for the actor. Leon Morris (1992: 136, n.8) comments that *hupokritēs* occurs more often in Matthew (13 times) than in Luke (3 times) or Mark (once). Further, it comes from *hupokrinomai*, a variant of *apokrinomai* holding the idea of a stage action such as answering. Thus, it is an actor playing a part. This background provided an easy transfer to that of a person who acts based on public display rather than the truthfulness of the message. Additionally, this one draws attention to the actor.

If the assumption is correct regarding Matthew’s use of the theatre for his Greek audience, then this term is appropriate. However, “A. W. Argyle argues that there can scarcely have been an Aramaic word for “actor” since theatre was forbidden among the Jews; he finds in the use of this word evidence that Jesus sometimes spoke Greek”

(Morris, 1992: 136, n.8; Tresham, 2009: 85). While there may not have been an actual word for actor, there was certainly a conceptual equivalent. The LXX uses *hupokritēs* to render the Hebrew *hānēp*, meaning “someone estranged from God”. This word, too, occurs only in Job 34:30; 36:13 (Günther, 1999). Thus, the concept could have been employed by Jesus and the Greek redactors using their conceptual equivalent. Tresham (2009: 85) questions if *hupokritēs* might be something of a stock phrase. Obviously, not only the language of Jesus but also that of the reader of Matthew may have an impact on what is used. For instance, Casey (2002) would see the hand of the redactor in the use of *hupokritēs* in Matthew 23. Is this because Matthew’s audience may have been Hellenized Jews? Nolland (2005: 17) writes that Matthew’s mission is to all peoples, while Blomberg (2001: 37) sees it as “distinctively Jewish-Christian concerns”. Morris (1992: 3) writes, “Matthew has a Jewish background and he is deeply interested in Jews, but he is also interested in the relevance of Jesus for all the nations” and Walvoord and Zuck title it a “Universal Message” (1985: 17). No matter the language or the audience, every culture has a conceptual equivalent of a person who talks one way and acts another. Whatever Jesus used, Matthew (and/or his redactors) found an equivalent.

Textually, only two verses in Matthew are in question. In 23:13, *hupokritai* is omitted in Gregory: 037/Δ (Tischendorf, Gregory and Abbot, 1869-94). Additionally, verse fourteen is bracketed and considered an interpolation. (Metzger and Societies, 1994: 50; Morris, 1992: 579) Additionally, Mark (7:6) and Lukan parallels (6:42; 12:56) are uncontested. Luke’s single tradition of 13:15 has some textual variation (*hupokritai* (Gb” Sz) *cum* ⲁBLT<sup>woi</sup> ΓΔΛΠ unc<sup>8</sup> al<sup>80</sup> fere it (exc) vg sah<sup>woi</sup> cop syr<sup>p</sup> aeth Hipp<sup>dan</sup> (ed Lag<sup>158</sup>) Ir<sup>int</sup> 236 ... *s hupokritai cum* DVX al mu sah<sup>müint</sup> syr<sup>cu</sup> et<sup>sch</sup> et<sup>hr</sup> arm) (Tischendorf, Gregory and Abbot, 1869-94). This is evidence that there was little redaction. Thus, by the time there is a finished product, it is an accepted term understandable to Matthew’s audience, both Jew (Hellenized) and Gentile.

Before moving on to detail the growing drama of Matthew’s episodes, it is important to note the relationship between the scribes and the Pharisees. As noted above, the scribes were part of the ruling class. At times, they are seen with the Pharisees and at other times with the priests and elders. Who are they? What is their significance when associated with the Pharisees, especially in light of the condemnation in chapter twenty-three where Jesus mounts a counter-attack after their retreat from the debates and questionings (22:46).

The scribes were the antecedents of the later Jewish rabbis. (Nolland, 2005: 112) Matthew's interest is in their leadership role, related to their knowledge of the Law. Nolland (2005: 112 n.120) maintains that knowledge of the law was indispensable to the Jewish society due to the role it held in both religious life and the wider life of the Jewish society. Hillyer (1999) adds that "precedence is usually given to scribes over Pharisees, for the former were the scholars of the party. This position of scholar of the Law is evident in Matthew 23:2: 'The teachers of the law (*grammateus*) and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat'". Utey (2000: 188) contends that they effectively replaced the functions of the local Levites.

In Matthew, scribes and chief priests are together on six occasions (16:21; 20:18; 21:15; 27:41). They are associated with the Pharisees ten times (5:20; 12:38; 15:1; 23:2, 13, 15). 23:14 is omitted from the list due to poor attestation from the textual evidence (Metzger and Societies, 1994; Tischendorf, Gregory and Abbot, 1869-94; Nolland, 2005: 933). Morris (1992: 38) shares this insight that the scribes and Pharisees were both zealous for the law. Thus, naturally, scribes were often Pharisees. However the connection with the high-priestly party may indicate a weaker than expected link to the Pharisees since the Sadducees needed legal experts. This may have been the group Matthew had in mind.

For Matthew, it is always scribes and Pharisees. Mark, however, uses the phrase "scribes of the Pharisees" (2:16), which agrees with Morris above. Additionally, in Synoptic usage, the term lawyer is interchangeable with scribe (Mt 22:35; Lk 7:30; 10:25; 11:45, 46, 52; 14:3) (Chilton, 1992: 405; Gutbrod, 1964: 1088). Thus, we conclude that the scribes were the trained officials of the Law and sat on the Sanhedrin Council. The Pharisees, having the support of the masses, welded their "authority" in public religious matters. For Matthew, the Pharisees were possibly the most prominent, Jewish group. They were known for their "dedication to the 'tradition of the elders,' and for their meticulous observation of the laws" (Cohen, 2006: 142-143). Thus, they were mainly concerned with legal issues.

Legal issues were at the heart of the conversations between Jesus and the Pharisees. In particular, marriage, Sabbath and festivals, and temple and purity were the central issues. As illustrated in the table above, these are the subjects of debate between Jesus and the Pharisees.

One final point is important to understanding the character of the Pharisees in Matthew's work. This stems from Lohse's (1964) point that "the later Halachah codified in the Mishnah would not be normative for the Sanhedrin in the period prior to 70 AD".

The council acted according to the legal understanding of the Sadducees. The later rule of the Mishna that the sentence of death should be pronounced only on the second day may well be due to milder Pharisaic practice. Other examples of later, Rabbinic codes, that reflected earlier Pharisaic understanding, would be to restrict the content of blasphemy quite narrowly to the pronouncing of the divine name or the rule that capital trials should be held only by day. Lohse (1964: 868, n.57) thinks these were established to prevent injustices. He references Blinzler, "Das Synedrium v. Jerusalem u. d. Strafprozessordnung d. Mischna", ZNW, 52 (1961), 54–65 regarding the question of the validity of the penal law in the rabbinic teaching of Jesus day.

As a priestly sect (Gerardi, 2004), they held a stronger position of authority in the council. Thus, the lack of participation by the Pharisees is noteworthy. The Pharisees participate only by inference. There is no direct part played by them. The closest that Matthew comes to implicating them in the killing of Jesus is in 12:14: "The Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, *as to* how they might destroy Him". What did Matthew mean by the verb *apolesōsin*?

In classical Greek, it is found in all forms holding the idea of destroy, make an end of, lose. Homer used it two ways: (a) to lose (e.g. father, spouse, courage, life); and (b) to annihilate (e.g. a crowd of people in war), destroy, kill (*Il.* 5, 758). In the LXX, it most frequently it stands for *ābad* to be lost, perish, or, to destroy (Hahn, 1999). Arndt, Danker and Bauer (2000) supports three connotations: (a) to cause or experience destruction, (b) to fail to obtain what one expects or anticipates, *lose out on, lose*, (c) to lose something that one already has or be separated from a normal connection, *lose, be lost*. However, in the Gospels, these can have a figurative use as well (Oepke, 1964: 394). Consider 10:39 and 16:25. The losing of life is not considered death. Rather, "This statement involved a radical crucifixion of self interest in light of Jesus' interest" (Utey, 2000: 94). This would carry the same ideas as Paul's "crucified with Christ" in Galatians 2:20.

Additionally, whenever Matthew wanted to convey the idea of death, he used the word

*apokteinō*. He uses this word twelve times and the meaning is distinctive, to deprive of life, kill (Arndt, Danker and Bauer, 2000: 114). However, of the nineteen times he used *apollumi*, ten are metaphorical. A prime example is 10:6 and 15:24. In these, the word is used to describe the house of Israel. The New American Standard, 1995 update and the Revised Standard and New Revised Standard translate this as “lost”.

The question, then, is did Matthew mean that the Pharisees intended to kill Jesus or did they intend to only destroy his reputation and credibility. In support of the former are Robertson (1997: 94), Hughes (2001: 407), Gardner (1991: 197), Weber (2000: 173), Newman and Stine (1992), Walvoord and Zuck (1985), Morris (1992: 307), Hendriksen and Kistemaker (1953-2001: 518), and Blomberg (2001: 198). Only Keener supports the latter (1993: 361) However, Nolland’s (2005: 489) insights are worth sharing: “Matthew may well trade on the imprecision of *apolesōsin*: people may be “destroyed” in various ways. Sabbath violation plays no role in the trial of Jesus, but the desire to destroy Jesus will reach its culmination in Jerusalem and will be successful.” Whether the plot included death or not is unknown from the reference here. The issue is whether the Pharisees as strict observers of the law would support the death of Jesus. Has Jesus done anything worthy of death?

While the intent of the Pharisees may not be known for certain, Nolland is correct is the assessment that whatever was intended, the issue was resolved with Jesus’ death. However, it is noteworthy that Matthew did not include them in the trial scenes or the crucifixion. There is a noticeable absence between 22:46 (“No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question.”) and 27:62 (“Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate.”). It would seem that it is Matthew’s intention to purposely keep the Pharisees separate from this because this would not satisfy his picture of the strict representation of the law. It may raise questions and destroy his theme, plot, and structure if they were directly involved in Jesus’ death.

Matthew’s Pharisees play the major role as the leading antagonist to Jesus. The reason is very simple. They are one of the major contributors to his structure. He builds his plot around Jesus and the conflict with the representatives of the Law. While the priests, scribes, Herod, and Pilot are essential to the crucifixion, the real issue for Matthew is the covenant, kingdom, and Jesus as the Christ. The other characters are incidental in these themes. However, the Pharisees are in direct contention with Jesus over these very

issues. This is because the Law is at the core of all three themes. Thus, Matthew's use of *plērōō* draws its context from these, using the Law as the focal point since the Mosaic covenant is the apex of God's covenant and provides the catalyst for the kingdom and messianic expectations.

To develop this further, it is necessary to examine the Jewish influence on the structure of the text. To do this, we will examine the Pharisees relationship to the later rabbinic writings and show how, as precursors to the Rabbis, the logic used in the conflicts between Jesus and the Pharisees provide the final key to unlocking Matthew's structure.

## **2.5 APPLICATION TO THE STUDY**

The aim of this work is to examine Matthew's use of the verb *plērōō* to determine if it reveals the Christological characteristics that endorse Jesus' divine initiative of proclaiming the coming reign of heaven within the hermeneutics of covenant. The critical examination of the context of this term requires first that we examine the broader context of the book. I am suggesting that the broader context is in the drama of Jesus' life and how this plays out in the cultic setting of second temple Judaism where the voice of authority lies with two distinct elements—the Pharisees and the cultic leaders of scribes, elders, and priests.

The specific objective of this chapter is to appraise the impact of Greek and Jewish cultic influences as they may have directed the structure of Matthew's work. I contend that this structure sets the stage for the use of *plērōō* to demonstrate how Jesus fulfils the cultic expectations of Matthew's contemporary Judaism as well as to entice the non-Jewish hearers to consider the Jewish Jesus as a divine alternative to the gods of their cultures. This backdrop of human drama may best motivate his use of *plērōō* to support the Jewish heritage of covenant, Christology, and kingdom, as well as bind all adherents, Jew or non-Jew, to this context, emphasizing the Judaic heritage of Christianity.

The approach has been to examine the concept and historical background of Greek drama as a plausible structure used by Matthew to relate the story of Jesus in the role of fulfiller. This was supported by the use of examples of Greek and Jewish dramas, as well as an in depth study of the topic from a variety of perspectives via the literary contributions of those who have specialised in Greek drama, biblical theology

resources, and specialized study resources specific to the topic. This segment of the study ended with a brief overview of the primary characters in the Jesus drama, which leads us to our next concentration, the Jewish influences on the study and how this clarifies the way Matthew intended the *plērōō* passages to be understood.

### **3.0 JEWISH INFLUENCE ON MATTHEW'S DRAMA**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Contributing to the central question of how Matthew uses *plērōō* to demonstrate that Jesus' Christological right to reign over the new covenant community provides the Jewish influence in Matthew's structure. The last chapter proposed that Matthew may have been influenced by human drama as realized in the theatre. This medium of expressing human drama was part of both the Greek and Jewish cultures. With this backdrop, it is necessary to examine the Jewish influence on Matthew's story of Jesus that unfolds under the influences of *plērōō*.

The aim of this thesis is to examine Matthew's use of the verb *plērōō* to determine if it does reveal the Christological characteristics that endorse Jesus' divine initiative of proclaiming the coming reign of heaven within the hermeneutics of covenant. The first two chapters introduced and evaluated the cultural influences on Matthew's gospel in an attempt to understand how this may have motivated his use of *plērōō* to support the Jewish heritage of covenant, Christology, and kingdom. This chapter will appraise the impact of Jewish influences as they may have directed the structure to set the stage for the use of *plērōō* to demonstrate how Jesus fulfils the cultic expectations of Matthew's contemporary Judaism.

#### **3.2 FULFILMENT AS THE DEFENCE OF MATTHEW'S THESIS**

The last chapter ended with a brief overview of the primary characters in the Jesus drama, which leads to the next concentration—the Jewish influences on the study and how this clarifies the way Matthew intended the *plērōō* passages to be understood. To do this, it is important to understand that the Greek culture previously discussed goes no farther than to influence the way Matthew presents his story of Jesus. The purpose was to propose a viable structure for the story. However, within that structure, Matthew's intent toward his Judeo-Christian and non-Christian audiences was to defend Jesus as the messianic son of David, whose Jewish roots tie him to the God of the covenant. Thus, it is the Jewish influence on Matthew that gives the structure substance and is used to show Jesus as the only one who can fulfil (*plērōō*) Jewish expectations, expanding those expectations to cultures beyond Judaism. While, as noted in chapter 1, there is much debate regarding the extent of the Jewishness of Matthew, it is irrefutable

that the story of Jesus is in a Jewish setting with Jewish characters. In this light, it will be demonstrated that the influence most directly related to the structure is set in conflict and that it is within this framework that Matthew utilizes the power of fulfilment to defend his thesis regarding Jesus. This distinctly Jewish setting provides the material for the “acts” in Matthew’s drama as well as the impetus for his use of the fulfilment passages.

It is the contention of this work that Matthew chose this structure because it was the best way he could tie together common human drama and Jewish expectations. Utilizing the tool of drama in written form (as a playwright), Matthew used literary markers to set up and control the flow of his drama. However, these markers do more than simply signal the “acts” in which Matthew tells his story. They also allow Matthew to introduce Jesus’ primary tool in his own defence—his words as the oracles of God. As will be shown, these markers identify the substance of the form he used to depict a drama that is the plan of God. This plan is identified with the *plērōō* statements. This moves the work to the literary markers and their place in Matthew’s drama.

### **3.3 LITERARY MARKERS**

There are two literary markers in Matthew— *kai egenetō hōte etelesen* (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1) and *apō tote* (4:17; 16:21). In section 2.2 of the previous chapter, some scholarly positions on these markers were discussed. Their uniqueness is not simply in the fact of their formula type appearance. These markers come at notable times in Matthew’s story, providing a shift that is both visible and intelligible. The question this work attempts to answer is “What is the significance of the shift at this exact time?” These shifts focus either on the coming action (*apō tote*) or concluding a narrative (*kai Egenetō hōte etelesen*). These markers provide not only this time recognition but also the primary subject that is the foundation upon which the section is built. It will advance this study to break these markers down farther into the concepts of time and subject.

#### **3.3.1 Time Markers**

It would seem as if much ado has been made over little. Or, as one may say, the molehills of *kai Egenetō hōte etelesen* and *apō tote ērxato* have had mountainous amounts written about them, anticipating that these phrases will reveal Matthew’s

structure. Kingsbury (1975: 2-4) describe a category of scholarship that is influenced by Bacon’s structure (1930: 81-83), concluding, “the influence of Bacon’s hypothesis upon Matthean studies has been immense”. Supporting the two-part division (*apō tote ērxato ho Iēsous kērussein*) are Kingsbury (1975) and with variation, Luz (2005: 9-13) loosely but directly opposed to the five-part structure. Supporting the five-part division are Carson, et. al. (1992: 62-63), Bacon (1930: 81-83), and Harrington (1991: 4). Kümmel (1973: 106-107) lists this as a prominent structure and offers some support by inference in that he contends that Matthew reworks Mark and is fond of formula statements. Admittedly, he holds that three is Matthew’s favourite but that five is oft used. Blomberg (2001: 24) suggests a combination of the two agreeing with Kingsbury for the main divisions and using Bacon for subdivisions. Keener (1999: 36-37) concludes that the two are not incompatible. Senior’s second level (1996: 21-37) provides a comprehensive overview of the differing structures that indicates the wide variations in the position of the scholars. While contributing, the real emphasis needs to be on what happened at this time not just the marker that sets a break in the literary structure. This will be explored under the subject markers. Nevertheless, it is important to examine these markers because of their popularity in Matthean studies. Additionally, the study will examine the use of the fulfilment statements within the context of these markers.

If it is acceptable that these markers either introduce or conclude certain elements of the drama, it is necessary to determine how they interact with this action and what do they introduce or conclude. In both, time as related to action is the intended design. These markers move the story along, allowing characters to enter and exit, setting up the “stage”, and allowing each part to work together. It will serve the work well to give a brief explanation of each and then see how Matthew’s uses this for the benefit of his defence.

### **3.3.1.1 *Kai Egenetō Horē Etelesēn***

*Kai Egenetō* literally means, “and it happened”. This is used in the LXX to conceptualize a common Hebrew construction (Morris, 1992: 184; Robertson, 1919: 1042). Robertson (1997: 86) and Morris (1992: 184) translates it as “and it came to pass”. Matthew uses some form of *genomai* seventy-five times and seven time in this form—the five that are used to designate his structure and two other occasions (8:26; 9:10) that are also used to introduce an action by Jesus. However, the latter two do not

introduce major movement. Rather, they are incidental only to the context of a particular scene.

### 3.3.1.2 *Apō Tote Ērxeto*

*Apō* marks the general point from which movement or action proceeds (Harris, 2001). It is used by Matthew ninety-one times, always with the same connotation. With *tōte*, it occurs three times in Matthew—4:17, 16:21 and 26:16. It also occurs in the latter in reference to Judas betraying Jesus. Why does Kingsbury not see this as a literary marker? True, it is preceded by *kai*, which is not the case in the others. However, it is certainly a point of transition marked by an external action (character: Judas; action: betrayal) that sets in motion the grand finale of Matthew’s work. Thus, this work includes this marker in the Matthean structure.

Commenting on the use of this phrase in 16:21, Robertson (1930: 135) understands it as “it was a suitable time...”. In 4:17, it was a suitable time to begin his preaching of the kingdom. In 16:21, it was a suitable time to talk about the completion of his mission by discussing his impending death. The third time, expressing the action of Judas, indicates that it was now the suitable time for Jesus to die (26:16). While this passage does not use the word *ērxeto*, it does express the idea of beginning. The imperfect, active verb express a progressive action of looking (*ezētei*), which Matthew uses as a time marker to indicate the beginning of an action. Following this idea, the NAS95 translates the verb as *began* looking to express the initiation of the action.

### 3.3.2 Subject Markers

In chapter two (2.4.2.2 The Leading Antagonist), a table was provided that gave the divisions of Matthew’s drama. Now, that table can be expanded to include the literary markers and the subjects that each of these introduced into the play.

#### Literary Markers and Subjects

Drama Element	Theme/Literary Marker	Subject	Text
1. Prologue	Hero Introduction	<i>Iēsous Christou</i>	1:1-2:23
2. Parodos (entry)	Kingdom Introduction	<i>kerussein</i>	3:1-4:17
3. Strophê (Turn)	John the Baptist	<i>metanoēō</i>	3:1-3:17
4. Antistrophê (Counter)	Temptation (Devil)	<i>ei hious ei tou Theou</i>	4:1-11

5.	Epode (After-Song)	Jesus' Kingdom Introduction	<i>kerussein kai legein</i>	4:12-17
6.	<b>Time Marker</b>	<b><i>apō tote</i></b>	<b><i>kerussein kai legein</i></b>	<b>4:17</b>
7.	<b>Episode 1</b>	Kingdom Constitution	<i>opiso mou</i>	4:18-7:29
8.	Stasimon	Presentation of the Constitution	<i>legō humin</i>	5:1-7:27
9.	<b>Time Marker</b>	<b><i>kai Egenetō hote etelesēn</i></b>	<b><i>logous</i></b>	<b>7:28-29</b>
10.	<b>Episode 2</b>	Kingdom Mission	<i>Therapeuso/matētas</i>	8:1-10:42
11.	Stasimon	Meaning of Discipleship	<i>diatasson</i>	10:24-10:42
12.	<b>Time Marker</b>	<b><i>kai Egenetō hote etelesēn</i></b>	<b><i>Diatasson</i></b>	<b>11:1</b>
13.	<b>Episode 3</b>	Kingdom Mysteries	<i>ekrupsas</i>	11:2 - 13:52
14.	Stasimon	Teaching in Parables	<i>elalēsen...legōn</i>	13:1-52
15.	<b>Time Marker</b>	<b><i>kai Egenetō hote etelesēn</i></b>	<b><i>parabolē</i></b>	<b>13:53</b>
16.	<b>Episode 4</b>	Kingdom Structure	<i>sophia</i>	13:54-17:27
17.	<b>Time Marker</b>	<b><i>apō tōte</i></b>	<b><i>deiknyein (explain)</i></b>	<b>16:21</b>
18.	Stasimon	The Church	<i>tous logous</i>	18:1-35
19.	<b>Time Marker</b>	<b><i>kai Egenetō hote etelesēn</i></b>	<b><i>logous</i></b>	<b>19:1</b>
20.	<b>Episode 5</b>	Kingdom Destiny	<i>katakrinousin Thanatō</i>	19:1-21:22
21.	Stasimon	Eschatological issues	<i>tous logous</i>	21:23-15:46
22.	<b>Time Marker</b>	<b><i>kai Egenetō hote etelesēn</i></b>	<b><i>logous</i></b>	<b>26:1</b>
23.	<b>Epode</b>	Kingdom Authority	<i>exousia</i>	26:2-28:20

This chart suggests that the time markers *καὶ ἐγένετὸ ἵστε ἐτέλεσεν* and *ἀπο τότε ἐρξάτο* serve a very distinctive purpose in Matthew's work. Each are used within the drama to move Jesus into the correct position and move the plot along, culminating in the inevitable great reversal of his proof of divinity in the resurrection. Do the two different time markers work independently or mutually? If together, how did he use them and how do they fit this scenario? An acceptable answer is that *apo tote* of 4:17 is the *terminus a quo* for the introduction of the hero on a kingdom mission. After, the Prologue and Parados, he immediately puts our hero into action, accumulating the necessary kingdom components—a constitution and disciples. He builds this through the first three episodes that work together to build the plot to the time of intense conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. Skilfully, Matthew shifts the direction of the drama,

setting into motion what will appear as the *terminus ad quem* for our hero. Matthew uses *apo tote* (16:21) with the qualifier *ērxatō* to set up what would seem to be the inevitable consequence of his conflict with the religious leaders—his death. This dynamic shift sets up the climax and great reversal in the resurrection, providing ultimate proof that Jesus is the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.

### 3.3.2.1 *Logos* and the Subject Markers

It is necessary and helpful to the purpose of *καὶ ἐγένετὸ ἵστε ἐτέλεσεν* to examine the object of each subject marker. This phrase is driven by the term *logos* three of the five times. *Logos* is the object of *καὶ ἐγένετὸ ἵστε ἐτέλεσεν* in episodes one, four, and five. While Matthew uses different terms (*diatassō* and *parabolē*) in episodes two and three, they contribute to the concept of *logos* as used by Matthew. From these expressions, it is evident that the key to Matthew's structure is driven by the concept of *logos*. As will be shown later, Matthew reveals Jesus' logic (*logos*) used against his critics, defending his thesis with this logic. It is within the context of the logic that the fulfilment statements fall. Thus, they are part of Matthew's evidence regarding the nature of Jesus.

In this term, Matthew is bringing both his worlds—Jew and Greek—together on a common ground understood by both. It may be debatable if the orthodox Jew would have met Matthew here. To what extent Philo's teachings would have endeared this group to him may never be known. McGrath and Truex (2004: 44) state, "Certain first-century Jewish beliefs were later classified as "two powers heresy" and retrospectively condemned in rabbinic literature". The operative word is *later*. During Jesus' time, this term may have been more acceptable. This should become more evident in the next chapter. Nonetheless, logic, whether rabbinic or Hellenistic, was the agency of religious discussion and often the object of it.

### 3.3.2.2 *Logos*—Matthew's Logic

The concept of *logos* is not exclusive to later Christianity. As a technical term, it makes its appearances in the developing sciences (grammar, logic, rhetoric, psychology and metaphysics) in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, BC. It held the idea of discourse or the theme of discourse (Fries, 1999). Kittel (1964: 73) confirms Fries conclusion about the weakening of the word to the idea of discourse, giving it the sense of "collection".

The shift closer to the familiar NT concept takes place in Heraclitus when he expands the meaning of *logos* as the instrument of thought, expressing the thought-process and conclusion in addition to the consequences for the thinker (*Frag. 2*) (Fries, 1999). For Kittel (1964: 74) *Logos* carries a fuller idea in that “Everything takes place ‘for a specific reason and under the pressure of necessity’”. Quoting Schadewald, Fries (1999) notes that *logos* embraces “the whole empirical breadth of everything which one has ascertained by the use of eyes and ears”.

In the LXX, *logos* is used to translate *dābār* (“word, report, command”; also “thing, matter, affair”). Ritt (1990: 357) concludes that this provides the theological background for the term. However, the LXX usage may have given birth to the theological background but it was Philo of Alexandria who enriched the term, giving it the philosophical emphasis known to the NT writers. He bridged the gap between Jewish and Greek aspects of thought. According to Clarke (2000), Philo was thoroughly Hellenized, using Platonic and Stoic philosophy to interpret the OT. His aim was to demonstrate the compatibility of Jewish traditions with Greek thought (Cf. to Schürer, pg. 363 (1890)).

For Philo, *logos* was God’s mental activity present in his word, taking part in creation (Knight, 2000). By Philo’s time, this term had come to designate a “rational, intelligent and thus vivifying principle of the universe” (Hillar, 2005). Hillar sees this as driven by the belief that there was an underlying factor or agent to every occurrence. Cohen (2006: 78) summarizes Philo well by noting that *logos* is the manifestation of God which comes into contact with the material world and which is perceptible by humans.

### 3.3.2.3 *Logos* in the Gospels

Moving to the Gospels, consider the word count for the uses of *logos*:

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
33 times	24 times	32 times	40 times
in 31 verses	in 23 verses	in 32 verses	in 36 verses

While John has the most uses, it is obvious that this term was in use during the writing of all the gospels. Matthew’s use is tied closely with Philo in that of the thirty-one times he uses the word, only twice it is not understood in the way Philo has developed the term. Twice (18:23; 25:19) *logos* is used in a story about giving account to the master of

the house. The idea of logic is seen here in that they are to offer a reason for their actions. All the others can be understood with the idea of reason/logic or a proclamation. Even the ones understood as proclamation do not distract from the idea of logic as the proclamations are the logical culmination of Jesus' ministry.

Noting where the literary markers fall within this chart is an indication of what this work proposes regarding how Matthew structured his gospel. It was structured with Jesus finishing his logic—logic the Pharisees could not oppose (22:46). The “no one” in 22:46 is the Pharisees. They were unable to offer a counter argument. They were defeated in debate! Why? Jesus used logic in his defence that was comparable to but solidly based on reasons greater than that used by the Pharisees. This raises the question of whether Matthew held that the Pharisees best represent the Judaism of his milieu? The answers to these questions are studies of their own and will be highly debatable. Nonetheless, Matthew does use them in this position rather than the priests or scribes (although certain scribes at times enter into debate with Jesus) who would be expected to be the portrait of the knowledgeable Jew. However Matthew intended them to be viewed, it is evident that the Jesus-Pharisaic debates helps to identify the precursory, rabbinic logic used by them. Another question is raised: “Does the story/discourse relationship demonstrate a specific form of logic?” This is a valid question in a time when logic reigned.

Neusner and Chilton (2007: ix) inform their readers that the rabbis assert the continuity of the Mosaic Torah as unbroken. The loss of the Temple does not mean the lost all means of service to God. They insist that the approach taken by the Pharisees maintains the continuity between Sinai and the rabbinic circle reforming at Yavneh. “The Oral Torah revealed by Moses and handed on from prophet to scribe, sage, and rabbi remains in Israel's hands. The legal record of pre-70 Pharisaism requires careful preservation because it remains wholly in effect” (Neusner and Chilton, 2007: ix). While the Mishnah never claims to descend from the Pharisees, they both represent the same positions accepted as correct. According to Cohen (2006: 152), this is confirmed by implicit evidence (common features describe by Josephus and the NT) and by the prominence of both traditions of Gamaliel and his sons. Saiman (2007: 100) contends that they are the forbearers of rabbinic Judaism.

Below, the debates between Jesus and the Pharisees are examined to determine the logic Jesus used as counter-argument to the logic of the Pharisees. Before this is done, it is

necessary to introduce the placement of the *plērōō* passages into the drama. Then, exploring these together, the work will propose how Matthew may have intended his readers to see the complete evidence of his thesis that Jesus is the messiah, son of David, son of Abraham.

### 3.4 *PLĒRÓŌ* IN MATTHEW'S DRAMA

A fruitful place to start the study of Matthew's *plērōō* is with Menken's (2004: 2-9, 51-65) examination of the formula statements within Matthew's context. Menken maintains that the fulfilment quotations belong to the editorial level, which supports the drama thesis. If he is correct, then it is possible that this material was purposely added to enhance and support his own thesis that this work has identified as Jesus as Messiah, son of David, and son of Abraham. If Matthew were merely collecting the traditions, he would not be true to his job to add these as some are unique to Matthew. However, if he is attempting to build a case that his story of Jesus best portrays his thesis, then the editorial work is not only appropriate but it is also necessary.

In chapter 3, Menken (2004: 51-65) lays out the characteristics of the editorial work, which builds the case specifically for Matthew's text and cultural context. He uses the long quotation from Isaiah 42 found in 12:18-21 as his example. His stated purpose in this chapter is to focus on the relationship between the quotation and the context. This example can be applied, at least in principle, to all the fulfilment passages and is vital to Matthew's universalism, which will be examined in chapter four where an examination of Isaiah's context for his writings will be made.

In this text, Menken (2004: 52) finds two traits that this passage in has common with the other fulfilment passages—similar functions and size. Function is determined by three separate but synonymous terms in the original—*hina*, *hopōs*, and *tote*—that are used to introduce the formula. These are used to link the quote to Matthew's application. The clearest example is the reference to the slaughter of the innocent that Matthew connects to the lament of Jeremiah. Menken (2004: 53) discusses three others (1:23, 2:15, 21:5) where there is an obvious relationship between what precedes and what follows to the quotation. While 12:18-21 may appear to need the context prior and following, Menken (2004: 63-64) concludes that here as elsewhere, Matthew's context is the preceding event. In this example, it is connected to verses 14-16 where Matthew includes the

drama of the Pharisees plan to destroy Jesus. Below is a schematic of how he (Menken, 2004: 64) parallels the quotation to the preceding events:

### Matthew's Quotations and the Preceding Events

<u>vv.</u>	<u>Events</u>	<u>Quotation</u>	<u>vv</u>
14-16	Jesus' true identity, to be made public after his death and resurrection, also for Gentiles	Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen; My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased; I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles.	18
15a 14	His response to the Pharisees Their response to him	He will not wrangle or shout Nor will any one hear his voice in the street	19
15bc	His healing activity	He will not snap off a broken reed and he will not quench a smoldering wick	20
14-16	His realization of justice in his death and resurrection, also for Gentiles	And in his name the Gentiles will hope	21

In addition to function, Menken (2004: 54) suggests that the size of the quotation “has been determined carefully by the evangelist”. Because of their diversity in character or content, he maintains that Matthew as editor “presumably” (Menken’s word) took these from some continuous text, using only what is needed to support his purpose. In this, the editor’s full version of the quotation was fulfilled. Thus, with function and size, Matthew provides a dramatic argument to support his thesis of Jesus’ identity and mission.

With this understanding, it will be beneficial to examine the place of the *plērōō* statements as Matthew uses them to build his defence of Jesus. These and his other arguments (signs/miracles, authoritative relation to the law, etc.) make this Gospel a useful tool of evangelism, showing Jesus in context and not merely as a historical being of interest. Naturally, the question arises as to how it fits his plan. Of the sixteen times *plērōō* is used, three do not refer to Jesus or defend Matthew’s theme (13:48; 23:32; 27:9). The remaining thirteen fit into the story in the following order:

Prologue .....	Mt 1:22; Mt 2:15; Mt 2:17; Mt 2:23; Mt 3:15
Parados (entry) .....	Mt 4:14
Episode 1 .....	Mt 5:17
Episode 2 .....	Mt 8:17;
Episode 3 .....	Mt 12:17-21; Mt 13:14, 35
Episode 5 .....	Mt 21:4; Mt 26:54; Mt 26:56

Looking at the data in this format demonstrates the importance of the fulfilment passages to Matthew's drama as five of the thirteen (38%) are in the prologue. Their placement would seem to be significant in that they are employed early as a way of supporting Matthew's claim of 1:1. The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah are referenced in 1:22 and 2:17 respectively. Using these two Jewish prophets adds considerable weight to his argument. Two of these (Mt 2:15; Mt 2:23) are general references to an unknown source assumed to be known to his audience. The final statement (3:15) holds special implication in that the fulfilment is of a concept, not a reference to a person or tradition. Hagner (1993: lv) calls attention to the fulfilment passage of 3:3 that does not use the *plērōō* in any form. However, this OT reference does not refer to Jesus but to John the Baptist. In chapter five, an exegesis is made, indicating the context of covenant, Christology, and kingdom. Suffice it for now to show the place of these passages in his work.

After the prologue, there is a fulfilment passage (either of a concept [5:17] or a prophet or tradition) in every episode but four. The absence in four may be due to the specific logic used for which there is no apparent prophetic discourse suitable to the subject. Thus, it is now appropriate to examine the progression of Matthew's drama, showing the logic and the placement of the *plērōō* passages.

### **3.5 THE LOGICAL PROGRESSION OF MATTHEW'S DRAMA**

At this point, it will be helpful to take a panoramic view of this gospel from which two issues will be clearly seen. First, a logical progression of Matthew's story is evident, not set in historical accuracy as much as in dramatic fashion. Within this progression, it will be shown how Jesus employed the use of a pre-rabbinic form of logic to defend his actions when called in question by the Pharisees. This provides compelling evidence that it is the use of this type of defence that prompted Matthew to divide his plays based on the expression of *kai egenetō hotē etelesēn* as controlled by the use of logic (*logos*).

This examination will be three-fold. First, there will be an examination of the overall structure of logic used by Matthew as it flows from episode to episode. Additionally, an examination will be made of the logic used within each episode. Emphasis will be placed on the sections that counter the arguments/position of the pre-rabbinic logic of the Pharisees. Finally, the placement of the fulfilment passages with the flow of the

drama is presented. With this, the study of the structure will end and the work can move to the context of Matthew's *plērōō*.

### 3.5.1 Prologue—Setting the Stage

Matthew introduces his hero as the Jewish Messiah (*Christou*) whose lineage is firmly grounded as the seed of the two Jewish patriarchs (*huiou Daueid huiou Abraam*) who are vital to the messianic ideal. The Prologue sets the context for the book by introducing Jesus into both Jewish (Herod) and non-Jewish (Magi) cultures. This cultural matrix supports the drama by setting the stage for the entrance of the major protagonists and the cultural influence of the drama.

For Hagner (1993: 14), there is a natural and necessary connection in verse 16 (Joseph begets [*egennēsen*] and Jesus was begotten [*egennēthē*]). From this transition, Matthew is able to establish several important theological statements about Jesus. This said, Hagner (1993: 23) and Luz (2007: 102) see a disconnect between 1:18-25 and 2:1ff. Hagner, following Stendahl and others, sees the shift as geographical and thus, independent. Luz simply states that the connection is not as close, connected primarily by the dream motif. On the other side, Harrington (1991: 41) makes the connection with the chapter one “Son of David” motif and Gundry (1982: 26) ties it linguistically with the use of the definite article of 2:1 (*tou de Iēsou*) with “the aforementioned Jesus”, connecting it to the salvific name of 1:21. Davies and Allison (1988: 225), Blomberg (2001: 61), and Keener (1999: 97-98) understand that Matthew's literary device is to set in contrast two distinct characters (as pointed out above, two distinct cultures). For Keener (1999: 97), this is to prompt a personal decision, noting that this is a common literary practice in ancient literature.

Following the latter, a definite plan in Matthew's work seems to develop a plot that is designed to constantly bring to the audience's mind his opening thesis of *Iēsou Christou, huiou Daueid huiou Abraam*. This opening builds the backdrop against which the ensuing encounters, culminating in the verbal wars with the Pharisees, elevates Jesus to the rightful position of God's appointed Messiah whose lineage is directly tied to the roots of the Jewish heritage. Matthew makes it clear that this is not assumed as the Pharisees assume their tie to the Law. As stated above, Neusner and Chilton (2007: ix) remark that the rabbis assert the continuity of the Mosaic Torah as unbroken. They insist that the approach taken by the Pharisees maintains the continuity between Sinai

and the rabbinic circle reforming at Yavneh. Matthew's Jesus is confirmed with that direct lineage. It is never assumed.

### 3.5.1.1 The *Plērōō* Statements—The Prologue

Beginning with the examination of the placement of these statements, it is good to heed the understanding that Hagner (1993: lv-lvi) gives regarding the author's use of these OT references. He cautions that Matthew's intent is not to be an exegete, giving the intentions of the original authors. Rather, he is supplying the *sensus plenior* (fuller or deeper understanding) that is "detectable in the light of the new revelatory fulfilment" (Hagner, 1993: lvi). Menken (2004: 1) shows that the OT quotations can be viewed synchronically and diachronically. With the former, he anticipates that Matthew will associate his text to an identifiable source. Even 2:23, which source is hard to trace, is understood to have a place in the prophets (Menken, 2004: 52). In other words, it is understood to be prophetic although an exact parallel is unavailable. Diachronically, Menken (Menken, 2004: 1) views that Matthew added his own quotations (translations) to his sources (Mark and Q, assuming the validity of the Two-Source hypothesis). To defend this, Part I of his work, Menken (2004: 44) identifies the sources that sometimes are "obvious and correct rendering of the Hebrew" to "a revision of the LXX or a fresh translation of the original Hebrew". From this, it is understood that Matthew is using his sources and understanding of the text to provide the *sensus plenior* (Menken, 2004: 135).

Thus, in the OT usage, the passages are not necessarily predictive in the sense of looking specifically to the messiah. Prophecy is a double-edged sword as demonstrated by the myriad of writers and perspectives from the mid-to-late-1980s through 2002, revealing a prophetic phenomenon dubbed as "double fulfilment" (Blomberg, 2002: 17-20). This means that an exegesis of an Old Testament text gives an immediate time frame for fulfilment while the same text within the larger "context of their immediately surrounding paragraphs or chapters, disclose a further dimension of meaning never approximated by any Old Testament-age event". With this in mind, the work shifts to the first *plērōō* passage.

Matthew's opening *plērōō* statement (1:21-23) is an immediate declaration of Jesus' messianic mission to Israel. As a possible reference to Psalm 130:8, the significance is that the salvation will be from both the sin and the consequences (Bratcher and

Reyburn, 1991: 1085). This reference is essential to this dramatic opening for his Jewish audience, demonstrating the necessity of creating a reliable connection back to the traditions of David and Abraham. That is, linking Jesus to them via the prophets who were the intermediaries between that heritage and the current Judaism. Nolland (2005: 99 n. 66) points out that these are Matthean additions that are detachable from the context of the common (Markan?) sources. Additionally, he draws attention to the placement of the reference coming before as if it is an announcement (or a command, (2005: 99 n. 70) ) that reinforces the fact that this was “from the Lord” through the prophets (see also, Morris (1992: 30)). Hagner (1993: 20) contributes that this was done to convey its significance and origin. In order to help his non-Jewish audience, he translates the Hebrew word *Immanuel* (Blomberg, 2001: 59). Thus, at the very beginning, Matthew establishes a different type of hero than possibly imagined. The common imagination will be examined in the study of the prophetic context.

The next three *plērōō* statements (2:15, 17, 23) work together to establish Matthew’s messiah with Israel historically. First, there is reference to Egypt, a Gentile country which has served as a refuge for persecuted people (Luz, 2007: 120; Mounce, 1991: 17; Gundry, 1982: 34). In context with the first, Davies and Alison (1988: 262-263), along with Hughes and Laney (2001: 397) see the significance as relating to the redemptive nature of the exodus. Next, there is the connection of the suffering (a human experience) (Hughes and Laney, 2001: 397). This reference fast forwards history to the time of the exile, using the Jeremiah reference, which is a message of hope (Davies and Allison, 1988: 267). Additionally, this passage contains the “new covenant” hope of Israel and Judah, which is central to his covenant theme. Ultimately, the history is brought into the present tense with reference to the city of Nazareth. Blomberg (2001: 71) summarizes these as showing Jesus humanity (identifying with his fellow Jews) and mission of liberation.

In these opening *plērōō* statements found in his prologue, Matthew sets the context for them as covenant (2:15, 17, 23) and Christology (1:21-23). The kingdom context is not evident until the parados (3:15). It is within these contexts that Matthew establishes the mission of Jesus.

### 3.5.2 Parados—Kingdom Introduction

After the stage is built, the chorus (Matthew—as shown in the previous chapter) enters to introduce the primary topic—the kingdom. The literary impact of the strophe (turn) connects his play with Jewish tradition in that the one in Elijah’s spirit (cf. 11:14) announces the imminent arrival of the kingdom. The first on the scene to play their role are the religious leaders, represented by the Pharisees and Sadducees. Matthew’s contemporaries would have assumed that this is an appropriate audience. However, these are quickly set aside as needing to match their deeds to their words (3:8). Matthew repeats John’s message on the lips of Jesus, forming a complete literary unit (Harrington, 1991: 52). Similar language is used in 3:1 and 3:13 to tie these two together (Luz, 2007: 134). By the time of the kingdom introduction, Matthew has used some form of *legō* eleven times out of the 101 times it will be used in his work. This is significant in that it is part of the word group for the word *logos*. Gundry (1982: 42) notes, regarding specifically the participle *legōn*, that this is a typical expression not shared by Mark and Luke and is used for emphasis. It is not just that he said; rather, that in saying, he was making an official, public announcement (Arndt, Danker and Bauer, 2000: 543). Gundry (1982: 42) conjectures that these are John’s actual words. This may be true in light of the fact that Mark and Luke omit them. Whether they are or not is of lesser importance than Gundry’s idea that both John and Jesus are men of words. To demonstrate this with Jesus, Gundry includes the five literary markers particular to Matthew, three of which are driven by *logos*. With all of this, the kingdom is taken to the Jew first. This is Matthew’s cultural context for his kingdom introduction.

Matthew moves the scene from the regions of the Jordan (Gundry (1982: 42): trans-Jordan) to the wilderness. This counter turn (*antistrophê*) is unexpected as it reveals a celestial conflict fought between Jesus and Satan. This is not for terrain or kingdom citizens. Rather, it is nothing short of control of the kingdom. For Hagner (1993: 61), the logical connection is made between this event and the baptism by the reference in both accounts to God’s Son. He writes, “Jesus is proclaimed Son of God in the events immediately following the baptism, and his sonship is vitally important to his mission”. Thus, when Jesus emerges victoriously, he will then have the authority of his Father to say, “*egō de legō humin*”!

Matthew's *epode* (after-song) positions Jesus in such a way as to demand the need for a kingdom constitution. John has been put in jail. Jesus will begin a ministry that will draw larger crowds (Gk. is plural) than John (Jerusalem and all Judea [3:5] versus Galilee and *the* Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and *from* beyond the Jordan [4:25]) (Nolland, 2005: 182). Matthew uses a *plērōō* statement to summarize the declarations of the baptism and temptation that qualify him to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah regarding the enlightening of the Gentiles (4:14-16). At this point, Matthew establishes the *terminus a quo* of 4:17 to introduce the first episode in which the kingdom constitution is given.

### 3.5.2.1 The *Plērōō* Statements—the Parados

The parados has two *plērōō* statements—3: 15 and 4:14. The use of the *plērōō* statement (3:15) in the kingdom introduction is noteworthy. Rather than a reference to a particular prophet's words, this one is a conceptual reference to righteousness. In this, Davies and Allison (1988: 326) conclude that this is a general reference to fulfilment. However, righteousness is a key concept (seven occurrences), as the goal of discipleship in accomplishing the will of God. Thus, it is directly associated with the coming kingdom (Hagner, 1993: 56). Luz (2007: 142) attaches an ethical connotation to *dikaiosunēn* but comprehensively, sees this as the entire divine will from Matthew's perspective. This study will reveal a deeper, more intense meaning as the term is explored in chapter five.

This *plērōō* captures the essence of Matthew's thesis of Jesus and the kingdom, emphasizing the overarching emphasis on this quality for the disciples. Later, in the second conceptual use of *plērōō* (5:17), Jesus will conclude that with the admonition to have a surpassing righteousness. With these two conceptual ideas, Jesus lays out a standard for righteousness that is necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven. Understanding this righteousness lays a foundation upon which the house (the new synagogue; see 3.5.6 below) of the disciple is built.

The *plērōō* passage of 4:14–16 holds a significant role in the fulfilment ideal. Once again, Matthew is including non-Jews (*ethnōn*) in his drama. This time, immediately after John's imprisonment, Jesus moved directly into the territory of Herod Antipas where the Isaiah (9:1–2) passage will have new meaning as Jesus becomes the way out of darkness for Jew and non-Jew alike. Keener (1999: 146) insists that Matthew knew

the messianic context (9:6–7) of the Isaiah passage. Additionally, Keener (1999: 145-146) suggests that this reference may be due to the potential criticism offered by the Judean based Pharisees. This passage brings together Abraham’s blessing of the nations (covenant), David’s lineage (Christology), and the outgrowth of the Jewish traditions (kingdom).

### **3.5.3 Episode One—Kingdom Constitution**

The episode to which the Stasimon replies is the work of Jesus in teaching and healing (4:18-25). The great light that is to shine on those places once in disgrace (Isaiah 9:1-2) is the gospel that is at hand (Nolland, 2005: 174). In logical progression to assert the covenant authority of the kingdom, it is necessary for Matthew’s Messiah to align himself with the Law, God’s eternal will for Israel and the true light of the Gentiles. Paul explains this in Romans 2:12-16 where he concludes that Christ Jesus will judge all who possess the Law, either internally or by revelation. This is the intent of the first episode in Matthew’s drama. Speeches and dialogues, which are typical in an episode, are brief but not absent in this episode. Their brevity makes them so dynamic and emphasizes the vital importance of the chorus response (Stasimon) to it. In this brief episode, the only recorded statement (speech) is 4:19, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men”. However, Matthew does indicate that there were other speeches in the form of teaching (*didaskōn*) and proclaiming (*kerussōn*) (4:23). Hagner (1993: 80) proposes the teaching to be an exposition of the Torah, which is exemplified in the Sermon on the Mount.

As Keener observes (1999: 155), there is a demonstration of power that goes with the teaching and preaching. It is this demonstration that provides God’s seal of approval on Jesus (cf. Heb. 2:4). This demonstration is necessary for the Stasimon that explains the nature of the kingdom being introduced with power (Gundry, 1982: 63; Davies and Allison, 1988: 410). Now, Jesus is ready to take the position of another Moses, declaring the intent of God’s law.

#### **3.5.3.1 Matthew’s (Choral) Response**

The Stasimon is the response of Jesus seeing the crowds. As described in the last chapter, Matthew stands in place of the chorus, reflecting on the things said and done in the episodes. So how does this align with the Matthew’s text? This can be best

understood by answering the question of whether this is a single sermon preached at this one setting or a agglomeration (Davies' word (1966: 2)) for snippets, sound bites, and lessons (such as the *didaskōn* of 4:23). Hagner (1993: 83) relying on source criticism and Davies (1966: 1-4) relying on source, form, and liturgical criticisms agree that the sermon is a composite of sayings (Hagner, 1993: 83) yet with an integrated totality (Davies, 1966: 4). Betz (1995: 45) concludes that the sermon consists of smaller sayings (*logoi*) and at times, larger units (i.e., Matthew 6:1-18). These were compiled by the author (as a collector) or the later editors. If this is true, then Matthew's apparent logic is to have Jesus mimic Moses, as Davies and Allison argue (1988: 423-425), with the reading of the Law (Exodus 20). Of course, as with Moses, this is only the core elements of the new kingdom. Jesus will later enlarge and enlighten on these in a variety of discourses and especially the parables (Mt 13).

Carter (1994: 35-52) lists six structural approaches to the sermon. Of these, all but the one on general outlines includes some note that the theme of righteousness plays a major role in the sermon. Using Guelich's book published in 1974, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* as the resource for a structure based on the Beatitudes, Carter (1994: 38) notes that righteousness is a key word repeated in 6:1 to expand the surpassing righteousness of 5:20. He (Carter, 1994: 41) suggests that in Patte's Chiastic (reverse parallelism) Structure recognizes righteousness as the central idea of the sermon, noting this is shared by a number of scholars. The third structure has the Lord's Prayer as the center. He lists Luz, Bornkamm, and Guelich as the scholars purporting this position. The strength of Luz's work is the emphasis on content regarding discipleship. Among these is the demand for greater righteousness. Bornkamm did not share this position in his appeal to the centrality of the Prayer (Carter, 1994: 42-45). An understanding of how Jesus fulfills all righteousness (3:15) would be beneficial in ascertaining the ideal of righteousness set down in the sermon. For Przybylski (1980: 4), the OT understanding of righteousness is the departing point with use in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Tannaitic literature and Matthew is the final product. This indicates a process of development to which Matthew contributes in answering the question of whether righteousness is the gift of God or the expectations place on humanity. If only the sermon perspective is used, obviously, the latter is the answer. Additionally, Przybylski (1980: 78-79), defending the use of *dikaïosunēn* over *eleāsunē* in 6:1, counts seven occurrences in the gospel. Five of these occur in the sermon. He then divides the seven uses into three groups of redactional probability, since he concludes that there is no

extant synoptic sources that indicate a similar use to Matthew. From this, he puts 5:20 and 6:1 into the category of probable Matthean redaction, 5:6 and 6:33 are less explicit regarding the understanding of righteousness than the first group with Matthew show redactional restraint. The last three fall between in that they do not have synoptic parallels but also, they are not as crucial in development of their respective contexts. With this evidence, it would seem probable that Matthew has again taken editorial license to develop his argument. Fourth on Carter's list is the conflict with religious leaders and the Synagogue. W. D. Davies (*The Sermon on the Mount*, 1966) is one of the most influential resources studies on Matthew's milieu (Senior, 1996: 8). In this longer work, as well as the condensed *Sermon on the Mount* (1966: 83-90; specifically 85-86), Davies (1964: 256-315; specifically, 304-305) concludes that the sermon and much of the rest of the Gospel originate out of the disputes with the Pharisees. This is supported by Worth (1997: 55). Carter (1994: 45-46) and Davies (1964: 426; 1966: 140) give credence to the sermon's appeal to a righteousness greater than the Pharisees. Repschinski (2000: 236-240) considers the controversy stories a substantial part of Matthew, editing his sources to focus on the Pharisees. With this, there is hostility, community issues, and debates over the Law in which Jesus offers a better structure. His survey of the differing assumptions regarding the history and tradition of the controversy stories is beneficial. How did they go from oral to written tradition? He surveys five leading voices in the early studies, Albertz, Dibelius, Bultmann, Taylor and Hultgren. For Albertz (1921), the stories reflect the historical Jesus in conflict similar to the OT prophets. Dibelius (1934) contribution supports the thesis that the final editors found Hellenized forms useful in their work. He points to a variety of writers from the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. Additionally, Dibelius emphasized the use as a missionary tool, which this work supports. For Bultmann (1963), the stories rose out of the church's need to determine its position on the law. He too noted a resemblance to Hellenistic stories as well as parallels from rabbinic literature. Bultman's *Sitz im Leben* is a Jewish-Christian church in Palestine. However, Repschinski (2000: 239) points out that "Bultmann and Dibelius wrote during a time when scholarship held that Palestinian Judaism and Hellenism were quite distinct and separated. This explains to some extent why both restricted themselves to the investigation of parallels in either Jewish or Hellenistic literature". Since Taylor (1935) looked to the collective memory of the church for the historical Jesus, he did not look for Greek or Jewish sources. Hultgren (1979) had access to developed redaction-critical

tools not available to the others. He maintained that the redactors formed these into controversy stories, collecting them into units.

Przybylski (1980: 111-115) questions if Matthew uses *dikaiosunē* to convey the idea of conduct. If one answers this only within the Sermon on the Mount, the answer is yes. However, in the greater context of the work, this term is absorbed into the overall ideal of doing the will of God. In this, Przybylski reinforces a concept of righteousness in the sermon that deals with man's responsibility. Thus, the idea of the Sermon as a constitution becomes clear as this device guides the conduct of the kingdom citizens. Does this present a problem if Przybylski's view is adopted that righteousness does not play a crucial role in Matthew ideal disciple? (1980: 115-116) It does not. In fact, his idea of a surpassing righteousness (5:20) sets a standard for discipleship that includes the right actions of the constitution, leading to the full appreciation for and understanding of the nature and will of God, functionally and soteriologically.

This information points to a single theme running through the sermon—righteousness (*dikaiosunē*)—as either a personal ethic or a state of being (Przybylski's disciple doing the will of God). The appeal to a righteousness surpassing the Pharisees (5:20) ties directly to all three of Matthew's fulfillment categories. The first category is prophecy. In 1:21, Jesus will save people from sins. In 4:14-16, he will bring light to those in the shadow of darkness (an idiomatic picture of sinfulness). The second is righteousness, which Jesus satisfies (3:15). The third is the law, which is integral to the sermon itself (5:17-20), demanding a surpassing righteousness.

From this, it is evident that the logical progression for Matthew is to introduce the kingdom and immediately establish it via a constitution enforced by the authoritative *egō de legō humin* of the sermon. Within the sermon itself, there is a logical connection to the overall theme of rightness (as a distinct feature of *dikaiosunē*, which will be discussed in full in chapter five) important to Matthew as one of the elements of his *plērōō* motif.

In relationship to the book as a whole, Hagner (1993: 83) points out that the sermon is "fundamentally Jewish". Nonetheless, he admits that there are places that are not typically Jewish. Rather, they reflect the originality of Jesus, which Matthew sees as Jesus reversing the negatively expressed laws into a more positive form. Worth (1997: 1-6) reflects on the possibility that the antitheses of the sermon may, at various times,

reflect “congeniality” with the Talmud. He further encourages the idea that some of Jesus’ contemporaries may have found areas of agreement with their Jewish heritage. As Matthew applies this specifically to the antitheses of the sermon, he puts this into the context of 5:17-20 by emphasizing that Jesus’ goal was to reflect on the original idea of the Law as opposed to what his listeners may have been taught. These contemporary teachings were identified as the traditions of the elders and, for Jesus, stood in direct contrast with the Law (cf. 15:1-9). Matthew contends that if a reader assumes Jesus is affirming the teachings of the Law but does not indicate directly the stance of the opposition, then the only tool available to determine this is the process of elimination. His conclusion, using this method, is the rabbinic, scribal or popular teachings are in Jesus’ sights. (Worth, 1997: 24) Thus, the emphasis is on intent as opposed to ritual obedience (Worth calls it the letter of the law) (cf. 9:13, 12:7). He illustrates by contrasting the legal emphasis on prayer with the pretentious prayers of the Pharisees (23:14) (Worth, 1997: 69).

The emphasis on the law connects Matthew to covenant, which is, of course, Jewish in origin, intent, and nature. This early emphasis on the Jewishness is vital to the defence of the Christological title of 1:1. Readers, Jew or Gentile, must know that the roots are undeniably Jewish. Could this be why Matthew did not identify the Eucharistic cup as new (*kainēs*)? Metzger (1994: 54) rightly notes that there would be no reason to remove it if it were in the original since it is present in Luke. Thus, Matthew knew that the newness of Jeremiah 31 was not a different covenant, new in time, but the original covenant finalized through the blood of the Son rather than the blood of bulls and goats (Hebrews 9:11-14). With the covenant finalized, the Jews could truly be a light to the Gentiles having the good news of the kingdom.

While much more can be said, this should suffice to show that there is a logical progression to and through the sermon to validate Jesus as Matthew’s Christological agent of the covenant kingdom. All that is left for Matthew to do is draw this episode to an end. He does this in what is to become his final call to lower the curtain— *kai Egenetō hotē etelesēn*. The response to the *logous* is amazement in that the authority of the words is evident. The *amazed* response is used three other times by Matthew (13:54, 19:25, 22:33). To what extent were they amazed? Was it enough to convince them to become devoted followers? Nolland (2005: 345) is skeptical and encourages waiting to see if such is the case. Nonetheless, for our author/editor, what is important is that Jesus

has closed the book on this first offering of the logic of discipleship. At this time, response is not the primary issue; Jesus authority is the issue!

How does the Gentile come into play here? Is the sermon exclusive to Israel? After all, Jeremiah's statement about a new covenant was to the house of Israel and Jacob (31:31). To look at an earlier document that Matthew may have known (at least he would know the teaching, especially if he was in Syrian Antioch) is Paul's encouragements to the Colossian church, which although there are Jewish elements, the major emphasis is philosophical and could also point to a Gentile audience (Guthrie, 1990: 567). With this background, Paul establishes what it means to be raised with Christ (3:1-15). A careful comparison will find issues raised by Paul to be present in the sermon such as anger (dealing with the brother in 5:21-26), earthly passion (immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire) (lust in 5:27-32), and words (vows as in 5:33-37). The principles of the sermon are applicable to any culture and under any/all circumstances. Mont Smith (1981: 358-360) describes this as behaviour that is either never like Christ or always like Christ. This is based on the idea that the Gentiles are not as stable in their moral actions as are the Jews. Thus, the laws of Christ are supra cultural, imposing their strict Christ-likeness upon all where they come into conflict with that culture.

Rabbi Cook (2008: 192-208) devotes a chapter to the anti-Jewish stance of Matthew. While this is not the place to offer counter-perspectives to his arguments, there is a section of note that relates to the point here regarding the Jewishness of the first episode. He expresses concern that the final editor's personal orientation may have been influenced by the cultural shift of the Antiochene church. He states that in 66 AD, the Jerusalem church disbanded and the tie between the two churches was severed. The result was a decreasing Jewish element and increasing Gentile. By the mid-80s, the Jewish-Christian element was in jeopardy. Agreeing that this may be true gives greater credence to Matthew's insistence that the Gentile Christian understand the root of their covenant. This is consistent with Paul's teaching in Ephesians 2 when he states that the Gentiles were brought near. They were not brought into. Rather, from both groups, one new humanity came to co-exist *en Christō Iēsou*. More than ever, because the connection with the original church was lost, they needed a constant reminder of their heritage.

Sim (1998: 106-107) concludes that the Hellenists of the Jerusalem church became independent of the Aramaic-Speaking church based on faith in Jesus and conflict over

the law. The result was the Antiochene church and mission to the Gentiles. He further concludes that James opposed the acceptance of the Gentiles, sending emissaries to Antioch. He thinks these to be Christian Jews who want the Gentiles to be circumcised and follow the Torah. Also, he associates these with Paul's "false brothers" in Galatians 2:4 (Sim, 1998: 92-93). However, it would seem that Luke has properly identified these people in Acts 15. The group there that raised issue with the acceptance of Gentiles without following Jewish traditions was a sect of the Pharisees (Acts 15:5). Paul's false brothers in Galatia were brought in secretly (*pareisēlthon*) to lay a trap (*kataskopēsai*). In light of James acceptance of Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15, it hardly seems possible that James could have sent these. Additionally, Peter's withdrawal could have been due to his mission to the Jews. Without thought of the ramification, he sided with his own culture until Paul sets things straight. However, in his conclusion, Sim (1998: 106-107) admits that the church was originally bound more closely to the Judaic church but moved toward the Gentile community. Luke succinctly records that it did start with the Jews only as the object of the preaching but soon went to the Gentiles (Acts 11:29-20). Meier (1985: 34) senses a strain between the Jews and Gentiles reaching into the second generation, with the "Jewish war, the martyrdom of James, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the eventual break with the local synagogue(s)" weakening the stricter Jewish element in the church. By the time of Ignatius and the third generation, the differences between the Jews and Greeks have been displaced by the conflict with Docetism.

It is at this point that Sim (1998: 109-114) raises an important question regarding Matthew's community and formative Judaism. He first identifies two essential components of formative Judaism, which are the Pharisees and their devotion to the study of the Torah. For Sim, these are an integral part of later, formative Judaism. Further, he contends for the Jewishness of Matthew, particularly their unquestionable acceptance of the definitive doctrines of the Jewish religion (1998: 116). Stanton (1993: 138-139) argues for a similar point by noting that Matthew's seemingly anti-Jewish rhetoric demonstrates that he was a recently alienated from Judaism. Further, he will demonstrate that "in *redactional* (author's emphasis) passages, there are phraseology and theological motifs that look like the work of someone steeped in Scripture and in contemporary Judaism" (Stanton, 1993: 135). Accepting this, this work contends that his familiarity with Judaism benefits his emphasis of the true Judaic motifs for the Gentiles in his community. They needed to know their religious heritage. Matthew supplies this within a form comfortable to them and beneficial to his purpose.

### 3.5.3.2 The *Plērōō* Statements in Episode 1—Kingdom Constitution

It is within the Stasimon that Matthew introduces his next *plērōō* statement. Matthew's Jesus anticipates that his "but I say to you statements" could be misinterpreted (Davies and Allison, 1988: 481; Nolland, 2005: 217). Thus, he declares his mission of satisfying the law and the prophets, with expectation that his disciples will do the same. Morris (1992: 107) understands the significance of this expression meaning that his origin is from God, pointing to a realization of his mission. "Jesus had a special place and a special function, and that was not concerned with abolishing the law" (Morris, 1992: 107) or even presenting a rival system (Walvoord, Zuck and Seminary, 1985). Gundry (1982: 78) sees this statement as the first of two (7:12 being the second) that indicates that law and the prophets make up the body of the sermon. Viljoen (2011: 394-395) asserts a strategic use of the *ēlthon*-word as the indication that Jesus was aware that his mission was a divine initiative. He will serve as lawgiver not law destroyer (*katalusai*). Thus, his coming puts "the law and the prophets in context of the mission of Jesus". This context indicates an alignment of the centres of the OT faith and the Christian faith as realized in Jesus. There is an emphasis placed on *plērōōsai* by the use of the double negative accusation *ouk ēlthon katalusai*. The fulfilment concept cannot be understood apart from the dismissal of the destroyer accusation. Viljoen (2011: 394) points out that "abolish" stands in contradiction to "fulfil". He did not come to merely confirm or enforce the law. Regarding the abolish/fulfil idea, Luz (2007: 214-215) suggests that they can relate to either Jesus' life or teaching. If the former, Jesus' fulfilment is in his obedience to the law or, regarding the efficiency of his death/resurrection, he "brought it to its goal and end". If the latter, two questions are raised by Luz. First, if Jesus did not intend to change the law, *plērōō* means to articulate it perfectly. On the other hand, if his intent is to change the law, then *plērōō* must mean either to add what is missing or to finish it perfectly. In the final chapter, an attempt will be made to draw a conclusion as immediate context of the sermon and to Matthew's work in totality, especially within our covenant, Christology, and kingdom context.

### 3.5.4 Episode Two—the Logic of the Apostolic Commission

Thus, the next natural step is to encourage the response to Jesus as one who speaks with authority. This is, in essence, the kingdom mission. As in the opening episode, Jesus immediately demonstrates his right to speak as he has by performing miracles. First,

there are healings (8:1-17)—a leper, centurion, and generally “others” among whom is Peter’s mother in law. Finally, almost in desperation, he states “many”. Davies and Allison (1988: 258) provide an excellent discussion regarding the number of miracles recorded by Matthew. These displays continue with intermittent dialog through 9:35 where the summary implies the authority of Jesus. Here, they must ask Jesus for help because there is so much work. Matthew, using his own construct of Isaiah 53:4 (Hagner, 1993: 208), seems to validate Jesus’ miracles as messianic in intent. Early Christians saw this as a pointing to the messianic atonement for sin (Blomberg, 2001: 144).

The dialogues, as with the miracles, defend Matthew’s thesis. There are seven distinct teaching dialogs that build up to the first Great Commission given by Jesus (10:5ff). This commission is not given to the centurion but to his followers after hearing the testimony of faith of a non-Israelite (8:10-12). Blomberg (2001: 142) notes that *akoloutheō* is the verb of discipleship and can be either of religious or non-religious significance. If used in the NT in a religious context, it is “strictly limited to discipleship of Christ” (Kittel, 1964: 213; also, n. 23). In the context of this episode, discipleship is limited to the lost house of Israel and oddly, is introduced by the recognition of the faith of a gentile. Jesus’ response to the Centurion is two-fold. First, it is a criticism of the weakness of faith in Israel. But, is this fair? Was there little faith? Nolland (2005: 365) may have the right idea on this as Israel is viewed from a salvation-historical perspective. It is expected to find a faith in Israel that recognizes and responds to what God began in Jesus. While his mission may have been to Israel, this does not exclude the ultimate call to those not of the covenant. This is because the primary intent of the response was covenantal in the context of the eschatological banquet. At this great feast, Jew and Gentile will gather. The context is not salvific; Matthew merely allows for the inclusion of the Gentiles at the gathering of Israel’s dispersed (Nolland, 2005: 357). This echoes many OT texts regarding an eschatological gathering (Is. 2:3; 19:18–25; 66:18–21; Je. 3:17; Is. 45:22). In 15:24-26, Gentile participation is pictured in a less complementary way in that they will only receive crumbs from the master’s table. While this would be a banquet in comparison to having nothing (separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world [Eph 2:12]), it does not reflect the benevolence of 8:11.

The next dialog includes Matthew's first use of the title "Son of Man". Cook (2008: xxii) holds that this reference is to his humanity. Harrington (1991: 119) contends though that it is not generic to humanity here, but is specific to the lifestyle that he and his followers will encounter. For Nolland (2005: 366), it is an Aramaic idiom that relegates some importance to him that would recognize the scribes' affirmation that he is a *didaskale*. Morris (1992: 201) divides Matthew's use of the designation "Son of Man" into three categories: 1) Jesus' earthly mission (8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:8; 13:37; 16:13; 18:11 [if this verse is authentic]), 2) rejection and suffering (12:40; 17:9, 12, 22; 20:18, 28; 26:2, 24 [twice], 45), and future glory (10:23; 12:32; 13:41; 16:27, 28; 19:28; 24:27, 30 [twice], 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:64). Cook (2008: xxii) echoes the last of the three but concludes that this could not be applied to Jesus.

After this portrayal of discipleship is given and the disciples' faith questioned, Jesus confronts the demons and heals a paralytic (8:23-9:8). Within the context of the latter, he speaks again of the Son of Man. This time, it is not restricted to human condition. Rather, this time he equates himself with God by forgiving sins. The accusation of blasphemy (*blasphēmei*) by the scribes validates this. In the Misnah, blasphemy would be only when the name of God is pronounced (Morris, 1992: 215). However, in the NT, "blasphemy is controlled throughout by the thought of violation of the power and majesty of God" (Beyer, 1964: 622). This builds on the last discourse, redefining a contemporary idea of messiah to an anointed who has the very power of God. This entitlement is why he was able to criticize Israel's faith in him.

The series of events and discourses from 1:1 to this point sets up the initial conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. It is at this juncture that Jesus' authority takes a new turn. Up to this point, it has been the authority to fully satisfy the law, heal the sick, and forgive sins. Now, Jesus' authority extends to the right to demand the exercise of mercy over temple ritual, as understood in the OT. This is appropriately placed after he forgives the sins of the paralytic and proves his right to do so (Gundry, 1982: 165-166). The setting is a meal that Jesus ate with sinners and tax collectors. This was an issue of ritual purity (Harrington, 1991: 128). Jesus' response was driven by the addition made to the LXX version of Hosea 6:6. The pious would invite scholars to dinner (Keener, 1999: 293) of which Hagner (1993: 240) would include the Pharisees and not the sinners. However, the literal implication is that they should know what is right and all they need to get there is to reset the *chesed* nature of covenant back into their ritual. Driven by a desire to follow the law to the letter (Matthew's jot and tittle (5:18)), these

religious leaders who hold the seat of authority (23:2-3) have forgotten that mercy (the LXX equivalent to *chesed*, which is characteristic of God's covenant nature) is at the heart of ritual sacrifices.

This is evident in an OT formula statement regarding the nature of God. It is stated on three separate, but important occasions in Jewish history. This formula declares that God keeps covenant and lovingkindness (Heb., *shmrē-brithu-e-chsd*; Gk. *phulasson diatheken kai eleos*). The first is in Deuteronomy 7:9, 12. This post-exilic recollection reminds the people of the Mosaic covenant God made with their ancestors. It was imperative at this crucial time to state the nature of the God making the demands of the law. The second is at the dedication of the first temple (1 Kings 8:23; 2 Chronicles 6:14), which was a permanent dwelling for the ark of the covenant. The third time is a post-exilic episode recorded in Nehemiah where the same declaration is made on two separate occasions. First, Nehemiah declares this as God's nature after hearing of the state of affairs in Jerusalem (1:5). This is his reassurance of God's abiding nature. Next, he makes the same declaration to the remnant that is in Jerusalem after the walls have been rebuilt and the law read (9:32). It is this formula that gives the most basic nature of God and would have been an appropriate statement following the declaration to Moses that God is the great "I AM". The formulary of *brithu-e-chsd* is behind Jesus' declaration of the prominence of mercy.

It must be understood that Jesus is not doing away with sacrifices. This is not his intention. Rather, he is using "a Semitic idiom for 'more Y than X.'" Hosea did not abolish the sacrificial cult but graphically emphasized the priority of interpersonal relationships over religious ritual (Blomberg, 2001: 157). Jesus is anticipating the same.

The next dialog is an indirect conflict with the Pharisees raised by the disciples of John. This one involves fasting. What should be obvious to Matthew's readers is that Jesus is not a traditional teacher. His authority has already been declared as greater than the scribes (7:29). He is healing, controlling demons, and challenging the Pharisees. His response puts him counter to the Pharisees as he is the new, they the old. Walvoord and Zuck of Dallas Theological Seminary (1985) anticipate Jesus is leading a group out of Judaism. Their hermeneutics are driven by a prejudiced view of the church in a supersessionist role. This is foreign to Matthew's thinking as the newness is driven by the joy of the bridegroom's presence that has just restored mercy back into ritual service. Nolland (2005: 391) states it more diplomatically: "Possibly there is an

overtone here of the new situation as having freshly arrived versus the old situation which had gone on for a considerable period”. Yet, this is still comparing Jesus to the Pharisees. Blomberg (2001: 159) stresses the contemporary application which is closer to Jesus’ intentions. This dialog is about joy. It is about a realization that God is with us (*meta humōn ho Theos* (1:23)). Shortly after saying this to his followers, he performs a miracle of true joy, the raising of the dead.

As a summary verse, 9:35 characterizes Jesus’ mission as teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing all types of disease and sickness. In a state of compassion, overwhelmed by the lostness (sheep without a shepherd), Jesus seemingly in desperation proclaims that there are just not enough people to do the work. He is saying, “I cannot do this by myself”. This sets up his final dialog that serves as the ordination service for his disciples. Hagner (1993: 269-270) gives an excellent description of the structure that need not be repeated here. For our purpose, what is important is that Jesus delegates a specific number (twelve) to whom is given “authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness” (10:1).

The language used in the Gospels is consistent, demonstrating what may be a formalization of the tradition by the time each of the Gospels was written. Mark 3:14 states that Jesus appointed twelve that he named apostles. Luke has a calling and a naming, while Matthew simply states their names. Key to this is the consistent use of the word group *onoma* (“name”), which includes the verb *onomadzō* (“to call, name”), the verb *epanomadzō* (“call by a name, give a surname”), and the adjective *pseudōnymos* (“bearing a false name”) (Bietenhard, 1989-2001). Additionally, Bietenhard remarks that almost without exception, the idea of “name” is connected to the person. Knowing the name gives one the right to exert power over it.

This designation (naming) given by Jesus takes them from the state of disciple (*mathētēs*, learner, pupil, disciple) to that of emissary/ambassador under the control of Jesus. It is within this context that the second (authority) and third elements (message) are to be understood. It is not the authority and message of the apostles. Rather, it is the message of Jesus via the line of authority, starting with the Twelve selected by Jesus for his designated purpose.

After the naming and the giving of instructions (*parangellō* as opposed to *diatassōn* in 11:1), he apostles them (*apostellō*; used again in 10:16). This is the verb form of the noun that is anglicised to represent the apostles. This term is significant. In secular Greek, there are two terms used to designate the idea of sending: *apostellō* and *pempō*. These two verbs are used similarly with sending of persons and things. However, there is a discernible difference between them. *Pempō* holds the idea of merely sending, whereas *apostellō* is used for sending a commissioned person. In some cases, it is used to denote a divine sending and authorization (Kruse, 1992: 27). The significance of this term is in the authorization. Lindner (1989-2001) informs us that the envoy (messenger) has full powers in that he represents the sender. In this, a close partnership is established. *Pempō* (to send) is the more common in secular Greek and stresses the fact of sending. Stoicism adds a religious significances in that the envoy was sent by Zeus. From this, *apostellō* acquires a technical sense, denoting divine authorization.

Much has been made of the structural logic of this episode because it is pivotal to Matthew's drama. The Prologue, Parados, and episode one demand a response to the question, "What right did Jesus have to instruct the people, especially when it runs counter to the traditions of their contemporary leaders"? Matthew answers by having Jesus give several demonstrations of authority, each one raising the bar until he is in a position to command (*diatassōn*) his followers to go on a mission assuming that Israel was lost and needed their message. Additionally, he gives them similar authority to what he has demonstrated. In light of the prophecy about being taken away (this is a euphemism for death in the story of the joyful wedding) and the upcoming events and explanative Stasimon of the next chapter when Jesus' promise to build his own church, it is imperative that he put in order (*diatassōn*) what is necessary before he is taken away.

#### **3.5.4.1 Matthew's (Choral) Response**

Matthew's response (Stasimon) is designed to define the meaning of discipleship (10:24-42). This is repeated in a succinct fashion in 16:24-26, after his passion prediction of 16:21. While it is the goal of the student to aspire to be like their teacher (Keener, 1999: 325), Matthew's use indicates that the teacher is always superior as marked by the disciple's allegiance to the master. This is a socially acceptable (Nolland, 2005: 433-434). While on Jesus' lips, like the Sermon on the Mount, this is an edited

addition by Matthew, which qualifies this as the choral response to Jesus' teachings (Nolland, 2005: 422-466; Wagner, 1993: 281-295)

Matthew has laid out the kingdom mission and responded to it by defining discipleship as being like the master and receiving the same recompense (good or bad) that the master will receive. He ends the episode with a time marker that has a different object. The object here is *diatassōn*, which is more appropriate than *logous*. The transition begins in 7:28-29 where Matthew equates *didachē* to *λόγους*, indicating that the term is more expansive for Matthew than merely words. The words have to be collective logic, which is what teaching is to be. The time stamp for this episode is in 11:1, with Jesus finishing the *diatassōn*. This word generally designates orderly arrangement or to instigate action that advances one's objective. This is frequently in an official capacity (Arndt, Danker and Bauer, 2000: 237). Nolland's (2005: 446) textual notes for 11:1 note that *τοὺς logous toutous* was added in (aur) b ff<sup>lc</sup> vg<sup>mss</sup>. While not original, it does indicate a connection with the *logous* concept.

This term is distinct from *didāskō*, which is the more common word for teaching in Matthew who uses it fourteen times in thirteen verses. Whereas *diatassōn* is used only here. Thus, Matthew changes here to enhance his argument regarding the authority of Jesus. Use in the Septuagint is rare. The idea of ordering is found in Wisdom 11:20 where God has ordered everything in nature by measure, number and weight. Additionally, it holds the idea of arrange (2 Ch. 5:11), draw up troops (Judith 2:16; 2 Maccabees. 5:3; 12:20; 14:22; 3 Maccabees. 5:44), allot, such as to ration (1 Kings 11:18; Daniel 1:5), determine (Ezekiel 21:24; 44:8), and measure (Ezekiel 42:20). In the middle voice, it is used with the idea of determine (1 Samuel 13:11) and command (4 Macc. 8:3). In the NT, it is used only by Matthew and Luke (3:13, 8:55, 17:9-10). In Acts four of the five times it is used, it holds the idea of an official action (7:44, 18:2, 23:31, 24:23) (Delling, 1964: 34). Paul's usage favours the idea of divine action (1 Corinthians 9:14; Galatians 3:19). The Galatians passage is translated ordain in the NAS95, RSV, NRSV, and the ASV (1901). Delling (1964: 35) emphasizes that the Torah was "ordained" or "decreed", by angels, using Moses as the medium through whom it was given to the Israelites. Arndt, Danker and Bauer (2000: 237) agrees with Delling adding that the word *diatassō* holds the more formal idea of ordering, arranging, or giving detailed.

The idea of order, arrangement, etc. is certainly logical in context, making this an appropriate word to fit both the context and Matthew's overall design of demonstrating that Jesus is the Christ. When considered with the fact that later manuscripts used the *tous logous*, there is a sense of some certainty that this work is used synonymously with *logos*, maintaining his literary divisions of Matthew concluding his arguments based on Jesus' teachings in this episode.

#### **3.5.4.2 The *Plērōō* Statements in Episode 2—the Apostolic Commission**

As noted at the beginning of Episode 2, miracles play a significant part in this section of the drama. Tucked away in the middle of miracles, Matthew introduces the idea that what Jesus is doing somehow connects Jesus to the Isaiah 53 suffering servant. Like 4:14, this one is linked to a generalized statement about healing (Nolland, 2005: 361). Hagner (1993: 210) sees this as part of the summary statement of 8:16. Gundry (1982: 149-150) agrees that this is a summary based on Matthew's use of *hopōs*. Further, he also connects this with Jesus' salvific work. If this proposal, which seems plausible, is accepted, then this becomes messianic in context. As discussed in the next episode, the Davidic ideal is linked to the miracles, specifically healing.

#### **3.5.5 Episode Three—the Logic of the Parables**

The question of authority has driven Matthew's plot to this point. However, in Episode three, there is a dramatic shift in the plot and character development. The scenes move from doing to saying. This episode brings the reader into the word battles that now help Matthew establish further his Jesus as the messiah of the seed of David and Abraham. This leads to the next literary marker controlled by *parabolē*.

What stands out most in episode three is obvious by its scarcity—healing. In episode one there is a general statement of healing. Jesus heals those suffering with various diseases, as well as demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics (Mt 4:24). Episode two witnesses an increase in the number of healing events. Matthew records healings five times (8:1-17; 8:23-9:8; 9:18-33, 27-33, 35-36). Why would Matthew record the increase of miracles of healing? Sanders (1985: 157) maintains that miracles and sinners are intimately tied to Jesus' view of the kingdom and of his mission. While Sanders thinks it is erroneous that exorcisms are a sign of the kingdom, Barber (Barber, 2007) does not. He concludes that exorcisms and healings are a Davidic ideal that is confirmed

by the term Son of David being applied to him when people appeal for healing (Matt 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30). It is noteworthy that there is a “Son of David” reference in Episodes two through five. This would indicate that it is vital to Matthew’s plot that this idea be stressed in several, consecutive episodes. As a side note, this phrase is used in three contexts in Matthew. In chapter 1, it is used to tie the historical Jesus to the line of David (1:1, 20). In chapters 9 (episode 2), 12 (episode 3), 15 (episode 4), and 20 (episode 5), it is used in association with healing. The grand finale for this phrase is used to indicate Jesus’ messianic position in the Triumphal Entry (21:9, 15) and Jesus’ final verbal conflict with the Pharisees (22:42) that leads Matthew to conclude, “No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question” (22:46).

However, the shift in the current episode reveals a reversal from emphasis on the display of authority to conflict. There are five separate conflicts recorded by Matthew. Looking back, in the Parados, there are only two (John the Baptist, the religious leaders, and the celestial battle for kingdom control between Jesus and Satan). Episode one is void of conflict with Matthew giving only a quick preview of Jesus’ kingdom activity with a call of disciples (4:18-22) and kingdom work of teaching (*didāskōn*), preaching (*kērussōn*), and healing (*therapeuōn*) (5:23-25). This is followed by Matthew’s summary (Stasimon) of the kingdom constitution (“Sermon” of 5:1-27). Conflict would have been out of place in this episode as Matthew intended for Jesus to appear, giving full emphasis on kingdom business.

Jesus’ bold move to posture himself in a position of authority demands a reaction. In episode two, this takes the form of two assaults that draw into question his conduct (eating with sinners and casting out demons). The first assault is not made directly to Jesus but through his followers (9:10-13). The second is set in the context of an overheard conversation (9:34). The Pharisees are the ones speaking but to whom were they speaking? Nolland’s (2005: 404) suggestion is plausible. They were probably addressing the crowd, as this is part of their operating procedure to keep their control. Now, it appears as if the Pharisees strategy is to attack Jesus at what may be his weakest point—his new following. How does Jesus respond? He responds powerfully and decisively by performing miracles. This appears to be the primary component of the second episode. Even Matthew’s Stasimon involves this dynamic as the summary of kingdom activity (Jesus ordaining and commissioning his disciples) revolves around “And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ ‘Heal the sick,

raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons” (10:7-8). The form of this commissioning formula (*poreuomenoi* [pres mid part] *de kērussete* [2nd per pl, aor act imp]) is repeated in the commission to the *tā ethnā* of 28:19 (*poreuthētes* [aor pass part] *oun mathēteusate* [2nd per pl, aor act imp]). The aorist passive participle of 28:19 carries a similar sense as the present middle of 10:7 (Blass and Debrunner, 1961: 165; Wallace, 1996: 440; Robertson, 1919: 808) signifying the personal commitment of the ones going. However, in that commission, the intent is worldwide discipling.

When the third episode opens, the emphasis is reversed with the greater number of references being to conflict rather than healing. The episode opens with Jesus questioned by John’s disciples. This conflict sets up Jesus’ confirmation of John’s purpose as the forerunner. He does this by recounting the ministry activity in which Jesus has been involved. In this, “*the* blind receive sight and *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised up, and *the* poor have the gospel preached to them” (11:5). Jesus then praises John as having no equal among those born of women. Yet, anyone in the kingdom is greater than John (11:11).

After denouncing the cities in which miracles were shown but not believed, Matthew records two healing events, both of which incite debates between Jesus and the Pharisees. Before the first miracle/conflict scenario, Matthew records the first of two issues, which is working on the Sabbath. The second conflict is prompted by the first miracle of this episode (12:8-14). This follows his statement regarding his relationship to the Sabbath in correlation to the title Son of Man. Matthew uses this title to make a strong Christological emphasis as he is about to defend further Jesus’ messianic claim (Morris, 1992: 304). Campbell (2008: 72) suggests that the early confession of Jesus as Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3) takes Jesus beyond Lord of the Sabbath. He appropriately remarks, “The Sabbath, as a creation ordinance, is of perpetual significance; and in Christ we have the incarnate King, the God of the Old Testament who gave Sinai’s law to his people and the Sabbath rest to man, now among us, exercising the authority that is his alone”. Sabbath issues were of particular importance to the Pharisees. This debate puts Jesus directly in the middle by his declaration that his authority empowers him over even the Sabbath. Additionally, it was God who gave man the Sabbath rest. It is only fitting that the Son of God maintains his control over this ritually vital event (Campbell, 2008: 72).

At this point, Matthew's next conflict goes off stage as "the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, *as to* how they might destroy Him" (12:14). Nolland (2005: 489) notes that the displeasure of the Pharisees shifts from Jesus as healer to Jesus as teacher. The word used by Matthew (*apolesōsin*) does not have to mean kill. In classical Greek, there are multiple ideas conveyed by this word. It usually involves injury (of a violent nature), destruction or death (Hahn, 1999). Blomberg (2001: 198–199) contends that the word means arrest, which leads to the legal proceedings. This same idea is carried into the NT. The sense of kill is found only in Matthew 2:13; 27:20. Matthew's use may rely on the imprecision of *apolesōsin*. After all, people are "destroyed" in various ways (Nolland, 2005: 489). Additionally, supporting the contention that this word does not mean kill is that the Pharisees are not listed in Matthew's (or the other Gospels) statements regarding the groups who plan to kill Jesus. Scribes, who were often with the Pharisees, are mentioned. However, as a group, the Pharisees are never mentioned as participating directly in the death of Jesus.

In his first mention of his death, only the elders, chief priests and scribes are mentioned (16:21). Next, in 17:22-23, the reference is to the hands of men (*anthrōpōn*). Luke 9:44 has the same wording and Mark (9:31) simply says "they". Again, in 26:3-4, only the chief priests and elders are mentioned. It is only in 21:42 that Matthew implies the participation of the Pharisees in the death of Jesus. Blomberg (2001: 325) see this in reference to the last parable (the Landowner, as he does not call the cornerstone a parable). However, the *parabolās* is plural. Morris (1992: 545) states that Matthew is primarily referencing the two just recorded. Nolland (2005: 880) states, "Matthew is concerned to give them a firm place in the Jerusalem climax of Jesus' ministry". The contentions is that, in light of what has been seen and will be seen about Jesus and the law, the Pharisees are left out purposely. The reason would be that they are Matthew's (and the rest of the Gospel's) representatives of the law. At the writing of the gospels, the tensions between the Jews and Christians need not be strained by the inclusion of the most respected leaders of post-70 Judaism.

The second healing (12:22-29) is also set in a conflict context. The Pharisees debate with Jesus over the source of his authority over demons. Within this context, Matthew uses the title Son of David for the fourth time (1:1, 20, 9:27). Kingsbury (1976: 592) has concluded that this title is tied to the earthly Jesus because it is never used with his death and resurrection and it is never on the lips of the Apostles. This time, as in 9:27, it is on the lips of the people. This would offer credence to Barber's (2007) conclusions

that the popular expectation of the people was the restoration of the Davidic kingdom ideal of healing and exorcism. The emphasis of both is on the historical Jesus, not the divine. Here, his messianic nature is in view.

The crowds were amazed at this display. Was the reaction of the Pharisees to the crowd because they felt they were losing their following to Jesus? Hendricksen and Kistemaker (1953-2001: 524) would agree. They contend that their motive was envy and fear of lost of their following. Blomberg (2001: 201) points out that the Pharisees do not reject the genuineness of the miracle but credited his power to the devil as the source of the power. This charge by the Jews was a common practice into the early centuries of the church. For this reason, Jesus was branded a sorcerer and was worthy of death. This charge against the source of his power over demons prompts the teaching of regarding an unpardonable sin.

The final conflict is recorded in 12:38. This conflict takes a different approach, testing Jesus by requesting a sign. This request is not for another miracle, but for compelling proof (Hagner, 1993: 353). In 16:1, the sign is qualified by the phrase “*ek tou ouranou*”. Both are a request for a miracle with divine significance, showing beyond the shadow of a doubt that God is with him (Morris, 1992: 413). Nolland (2005: 510) remarks that there is irony in this request in that the exorcisms are directly against Satan and not subject to the ambiguity as a sign may be.

Matthew closes the episode by referencing Jesus’ elevation of his relationship to kingdom participants by indicating that blood ties are no longer the connection as they had been in ancient Judaism. Now, relationship is determined not by physical birth but by kingdom activity. The episode closes and the chorus is ready to speak. Matthew will summarize the intent of this episode by Jesus’ hidden message of the kingdom—parables.

#### **3.5.5.1 Matthew’s (Choral) Response**

Matthew’s Stasimon is a collection of parables that represent a new strategy used by Jesus (Nolland, 2005: 533; Hagner, 199: 366). These are put on the lips of Jesus who uses them to set the twelve against the crowds of 12:46-50 (Newman and Stine, 1992: 406). They have the special place of being privy to the kingdom mysteries (13:11). Using this method not only satisfies prophecy (13:35) but elevates the twelve in

anticipation of the later role they will play in the church. In this, Jesus both reveals and conceals (Blomberg, 2001: 215). However, above all this, the Stasimon is designed to draw together the master of Jesus' logic into a concise form. In essence, Jesus here will use a common tool to give the religious leaders a sign that they themselves may not be able to interpret. Young (1998: 3) calls parables "miniature plays". They create drama by bringing together theological reality with everyday illustrations. He states, "The rabbinic parable illustrates its point by redescribing, in drama, the nature of God and human responses to his love" (Young, 1998: 3). Thus, Matthew culminates the verbal conflicts of this episode with Jesus' ultimate rabbinic logic by "hiding" his message and nature in rabbinic-like stories that contain the very essence of his kingdom. Six times, Jesus will use one of two forms of *homoios*. In 13:24, he used the 3<sup>rd</sup> per sing, aor act ind to tell the the apostles to compare the kingdom of heaven to something. In the last five, *homoios* is used in the adjectival form with kingdom of heaven and *estin*, giving the formula "kingdom of heaven is like..."

Jesus here is using a form of rabbinic teaching to validate his kingdom authority. Jeremias (1972: 13), Hunter (1960: 8-9), and Young (1998: 4) agree that Jesus' parables shared common threads with this rabbinic device. Jeremias (1972: 13) states that the only known antecedent in rabbinic literature before Jesus is from Rabbi Hillel (c. 20 BC) and these are in the form of similes. He holds that the first parable is not found until AD 80 in the sayings of Rabban Jochanan ben Zakkai and it resembles Jesus' parables. He asks whether Jesus formed the model later used by the rabbis. Additionally, Jeremias (1972: 188) makes a comparison of Jesus' parable of the wedding garment and a Palestinian theologian of the late first century.

McArthur and Johnston (1990: 9-10) confirms this, noting that with some degree of reliability, 325 parables can be found in the Tannaitic period (early Christian period to roughly 220 AD). Hunter (1960: 8-9) insists that while *parabolē* is Greek, the antecedents must be found not in the Greek orators but the OT prophets and Jewish Fathers. He comments that in would have been in the synagogues that Jesus first heard them used. Young's (1998: 4) emphasis is the combination of religious heritage and cultural experience. Hultgren (2000: 6) points out that parables used by both Jesus and the rabbinic writers have similarities such as an introduction ("to what shall we compare" or "it is like"). However, it is Dodd (1961: 9-10) who may reveal the intent of Matthew's Stasimon. He states that parables, true to nature and life, especially in respect to the kingdom parables, create an inward affinity between the natural and the spiritual

so that the intrinsic nature of the kingdom is known by its comparison with the natural. This intrinsic nature demands participation by the ones involved. Thus, *parabolē* becomes a conceptual equivalent of *logos* in light of the fact that Jesus uses concepts of logic in his explanation of why he uses parables. He puts these in couplets of hearing/understanding and seeing/perceiving. Jesus is building his case for discipleship, for those who could understand. Thus, it is a reasoning process and is a logical choice as the controlling word for the literary marker of episode three.

### **3.5.5.2 The *Plērōō* Statements in Episode 3—the Parables**

In a scene dominated by mystery, Matthew introduces a *plērōō* section with intentionality toward the Gentiles. This is placed after the Pharisees went out to make a plan to destroy Jesus. With this movement of the Pharisees, Matthew introduces for the first time the passion of Jesus because the schisms in Israel cannot be healed (Luz, 2001: 188). This passage widens the mission of Jesus (Nolland, 2005: 490) and is a pretense for the commission of 28:18–20.

Keeping pace with this widening of his mission field, Jesus teaches the crowds (13:1) in parables. When his disciples asked why, he responded with a quotation from Isaiah. The setting for the original quote is the same as when Jesus used it—the hard heartedness of Israel (Hughes and Laney, 2001: 408). As noted above, hearing/understanding and seeing/perceiving indicates a reasoning process and is what Jesus expects from one who would be his follower. This principle is reinforced in 13:35 with a quote from Psalm 78:2. Mounce (1991: 132) thinks this is a summary statement about teaching the crowds in parables. Luz (2001: 265-266), however, thinks this to be transitional from parables spoken to the crowds to the private setting with only his apostles. Blomberg (2001: 221) would seem to agree because, as he contends, 34b does not refer to Jesus teaching in parables. There is great messianic impact by the fact that Jesus' teachings would forcefully (Morris, 1992: 354 n. 89) reveal that which has been hidden since the foundation of the world. Again, Pauline theology can be seen in Matthew (Ephesians 1:4).

### **3.5.6 Episode Four—the Logic of the New Synagogue**

Episode 3 provides a major shift in emphasis for Matthew's drama. Jesus' ministry has made an inward turn with more emphasis on his disciples. This resulted from the

commissioning of episode two. Matthew's Stasimon lays stress on both the mystery and the responsibility of the disciple. Because of this shift in Jesus' rabbinic-style logic in episode three, it necessitates the possibility that there may be need for a new classification for his followers that identifies them as participants in the kingdom mysteries. No longer will the current Jewish system (the traditions of the elders) satisfy this need. This theme is picked up in episode 4 where Jesus announces that he will build a new synagogue (*ekklesia*) (16:18).

Before making this announcement, Matthew must heighten the drama. He does this as in the previous episodes with healings and conflict. However, something new is added in this episode—miracles other than healing. Morris (1992: 180, n. 77) notes that the word *dunamis*, used twelve times by Matthew, is the usual word for a miracle in the Synoptic Gospels. Of this twelve, six (11:20, 21, 23; 13:54; 13:58; 14:2) refer to miracles actually performed by Jesus. These are references only, with no description of what he did. The first mention of what Matthew and the Synoptics would classify as a miracle performed by Jesus is found in 8:23 when Jesus calmed the storm. It is just a passing remark by Matthew, almost without significance. It is nestled between two healings which take front stage. After a brief note on the death of John, Matthew gives two dramatic events, back to back, that elevates Jesus claim to divinity by demonstrating control over nature. From 14:13 to 16:12, these events are recorded in the form of a couplet of miracle/healing and then conflict. Later in the episode, there is another healing/miracle couplet (Healing, 17:14-21; Miracle, 17:24-27).

To set the stage for Jesus' introduction of his new assembly, Matthew records the miracles first (two; feeding the 5,000 [14:13-21] and walking on water [14:22-33]) and then a general statement of healing ("brought to Him all who were sick", 14:35). This was followed by a conflict regarding purity and the traditions of the elders (15:2). Hagner (1995: 415) notes that the miracles sharpen the question regarding Jesus' power and identity with special emphasis on the feeding miracle as having "unmistakable messianic implications". Keener (1999: 402) and Blomberg (2001: 233) find the same Messianic implications. However, Nolland (2005: 594) ties the feeding of the five thousand only to historical Israel, indicating no messianic implications. Morris (1992: 379-380) connects this miracle to the twelve apostles. For Hagner (1995: 419), the implication is that of messianic provision. Including the later feeding (the four thousand recorded in 15:32-39), he compares this to the messianic table of 8:11 (future eschaton) and the historical provision of manna in the wilderness, as this setting is also in the

wild. Additionally, the twelve baskets suggest that this miracle belongs to Israel, whereas the feeding of the four thousand points to the Gentiles. Matthew sustains this by the fact that the first feeding had twelve baskets remaining, while the second feeding had seven, which is the number of perfection. Additionally, the satisfaction of all present (15:37) has eschatological overtones (Hagner, 1995: 452).

The second reverses the miracle/healing with a specific instance (daughter of the Canaanite woman, which is a Son of David reference [15:21-28] and a general healing (large crowds [15:30])). This is followed by the feeding the four thousand (15:32-39). After this, Matthew reports the second request from the Pharisees (joined by the Sadducees) for a sign.

Matthew uses this series of dramatic interactions to prompt Jesus' question regarding public opinion of the Son of Man. The way the question is asked, Son of Man need not refer to Jesus. Marshall (1992: 775) notes that the phrase "the Son of man" (*ho huios tou anthrōpou*) is used more frequently than any other title to refer to Jesus in the Gospels. In the parallel passages (Mark 8:27; Luke 9:18), Jesus asks what the people think of him. Matthew's version makes the statement ambiguous. Was Jesus looking for a contemporary view of Daniel 7:13? Peter did not think so. He made it personal: "*Su ei ho Christos ho huios tou theou tou zōntos*" (16:16). This revelation (*apokalupsen*) of God to Peter (16:17) provided Jesus the proper foundation for the building of an elite assembly. Using Shem Tov's Hebrew Matthew (written in 1380 CE, revised in 1385 & 1400) as found in Howard's (1995: 78-81) version of the Even Bohan Hebrew text, the expression used by Jesus in 16:18, translated by *ekklesia* in the Greek NT, is the same as the expression used to reference the temple as a house of prayer in 21:13. However, for our use here, this is noteworthy in describing Jesus as building his own temple. Matthew only refers to John's direct statement that Jesus body was a temple that was confused with the brick and mortar temple of their day (26:61; 27:40; cf. John 2:19). When this is understood in light of the Pauline reference to the church as the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18, 24; cf. Ephesians 2:19-22), it is natural for the Matthean community to understand Jesus' statement that he was building a new synagogue (universal assembly of his disciples). Nolland (2005: 667) questions whether Jesus anticipated the church as separate from Israel. Nolland further maintains that Jesus' idea of church would not identify with separatist like the Qumran community. He is correct here as Jesus is building on the Jewish heritage to bring a new quality to the synagogue, making it a true house of prayer by his own presence and nature.

The continuing ministry of teaching reinforced by miraculous powers (13:54; this is the word *dunamis*) set the stage for this episode. Special Christological emphasis (the miracles and the Transformation of chapter 17) reinforce Jesus' right to build his new assembly. It is now that Jesus twice introduces his impending confrontation with the religious leaders in Jerusalem. The first is in 16:21. Here, Matthew uses his second formulary (*apo tote*) that positions Jesus for the ultimate culmination of Matthew's proof that Jesus is the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham. Skilfully, Matthew shifts the direction of the drama setting into motion with the *terminus ad quem* of 16:21. Matthew uses *apo tote* (16:21) with the qualifier *ērxatō* to set up what would seem to be the inevitable consequence of his conflict with the religious leaders—his death.

### **3.5.6.1 Matthew's (Choral) Response**

Closing the episode in this way leads to the Stasimon of episode 4. Set in the context of a question, Matthew gives a summary statement, "treating a variety of aspects of life in the church" (Hagner, 1995: 516). Gundry (1982: 358) agrees, contending that these represent scattered blocks of tradition compiled by Matthew. However, Blomberg (2001: 270) may have the best perspective as these issues identify the implications of Jesus' impending death. Thus, they are the natural outcome of a group of disciples who have just been told that they would soon be leaderless. Understanding that they were being left with the responsibility of the kingdom mission, they (Matthew's church?) discuss some vital issues. The first is regarding leadership (who is greatest) and the second is community relationship (forgiveness). These are vital issues for status-conscious Mediterranean Judaism (Keener, 1999: 447). Stanton (1993: 98-99), drawing on the studies of Lewis Coser, applies the social conflict theory to his comparison of the Damascus Document and the Gospel of Matthew. However, the principle of close relationships that he uses is appropriate to the Stasimon of episode four. Just as the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees grew as they encounter each other more, so the conflict of closer relationships will come to bear on the new community Jesus is establishing. Could it be that Matthew's own community was experiencing these same issues? If so, this certainly would warrant Matthew's choral response. Stein (2001: 187) concludes that the needs and interests of the church prompted what was preserved in narrative as well as the preserved traditions prompted some needs. Either of these could be true regarding the Stasimon of episode four. Matthew has followed his Lord's

teachings here by summarizing the community relationships that could influence the mission outcome.

After an episode of convincing proofs and the disturbing news of Jesus' departure, Matthew draws to a close this episode with the inevitable conflict that will (and did) rise in the church. After Matthew's Stasimon, the fourth literary marker is used. This one is controlled by the concept of *logous*. Matthew's return to this concept after using *diatassōn* and *parabolē* signifies that the creation of the new synagogue is an oracle of God, holding the status of divine revelation. From here, the natural progression is to look to the eschaton and the ultimate outcome of the kingdom.

### **3.5.6.2 The *Plērōō* Statements in Episode 4—the New Synagogue**

There is one prophetic statement in Episode 4 (15:7–9). However, it does not have the Matthean *plērōō* formula. Additionally, this one is on the lips of Jesus (note that all others are Matthean additions; no claims to these are made by Jesus) and refers to the Pharisees and scribes. There is no formal *plērōō* formula in Episode 4. To venture a reason, the assumption may be that Matthew's intent is to preview a covenant concept in the church that would be difficult for his listeners to conceive. The covenant system described in Hebrews 8-10 would not be easily accepted so soon after the loss of the temple.

### **3.5.7 Episode Five—the Logic of the Prophetic Messages**

In this final episode, the master writer brings his drama to full intensity with a series of healings and conflicts, culminating in Jesus' direct attack on the pharisaical attitudes. This is preceded by two displays of authority yet seen in the play—the conqueror's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple. The logical development would anticipate a final conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. In skilful fashion, Matthew combines healings and conflict with the authoritative display involving Jerusalem and the temple. Episode 5 (19:1-21:22) begins with healing, the first of only three references. Two are general (19:2; 21:14) and the third is two blind men who reference Jesus as Son of David. As in Episode 3, conflict is the primary element. The difference now is that the conflict is not directly related to the healing.

The shift in Matthew's use of conflict is twofold. First, the conflict has the nature of testing rather than debate. In 19:3, the Greek text uses the term *peiradzō*. According to Arndt, Danker and Bauer (2000: 792), *peiradzō* in this context holds the idea of attempting to snare by questions. However, there is another understanding that may carry the idea better. It is to discover the nature of something by testing. The specific absence of the Pharisees from Jesus' death and the nature of their encounters with Jesus (especially in the later episodes) points more to their trying either to understand him or destroy him (12:14). Either way, at the center is the nature of Jesus. Either he is the messiah or he is an enemy of the system, wanting to destroy their cultic traditions. A different word is used in 22:15 (*pagideusōsin*) that is closer to the first meaning given by Arndt. This word is qualified by *en logōi*. To do this, first the Pharisees, then the Sadducees and then the Pharisees again submit Jesus to a series of questions. The first is political (tribute to Caesar, 22:15-22), the second is theological (resurrection, 22:23-32), and the last is cultic (the greatest command, 22:34-40). The second shift in the conflict is the inclusion of the chief priests and elders. In his first prediction of suffering in 16:21, Jesus includes the scribes. The prediction of 17:12 speaks of suffering at their hands. This is qualified in 17:22 by the expression "into the hands of men" (*eis cheiras anthrōpōn*).

However, healing and conflict are set off center stage in this final episode to make room for the display of authority in the entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing of the temple. Hagner (1995: 591) calls this the final encounter between Jesus and Israel. Keener (1999: 489) understands well here that Matthew's intent is to show him as king and the significance of this for the drama. This was certainly a huge turn of events as the response of the crowd was not expected. However, it is not unusual as many there would probably have experienced Jesus and were impressed by his teachings, if not his miracles (Morris, 1992: 518). However, as vital as this is to Matthew's drama, the key verse is 22:46. Jesus' logical attack on the Pharisees' understanding of God's interaction with humanity reached a climax in this episode. Hoping to deliver their final blow to his integrity and teaching, the Pharisees and other religious leaders raised vital questions regarding his identity. First, he answers them in actions (triumphal entry and the cleansing) and then in words (parables and direct answers). The attempt was to embarrass him, hoping to destroy his popularity with the people or the governing bodies or both (Morris, 1992: 567). Matthew concludes that Jesus' logic was too strong for them. The NASB, 1995 update translates this as, "No one was able to answer Him a

word”. If the arguments are sound, it could easily be understood as “no one was able to answer his logic”. At this point, there were no more logical arguments or questions that could be used to regain their standing with the people. Jesus had won the argument. “All the traps have failed, and Jesus’ listeners have in fact been trapped” (Blomberg, 2001: 337). This gives Jesus the acceptable platform to raise an indisputable charge against the Scribes and Pharisees. Hagner (1995: 653) is correct in saying that this does not fit the norm for discourses following the narratives in Matthew’s previous chapters. The explanation may be found in that this, following the form of the Greek drama, needs this for the final element prior to the climax of the death and resurrection. It is negative, as the climax appears to be. This direct attack also sets up the final Stasimon that is designed to tell Matthew’s community that the final victory belongs to the Son of Man (25:31-46).

### **3.5.7.1 Matthew’s (Choral) Response**

Concluding this episode is Matthew’s Stasimon that includes a series of eschatological speeches (exposition in 24:4-36) and parables of exhortation (24:37-25:46) (Hagner, 1995: 684). These are set in the context of the disciples’ questions regarding Israel, Jesus’ return, and the end of days. The Stasimon anticipates the preparation for Jesus’ death (Blomberg, 2001: 382). It would seem that Matthew is using this choral response to point out the necessity of the death to set in motion the events recorded in the Stasimon. If indeed, Matthew’s community is part of the post-70 disarray in which the cultic heritage of their Judaic background is threatened, and then the Stasimon is intended to bring hope that is only in the ultimate victory of Matthew’s hero, Jesus, son of David, son of Abraham.

### **3.5.7.2 The *Plērōō* Statements in Episode 5—the Prophetic Messages**

There is a long gap between the last fulfilment formula (13:35) and this one in 21:4. This was due to the absence of a fulfilment passage in Episode 4. This episode will end Jesus’ ministry and begin whatever aspect of the covenant and Christological kingdom into effect that he intended. This episode has three *plērōō* statements. One is specific to prophetic intentions. The last two are general statements of fulfilment.

The first interrupts Jesus’ instruction regarding his entry into Jerusalem the week of his death. Nolland (2005: 834) points out the strikingly similarity in the formula between

1:22 and 21:4, which is the first *plērōō* statement of the final episode. He questions from this if the coming in birth and the coming to Jerusalem and the cross are being paralleled by Matthew. For Keener (1999: 492) this passage verifies the kingliness of Jesus, thus emphasizing the Davidic heritage and kingdom. Campbell (2008: 125) describes this passage as set in judgment, with a promise to build up and save Israel. Luz (2005: 8) draws attention to a special point regarding this messiah. The prophetic fulfilment defines his desire to obey God's word.

The writings (26:54) and the writings of the prophets (26:56) are the subjects that control the verb *plērōō* here. Hagner (1995: 790) sees in this general term the idea of the very faithfulness of God. In both instances, there is the idea of help. Verse 54 looks to the assistance of angels to overcome death (26:53) and verse 55 looks to the apostles who are fleeing. The alternative to these agencies of help is passive submission (Hagner, 1995: 790), which is the quality of the suffering servant of Isaiah 53:3–5. With these, Matthew rests his case. Jesus has been verified as the messiah, son of David, son of Abraham.

### **3.5.8 Closing Thoughts on the Episodes**

Matthew divides the story into actions, using setting, characters, and conflict. These necessary elements are present in Matthew in the form of narrative and discourse. All of these are essential to the structure that supports his thesis that Jesus is the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham. Without any one of these, his story would lose the necessary impact.

It may be helpful to recall the Aristotelian development of drama and the Matthean structure. First, plot is built around a beginning (incentive moment that starts the cause and effect). This is accomplished in episode one where the announcement and demonstration of kingdom activity sets in motion authoritative teaching exceeding the scribes (8:1). Next, the middle of the plot drives the climax that is caused by the earlier incidents. After the commissioning of the kingdom ambassadors and teaching of kingdom mysteries in parables, conflicts increase (Episodes 3 and 4) and the final confrontation is put in motion (Episode 5). Finally, the end solves the problem.

Aristotle's second element of drama is that the plot maintains a unity in action bound together by internal necessity. Third, plot must have what Aristotle calls a "certain

magnitude”. By this, he means it is both quantitative (length and complexity) and qualitative (serious and universal significance). Fourth, while a plot can be either simple or complex, the latter is better. McManus (1999) notes, “Complex plots have both ‘reversal of intention’ (*peripeteia*) and ‘recognition’ (*anagnorisis*) connected with the catastrophe. Both *peripeteia* and *anagnorisis* turn upon surprise”. The great reversal of the Resurrection assures Matthew’s community that Jesus truly satisfies all the covenant and prophecies anticipated. He truly is “the Christ, the Son of the Living God” (16:16).

If the evidence submitted is tenable, then the following points can be made. First, Matthew was familiar with both cultures. This does not indicate if he was a Jew or Gentile. It is not the focus or intent of this work to delve into this study as the commentaries and introductions have provided ample evidence of the author/editor’s cultural origin. However, this fits well with the mixture of the Jewishness of the infancy narrative with credentials (a genealogy), a Moses/Jesus parallel that is sticking, and knowledge of Jewish legends (Brown S.S., 1997: 221; Allison, 1993: 47) as well as the Gentile emphasis, which Guthrie (1996: 29) calls universalism alongside particularism. This universalism is seen in the Gentile signatures of the Magi worship, trip to Egypt, and the commission to the nations (*ethnē*).

The cultural mix of the book validates Matthew’s intentions to maintain the integrity of the Jewish Heritage for all cultures. With apostolic insights, Matthew anticipates that the gospel would travel to the ends of the earth (*heōs eschatou tēs gēs*; Acts 1:8). Additionally, this cultural mix fits well with the anticipation of a servant who will be appointed “as a covenant to the people” (Isaiah 42:6). Later, this servant is said to be a light to the Gentiles. The LXX in Isaiah 49:6 states, “Behold I will set you in place for the purpose of covenant resulting in a light of the ethnics until salvations exists to the last of the earth “(Author’s translation). Who is this servant? Duane Lindsey (1982: 129) maintains that it is restored Israel. He concludes that the second Servant song (Isa. 49:1-13) has the same basic concepts as the first with some limitations. He contends that the greater emphasis is on the restoration of the national Israel. However, this conclusion may be drawn using a contemporary lens to understand God’s will (covenant) that is clouded by personal theology. An objective study of the covenant theologies (original and new) and dispensationalism will reveal the myopic hermeneutics of these scholars. A better understanding may come from the Similitudes of Enoch, written no earlier than 94 BC or later than 64 BC (Charles, 2004: 171). In 48:4 the Son of Man is called the “light of the nations”. This is a characteristic of the

servant of God in Is. 42:6; 49:6. This servant will be the representative of the tribes of Jacob (son of David) whose responsibility is to the lost tribes of Israel (Mt 15:24). Once restored (by the gospel), these will be the light of the gentiles as the Jewish church will be the missionaries to the non-Jews. The prime example is the apostle Paul who was called as the apostle to the gentiles (Romans 11:13). Paul will build on this by stating that the outreach to the *ethnē* is twofold in purpose. The first is to bring salvation to the *ethnē* and then to make Israel jealous (Romans 11:11-12). The ultimate riches will be restored to Israel, as they are God's covenanted people. Is it any wonder then that Matthew would be concerned that the non-Jewish cultures maintain an allegiance to Israel? Matthew's intentions seem to be to keep fresh the collective memory of the early Christians and their Jewish heritage.

### **3.6 APPLICATION TO THE STUDY**

The Jewish influence in Matthew's structure contributes to the central question of how Matthew uses *plērōō* to demonstrate Jesus' Christological mission of introducing the reign of the new covenant community. This chapter has demonstrated that Matthew was influenced by the contemporary, Jewish culture, which affects his use of *plērōō*. To answer this question, the aim is to examine Matthew's use of the verb *plērōō* to determine if it reveals the Christological characteristics that endorse Jesus' divine initiative of proclaiming the coming reign of heaven within the hermeneutics of covenant. The first two chapters evaluated the cultural influences on Matthew's gospel in an attempt to understand how this may have motivated his use of *plērōō* to support the Jewish heritage of covenant, Christology, and kingdom.

In this chapter, the impact of Jewish influences has been appraised as they may have directed the structure that set the stage for the use of *plērōō*. The design is to demonstrate how Jesus fulfills the cultic expectations of Matthew's contemporary Judaism. This will become evident as attention is turned to the *plērōō* statements of Matthew.

## 4.0 *PLĒRÓŌ* IN CONTEXT: EXPLORATION OF THE TERM AND THE PRE-MATTHEAN CULTIC CONTEXT

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

To remind us of the focus, the central theoretical argument of this study is that Matthew envisions the fulfilment of the covenant hope of Israel and the nations in the reign of heaven proclaimed by Christ. This argument is based on the following salient concepts: 1) God reveals his true nature best in keeping covenant and loving-kindness. God demonstrates this nature in the covenant relationship to the Jewish nation and the Christian community, expressed most succinctly in the Matthean reign of heaven. 2) The covenant of the prophets envisions a broader expanse of God's reign beyond the cultic limitations of a single nation. God's rule is supra cultural in that it brings the nature of heaven to all cultures. 3) Matthew uses the concept of fulfilment as one of his foundational elements that establishes the reign of heaven. In this, God's unique nature pledges faithfulness to Israel and the nations via his elect community, which comes to maturity in the church and is faithfully represented by Matthew's community as evidenced in this gospel. Thus, Matthew's conceptual (cultural) equivalent to the covenant is the anticipated reign of heaven realized in the church, which Jesus proclaims (*kerussein*).

Focusing on Matthew's use of *plērōō* in determining the Christological characteristics that endorse Jesus in this divine initiative raises the question of the impact of the pre-Matthean culture as it may have set the stage for the use of *plērōō*. Understanding this may help to demonstrate how Jesus fulfils the cultic expectations of Matthew's contemporary Judaism. Thus, it is necessary to evaluate the use of *plērōō* in relationship to covenant, Christology, and kingdom in the culture prior to Matthew's milieu. This chapter assess this in order to prepare for the examination of the Matthean fulfilment texts. The assessment divides into two categories. First will be the exploration of the term *plērōō*, anticipating an understanding of its value in Matthew's work. The second will be an exploration of the pre-Matthean cultic history that set the stage for Matthew's milieu. Together, these will set the stage for Matthew's fulfilment concepts.

As a reminder, the assertion in the last chapter was that the Jewish background was intended to give the Hellenistic Jew and Gentile audience a sense of the heritage of Christianity and the extent and impact that the Jewish covenant, messiah, and kingdom

has on the world. The Jewish fulfilment idea is a natural fit to do this. God uses the sacred writings and history of a small, insignificant nation, who is controlled by Rome and who have probably just lost their cultic worship center (Temple), to bring together two groups who are culturally and religiously divided. *Plērōō* is a primary tool used by Matthew to establish this heritage. This literary device enhances the drama of the Jesus story. Thus, it is necessary to provide the meaning and background of *plērōō* before moving into the Jewish culture that provides the subject matter for the word.

## 4.2 *PLĒRÓŌ*

Empowering the *plērōō* concept is the strategic use of the *ēlthon*-word as the indication that Matthew was aware that Jesus' mission focused on the law and the prophets (Viljoen, 2011: 394-395). This same term is used three times (9:13, 18:11, 20:28) with Christological emphasis (Banks, 1974: 227). On the other hand, Bultmann (1968: 150-166) regards the "I Sayings" of Jesus in the gospels as inauthentic. He puts these words on the tongues of the early Christians because Jesus may not have realized this divine mission. Agreeing with Viljoen and Banks, regarding the divine initiative, this would seem to provide the driving force for Matthew's use of *plērōō*, thus adding both the significance of the divine mission and Jesus right and privilege as the prototype Apostle of the kingdom of heaven. This increases the significance of *plērōō* in that it puts it on a level equal to or above the prophets that it references. Hübner (1990: 346) contributes by noting that the first person present of *legō* carries a similar significance "articulated especially in the evidently authentic formula of authority and asseveration, 'Amen, *I say to you*'...and in the words that are fundamental to the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount, 'but *I say to you*'". Thus, Matthew's Jesus has come (*ēlthon*) with authority (Amen, *I say to you*') that is supported with the *plērōō* statements. Accordingly, it will be beneficial to examine the background and meaning of the term.

### 4.2.1 **Background and Meaning**

Arndt (2000: 828) gives six meanings to the term *plērōō*. It is used in reference to filling things (fish nets, Mt 13:48; all things, Phil 4:10) or people (Rom 15:13). Also used to denote the completion of time (Mk 1:15, cf. Mt 4:17). Another completion idea is to finish something started previously (completed joy, Phil 2:2; law fulfilled by the word love, Gal 5:14). The third is to bring about a preferred end. Within this is the completion of divine predictions (obviously, any of Matthew's fulfilment statement satisfy this).

Unique to this definition is the fulfilment of promises. This idea holds special consideration of the covenant context of any of the fulfilment statements under consideration. Also within this concept of the preferred end is the idea of a prayer as a request. This is supported with Matthew 3:15 where Jesus' request is like a prayer. The next meaning is the involvement in activity from beginning to end (finishing a speech, Lk 7:1; completing a mission, Ac 12:25). If Jesus' mission is divine and his relationship extends back into the ancient Hebrew history, then this carries significant meaning to Matthew's fulfilment scenario. Jesus himself starts and finishes these activities. The final meaning is to complete a number, which seems to hold no special significance for Matthew.

Hübner (1990: 108) gives a simple "fill or make full" but notes that this is purely spatial. His main contribution to this study is the recognition of the theological import in what he calls a metaphorical usage. He applies this to 5:17 pertaining to the law. It would seem to hold the same connotation in 3:15 regarding righteousness as these are structured similarly (both using the aor act inf) and both apply to a broader theological theme in the Judaic tradition. This metaphorical sense is like that used by Paul in Ephesians 4:10 (fulfilling all things), 5:18 (filled with the Spirit), and Acts 13:52 (filled with joy and the Holy Spirit). Regarding these, he states, "we encounter metaphorical usage only" (1990: 108). While it is not the purpose of this work to discuss Paul's meanings, any of these passages could seem to hold as much of a literal sense as they would metaphorical. It would be difficult to imagine that Paul would not contend for a literal presence of the Spirit as well as literal joy felt by the disciples. Hübner (1990: 108) does contend, however, that the fulfilment statements are to be understood literally because of the formula as it relates to an event or episode narrated. It would seem that these are literal because both (the prophecy fulfilled and the event or episode narrated) are historical. The historicity of the baptism (as event) and the sermon (as a collection of sayings associated with a historical setting) certainly demand the expectation of a literal fulfilment to satisfy the expectations of Jesus' and Matthew's audiences. Jesus' deeds and words are as essential to his authenticity as are the prophecies. He must complete the fullest expectations of righteousness and the law. Jesus actually accomplished some means or act of completion that properly satisfies *plērōō*. The act of completion authenticates him as "the Christ, the son of the living God" (Mt 16:16). This will be clarified more in the next chapter.

Non-biblical use gives us “to fill”, as in a bottle with water (Philo *De Posteritate Caini* 130). Passively, become full as in an assembly, a river (Aeschylus *Eumenides*, 570), full of air (πνεύμασιν) (Aeschylus *Septem contra Thebas*, 464). As a disposition, *eros* fills with familiarity. One can be full of emotion (Plato *Symposion*, 197d) or filled with an emotion (*eúelpístias*) (Philo *Josepho*, 255) such as *charas* (Philo *De Abrahamo*, 108; *De Vita Mosis*, I, 177). In religious speech, the Pythia gives the oracle *plērōtheisā* with the *pneumā* of God, (Origen *Contra Celsum*, VII, 3. 2). Intellectually, it indicates satisfaction or appeasement (*thumón*) (Sophocles. Philo, 324). Passively, it holds the idea of satisfying a demand (*épithumías*) (Plato *Gorgias*, 494c. b). Philo also used this word in ethical directions, “to fulfil” them (*De Praemiis et Poenis*, 83. 3). Regarding business use, it gives the idea of an accurate measure that is, to balance (Thucydides, I, 70, 7; b) or round off a sum (Herodotus, VII, 29). Passively, it held to pay a debt in full, pay off an allowance, or a home (Aeschylus *Septem contra Thebas*, 477). It was common in papyrus for the satisfaction of a debt (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 36, 6 (2nd cent. B.C.)). Regarding time, it holds the idea “to complete”. Passively, it means, “to run its course” (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, II, 275, 24 (66 A.D.)). Regarding religious events, festivals fall due every third and fifth years (see Josephus *Antiquitates*, 6, 49 for the date of an event which God has entrusted to the prophets). In Herodian, II, 7, 6, it means, “to fulfil” promises. Passively, it holds, “to come to fulfilment” such as the saying of an oracle (*tou logiou peplērōmenon*) (Polyaenus *Strategica*, I, 18. 5). Also, to fulfil one’s duties (*The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, X, 1252, Recto 9 (3rd cent. B.C.)) (Delling, 1964: 286–287). In addition to the literal meaning of fill, Schipper (1999) associates the word to operating a ship. In an extended sense, it can be used for “fulfilling a wish, hearing a prayer, calming wrath and anger, satisfying a desire, meeting obligation and carrying out work. It has the further sense of bringing to full measure, delivering a reward or tribute, filling a gap, enlarging”. In a temporal meaning when used in the passive, it means to expire, come to an end. In example, it can mean a full (*plērēs*) year or a full number (*plērōma*) of years. Just like a person can be full of pain, emotion, and virtue, they can also be filled with God (*plērēs theou*) or possessed and inspired by God (Pollux, *Onomasticon*, 1, 15). According to Origen, the Pythian priestess was reported to be filled by the spirit of God when uttering an oracle (*Contra Celsum*, 7, 3).

*Plērōō* is frequent in the LXX in connection with time. As in some non-biblical uses, actively, it means to make a time full. It is mainly in the passive in the sense of expiring or coming to an end. The implication is for a definite amount of time that must

inevitably end. This is illustrated in Genesis 25:24 with the birth of Jacob and Esau. Additionally, it is use for a vow (Num. 6:5), the law (Lev. 8:33) or God’s word (cf. the 70 years in Jer. 25:12; 2 Chron. 36:21) (Schippers, 1999). Tobit 14 gives us an interesting use of *plērōō* in a prophetic sense:

The house of God will be in grief and be burned up for a time (*plērōthōsin kairoí tou aiōnos*); and God will again have mercy on them, and God will bring them back into the land of Israel, and they will again build the house, but not like the first, until the time when the time of the seasons be fulfilled; and afterward they will return, all of them, from their captivity, and build up Jerusalem with honor, and the house of God shall be built in her, even as the prophets of Israel spoke concerning her (Tobit 14:5).

In this passage, *plērōō* holds the idea of a filling of time to a desired end, which in this case is the rebuilding of God’s house. It will last until the time of the aeons (the time of the times in the Codex Sinaiticus) is fulfilled (Schippers, 1999). *Plērōō* is used specifically for the words of the prophets being fulfilled (1 Esdras 1:57).

NT usage varies little from the classical and OT. In the NT, it literally means, “to fill something completely”, such as a place (Ac 2:2). Passively, the same is found in John 12:3, Matthew 13:48, and Luke 3:5. In Philippians 4:9, Paul uses it to completely fill a material lack. In a transitive sense, “You have filled all Jerusalem ...” (Ac. 5:28). Non-literally, in the active it is to fill with a content and passively, to be filled with something (the content may not be specified). Used abstractly with the meaning “to fill completely” in John 16:6. As an active subjunctive, Satan finds a place in the heart of the deceiver, so that he dominates it (Acts 5:3). With God as the subject, He fills (Acts 2:28) and answers prayers (Romans 15:13) (Delling, 1964: 291).

*Plērōō* is a technical term regarding the fulfilment of scripture, thus it has a special theological significance. Usage is split equally between the gospels and the rest of the NT. Schippers (1999) summary of the use of *plērōō* directs the focus on the context of this word. He concludes that the NT church was aware that the OT continued in its work. It relied on OT authority. It was the bible of the early church.

#### **4.2.2 Moving toward Context**

Within the context of this study, three distinct fulfilment categories have been identified. Two are inter-related (righteousness and law), yet forming two distinct groups. The third category is prophecy. First, righteousness (Mt 3:15) is introduced by

the idea that there is an appropriateness to Jesus’ fulfilment activity. As will be discussed later, this is the only one of the fulfilment ideas that involves an action, while the other two evolve from the spoken word (either Jesus or the prophets). Next, law is introduced by a contrast—*katalūsai alla plērōsai*. Viljoen (2011: 395) properly concludes that “the word used as contrary to ‘abolish’, is not to ‘confirm’ or to ‘enforce’ the law, but to ‘fulfil’”. He further concludes that the ideal of fulfilment is to realize its full intention. The final category of fulfilment passages is introduced by the formula, *hina hopōs plērōthē to rēthen (hupo kuriou) dia...tou prophētou*. At times, this is with the name of the prophet and at times, not. Nolland (2005: 154) ties together the three categories in that 3:15’s use of the infinitive is bridged to the passive verb forms of the prophetic references by the combination in 5:17 of the aorist active infinitive and the prophets (fulfil the law and the prophets). The fulfilment statements discussed in this and the following chapter are limited to those supporting Matthew’s thesis of Jesus as the Christ, son of David and Abraham. The following shows these with their OT source and the primary emphasis of each:

#### **OT Sources and their Primary Emphasis**

Isaiah	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Emphasis</u>
7:14	1:22	Messianic
9:1	4:14-16	Gentiles
53:4	8:17	Sin/infirmities
42:1-4	12:17-21	Gentiles
Hosea		
11:1 [Nu. 24:8]	2:15	Covenant
Jeremiah		
31:15	2:17-18	Covenant
Zachariah		
9:9	21:4-5	Messianic

However, masked in all the meanings discussed and the categories delineated, is an important concept. At one time and/or in some setting, something was lacking that needed to be filled, completed, satisfied, or accomplished. In righteousness, law, and prophecy, Matthew is appealing to his OT heritage to connect to covenant, Christology, and kingdom. The author of the book of Hebrews (8:7-8) notes that fault (*amemptos*) was found with Israel. What was that “fault”? Did Matthew have this in mind when he redacted the *plērōō* concepts into his work? With these questions in mind, it is necessary to move to that cultic background to unveil the covenant, messianic (Christological), and kingdom (reign of God) elements in Matthew’s prophets. This will

help us determine if there are any insufficiencies that necessitated Matthew's fulfilment context or if Matthew used these simply to validate his messiah.

Before moving into this study, it is important to clarify the approach of the remainder of this study. To better facilitate the flow of this work, the cultic background of the categories of righteousness and law will be dealt with in more detail in the exegesis of 3:15 and 5:17. The intent of the remainder of this chapter is to discover the cultic background of the final category, prophetic fulfilment. Nonetheless, this limited view will contribute to the overall view of the righteousness/law issues to be discussed in chapter five.

### **4.3 CULTIC CONTEXT**

This work has repeatedly insisted that the immediate declaration that Jesus is the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham is the thesis for Matthew. This is bonded with the *plērōō* statements and sets the context with the three elements of covenant (Abraham), Christology (Christ), and kingdom (David). All of these terms are Hebrew in nature and intent, reflecting back to the ancient foundations upon which Matthew's Jewish milieu and Christian community were built. Nolland (2005: 38) notes that Matthew's Jewish context is designed to bring "to his task a full set of Jewish beliefs about God". When the terms "Hebrew" or "Jewish" are used in this context, it identifies with the thought patterns and spirit of a people whose history and text are part of an ongoing conversation between God and the faith community, whether ancient Israel or Matthew's church (Hendriksen and Kistemaker, 1953-2001: 83; Gardner, 1991: 20; Morris, 1992: 2). Thus, with fulfilment (*plērōō*) at the core (France, 1994: 41), Matthew draws on Jewish antiquity to demonstrate how Jesus is the universal prototype for the new humanity that is the focal point of God's love. It will benefit us at this point to examine Matthew's heritage. Following Brown's (1994: 156-159) historical divisions (pre-8<sup>th</sup> century BC, 8<sup>th</sup> century BC to the Babylonian Exile, Exile to NT times), the approach will be to briefly examine the covenant, Christological (under the messianic concept), and kingdom context of Matthew's prophets and thus, his heritage.

Matthew provides a similar historical divisions to Brown's schema. In 1:17, he divides his Christological structure as Abraham to David, David to Babylon, and Babylon to the Messiah. Witherington (2006: 42) reflects that Matthew is less concerned with the exactness of time (fourteen generations in each group). Rather, his concern is to depict a

royal genealogy with “certain key theological points” regarding Jesus. Brown’s (1994: 156) earliest patriarch is Jacob (Gen 49:-12). Nonetheless, his apparent intent is to take his Christological emphasis back no farther than the covenant patriarchs. Brown (1994: 157-158), like Matthew, uses David and Babylon as the pivotal points for his history. These divisions provide the “structure and teleological momentum” (Hagner, 1993: 12) that brings us to Christ.

With the divisions established, it is necessary to see what these cultic eras contribute to the study. In each, the examination will expose the context that Matthew uses for his *plērōō* ideal. Building knowledge on knowledge with these divisions, this study will arrive at the Matthean milieu, anticipating the use of this cultic context in his work.

### **4.3.1 Pre-8<sup>th</sup> century BC**

This is the broadest of the three periods including the beginning history of the nation with the election of Abraham in Genesis 12 to the division of the nation after the death of Solomon. Using Abraham as the *terminus a quo*, Allen (1988: 11) places him toward the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (1900–1800 B.C.) or the end of the Early Bronze Age (2150–2000 B.C.). Myers (1987: 10) notes a range from the Middle Bronze I (*ca.* 2200–1900 B.C.) to as late as the beginning of Late Bronze II (1400–1300 B.C.). However, he states that most scholars contend for a date early in the second millennium. The problem with dating this is that pre-8<sup>th</sup> century data is provided to us via narrative myth as opposed to traceable history with adequate time markers. Trying to distinguish a difference between biblical myth and historical realities shrouds Hebrew tradition. The reason is that myth is only an expression of the way humanity understands reality. It is not reality itself (Childs, 1960: 17). Consequently, finding history in the OT is an archaeology dig attempting to classify artefacts, discerning whether they are found purely in history or in the mythological understanding of history. For Judaism, myth serves as the divine character most properly realized in the Torah that provides both a chronicle and covenant. Schwartz (1997: 16) maintains that the over-riding myth of Judaism is God’s covenant with Israel and that all “mythically divine figures” are ultimately offshoots of God, thus maintaining a monotheistic structure.

For Schwartz and all of Judaism, the covenant best defines who they are. This work contends that Matthew understood this and has placed his work within the context of

covenant. The examination now turns to this subject to determine why this may be the case.

#### **4.3.1.1 Pre-8<sup>th</sup> century Covenant Context**

At the very core of Hebrew theology rests the covenant concept. Eichrodt (1961: 36-45) believed that covenant was the controlling idea, or “center” of all Old Testament theology. Boadt (1984: 175) insists that covenant (*berith*) captures the “heart of Israel’s religious beliefs”. This ancient covenant holds that the God intervened in history by appearing to Abraham. At this time, he divulged his name and, therefore, his nature (Köhler, 1957: 59-69; Walton, 1994: 24-26). Formula-like statements in the Hebrew Scriptures confirm covenant history where God pledges his faithfulness to Israel and Israel pledges their faithfulness to be God’s unique possession (Rendtorff, 1998: 11).

Hillers (1969: 5) realizes that the fullest understand of covenant is not found by simply studying the passages that contain the word *berith*, but by following the history because it is obvious that the covenant refers to “something that had actually happened—the text of the agreement was in a box in the temple”. Eichrodt (1961: 37) uses the phrase: “the factual nature of the divine revelation”. It is a historical process, not just speculative theology. There are actual events, concrete facts of Jewish history left to us in the stories of the OT.

This covenant identifies the ancient roots of Matthew’s Jewish heritage. It is good to understand that there are varieties of covenants revealed in the OT. Robertson (1980: v-vi) gives commentary on only six of the covenants that support his salvific theme culminating in the covenant of Christ. Walton (1994: 48) devotes an entire chapter to the question of the number and types of covenants, providing dispensationalist numeration of four to eight. He further notes that classic covenant theology divides history into two, the Old and the New. However, he concludes that it is recognized that there is actually only one (continuous) covenant. The ancient covenants providing the context for the Matthean claims for Jesus and the fulfilment ideals are the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic. It may be best to summarize this as such: God made one covenant with Abraham that reached its apex at Sinai. The Davidic covenant provides a physical (lineage of David) hope for Judaism that, depending on the author, would be limited to the Jewish nation or expanded to offer peace to the world (Cook, 2008: xxi). In this

way, the promise to Abraham is satisfied in that the whole world will be blessed (Genesis 12:3).

From this perspective, ancient Judaism's knowledge of and claim to a special covenant in a narrative collection from which the historically known Israel of the exile is based. Beyond Genesis, Jewish history takes form; the kingdom of God's elect becomes a known political power under David and Solomon. Brueggemann (1968: 18-19) gives a narrative development of what he calls the "creedal affirmation" that was at the heart of the "public confessions of faith which was made normative through its liturgic use". In the prophets, the past memories become the means of restoring faith. It is this historic past that is the ancient foundation upon which exilic, post-exilic and Matthew's milieu are built. All rests on this, including their messianic and kingdom hopes.

#### **4.3.1.2 Pre-8<sup>th</sup> century Christology Context**

An attempt to find a clear, messianic ideal like that of the covenant leaves the researcher in somewhat of a despair as this is not a clear element in the earlier, ancient traditions. As will be demonstrated, the appearance comes only after the covenant relationship is threatened as Israel abandons her faith, chasing other gods. The approach to arrive at a point of study will start with a brief linguistic consideration and then move past the establishment of the covenant into the royal era of Israel's history.

In a study of ancient traditions, there is the problem of language. Idiomatic usage, cultural impact, etymology, and linguistic limitations present ever-present barriers to research. This is especially true as one attempts to move the messianic concept from the Hebraic to the Christian mindset. The term *messias* is used only twice in the NT and then only by John (1:41; 4:25). This may indicate a developing tradition since the Synoptic Gospels do not use the term. In Hebrew, there are two words for anoint—*māšah* and *suk*. Of these, the former is used one hundred and thirty times against twelve for the latter. The primary idea is to anoint. However, *masah* refers to a ritual or a formal activity while the other is used in the common life for cosmetic or occasionally medicinal purposes (Oswalt, 2001). The Greek follows this same idea in that it "denotes someone who has been ceremonially anointed for an office" (Rengstorf, 1999) It may be helpful to determine if the NT, Christological idea is built on the sanctifying ritually or religiously. If this connection is made, this will reinforce the Christological essence of Jesus as the divinely appointed Christ whose sonship (God, David, and Abraham) are

enhanced by the specific appointment to his prototype, apostolic mission regarding the kingdom of heaven.

As this thread relates to Jesus, difficulties arise. From the Christian perspective, looking back and finding Jesus in any passage that seems to hold the Christological nature is not hindered by Jewish concepts of a physical king/kingdom. However, this is hindsight, which is twenty-twenty. Additionally, twenty centuries of Christian exegesis has cleared the vision, giving us a programmed image of Jesus in the covenant literature of the Jews. However, from the contemporary Jewish perspective, the same is not true. Rich (2009) states “Mashiach” and saviour are not the same. The latter is a “purely Christian concept that has no basis in Jewish thought”. Cook (2008: xxi) reiterates the same general idea in his Notes on Terminology regarding the distinction between Messiah and Christ.

Looking for the Messianic concept in the cultic tradition does not necessarily mean looking for a person. Rather, the quest is for an idea. To do this, it is helpful to gain an understanding of the concept of anointing. The Hebrew verb (*māšah*), “with only four exceptions, always refers to ritual or formal activity associated with inauguration and dedication” (Oswalt, 2001). The first time this word was used in the Hebrew text is Genesis 31:13 where a pile of rocks is anointed. This passage refers back to the events of Genesis 28:18-21 where Jacob sets up the stones and dedicates them to God. Meier (Meier, 1997) notes that the verb is often used in relation to setting up idols (Deut 27:15; Judg 18:31; 1 Kgs 12:29; 2 Kgs 21:7; 2 Chron 33:7; Ezek 14:4, 7). Thus, there can be a religious connotation to the word. Jacob makes an oath to God, which has covenantal overtones. *Māšah* is not seen again until Exodus and the anointing of Aaron and his sons (Exodus 28:41) for the priesthood. After that, a variety of items are anointed—wafers (Ex. 29:2), Aaron’s sacred garments (Ex. 29:29), the altar (Ex. 29:36), just to name a few. It is in the anointing of Aaron and his sons that a significant shift takes place. No longer are inanimate articles the object of the anointing. Additionally, the anointing for an office is seen with Saul (1 Sam 10:1), Elisha (1 Kings 19:16), and the Patriarchs (Ps 105:15). Oswalt (2001) reduces all uses of *māšah* and its derivatives to three distinct groups. The first is the tabernacle and the priesthood (Fifty-four times between Exod 25:6 and Num 7:88). The second references the kingships of Saul, David, and Solomon (Thirty-four times between 1 Sam 2:10 and 1 Kgs 5:1). The final is the prophets (1 Kgs 19:16; 1 Chron 16:22; Ps 105:15). Freeman (1999: 128-129) introduces the idea that anointing is literal (oil is the instrument of anointing) and

metaphorical (designation of the call to service). The use of oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit and the explicit connection of the Holy Spirit with anointing in Isa 61:1 reinforce that the act of anointing symbolized this divine empowerment (Oswalt, 2001). The metaphorical understanding is significant in that this action is specific to setting them apart for service to the Lord. Exodus illustrates the concept of consecration with the record of the instructions to Aaron stating a reason for the anointing. God tells Aaron, “You shall anoint it (the altar) to consecrate it” (29:36). This is carried out in Leviticus 8:11. Mounce (2006: 1031) finds the word translated as consecrate (*qōdeš*) in 29:36 used 470 times meaning “holy or sacred thing, holy or sacred place, sanctuary; holiness, set apart as dedicated to God”. Goldingay (2001: 46) maintains that the prophet did not hold an office and, therefore, were not anointed with oil. He does note one exception in 1 Kings 19:16 (Elisha).

Matthew ties together these two ancient concepts in his expression “son of Abraham” in the opening verse of the gospel. Here, Matthew seems to connect Jesus’ anointing (*Christos*) with the divine covenant of Abraham. Rendtorff (1998: 14-15) contends for the significance of the eternal covenant as the essence of Formula A (I will be their God [see Rendtorff, 1998: 13-14]) for Abraham’s descendants. The essences of this is in his election. Nehemiah 9:7 verifies the Genesis account using a Deuteronomic word for God’s election of Israel (Deut 7:6; 14:2; 18:5) (Rendtorff, 1998: 1-2). Hahn (2005: 283-284) reminds us of Paul’s commitment to the ratification (*kekurōmenēn*) of the covenant by God was via an explicitly sworn oath (Gen. 22.16). For Paul, the oath is now being fulfilled through Abraham's seed. With these two connected, there is one remaining element—the reign of God, which is the essence of the word kingdom as used by Matthew in the expression kingdom of God.

Christological development is tied to the third context of kingdom. In David, the Christological ideal is realized. However, it is in his throne that kingdom authority is symbolized. Matthew’s reign of God that Jesus came preaching (4:17) is paralleled in the historic periods by the throne of the king. Thus, kingdom as used in the OT and NT entails the authority or rule of the king, not just the land mass and people.

#### **4.3.1.3 Pre-8<sup>th</sup> century Kingdom Context**

Brown (1994: 156-157) sets the first stage of Christological development with the early days of the Davidic monarchy, which is approximately the tenth century B.C. While not

true in Israel, in Judah every king was a messiah in the sense that he was God's anointed for leadership and protection. Brown (1994: 130) points out that there are three parallel accounts (2 Sam 7, Ps 89, 1 Chron 17) that he considers the first "literary record of the messianic character of the dynasty of David". Brown connects the idea of these passages to the Lukan account of Mary's song (1:32), combining the sonship (of the Most High) to the throne of David. Matthew does not use such a concept or this verbiage. His use of the concept of throne always relates to the reign of heaven (God) as in 5:34, 19:28, 23:22, and 25:31. The second and fourth are understood as an eschatological setting. The other two assume the dignity and authority of the heavenly throne. Thus, it is in the idea of the throne (of David) that Matthew frames the authority of God in the Messiah. His reference to the prophet Isaiah in 4:14-16 is in context of the Davidic throne. Matthew uses this prophet to introduce Jesus' more universal appeal (outside the boundaries of Jerusalem). For Isaiah, this verse is contextual to 9:6 where the throne of David is established and empowered with justice and righteousness eternally. For Matthew, it is from the throne of David that the reign of God will be known. It is Jesus who, as the son of David, has ascended that throne.

The earliest allusion to the throne of David is in the blessing of Judah by Jacob in Genesis 49:9-12. Verse 10 endorses the authoritative throne that Rashi (Rashi, 2001) considers to be the King Messiah and Neusner (2001: 267) calls the royal Messiah. The time designation "until" in verse ten does not indicate a termination of the blessing. Rather, phrases beginning with this word mark a continuation of the previous action (Gesenius, 1910: 503). Matthews (2007: 892) indicates that this is a permanent, eschatological figure who is David's greater son. As above, the emphasis here is on the throne as the seat of authority from which the blessing rules. Brown (1994: 156) attributes the messianic ideal in the Royal Psalms (2, 72, 110) into the ancient context and are appropriate for any Davidic like ruler. Assigning the qualities of divinity (Ps 110:3) and sonship (2:7) to the Davidic descendant, Brown (1993: 157) understands this to be "symbolic court language used to describe the king as God's representative". Psalm 72 introduces a saviour-king who rules in righteousness, which is contemplative of Jesus' fulfilment of all righteousness at his baptism.

In both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, kingdom entails the essence of the royal power (Arndt, Danker and Bauer, 2000: 168; Luz, 1990: 201; Schmidt, 1964: 579). While the promise to Abraham of land is fulfilled by the geographical location occupied by the Israelites, this is not what constituted them as a kingdom. In this historic period,

especially prior to the anointing of Saul, there was a theocracy. Ewell (1988: 2049) places the beginning of the theocracy with the Exodus. Norman (2003: 1580) contends for a progressive revelation of theocracy in the scriptures. While he does not make the case, Norman states that there is one for a theocratic relationship in the Edenic setting where God is obviously the ruler. However, he connects Abraham and Moses to note that it was with the former that a national theocracy is established. It is with the latter that the structure of the theocracy is given, which is the law. At first, the theocratic form was personified in national leaders like Moses. He was God's ambassador in what Brueggemann (2001: 1-20) describes as the alternative community of Moses. He demonstrates that in Moses, God overcame the "politics of oppression" with the "practice of justice and compassion" (2001: 10). This was a major paradigm shift in which the Exodus, serving as the axis for the transition, nullified the Egyptian gods by the freedom provided by one who declared, "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself" (Ex 19:4). The essence of this theocracy is captured by the covenant formula described above.

The ancient foundation of covenant, messianic hope, and authority soon realizes a less stable building than originally designed. As Brueggemann (2001: 25) indicates, with Solomon there is a paradigm shift from the ancient community founded on covenant to a social vision contrary to Moses. This shift moves the study to the next historical era of the investigation—8<sup>th</sup> Century BC to the Babylonian Exile.

### **4.3.2 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC to the Babylonian Exile**

It is important to clarify what caused this paradigm shift. The theocratic experiment guided by Moses was successful until the time of Solomon. Solomon was not the king his father was. The parent may start the transitions completed in their children. In this case, Solomon hastened the demise of the Mosaic ideal begun by his father, David. Appropriate terms to describe Solomon are self-serving and self-securing. This is evidenced by having a harem of one thousand women whose primary purpose was political and procreative (Brueggemann, 2001: 23-24). Additionally, Solomon increased control with a system of governors that were responsible for the taxes used to sustain the central government (Brueggemann, 2001: 23-24; House, 2001: 115). A bureaucracy immune to considerations of justice and compassion also needed a standing army to guard the national interests. Additional support for these descriptions of Solomon came

from conscripted labour that was needed to build the political state (Brueggemann, 2001: 24).

Mendenhall (1975: 157-160) identifies the first stage of the failure of the monarchy as a transition from the religious community to a political state. The prerequisite for such a transition is twofold. First, the larger government (as described above) requires a shift away from the agricultural/pastoral village to the larger city. Second, successful political patterns, such as the success of the Sumerian model of the temple economy that developed into successful political states, provided a model for others. The request of the Israelites as Samuel was dying illustrates this (1 Sam 8:4ff) (Mendenhall, 1975: 157). The covenant, which Mendenhall reluctantly calls a constitution, was not typical in that it was the “common acceptance of a common relationship to a common overlord, who was no human being or even a political structure” (Mendenhall, 1975: 158). This formula worked until the reversion to the cultural paganism. This has roots from when a king takes a city (like David takes Jerusalem and makes it the royal city) and uses the existing substructure to administer a new, larger state. Evoking *cuius regio eius religio* (Whose realm, his religion) does not necessarily remove all previous cultural practices (Mendenhall, 1975: 158). When the monarch makes political ties by marriage and allows his wives to continue their religious practices, the transition is completed. Brueggemann (2001: 26-30) identifies three elements that set this transition in order—affluence, oppressive social policy, and a static religion. He contends that it is the last that may have been the most decisive factor. An affluent society was the norm of Solomon’s day as pictured in 1 Kings 4:20-23. Covenanting had been replaced by consuming. To accomplish such a society, forced labour was required. 1 Kings 5:13-18 tells of Solomon forcing labourers to work in the building of the temple. While the end may have been worthy, the means was not. However, it was Solomon’s “*establishment of a controlled, static religion*” (emphasis is Brueggemann’s), placing God and the temple in subordination to the king. With a permanent structure in which God will dwell, he is now “on call” for the king. It is into this setting that a powerful representative of God enters—the prophet.

An introduction to the principle characters of this period will serve this investigation well. The prophets make their appearance in the first historical era. Samuel and the school of the prophets were organized to strengthen and confirm Israel in its fidelity to the Lord (Keil and Delitzsch, 2002: 5). Additionally, they were in constant protest against the Canaanite religion and culture (Freeman, 1999: 29). Deuteronomy gave case

law example for a false prophet (13:1-5) and predicted the coming of a prophet like Moses (18:15-22). However, Deuteronomy ends with a reference to the level of efficiency of the prophetic office—“Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face” (34:10).

With this backdrop, the investigation now turns to the three contextual subjects (covenant, Christology, kingdom) to examine their place in this period. For the sake of convenience, the period from 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC to the Babylonian Exile will be termed “the middle period” and the third period, Exile to NT times, will be termed the final period. These are used as historical boundaries only. Additionally, because of the close tie of the reign of God in his servant and the Christological ideal, these two will be studied in conjunction unless there is data that validates individual consideration.

#### **4.3.2.1 Covenant in the Middle Period**

Brueggemann (1968: 15) and von Rad (1962: 123, 126) maintain that Deuteronomy 26:5-9 is the earliest and most succinct expression of the cultic convictions of Israel. The central elements of this declaration of cultural memory are 1) the wanderings of the fathers, 2) the Exodus, and 3) the Promised Land. One and three are the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise, which draw their vitality and power from the second, which is the true center of the confession (Brueggemann, 1968: 15). Within this covenant framework, the prophets work in their various historical situations. Their mission is to restore the covenant liturgy in the life and destiny of Israel (Mueller, 2007: 49; Brueggemann, 1968: 24). Theirs is a “passionate championing of the exclusive worship of Yahweh” that rejects foreign influences, demanding unwavering submission to the covenant (Eichrodt, 1961: 340).

While this mission is traceable in all the prophetic writings of the Hebrew scripture, the target of this exploration will be three of the four prophets specific to Matthew. By order appearance in Matthew, they are Isaiah, Hosea, and Jeremiah. The fourth, Zechariah will be considered in the post-exilic period. The intent is to give a general overview of the prophets based on the order they appear in Matthew. In this overview, the covenant focus of each prophet will be clarified. The purpose is to validate the covenant context of *plērōō* in the prophetic statements of Matthew. The first examination starts with Isaiah.

Isaiah leads Matthew's fulfilment character list with four references (7:14, 9:1, 42:1-4, 53:4). This prophet's mission centred on Judah and Jerusalem at what Freeman (1999: 191) considers a crucial time in the nation's history (c. 739-700 B.C.). However, his mission is not limited to Judah. He pronounces judgment on Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and, at times, on Israel and other surrounding nations. This universal appeal makes this prophet the ideal focus for the larger portion of the Matthean, *plērōō* statements. Additionally, Freeman notes that there are two primary themes: judgment (1-39) and redemption (40-66), both of which are universal in nature. In light of Matthew's use (esp. 4:14-16 and 12:17-21), this universal significance works well with his overall purpose. For von Rad (1965: 99-103), Isaiah's perception of time provides a strong eschatological emphasis. He states, "The prophetic author consciously looked for a relatively immediate referent and for a more long term eschatological fulfilment". This plays itself out with the historical connections made by Matthew to the history of Israel (1:1ff) (von Rad, 1965: 350). This would equate to Blomberg's (2002: 19) double fulfilment concept. However, what Isaiah prompted was an active "faith" as a conscious reaction to the message. This faith, according to Eichrodt (1961: 358) is "a definite 'Yes' or 'No' to the claims of divine reality".

Searching for the term *berith* in Isaiah reveals a more diverse use than some may anticipate. Klein (2011) maintains that Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah say little about breaking the Mosaic covenant. Isaiah has four references (24:5, 28:15, 18, 33:8) where the word *berith* is used but not in reference to the Sinai covenant. Using the Logos 4 software search engine for covenant (*berith*) in the NASB95 produces twelve hits in twelve verses. Of these, three (24:5, 55:3, 61:8) refer to an "everlasting covenant". The three references are to Genesis 9:3 and the Noahic covenant (Childs, 2001: 179, 434, 506). Goldingay (2001: 138, 313) agrees that 24:5 refers to the Noahic but holds that 55:3 is the Davidic covenant. Baltzer (2001: 470-471) agrees with Goldingay regarding that 55:3 belongs to the Davidic covenant. Walvoord and Zuck (1985) hold to a more general idea for 24:5 in that it refers to an implicit covenant of humanity. However, they agree with Baltzer and Goldingay that 55:3 is Davidic. In referencing the Davidic covenant, this concept of covenant in Isaiah falls in line with a universal view, which this work proposes is Matthew's overarching consideration. Further, two of the twelve qualify the covenant as one of death (28:15, 18). Childs (2001: 208) and Goldingay (2001: 151-154) see this as a military allegiance with Egypt. Matthews (Mathews, 2007: 186, n. 50), and Walton (2000) expand this to possibly infer the pact is with the god of

the Egyptians (the dead Osiris) or possibly the Canaanite god Mot. Hillers (1969: 106) states that the Isaiah 28:15 statement is about a covenant with a god other than Jehovah. He finds similar covenants in Ugaritic epics. Nonetheless, it certainly signifies an alliance with these countries. Similar to this but not using the full “covenant with death” signature is 33:8 where Israel has made an alliance with Assyria but will be disappointed as the covenant will be broken by them (the Assyrians) (Goldingay, 2001: 188). Additionally, 56:4, 6 expand the idea well beyond Israel with the inclusion of Gentiles in ministry to God (Childs, 2001: 458; Walvoord, Zuck and Seminary, 1985; Hughes and Laney, 2001: 267; Keil and Delitzsch, 2002). In 56:7, the covenant elements of burnt offerings and sacrifices are promised, as well as the recovery of God’s house of prayer (cf. 57:7; Matthew 21:12).

Three of the last six refer to God’s covenant with Israel as his servant—42:6 (Childs, 2001: 326-327; Walvoord, Zuck and Seminary, 1985); 49:8 (Childs, 2001: 386; Walvoord, Zuck and Seminary, 1985;Goldingay, 2001: 284); 59:21 (Childs, 2001: 490; Walvoord, Zuck and Seminary, 1985; Goldingay, 2001: 338). Walvoord, Zuck, and Goldingay (Walvoord, Zuck and Seminary, 1985; Goldingay, 2001: 312) maintain that 54:10 also references the covenant with Israel as servant. However, Baltzer (2001: 446) and Childs (2001: 429) see the Noahic covenant here. Interestingly, Goldingay (2001: 312) sees the possibility of a Noahic covenant but settles on Israel. These references direct the reader toward the conclusion that the historic covenant of the pre-8<sup>th</sup> century is also the foundation for Isaiah’s mission. The fact that God segregated this tiny nation by means of this covenant is the basis for God’s work as projected by Isaiah.

From the predominance of Isaiah, Matthew uses single quotes for the remaining prophets. Hosea and Jeremiah are the two prophets most directly associated with the context of covenant. Concentrating first on Hosea, the focus of the book is a new covenant because Israel has nullified the original Mosaic. Padilla (2005: 16) finds five of the six types of Biblical covenants in the book of Hosea. They are the Davidic Covenant (3:5), Adamic Covenant (6:7), Abrahamic Covenant (1:10), the Mosaic Covenant (2:15, 4:6, 8:1), and the New Covenant (2:14-23; 13:14). This seems to put covenant at the heart of Hosea’s ministry. Additionally, Brueggemann (1968: 26-54) relates several covenant motifs in Hosea that strengthen this conclusion regarding the place of the covenant in Hosea’s work. The motifs include the Exodus (11:1), which is used by Matthew, allusions to the patriarchs (11:8-9; 12:2-6), wilderness journeys (5:1-2; 9:10; 11:3; 12:9b), and the legal traditions of the Decalogue (4:2 as a summary

(showing Brueggemann list) 1968: 38); first command, 7:13, 16; 11:2; second command, 4:12a, 8:4b-5b, 13:2; third command, 10:4; fourth command, 2:11; fifth command, 11:1-3; sixth command, 6:8-9; seventh command, 4:13-14; eighth command, 7:1b; ninth command, 7:13b; tenth command is absent).

For Hosea, the covenant was like a marriage. Israel's marriage to God was characterized by unfaithfulness as they went after other gods, no lovingkindness (*hesed*) and by ignorance because there was no knowledge of God (4:1). Strange (1975: 437) identifies these as the three reasons for the spiritual bankruptcy in Israel that led to the broken covenant. The idea of faithfulness is represented by *emet* that holds the idea of firmness. "There is no loyalty to the God of the covenant relationship. This results in no loyalty, no faithfulness, in human relationships" (1975: 437). The third word contends for an intimate knowledge that is known only through experience. (1975: 428). However, the middle word holds the most significance for Hosea. This is a "*personal divine restorative confrontation* with Israel" (author's emphasis) (Wrytzen, 1984: 315). The marriage covenant picture is extensive in that there is a divorce and then remarriage. Wrytzen (1984: 320) contends that the remarriage is not the renewal of the Mosaic marriage (covenant) but a new relationship based on God's grace and not Israel's faithfulness. Whether this is valid is debatable as faithfulness is always God's expectation. However, the key concept that Wrytzen points out is God's unending love. This is represented in 4:1 by the term *hesed*. The thrice used formula regarding God's nature as keeping covenant and lovingkindness (Heb., *shmrē-brithu-e-chsd*; Gk. *phulasson diatheken kai eleos*) is at the heart of Hosea's used. Glueck (1967: 77) draws attention to the fact that the terms *hesed* and *berith* are related but they are not identical in meaning. He states, "*Hesed* is the result of a *berith* relationship". Padilla (2005: 16) reminds us that the original treaty idea is a legal bond. However, by qualifying this as a keeping of *berith* and *hesed*, it surpasses the norm for the legal aspect with the showing of the divine *hesed*, the unending love of God. Hosea, as the prophet of *hesed*, uses the term to express the unique nature of God (Freeman, 1999: 174).

When used in combination like this, there is an ideal of mutuality involved. Each involved in a *berith* responds to the other in *hesed*. Micah 6:8 exemplifies this with God's longing for mutuality in the response of love. This is something that is directed back to God. (Sakenfeld, 2002: 172-173). The mutuality of *hesed* is evidenced as well in Hosea 7:18 with God's willingness to forgive. It is reciprocal with the intent of mutual prosperity (in this case, the prosperity is spiritual but in others it can be physical

or monetary). Glueck (1967: 43-54) identifies six forms of mutuality in the ideal of *hesed*. He concludes by summarizing *hesed* as part of a mutual relationship in regard to rights and duties. *Hesed* is restricted to those in the relationship and corresponds to the concept of faithfulness. Since it can be confirmed by an oath, it constitutes the essences of a covenant. Specifically, in Hosea, the mutual prosperity of *hesed* is evident in God's provision (2:10f.), his peace and rest (2:20), help (12:10), and benevolence (11:3-4, 3:1) (Glueck, 1967: 54-55).

Mutual respect and love are at the center of Hosea's parallel to Micah when he writes, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings" (6:6). Twice (9:13, 12:7) Matthew quotes Hosea in his reaction to the Pharisees. In summary regarding *hesed*, Hosea uses the word six times. Four of the six times (2:19, 6:6, 10:12, 12:6) are in reference to God's love for his people. The other two (4:1, 6:4) are used negatively of Israel. Additionally, Hosea is the first of the prophets to relate this *hesed* of God as the basis of their relationship. Birch (1997: 14) maintains that because of this emphasis, Hosea has a significant influence on the later writings of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah. From this personal perspective of *hesed*, the examination takes us to Jeremiah, Matthew's next prophet.

Jeremiah's *Sitz im Leben* was formed by the ancient, patriarchal covenant, the Mosaic revelation, the visions of prophets before him, the cultic-institutional activity of the priests and the national stability of the monarchy (north and south) (Owens, 1981: 366). A covenant theme presents itself early in Jeremiah when God tells the prophet that his people "have forsaken Me and have offered sacrifices to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands" (1:16). This is an exact opposite of the covenant formula of "I will be their God and they shall be my people", which Robinson (2001: 182) supports and suggests as a common element of the Jeremiah prose tradition. He further suggests that this may have been influenced in Jeremiah by the Hosea tradition. The absence of the formula tradition is reversely evident in Jeremiah's new covenant of 31:31-34. What this means is that the Torah is not evident in the hearts of the people as "YHWH will have to intervene to place it there" (Robinson, 2001: 182). For Robinson, this is a surgical procedure that God performs while in Deuteronomy 10:16, the Israelites are told to do this to themselves. Jeremiah 4:4 repeats the Deuteronomic ideal, requiring the heart surgery by the patient. This heart surgery about which he spoke was tied to circumcision, the sign of the covenant (Gen 17:11-14). Owens (1981: 372) reiterates this same idea of heart surgery but approaches it as Judah needing to redefine the act.

Jeremiah 4:4 calls for the removal of the foreskin from the heart. Paul's idea of an inward Jew is one who has followed Jeremiah's direction (Rom 2:28-29).

Other references to the ancient tradition of the covenant are rehearsed in 2:1-7 and the apostasy described in 2:8-3:14. In 3:16-17, the implications are a message of hope, as is the language of a new covenant in chapter 31. Hillers (1969: 167-168) recognizes that Jeremiah had experienced an attempt at the revival of the Mosaic covenant under Josiah and resulting disappointment (31:32). Nonetheless, the revival was ultimately ineffective as 31:32 points out. Hillers concludes from this that this statement regarding the breaking of the covenant dismisses the old covenant. Conversely, he may be overstepping the impact of "new" to Jeremiah as the prophet states that a time will come when the Ark of the Covenant will be remembered and Jerusalem will once again be the throne of the Lord. This will satisfy the Abrahamic covenant as the population is once again increasing. The implication this makes is that these things do not exist in Jeremiah's day but will at some time in the future. Judah does not recall the ark or call Jerusalem the throne where all the nations gather. They were a shrinking nation, not increasing and growing. Lundbom's (2010: 90) describes the condition of Israel as having a misguided foreign policy (2:14-19), forgetful (2:32; 3:21; 13:25; 18:15; cf. Jer 32:18), and familiar with other gods. These practices are covenantal in concept. All of these point to covenant failure by Israel but not the backing out of covenant by God. Although negative in perspective, these features certainly demonstrate Jeremiah's concern with covenant and the covenant context of his writings. As Levenson (1979: 216) confirms, it is impossible to miss the "covenant resonance" of the preaching of Jeremiah. He concludes, "In short, the Sinaitic experience was without question a central, perhaps the central, component of Israelite identity for as far back in the Iron Age as we can confidently probe".

Before the Babylonian captivity of 586 B.C., Jeremiah preached in vain to an unrepentant people. As a result, the covenant curses of Deuteronomy (11:26, 28; 29:1-30:1) were brought on Judah. God's chosen were in captivity. However, Deuteronomy 30:2 promises a return after exile. It is in this hope that the messianic ideal is realized and the absolute reign of God anticipated. Consequently, the study turns to the Christology and the reign of God in the middle period.

#### 4.3.2.2 Christology and the Reign of God in the Middle Period

Aytoun (1920: 27-28) maintains that the Major Prophets did not consider the Davidic throne sacrosanct or divinely guaranteed. He specifically mentions that Isaiah shows no special reverence for the Davidic succession and Jeremiah prophesied the rejection of David. However, he does admit that the common belief of a restored throne did eventually develop, although slowly. Brown (1994: 157-158) however, does not present such a restrained view of the Christological development. He states emphatically, “there is a development in royal messianism” in the eighth century. He then supports this with discussions on various passages from Isaiah, Micah, and Ezekiel. Both, however, agree that the stimulus for the Messianic hope was the product of the restoration and regeneration of Israel following the loss of their covenant security (Aytoun, 1920: 24; Brown, 1994: 158).

As indicated above, the study will examine the prophets of Matthew’s *plērōō* statements. This begins with Isaiah, the first of the four prophets used by Matthew. It will be evident from the material presented that there is a close association between Christology and kingdom in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, for this study, they will be treated as two elements of a whole, studied under the general heading of the Davidic covenant. As should be evident, this covenant holds the messianic ideal of one like David who will be the agent of the rule of heaven in Israel and for the nations. The research in this section is intended to show the general context of covenant, Christology, and kingdom in the particular periods. The historical evidence will be used to support these themes.

The search for Christological concepts in Isaiah begins with the term for anointing. Messiah is commonly used, represented in Hebrew by *māšah* (verb) and *māšîah* (noun). Isaiah uses the verb twice (21:5, 61:1) and the noun (45:1) once. The first occurrence of the verb relates to oiling a shield, perhaps to make it more flexible (Oswalt, 2001). The second is of interest to this study. “The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed (*māšah*) me to preach good news to the poor” (Isaiah 61:1). Oswalt (2001) states that Isaiah 61 is central to the vision of God’s redemptive acts. The anointing spoken of could be assumed to be that of the prophet. However, as Childs (2001: 504) points out, there is a shift to the first person, which is not typical of earlier Isaiah. This is indeed the messiah, the servant of Jehovah (Keil and Delitzsch, 2002;

Oswalt, 2001; Childs, 2001: 504). Goldingay (2001: 345-346) considers the prophet himself to be the embodiment of the servant of Isaiah 42:1-9. Additionally, significant in the Isaiah 61 passage is the explanation of the result of the anointing. The Spirit of the Lord God is in that result. It is significant that the double name for God (*Adonay Yahweh*) is used here and in verse 11 “as if to form brackets around the entire chapter” (Childs, 2001: 503). Clements (2003: 43) ties the servant idea explicitly to the royal house. He notes that the expectation was drawn from expectations of dominance over other nations based on the Davidic claims.

The sanctioning of the Davidic line was validated first by the prophecy of Nathan (2 Sam 7) and then by the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh to Jerusalem (von Rad, 1962: 39-41). This was common knowledge from the time of David through the prophets. Isaiah sings the praise of the Davidic messiah in 11:1-8 with reference to his anointing (the Spirit of the Lord on him) that was not confined to a limited number of days but to his desire for justice for the weak, and his reign of peace. This looks to the coming “root of Jesse” who is a new David (von Rad, 1965: 169-170). Regarding the reign of peace, Pannell (1988: 132) identifies Isaiah 9:1-6, Isaiah 11:1-5 and Micah 4:14-5:5 as a trilogy for the Messiah as “the agent of liberation par excellence”. This is vital in a scenario of power and dominance that demonstrates injustices to the point of oppression (Dempsey, 2000: 5).

Goldingay (2001: 64) and Childs (2001: 62) indicate that Isaiah’s seventh chapter contrasts the faithlessness of Ahaz against the faithfulness of God with us (Immanuel). This is the purpose of the sign given to Ahaz. Brueggemann (1998: 70) notes that the name of the promised sign stands in contrast to the name listed in 7:3, Shear-jashub, Ahaz’s son. Additionally, this “positive and reassuring” name points to the Davidic promise, affirming the prophetic realities of 2 Samuel 7. It is in these types of contrasts that the messianic figure is elevated above the disappointing leaders of Israel and Judah. They are not rulers like David. Thus, God promises rulers who will rise above these who have broken covenant by serving other gods. This starts with the messiah who is in the Davidic lineage and the first of many to rule.

An appreciation for Isaiah’s messianic ideal is incomplete without the consideration of the suffering servant. The passage under consideration to illustrate this is 52:13-53:12. The beginning of this account stands seems to stand in contrast to an expression used of God in Isaiah 61. Here, God is high and exalted. This is the picture of supremacy, “a

king on a highly elevated ‘royal throne’ (*kissēh* 6:1)”, the picture of sovereignty over all the earth (Smith, 2007: 187). Yet, in 52:13-14, it is now the servant who is exalted. The first verse uses the same two verbs as in 6:1 (*rûm* and *nāsā*, respectively) but adds a third (*gābah*). Dray (2008: 33) vividly points out the extreme language in this verse. The servant is elevated to a position equal with God. Additionally, he will be of such position that the kings of the earth will be speechless, especially when one considers the picture of suffering that is given by Isaiah. It would seem that Isaiah is picturing one who overcame enormous and painful suffering. This may have been the reason for the elevation. This is the picture painted by Isaiah. He was despised, rejected, sorrowful, and suffering. Yet, God has exalted this servant to a position equal to his own. It is, in fact, this very picture that Matthew recreates in his use of Isaiah. The one who was familiar with human suffering healed others from their suffering. Walton (2003: 738-740) surveys the evidences for the Mesopotamian practice of substitution for the king when there were omens perceived to jeopardize his life. After the survey, he compares this to Isaiah 53 concluding that the servant in Isaiah 53 stood in place of the community as a single representative for the king. Next, he concludes that the substitution is vicarious because, as in the Mesopotamian ritual, the substitute died and was buried. As a single substitute, the identity is important since there are messianic implications. He supports the (royal) messianic identity with a comparison of the Deutero-Isaiah to canonical Isaiah. He contends that the exact terminology varies but “the similarity in the general profile is unmistakable” (Walton, 2003: 742).

Maller (2009: 244) lists the possibility of at least six messiahs. Of these, four are individuals. Of these, one is political of the house of David and one is religious of the house of Aaron. Another is a special “end of days” prophet and the other is *mashiah ben Yosef* who was a precedent of David from one of the northern tribes. The other two are the larger groups of Israel and the Gentiles as exemplified by Cyrus. Regarding the individuals, two of these do not fit the rabbinic understanding of a messiah who was a descendant of David, from the tribe of Judah. The Aaronic and *mashiah ben Yosef* would not fit this description. According to Wicher (1999: 320), the rabbis of Jesus’ day could not escape the theme of suffering in Isaiah but felt this to be offensive to the majestic nature of the messiah. Sanders (1985: 412, n. 27) takes this further by concluding that Jesus’ use of the title Son of Man “fused the ideas of Messiah and Suffering Servant”. With these views as perspective, it is understandable why Matthew depended so much on Isaiah to defend his thesis. After Isaiah, Matthew uses the prophet

Hosea to tie Jesus to the ancient covenant. However, in this exodus reference is the election of a son who is messianic in mission.

As indicated above, covenant and covenant love are at the heart of Hosea's writings. However, to find such clear statements about or even allusions to either a Christological or kingdom theme in the book is difficult at best. Possibly the most direct allusion is the reference the return of the sons of Israel to "their God and David their King" (3:5). This statement is preceded in verse four by the prediction that there will be a time without the monarchy or religious institutions and relics. Hosea dated his ministry in 1:1. Freeman (1999: 175) dates this from 790 BC at the earliest to 686 BC at the latest. Macintosh (1997: lxxxiii) is more specific with a date covering a thirty year period starting in 750 BC. Without concern for the exact date, it is obvious that this post-dates the Davidic ideal of the messianic king. Thus, a reference to the return to David their king has messianic implications. However, Birch (1997: 44) and Macintosh (1997: 108, n. c) maintain that the phrase "David their king" is a later redaction reflecting Judean hope. If this is the case, it is necessary to look elsewhere for Messianic implications. One such place may be found in Hosea's use of the phrase "son of the living God" (*klēthēsontai huiōi theou zōntos*) (1:10; LXX, 2:1). Goodwin (2005: 272) believes that the Matthean parallel to this in 16:16b is modeled on the Hosean usage. He suggests parallel usage in 3 Maccabees 6:26 and Jubilee 1:25 provide a Jewish and early Christian background that validates the Matthean use of Hosea. The former is similar but not exact with "sons of the almighty living God of Heaven". Esther E:16 is similar to the Maccabean formula: "sons of the Most High, Most Mighty, Living God". The Jubilee passage is exact, even using the verb form (3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, future active indicative) of *kaleō*. This verb is absent in the Matthean formula of 16:16b because it is used in a direct quote from Peter. "Son of the living God" qualifies the noun *Christōs*. Had Peter used the exact phrase from Hosea, he would have merely restated what some may have accepted as a teaching of tradition that the "Christ is called the son of the living God". By leaving out *klēthēsontai*, Peter is making a dual confession. He is stating that Jesus is the Messiah and he is the Son of God. Goodwin (2005: 273) draws a similar conclusion but bases it on the use of the articles with son and God that are absent in Hosea.

While it may be a stretch to conclude that Hosea would have considered this a formula statement about the Messiah, the following verse may take us closer to finding that idea. After the declaration that sons of Israel would be called the children (*tekna* not *huios*;

children not son although the Hebrew is singular), Hosea projects the appointing of a ruler. Macintosh (1997: 36) points out that they will not have a king as the unity of north and south are in mind here as that institution in Israel has been discredited. However, the issue here is the restoration of the covenant, which is God keeping *hesed* and is not tied to a Messianic figure. To put Messianic hope in a descendant of David would not go over well in the north for the reason given above from Macintosh—the institution was discredited. Thus, Hosea keeps God as savior and the giver of hope. With the emphasis on God, it may be worth considering Mauser's (2000: 86-87) view regarding the anthropomorphisms of Hosea's language. Showing signs of extreme anger and continued care and love, these human qualities occur repeatedly in God's oracles to Hosea (cf. 9:15 with 14:5 and 5:10 with 11:9). Mauser (2000: 89) puts God on a level with Israel, hoping to exchange human emotions. "The God of the prophet Hosea is unashamedly anthropomorph". It is as if God has incarnated himself in Hosea. After all, Hosea is taking God's place in the marriage to demonstrate how God feels about Israel. Mauser (2000: 89) says it best when he describes the grotesque situation into which Hosea is put where, as God, he lives the "common life", enjoying both the blessings and cursings. However, as is oft the case with God in human relations, the full union is not always established. Hosea's wife is not fully his, yet he loves her as God loves Israel. This is truly a first glimpse of an incarnational act where God is in everyday human life. Not as a ruling, Davidic king but as a husband with an unfaithful wife. Not as a ruler, but as a citizen of the kingdom. He is man among men. This is one of the purest pictures of Jesus in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Hosea introduces the reader to the heart of God in the concept of *hesed*. This covenant component helps to identify the Christology of Hosea. It also identifies the human quality of the messiah. The humanity of the messiah is found in the connection to the line of David (Maller, 2009: 244; Wicher, 1999: 320). This understanding helps us transition to Matthew's next prophetic witness, Jeremiah.

Jeremiah's Christological perspective in the Davidic hope is stated clearly in 23:5-6 and 33:14-26. Bright's (1976: 144) contention that the traditions of David are foreign to Jeremiah are in contradiction to Jeremiah's direct statements. This seems to be true because of an apparent tension between the Sinaitic and Davidic covenants (1976: 103). He does clarify this to a degree by noting that the Davidic hope was a popular thought with the people and was reinterpreted by the prophets. This was necessary because the promises were the basis for national security and the future hope (Bright, 1981: 294).

Levenson (1979: 212) sees a contradiction in Bright's conclusions. He contends that if Sinai is the primary influence and if there is a Sinaitic promise of punishment but not total abandonment, then the "theology is the same shape as the underlying Davidic covenant". This is true because the Davidic line is also susceptible to punishment but are promised an eternal covenant.

There are four messianic prophecies in Jeremiah (23:5–6; 30:8–9; 30:21; 33:15–16). Two of these are of special significance in the quest for Jeremiah's Messiah. The first is in poetic form in 23:5-6. Aytoun (1920: 33, n. 25) considers only the poetry to be true Jeremianic oracles. For this reason, he appears to doubt the authenticity of the second Davidic passage in 33:14-26, noting that the LXX omitted it. However, he states that the reason for the omission may be political caution rather than lack of authenticity. Additionally, he notes that the outlook and phraseology are sixth century. Huey (2001: 211) comments that the royal failures of the Davidic line leads to God's intervention by providing his own ruler "who came to be called the Messiah (i.e., the Anointed One)" However, only the verb form for anoint is used by Jeremiah (22:14) and this is not in any way tied to a Messianic passage. However, the passage before us does indeed tie to a future event distinguished the phrase "days are coming." This expression is used fifteen times in Jeremiah (7:32; 9:25; 16:14; 19:6; 23:5, 7; 30:3; 31:27, 31, 38; 33:14; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47, 52). All occurrences are tied to either punishment (7:32; 9:25; 16:14; 19:6 [same as 7:32 only without the burial in Topeth] ; 31:27; 48:12; 49:2), restoration (23:7 [similar to 16:14]; 30:3; 31:27, 31, 38; 51:47, 52 [51:47 and 51:51 refer to the punishment of Babylon), or the Davidic rule (23:5; 33:14). This phrase does not designate movement in time. Rahter, it draws a contrast between the current situation and the hope of restoration. "However gloomy the present is, yet there is a time coming" (Keil and Delitzsch, 2002). Lundbom (2010: 98) identifies both continuity and discontinuity. He supports the former with 31:23-40 where once again the LXX uses the term *eti*, which denotes that a given situation is continuing still, yet (Arndt, Danker and Bauer, 2000: 200).

That which is anticipated is a *semah*, which is used in 23:5–6 and 33:15–16. This properly signifies one that shoots up, as in a fresh start such as the shoot from a tree (Carroll, 1986: 446; Hughes and Laney, 2001: 282; Martens, 1986: 149). The term is metaphorically used in contrast to the dead line of David (Hughes and Laney, 2001: 282; Walvoord, Zuck and Seminary, 1985). Isaiah is the first to use this (4:2) where the branch is specified as being the branch of Jehovah. In Jeremiah, the name of the branch

is identified as *Jahveh Tsidkenu*, the Lord our Righteousness (23:6). Carroll (1986: 446) notes that the term is a word play on king Zedekiah's name, serving to reject him (Huey, 2001: 212) because he was the king who had been "cut off" (Walvoord, Zuck and Seminary, 1985). The significance in this term is that it brings together references to the functions of both king and priest (Baldwin, 1964: 94). This is bound to the activity of doing justice and righteousness.

The context introduces the idea of the shepherd as the ruler of Israel. The ideal of the Messiah as shepherd has been introduced in 3:15. There he is said to *rāāl* the people. This term signifies the work of a shepherd but metaphorically means to lead (Jonker, 1997). These shepherds are not like the previous kings who led the nation into idolatry. Rather, they will have a heart for God and rule accordingly. The rule or shepherding will be characterized by knowledge and understanding. The actions of knowledge and wisdom are keeping and doing (Deut 4:6; 29:8). The doing and keeping will be of the law of God (Keil and Delitzsch, 2002). The term shepherds in 3:4 and 33:12 are plural, which can lead to the thought that the shoot of David is not intended to be one of the shepherds. However, the Davidic shoot will be the epitome of the good shepherd as defined by his nature of righteous and wisdom. Keil and Delitzsch (2002) understand this the Messiah being the first of many who will lead his people wisely. He will be the second David, the first in a long line of wise and righteous leaders of God's chosen. The obvious application of this in the Christian Scriptures is with the apostles and the successive leaders of the church (cf. 2 Tim 2:2). Brueggemann (1991: 98) agrees that the Messianic ideal is not part of Jeremiah's typical message. There is no "David-shaped" future. Nonetheless, God made promises to David that Jeremiah recognizes in these dual passages. Additionally, chapter 33 in particular speaks not only of the Davidic promises, but "collects all Israel's possible ways of speaking of God's good future" (Brueggemann, 1991: 98). The Davidic promises do more than fulfil God's covenant with him, they also satisfy the the covenant requirements that are the central theme of Jeremiah. The fact that this was written at a time when no descendant of David sat on the throne and there was no temple for the priest to serve, indicates that this is a promise of restoration centered on the promises to David (McKane, 1996: 862).

With the promise of restoration ringing in their ears, Israel is led into captivity. Prophecies have been fulfilled. God's chosen are scattered but not forgotten. As the promise to curse, so is the promise to bless and return. Thus, the study now moves into the era leading to Matthew, starting with the exile.

### **4.3.3 Exile to NT Times**

The exile begins with the loss of freedom, Jerusalem, the temple and ends with the restoration of the same. Porten (Exile, Babylonian, 2007: 609) indicates that the traumatic losses were met with the mixed feelings of revenge and repentance. Repentance produced “regular commemorative fasts (Zech. 7:1ff.; 8:18–19) and a yearning to be reconciled with God and restored to the land of Judah (Ps. 137; Lam. 3:39ff.; 5:19–21)”. Because they were God’s chosen, even though in exile, he did not forget them. They maintained an economic and social stability, maintaining their clan and family structure. Ultimately, Cyrus is the anointed of God who begins the restoration (Is 44:28-25:1) of the state and cultic practices with the decree to return the captured to their homlands. Porten (History: From the Destruction to Alexander, 2007: 186) compares the leaving from exile to the Exodus, both being done by God’s miraculous intervention. God’s presence at Sinai, giving the law is paralleled by the rebuilding of the temple, which restores God’s presence. Of equal importance was the restoration of the law by Ezra. In order to preserve the restored land, the sabbath must be observed, there must be a fraternal sense restored to the nation, and marriages outside their culture was forbidden. This outline for success is found in Deutero-Isaiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

This restoration forms the backdrop for an examination of the Matthean context for *plērōō* during this final historical era. The examination of this time period will be divided into two sections. The first section examines post-exilic Israel through the ministry of Zechariah, who is the final prophet referenced by Matthew. The second section will examine the Second Temple era under the heading of Matthew’s milieu (4.3), which will follow the study of Zechariah’s context.

#### **4.3.3.1 Covenant in the Final Period**

Porten (2007: 610-611) confirms that the work of Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah, Haggai, and Zechariah give conclusive evidence for the cultural continuity. Born in exile, Zechariah’s mission was to inspire the restoration of the state and religion of the Jewish nation by rebuilding the temple. However, this was not an easy task, even with the support of Cyrus. Zechariah’s return was in the face of opposition from neighboring provinces whose help in rebuilding the temple was refused, causing animosity that

thwarted restoration efforts. This was further complicated by wars in Persia and famine in Israel. The work was stopped after the death of Cyrus and his son but resumed when Darius, who supported the religious practices of Cyrus, located the orders from Cyrus that allowed the Jews to rebuild the temple (Ezra 6:2-5).

Restoration was a promise of the covenant (Deut 30:1-2). Zechariah makes a direct connect to the covenant in 9:11 with the idea that the people were set free from their bondage by the blood of the covenant. Merrill (1994: 258) reminds us that blood is associated with animal sacrifices, noting specifically the sealing of the Mosaic covenant with blood (Ex 24:1-8). Hence, the expression “blood of the covenant” is an element that represents the whole Mosaic covenant. As was pointed out by Porten above, there is certainly a parallel between the exodus and the drawing of the covenant by Moses and Zechariah’s use of this phrase here. However, as Merrill (1994: 259) points out, the second exodus is *because of* (emphasis mine) the covenant. As with the first exodus, the return was to the land of promise (also a(n) (Abrahamitic) covenant concept). For Zechariah, the emphasis is on the nature of the land. Now, instead of flowing with milk and honey (Ex 3:8), it is a fortification (*bissārôn*) that stands in opposition to the pit or prison (*bôr*) (cf. Is 42:7). Merrill (1994: 259) states, “The full blessing of YHWH awaits those who take refuge in Him as their stronghold. Those who remain outside, distant from Him, remain without the benefits of His promises”, which is another way of expressing the blessings associated with the covenant formula of “I will be their God and they will be my people” (Rendtorff, 1998: 13-15).

Clark and Hatton (2002: 247) consider that the identity of which covenant (Abrahamitic or Mosaic) is referenced is of little consequence since Jewish thought does not separate them. Rather, the Mosaic is the apex of the Abrahamitic (Torop, 2009). Further, they insist that the relationship of blood to the covenant needs to be clarified such as is done in the Today’s English Version and the Contemporary English Version. However, while the contemporary reader may be unaware of the significance of blood sacrifices and the sealing of both the Abrahamitic (Gen 15) and the Mosaic (Ex 24:1-8), Zechariah’s or Matthew’s (Jewish) readers would not. Smith (1994) reminds us that Matthew identifies the blood with the covenant (Matt 26:28). As noted earlier, it is noteworthy that the word is omitted from a majority of the manuscripts. The presence in some extant sources would seem to be the result of the parallel passage in Luke (22:20). There is no reason why it would have been deleted by the editors if it had been present originally (Metzger and Societies, 1994: 54).

For Zechariah, the idea of covenant involves two aspects—restoration and the blood. Both of these find their reality in the reconstruction of the temple. Here, God’s presence can again be known and the sacrifices offered in honor of the law that embodies God’s presence. The same chapter that connects Zechariah to the covenant also provides the shift in emphasis that introduces that it is the Lord himself who protects his people (9:8), providing protection greater than King David (Estelle, 2008). However, Zechariah identifies a messianic figure who will perform this for the Lord. Like Jeremiah, Zechariah identifies one by name who will perform the deeds of restoration for his people. His name is “the Branch” (3:8; 6:12). This identification shifts the study to the Christological context of Zechariah.

#### **4.3.3.2 Christology and the Reign of God in the Final Period**

After Jeremiah’s contribution to the Matthean drama, the next prophet to appear is Zechariah. Cross (1975: 13) suggests that the ideology of the Chronicler has been reformulated, especially in Zechariah. In chapter 3, the authority normally associated with the Davidic promises are also extended to the priest. Baldwin (1964: 96) recounts the word play in Zechariah to demonstrate that the glory (splendor beyond that of royalty) represented by the *hōd* (the gold and silver wreath) placed on Joshua’s head, would belong to one of a later time who would come from anonymity into prominence. His function would be kingly and priestly. This is the branch first mentioned in 3:8 where Joshua, the priest, and the men with him are the symbol of things to come. Baldwin (1964: 95) uses the word portent to translate the idea of *mōpēt*. However, this does not do justice to the idea that Zechariah possibly intended. This is the same word used by Jeremiah (32:20-21) to describe the miraculous work God performed in Egypt when he brought out Israel. Additionally, it is not the same word used by Isaiah in 7:14. Zechariah seems to be pointing toward the miraculous work that God will once again perform. The performance of that will be brought about through the branch because the audience knows that Zerubbabel has not performed this (Goldingay and Scalise, 2009: 220). These men signify the priestly nature of the coming branch (Merrill, 1994: 141). In opposition to this, Aytoun (1920: 38-40) puts the Davidic crown on Zerubbabel and with his disappearance from history, the loss of royal hope. In fact, he questions if there was ever a royal hope in prophecy stressing that the Isaiah royal passages are later additions. The only possible royal prophecy for him is found in Second Isaiah (55:3). However, he sees the Davidic house disinherited and the royal promise belonging to

Israel. As noted above, this is a bias built on the historical evidences of the sufferings of Israel as a people. Thus, his conclusions are the product of a history of suffering and not necessarily that of objective exegesis. Additionally, it would be difficult to attribute Zechariah's branch to the people group when the prophet specifically states that the branch is a man. The emphasis on the pronouns suggests a contrast between the present leaders and a future one (Baldwin, 1964: 95). Brown (1994: 160) notes that Zechariah's king-savior concept is a transition from a warrior to one who brings universal peace as the instrument of God's salvation. Additionally, the royal identity is lost. Brown admits though that this was not a universally accepted view as evidenced in *The Psalms of Solomon* where there is a mixture of the political and spiritual. Gregory (2007: 475) contends that the redaction of canonical Third Isaiah reveals the messianic development that flourishes in later Second Temple writings. "Thus, Isaiah 61 plays an important and pivotal role in the development of theological motifs and hermeneutical methods during the postexilic period".

To look beyond Zechariah and draw this era to a close, Brown (1994: 159-161) summarizes that it took the course of a thousand years for the fuller development alluded to in the NT. The exile ended the Davidic line, so the messianic type king was a representative who would act for God to save the people. He noted that this is the period that produced the "Messiah" in the strict sense. Admittedly, this term does not appear much outside of the NT, so he suggests that the Royal Psalms were read with this picture in mind. This new image pictured one who would be the final and ultimate victor so that God would not need to intervene again. This would not be as much of a series of historical events as it would be the "inbreaking of God's power into history" (Brown, 1994: 159). Finally, Brown concludes regarding the hope of a royal messiah as a political figure. However, the purpose was to bring Israel back under the rule of God by means of the "virtue of the charisma and power of God". Additionally, he remarks that the scope of the royal messiah was exclusive to Israel. Any reference outside of Israel was viewed with great prejudice (Brown, 1994: 161). Brown's summary brings the work to Matthew's milieu. As indicated earlier, the next sections serves the function of bringing to a close the third historical era covered in this study. Additionally, it will give us a view contemporary to Matthew, aiding the study in determining the more immediate context of Matthew's *plērōō* statements.

## 4.4 MATTHEW'S MILIEU

The intent of this final section is to offer an introduction to the Second Temple and Common Judaism. These are two segments of the culture in which Jesus moved about proclaiming the kingdom. It is into these that Matthew introduces the Jewish son who is qualified to fulfil the anticipations of both formal (Second Temple) and everyday (Common) Judaism.

### 4.4.1 Second Temple Judaism

Prior to Alexander the Great, culture was the product of birthright. You were a Jew by birth, descended from Jacob's sons, living in the covenant promised land. Because of the widespread influences of Hellenism, non-Greeks began to talk, dress, and live like Greeks in Greek-style cities. This new "ism" (*hellenismos*) gave birth to others, including Judaism (*judaismos*) (Skarsaune, 2002: 39-40). This term *judaismos* first appears in 2 Maccabees 2:21 (cf. 8:1 and 14:38). Judaism as used by the Maccabees was not a biological tie but a life style guided by the Torah. Regarding opposing "isms," 2 Maccabees 4:13-15 reports:

And to such a height did the passion for Greek fashions rise, and the influx of foreign customs, thanks to the surpassing impiety of that godless Jason—no high-priest he! <sup>14</sup>—that the priests were no longer interested in the services of the altar, but despising the sanctuary, and neglecting the sacrifices, <sup>15</sup>they hurried to take part in the unlawful displays held in the palaestra after the quoit-throwing had been announced—thus setting at naught what their fathers honoured and esteeming the glories of the Greeks above all else.

Grabbe (2010: 10-11) reminds us that the process of Hellenization was complicated, taking centuries to complete. The Greeks did not force their culture on the world. In fact, Grabbe states that they protected it (2010: 10). Rather, it was the world who sought after the advantages offered by Hellenism. Lower levels of civil service were bilingual. Greek education was desired. To best understand the conclusion of this process, Hellenization was to be Greek. Rather, it was the true synthesis of Greek and Near Eastern cultures into a third culture. Grabbe (2010: 11) insists that Hellenism has more in common with the Near Eastern culture than classical Greek culture.

Further, Skarsaune (2002: 40-41) demonstrates the contrast between the immediate post-exilic attitudes of being Jewish to the attitude of Hellenization with the ethnic cleansing of Ezra who endorsed the renunciation of all mix marriages. Nonetheless, the process continued to ultimately include the import of *koine* Greek into Jewish and NT

authors. As noted above, the reason is that identity with the Greek oriented culture was a matter of language and education (Grabbe, 2010: 10-11). An interesting archaeological demonstration of the influx of the Greek language into Jewish lifestyle is that of the 194 known inscriptions found on ossuaries, sixty-four percent were written in Greek against twenty-six percent in Hebrew or Aramaic. Other types of burial inscriptions demonstrate the same (Skarsaune, 2002: 41). Is it any wonder then that Matthew would use a Greek drama to tell his Jewish story! However, the quest for total Hellenization met strong resistance in the Jew's temple. Here, the revived, ancient culture resisted the Greek influence.

Thus, Judaism became sectarian in a religious sense with three focal points—the law, the temple, and scripture (Skarsaune, 2002: 122-129). However, there was a sense of loss in that the new temple did not have the authentic appeal of Solomon's. Additionally, the growing influence of the priests expanded outside the temple to that of official leadership of the Jews. The weakness of this lie in the fact that they were not sufficiently pious. This gave rise to sects that validated the new temple and priesthood. While they were often supportive of this arrangement, they did at times oppose it as well (Cohen, 2006: 153). Grabbe (2010: 40-46) identifies three currents of the larger stream of Judaism. First is textual Judaism that was temple oriented during a time of intense interest in understanding the law. Prominent in this current were the priests. Their primary responsibility was to carry out the sacrificial system, which was at the center of the covenant. Additionally, the priests interpreted and ruled on matters regarding the law. The second stream was revolutionary in its political and messianic ideals. Political interest is identified with various revolts from the Maccabees to Bar Kokhba whose spirits were sustained by the stories of David and Solomon and energized by the fear of loss of cultic religious practices. Their cause was based on the ideological, which prompted the hope of a messianic figure who would lead Israel (Grabbe, 2010: 66-84). Grabbe's (2010: 87-108) final current was driven by the end day expectations. He insists that this was not a unified ideal. Elements of this ideal were life after death, eternal nature of the soul, end times and the heavenly messiah. Regarding the messiah, the more common view was not ethereal but rather, a flesh and blood king/priest.

One final observation of relevance to this study is visualized in Skarsaune's (2002: 103-129) response to the question of "how many Judaisms"? This question is prompted by the idea that Judaism evolved over time so that it was no longer represented by a single,

united ideal. Rather, the sectarian nature produced a multi-layered religious society. He identifies four major layers and each play a priestly role. The first is the priestly elite who form the largest group. Skarsaune (2002: 108) puts the number at 20,000. Sanders (1985: 194-198) provides a detail account of the size of the groups of interest during NT times. While the largest, little is known about their beliefs or opinions as there are no extant documents that provide this. The next group is priestly Judaism, which is divided into two sub-groups, the Sadducees and the Essenes of Qumram. For these, extant writings give us insights into their philosophical ideas. The final layer is the priestly Judaism for the common people—the Pharisees. Josephus put their number at 6,000 (*Antiquites* 17.4.2). Additionally, Sanders contends that the Pharisees ruled Judaism (Sanders, 1985: 194-195). Their teachings are preserved for us in the NT, by Josephus, and in the Rabbinic writings. More is known of their ideologies than any of the others. One primary reason is that the NT, and as indicated, Matthew set them against Jesus as his primary competitor (Neusner, 1984: 60).

The groups pictured above belong to the religious class of Judaism. Theirs was a position of respect and leadership, whether they earned it or not. However, there is yet another segment of the Judaism of this point that deserves some attention. They were the *amme ha-aretz*. These were the common people, or peasants. Bercovitz (2000) maintains that the “Pharisees had nothing but contempt for these folk because of their casual attitude toward observance of the Law”. At this juncture, a brief introduction could prove beneficial.

#### **4.4.2 Common Judaism**

To the elements of the diversity of Judaism mentioned above, Sanders (2008: 19) adds three more groups to the list of the Priestly Judaism. They are Josephus’ “fourth philosophy” (*Antiquites* 18.1.6), the common people, and Hellenistic Jewish philosophers (Philo). Considering this group in its entirety, he defines common Judaism as that where most of them agree. As examples, he lists circumcision of males, belief in God’s election of Israel, and the distinct, social identity known as being a Jew. Identifying marks that non-Jews recognized were assembly in their synagogues, not to work or appear in court on the sabbath, eating of ethnic foods, and paying temple tax. In his conclusion, Sanders (2008: 21) suggests that the common Judaism was essential to the whole and most individual Jews. He further suggests that only popular opinion *enforced* (his emphasis) the uniform acceptance of these common elements.

McCready and Reinhartz (2008: 2) recognize a two-fold claim to the term “common Judaism”. First, it draws a line between the ordinary and the powerful. Second, it emphasizes a concern for religious matters, even though the *amme ha-aretz* are segregated from the elite. They suggest this is expected from scripture based religions. The writings belong to everyone. While the conclusions about common Judaism from Sander’s work (*Judaism: Practice and Belief* Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International, 1992.) has greatly influenced the study of Second Temple Judaism, it also draws attention to other ideas such as the insider understanding of the diversity of Judaism, the methodology used by Sanders that drew on such diverse geographical areas and time periods. However, it is these very concepts that emphasizes the importance of recognizing the significance of Second Temple Judaism. The fact that such an identifiable commonality could be found in the rich diversity in fact underpins Sander’s arguments for a common Jewish religious experience. Rajak (2008: 146) raises a related question regarding how the Jewish community maintain a common Judaism within their scriptures across the language divide. With the emphasis on the Greek speaking Jew, Rajak (2008: 146-147) insists that Greek speaking Jews, reading a Greek bible “demonstrably built on the work of predecessors”. That is, the message of Judaism and the common elements (as mentioned above) were transferrable across language barriers, maintaining the previous understanding of their ancestors. Of interest is the idea that translating from Hebrew to Greek came against the problem that Greek words were given specialized meanings with new works and idioms coined, such as Matthew’s word *ekklesia* (Rajak, 2008: 149).

One final illustration will move this toward the summary and application. Haber (2008: 64-65) reminds her readers that purity and holiness were prominent features of Jewish life in this period. Purity related to people, objects, space, and time. These were fundamental categories in the Jewish social structure. The law demanded that the sacred not contact the impure. The significance of this is reinforced by the observance of the purity laws in Israel and among the Diaspora. This final illustration of common Judaism ties us back to Matthew in that, as recorded in chapter 3, the issue of purity was the topic of discussion between Jesus and the Pharisees. This often came up due to the practice of the disciples (Matt 15:2). The Pharisees made it an issue of tradition. Jesus immediately turns to the crowds (15:10) and teaches them regarding true purity.

#### 4.5 APPLICATION TO THE STUDY

Matthew's choice of the word *plērōō* allowed him to move from the Greek environment of the word back into his cultural heritage. This was aided by the development of the concept, especially as filtered through the LXX. He understood that it help span the gap for the Hellenized Jew.

As shown, the word carries a variety of meanings determined often by context. Matthew's use of the word has obvious implications to determine first what needed to be fulfilled and why it was necessary to fulfil it at this particular time. Equally important is the import of how the fulfilment satisfies Matthew's thesis that Jesus is the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham. The examination of the prophets demonstrated that a link exists between Matthew and the prophets he referenced. The link in each was covenant, messianism, and the reign of God. For Isaiah, the messianic tie was very strong. Jeremiah and Hosea demonstrated strong covenant ties. Nonetheless, while these strengths did exist, all were shown to have all three contexts as a vital part of their work.

To reiterate the Matthean purpose, his audience was in need of being grounded in the ancient tradition of their faith. Even for the non-Jew, it should be obvious that the relationship between a people claiming a personal revelation via covenant election and their new faith tradition in Jesus is guided and perpetuated by this connection. Matthew has provided this avenue to antiquity to validate his claims of Jesus. With this connection, the study can now move to the next chapter where the work will center around the key fulfilment texts, giving opportunity to tie the covenant, messiah, reign concepts directly into the Matthean work.

Matthew, like Paul, had within his grasp the best of both worlds. He was capable of communicating a full, Jewish background to his audience while being sympathetic to their Hellenistic influence. As noted, his very Jewish work set in a Gentile setting allowed him to present the drama of Israel ultimately played out in Jesus. His audience was his class and Matthew the teacher of the Jewish heritage and the Christian ideal by means of a Gentile format.

## 5.0 MATTHEW'S *PLĒRÓŌ* IDEAL REALIZED IN JESUS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Matthew's use of *plērōō* makes it clear that Jesus came to fulfil. The necessity of this is obvious if Matthew's audience was a mix of Jew and Gentile. The validity for this has been suggested based on Matthew structuring his work on a Greek drama, using Jewish characters and a Jewish setting. This brings together Palestinian Jew, Hellenized Jew, and the world (*ethnē*) via a common media that each could understand. The Palestinian Jew is enticed into the drama by the representation of his status realized in the both Pharisaic and common Judaism. The Hellenized Jew is invited into the drama by the cultic mix of their heritage and the Greek theatre. The Greek is brought in by means of a well-written drama that invites a once-rejected culture to share what had been exclusive but is now inclusive as the Messiah represents one who is interested in all cultic heritages. Without this, the fulfilment scenario is limited to only those who have even a remote interest in what ancient writings suggested may be a reality in their day. However, the greater perception of a multi-cultural intent based on fulfilment is validated by both the extent of Matthew's outreach (e.g., Thomas taking the gospel to India) and the ultimate appearance of the work in Greek.

Additionally, *plērōō* is a Greek term whose impact is realized by the cultural integration of the Greek idea meshed with Jewish intent. For this reason, this chapter begins with suggestions on Matthew's understanding of the *plērōō* concept and then discusses this in its use contextually (3:15; 5:17) and in formula statements (1:22; 2:15; 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 21:4-5). The primary methodology will be an exegesis of the passages listed in an attempt to understand how they fit Matthew's theme. Additionally, the contextual studies will be broadened to the topical approach necessary to fully understand Matthew's use.

### 5.2 MATTHEW'S UNDERSTANDING OF *PLĒRÓŌ*

Looking back to the development and usage of the term, it is evident that this word group can have a variety of implications, depending on what it is referencing as needing fulfilling. Kirk (2008: 77) proposes that the fulfilment concept in Matthew is historically realized in Jesus continuing the story of Israel. This supports the assumption that Matthew's intent is to tie his audience to the Jewish heritage. Kirk (2008: 78)

contends that the formula quotations provide the window through which Matthew's Jesus is seen in the OT context. Further, Kirk (2008: 87) does not find Stendahl's (1954: 200-201) *perser* or Luz's (2007: 156-164) proposals satisfactory as they do not provide a conceptual framework for understanding Matthew's notion of *plērōō*. Rather, he disconnects them from their predictive role, attempting to find a broader base for the use of the OT. One possible solution he discusses is typology, which he thinks is closer to Matthew's use in that it does not depend on prophecy. Rather than prophecy, there are reoccurring patterns, similar to Blomberg's double fulfilment (2002: 17-33), indicating sovereign involvement. This can be illustrated by Allison's (1993: 185) statement that Jesus is the Moses-like Messiah delivering the law on a mountain like Sinai. Nolland (2005: 123) comments that the Matthean account of Jesus coming out of Egypt establishes an Israel typology. This had become the language of messianic expectation (Nolland, 2005: 123, n. 160). Kirk (2008: 91) concludes that the law and the prophets provide the "shape" of Israel, past, present, and future. In this sense, Jesus becomes the fullest expression of Israel as the messianic hope, giving a new shape to Israel. Hamilton (2008: 243) explains typology using the reference to Hosea 11:1 and Jesus' family coming out of Egypt. He equates Israel being brought out of Egypt and led into failure in the desert to Jesus' return from Egypt and success over Satan in the desert. In typology, future readers can read the history as history but find in their current milieu a realization of the ideal of the history. This is Matthew's intent as he connects them with the history by seeing it living in Jesus.

Matthew uses some form of the word *plērōō* sixteen times, yet no single idea applies to all of them. Additionally, not all of the uses support Matthew's thesis. Thus, it is necessary to classify the uses. The first classification is the non-thematic uses that do not fall within the covenant, Christological, or kingdom context. The second is the thematic use of *plērōō* within the larger context of the book. The final group uses *plērōō* in a thematic formula. The following offers a brief overview of each.

### **5.2.1 Non-thematic Uses of *Plērōō***

In Matthew's sixteen uses of *plērōō*, nine represent a thematic connection in which Matthew directly ties them to the contexts of covenant, Christology, and kingdom. The other seven (2:23; 5:33; 13:14, 35; 26:54, 56; 27:9) seemingly do not support Matthew's primary intent of connecting to the Hebrew context. Of the remaining seven, only 5:33 does not use the fulfilment formulary. Rather, it is used in reference to the OT demands

regarding vows (Lev 19:12; Num 30:2; Deut 23:21, 23). Martin (1983: 55, n. 12) contends that the antitheses, of which 5:33 is one, is designed to bring out the radical meaning of the law. Ito (1991: 11) attributes this saying to Jewish origins but not as prophetic fulfilment.

The next (2:23) connects Jesus with unnamed prophets (pl. in the GK). This is the third of three *plērōō* formularies used by Matthew in chapter two. This one does not have the same precision as the others (2:15; 2:17-18), as if Matthew is deliberately avoiding the meticulousness nature of the other formula statements (Nolland, 2005: 128). Shires (1947: 20) notes that the source is unknown and that this is beyond question. Additionally, there is no pre-Christian use of the term Nazarene. This imprecision reduces its support of Matthew's theme, making it of little interest in this study.

The next *plērōō* statements that have not made the working list for this study fall within Matthew's parable chapter. Both of these use the fulfilment formula, with 13:14 naming the prophet (Isaiah). McComiskey (2008: 1) concludes that Jesus is not coming to fulfil some anticipated event associated with the Messiah. Rather, he applies the words to his ministry and Isaiah's character to his preaching. While Isaiah is a messianic prophet as pictured in chapter 4, it is his message that is of interest to Matthew as he has Jesus preaching a similar message of kingdom awareness.

The first (13:14) uses a different form of *plērōō* than the others (*anaplēroutai*). Additionally, he uses the term prophecy (*prophēteia*). These distinctive features are not like Matthew's usual formulary (Nolland, 2005: 535, cf. n. 42). Additionally, the statement does not refer to Jesus. Rather, it refers *to them*. That is, it refers to those in verse 13 that do not see or understand. The second *plērōō* statement that is formulary is not from the traditional prophets. Rather, it draws from the Psalms (78:2). Morris (1992: 354) recognizes that Matthew holds that the entire OT is from God and thus, prophetic. Additionally, 1 Chronicles 25:2 identifies Asaph as a prophet of the king. Mounce (1991: 132) expands on Morris by saying that the whole of the OT looks to the coming kingdom. As Luz (2001: 265) rightly states, Matthew uses this OT statement to reinforce the idea that Jesus' parables conform to the will of God, this particular parable does not contribute any understanding to the nature of Matthew's messiah. This prophecy deals with the sayings, not the man. Because of the general setting in the Psalms and the intent to show Matthew's specific context, this passage was omitted from exegesis. In a similar fashion, the next set of non-thematic verses in 26:54-56

makes general rather than specific use of the OT. Matthew use of generalization of scripture is evident elsewhere (4:4, 6, 7, 10; 26:24). In the current passage, the use of fulfilment was to validate the passion of Christ that was to come (Hagner, 1995: 790).

The final *plērōō* statement is in 27:9. This one does not pertain directly to Jesus. Rather, this is in connection with the blood money given to Judas for his betrayal. Gundry (1982: 557) points out that Matthew breaks from his normal use of *hina* (in order that) in the formula and uses *tote*. This is done to tie this event directly to the prophecy. The only other time this is done in a formulary is 2:17 where Matthew ties the historical event of the death of the young boys to the sorrow recorded by Jeremiah. The use of *tote* in this way makes a more direct connection between his current history and the OT context. The exclusion of this verse is the same as 5:33 in that it has no direct relationship to the theme.

### **5.2.2 *Plērōō* in Thematic Context**

Hübner (1990: 108) marks the distinction between contextual and fulfilment statements in Matthew. The latter's use of a formulary distinguishes these passages as OT in context. Introduced by *hina/hopōs*, these are tied to prophets, sometimes by name and sometimes not. Regarding contextual statements, there are two significant uses of *plērōō*. Matthew uses the fulfilment concept in these instances to tie his theme to a broader OT concept as opposed to a specific prophetic setting. While both of these (3:15 and 5:17) effectively connect with Matthew's theme of Christ, covenant, and kingdom, they also identify more precisely with and support a specific thematic context. This context is the righteousness of God, which will be shown to be his ontological nature exhibited in specific actions. These actions support the Matthean theme and the suggested context of covenant, Christology, and kingdom. The ultimate purpose of the thematic context is to demonstrate that the fulfilment of righteous (3:15) and the fulfilment of the law (5:17) support Jesus' overarching theme of surpassing righteousness (5:20). Within this theme, Matthew's Jesus ultimately satisfies (fulfills) the requirements needed to support his right to be covenanted Messiah whose authority is realized in the reign of God in the kingdom of heaven.

The development of the thematic section requires an in depth study of the concept of righteousness, and how Matthew understands and uses it. As a result, there is an imbalance in the methodology of this study. Considerable space must be allotted for this

theme as this word senses that it is foundational to all other aspects of Matthew. If his Messiah did not come as the Righteous One, then all else is insignificant, including the prophetic fulfilments. If Jesus is anything other than the very essence of righteousness, Matthew's work is useless in that Jesus will be no different from the immediate, historical fulfilment of any prophecy. Thus, it is mandatory that much time and space be allotted to this subject.

### 5.2.3 Thematic Use of the *Plērōō* Formulary

The remaining passages support the Matthean theme, using the formula *plērōthēi tōn prophētōn*. Juce's (2011: 127-129) fulfilment ideal reinforces the proposition that Matthew's Jesus is the fulfilment of Jewish scripture and tradition and that Christ was put in opposition to the Jewish leaders. Reinforcing her thesis that Matthew's message is one of fulfilment, Juce (2011: 129) recognizes three fulfilment terms—*plērōō* (to make replete), *ginomai* (to come to pass), and *anaplērōō* (to complete). Dealing only with the formulary statements, this study focuses on *plērōō*, which is unveiled in 4:12-22, providing the prophetic background of these sayings. The purpose of this investigation is to explore what Matthew may have had in mind as he redacted these into his work. Nolland (2005: 99, n. 66) comments that there are ten (1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:4-5; 27:9-10. 2:5-6; 26:54, 56) considered as the formula set that are widely recognized as Matthean additions. He states two reasons. First, they are easily removable from their original context. Second, even though Matthew may identify a source, the quotations in his form are not found in the source. Based on the conclusion stated above that some are non-thematic, this study will work with only seven (1:22; 2:15, 17; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 21:4-5). The exegetical approach will consider the passages in the order they occur in Matthew, using standard methods of interpretation as identified by Powell (2009: vii).

### 5.2.4 Chapter Methodology

The study will consider the two in broader context first (3:15 and 5:17). The reason for this rather than following Matthew's order is because of the nature of these passages. Both introduce an aspect of Jesus that mandates the need for authentication that is accomplished by the formulary statements. That is, Jesus is placed centre stage as the only one who has the right to fulfil both righteousness and the law. The formulary

statements establish this right. Matthew, in order to create drama, allows the scenes to move in and out between these various elements, establishing Jesus' pre-eminence.

The contextual statements build the drama to the apex of 5:20 where Jesus introduces a surpassing righteousness. To do this, Matthew's Jesus arrives (*paraginetai*) and comes (*ēlthon*). These are incarnational actions placing God with us (*Emmanouēl*) for a specific purpose, both of which are done on the level with humanity. It is necessary to study these two incarnational events to see how they build to the climax of the introduction of the surpassing righteousness. After this, the study will seek to understand Matthew's use of the terms for righteousness (*dikaios* and *dikaiosunēn*). Finally, the formulary statements will be exegeted to demonstrate Matthew's use to support his theme of Jesus, messiah who is son of David and Abraham.

### **5.3 PLĒRŌSAI PĀSAN DIKAIOSUNĒN**

Jesus' introduction into public life is by way of the ministry of John the Baptist, emerging from John's ministry (Nolland, 2005: 151). Matthew introduces the forerunner in the context most important to him—the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven (Luz, 2007: 133; Gundry, 1982: 43). Matthew anticipates the theme of righteousness with a message of repentance. Hagner (1993: 47) points out that the message of repentance is not tied directly to forgiveness as it is in Mark and Luke (1:4 and 3:3, respectively). Later, Matthew will mention forgiveness in relation to the Eucharist and the blood of the covenant. Further, it is implicit in the confession of verse 6. Rather than forgiveness, Matthew's intent seems to be to place the ideal of righteousness in contrast to those in need of repentance and the one who will satisfy all righteousness. Thus, setting the context of covenant (3:9) and kingdom (3:2), Matthew introduces his Christological figure at a baptism that is validated by the Holy Spirit and the declaration of sonship, which is further verified in the temptation (4:1-11) (Hagner, 1993: 43). Further, the designation of sonship provides a glimpse of the baptismal experience in the early church (Johnson, 2003: 19). To determine how Matthew may have intended his readers to understand this, it is necessary to establish the setting for the fulfilment statement.

Hagner (1998: 367) associates the fulfilment of righteousness in 3:15 with Matthew's phrase "way of righteousness" (21:32) in salvation history. The former passage puts Jesus into salvation history and the latter puts John into it as instrumental to Jesus' role

in salvation history. Reinforcing this is Hagner's conception of fulfilment relating to the reaching of a new stage in salvation history. Connors (2010: 403) contends that the concepts of righteousness and fulfilment are complicated but in reality, the simple understanding is to do the will of God.

### **5.3.1 Setting the Stage for the Fulfilment**

Matthew carefully creates a dramatic effect when Jesus arrives on the scene on cue (*tote*). The prompt is the blistering statement of judgment that is incited by the presence of the leading antagonist, the Pharisees. John's bewildered reaction to Jesus' request shifts the attention to Jesus. Up to this point, Jesus has been passively involved. Notably, this fulfilment passage involves a physical action (Nolland, 2005: 151).

Matthew sets the stage for the baptism fulfilling righteousness by introducing the kingdom/reign (*basileia*), by confirming the conflict between the messiah and Israel begun in chapter two, and previewing the messianic judgment of the Son of Man. All of this is set in the forerunner's ministry of preaching and baptizing, climaxing in arrival of Jesus (Luz, 2007: 139-140). The movement of the drama is definite. Jesus has in mind to be baptized by John. Davies and Allison (1988: 320) sees the drama flow as Jesus arrives, is baptized, and the heavenly voice. They note that verses 14-15 are redactional, and not part of the narrative. Their emphasis seems to concentrate on the last two verses of the pericope. Hagner (1993: 54) agrees with emphasis on the descent of the Spirit as he notes that the crowd probably did not hear the voice. Luz (2007: 143) seems to reinforce this by minimizing the baptism, making it of lesser importance than Mark. The reason for these views seems to be the emphasis on the heavenly vision. There are at least two acceptable reasons why this could be acceptable. First, Matthew is Matthew's use of "behold" (*idou*). He uses the term sixty-two times in fifty-nine verses throughout his work. This seems to be a catchword for him when he is point to a definite action. Additionally, it is often connected with some type of celestial vision (1:20; 2:9, 13; 4:11; 17: 3, 5; 28:2, 9). Comparing the baptismal account and the transfiguration, Talbert (2010: 58) and Davies, and Allison (1988: 320) demonstrate the parallel supporting the climax of the vision.

### **Parallels between Jesus' Baptism and Transfiguration:**

<b>Baptism</b>	<b>Parallel</b>	<b>Transfiguration</b>
3:13-16a	Setting	17:1-2
3:16b	And behold	17:3a
3:16c	Vision	17:3b
3:17a	And behold	17:5b
3:17	Heavenly Voice	17:5c

Davies and Allison (1988: 320) point out that this parallel is not exact. In the transfiguration account, the heavenly proclamation does not terminate the story. Additionally, there is dialog (17:4) that has no parallel in the baptism account.

Further, while this approach places emphasis on the affirmation rather than the setting, it is not without difficulties. First, it minimizes the setting, which is necessary for the proclamation to make sense. It provides the reference for the declaration of sonship. Hence, it is appropriate to ask why God used these specific events to frame his proclamation. Each is significant in itself. Additionally, the scene would have been dynamic without the proclamation. Rather than the scene leading to the proclamation, the proclamation would seem to enhance the significance of the events (baptism and transfiguration, respectively). It is not a question of the value of the heavenly affirmation. However, the setting was enhanced by the affirmation. Thus, the "fulfilment" gives context to the affirmation, providing a special significance that it would not have had otherwise.

From here, it is essential that the attention turn to the element of the fulfilment that produced the confirmation. Against Hagner (1993: 54), the baptism lay in the centre as can be seen by this chiastic outline:

#### **Chiastic Outline of the Centrality of Jesus' Baptism**

John's proclamation regarding Jesus  
Jesus comes to John  
Jesus is baptized to fulfil all righteousness  
The Holy Spirit comes to Jesus  
The Father's proclamation regarding Jesus

There is a distinctive movement in this from the human to the divine and a unity created between the two by the physical action and God's proclamation. Is it a picture of the incarnational theology of Matthew and the uniting of divinity and humanity? Additionally, if it is true that the baptism is at the centre of this pericope, then another

question is raised: “How does the physical action of baptism fulfil righteousness”? The examination of this should shed light on Matthew’s possible intentions.

### **5.3.2 How Jesus’ Baptism Fulfils Righteousness**

Davies and Allison (1988: 323-324) list what they consider to be the seven most viable answers. 1) It was the Messiah’s task to bring the total will of God; 2) Jesus’ baptism illustrated Jesus’ death; 3) It was an example to Christians; 4) All divine ordinances of which baptism is one must be fulfilled; 5) Jesus validated John’s ministry; 6) It was a right action intended to remove offense; 7) Jesus was fulfilling prophecy. They agree that number seven is the most convincing as it fits with the thirteen fulfilment statements recorded by Matthew.

One apparent problem with all of these is that they cannot be supported contextually. With the exception of number seven, these anticipate a developed theology that may have been present in the church teaching but is not necessarily present in Matthew. Thus, the question is raised whether this can be answered contextually or must depend on the larger, historical setting to determine the meaning. It will be beneficial to explore both.

#### **5.3.2.1 Contextual Understanding of the Baptism of Righteousness**

In context, Matthew ties the baptismal scene to the preceding with both John and Jesus arriving (*paraginetai*) (Luz, 2007: 140; Robertson, 1997). Jesus’ arrival is Christological in nature as has been shown by the use of *ēlthon*. The Christological nature of this pericope is evident in that John’s prophetic ministry for Matthew is that of Elijah’s (11:14; 17:11-13), preparing for the day of the Lord (Davies and Allison, 1988: 289).

Without introduction, Matthew connects John’s preaching with the practice of a baptism accompanied by confession of sins. Hagner (1993: 46) comments that there is no certain background for this practice except the more likely practice of the same in the Qumran community. He also suggests that while proselyte baptism is not a certain background, it is extraordinary that Jews were submitting to a rite that was normally associated with the initiation of Gentiles into Judaism. Nolland (2005: 141) comments that OT water rituals were for purification but not tied directly to removal of sin. Rather, the

purification was metaphorical (cf. Is 1:16-17; Jer 4:14). Additionally, Luz (2007: 136) raises an important point by noting that while Mark states John's baptism was for the remission of sins (*eis aphesin hamartiōn*), Matthew associates confession with John's primary message of repentance (v. 2). From this, it would seem that Matthew is indicating a shift in perspective that could be the basis for the post-resurrection practice of baptism. However, the text gives no indication of this.

Matthew has the religious leaders (Pharisees and Sadducees) coming out to the place of the baptism (*epi* vs. *eis*). He does not make it clear that it was their purpose to be baptized since *epi* with the accusative can relate to location, not purpose (Köhler, 1990: 22). According to Luke (3:7-9), John does not single out the religious leaders. However, Matthew certainly makes it evident that they are the catalyst for the scathing remarks. Further, the introduction of the antagonist accelerates Matthew's emphasis of the baptism to include a baptism other than water. John's preparatory ministry introduces the greater one whose baptism has a greater effect. This is obvious from the rebuke John gives the religious leaders. He implies that the act of baptism may be hypocritical unless one can produce actions fitting the confession of their sins. His reprimand gives opportunity to contrast them as religious leaders against one who has the right to baptize in a greater way. Additionally, Matthew uses this episode with John and the Pharisees to put this into covenant context by the use of the expression children (*teknon*) of Abraham. This makes a strong connection back to 1:1 and Jesus as the son of Abraham.

It is important to the context to consider why Matthew chooses to include this group. Powell (2009: 9) suggests that the use of social-scientific approach to interpretation gives a historical perspective that discovers more about the world (meaning society) that produced the gospel. This approach is rooted in the idea that author and reader of another era are foreign to the modern Western world. Nonetheless, with the help of the social-scientific, the goal is to recover the ancient social system (Malina, 2009: 157). The crowds and the religious group would represent common Judaism, the pre-rabbinic legalism, and the religious political elements of the society. This social mix provides a cross section of Matthew's Judaism, the primary audience for both John and Jesus. Just as the prophets of old (pre-exilic), John takes his audience to a place of judgment (pictured as a harvest).

All three of the Synoptic Gospels allow for a public setting as the baptism is introduced by John's practice of baptizing. *Tote* controls Matthew's proximity of Jesus' baptism to

the others. Luke chooses not to use an adverb that can mean a distant or immediate time (Balz and Schneider, 1990). Rather, he uses the punctiliar aorist, indicating the proximity of the two accounts. However, some would move the scene to a private setting (Witherington III, 2006: 80; France, 1985: 99). Against this, Luz (2007: 140) suggests that the baptism is actually the climax to the setting. As such, this would seem to include the audiences, anticipating several questions that could arise. One such question would be whether the conversation between John and Jesus was public. If so, would the audience anticipate then that this is the one of whom John just spoke? Additionally, would they question Jesus' need for a baptism of repentance and confession? Hagner (1993: 54-55) contends that John's contesting of Jesus' need for baptism would eliminate this. As this section stands, little depends on the participation of the audience. Rather, as Matthew tells the story, the significance lies with John and Jesus. Matthew is clear with this in that the fulfilment of righteousness requires both John and Jesus. Jesus involved John by making it "fitting for us". This draws into his actions his forerunner whose message of the kingdom has prepared for this event. This is significant in that this provides an absolute tie between Jesus' ministry of fulfilment and the act of baptism. Later (21:32), Jesus will tell the Pharisees that John came in the way of righteousness. Blomberg (2009: 258) insists that Jesus' statement of righteousness is a validation of John's baptism. Whereas Davies and Allison (1988: 170-171) limit this to John living a moral life. However, the product of righteousness is not the whole of what righteousness is. The ontological aspect of God as righteous is at the root of all actions (God or humanity). In this same way, John coming in righteous and Jesus fulfilling it satisfies a greater reality than moral living. Olender (2008) contends that while scholars debate righteousness as either a gift or a demand, neither is naturally inherent in the concept. Righteousness is certainly active but does not necessitate a salvation by works. Hagner (1998: 371) concurs by stating that salvation by works is a faulty perception of Matthew's commitment to the importance of righteousness that is fully realized in the gospel of the kingdom.

The descent of the Spirit and the affirmation of God have a significant role, as is evident in the fact that this is a common tradition in the Synoptic Gospels. For Matthew, the purpose may be to validate the "son of" concept of his thesis (son of David and Abraham). If so, this elevates the messianic concept from a pure physical lineage to that of the divine. Additionally, with the enhancement of "the beloved" (*ho agapētos*; lit. the son of me the beloved), the concept is enlarged to involve not only Jesus but also all the

covenant people. Keener (1999: 135) makes this connection with the concept of sonship to God's special love for Israel as a son and Jesus having God's special focus. This special relationship is first realized with Abraham, the father of the covenant when he is called the friend (*āhab*) of God (2 Chron 20:7; Is 41:8; Jam 2:23). The Hebrew word (*āhab*) is stronger than the Greek (*philos*; hence, *philadelphos*). The former aligns more closely with *agapaō* (Gesenius and Tregelles, 2003: 16). However, the implication in both terms is that of a deep love, as God would have for a son. Mounce (1991: 26) finds in the beloved son statement a correlation to when God told Abraham to take the son he loves and offer him as a burnt offering (Gen 22:2).

The final contextual element is the great pleasure God receives in this. Légasse (1990: 75) notes that God is the subject fourteen times this word is used and that "these have a Christological, soteriological, or prophetic-apostolic accent". This is more obvious in 17:5 where the (present, active) imperative, hear him (*akouete autou*), is added. Compare Psalm 149:4 where God takes pleasure in his people.

Contextually, there are hints as to the meaning of the fulfilment of righteousness. However, the study must broaden the historical-critical study to encompass a much larger scope to have a better understanding. The historical-critical method uses many disciplines in conjunction with each other. With these, the historical-critical method attempts to arrive at the meaning of the text in the original context. This places the interpreter in the world of the text (Hagner and Young, 2009: 11-15).

The easy tendency would be to Paulinize this and look to his theology for an explanation. While this may offer some benefit, this alone is not sufficient. However, Paul does provide a good starting point for the conversation. He told the Colossians that in Jesus, all the fullness (*pān to plērōma*) dwelt. Since Paul was a contemporary of Matthew, it may well be assumed that the orthodox teaching of the time contended that *all the fullness* in Jesus is all encompassing, including this concept of righteousness. An understanding of the larger, historical landscape will prove helpful. This will be studied under the concept of Matthew, orthodoxy, and the early creedal statements to see if some clarity can be offered.

### 5.3.2.2 Tradition and the Church Fathers

In the previous section, the literary and historical setting satisfied the historicity of the incident. From that study, several of the criteria that Evans (2009: 138-143) listed provides a framework for assessing biblical literature. First, historical coherence is obvious in that recorded church history accepts the historicity of the baptism (cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.12; Clement, *Stromata* 1.21). In addition to this historical claim, there are multiple attestations in that all of the Synoptic Gospels recorded the event. This encourages the readers to accept the tradition as founded in fact. Additionally, dissimilarity is evident in the use of a Gentile practice (baptism for proselytizing) associated with Jesus' introduction into the Jewish religious culture. These lend to the authenticity in that Matthew's Gospel moves toward a universal orientation (cf. 28:18-20). Thus, historical-critical studies, while not easy, are rewarding, providing an important perspective of Jesus.

This perspective is valuable but not conclusive for answering the questions regarding the meaning of the fulfilment of righteousness. This is foundational, but the wider vision is necessary to discover what Matthew may have intended. Thus, while understanding that Matthew is presenting a historical drama, it is beneficial to understand that the *Sitz im Leben* of Matthew's community is post-resurrection and that this perspective may be present in the work. The post-resurrection religious experience of his community could well support a myopic perception of Jesus' Christological status in the larger faith community. This perception could then influence the interpretation of the reality of the experience. In dealing with a post-resurrection religious experience, Johnson (2010: 95) admits that there are problems capturing personal experiences, as they are a blend of the objective and subjective. He states that it is difficult to make a distinction between objectivity and subjectivity. Many events tend to be viewed as personal experiences which Johnson (2010: 96) considers an encounter with God realized in unexpected ways, making it impossible to deny his presence. Writing some years after the historical events of Jesus' death and resurrection, Matthew's church understands Jesus' baptismal encounter was a historical event. However, there may be evidence that they also read more into the experience that Matthew shared. This practice of the church makes the historical event a personal experience. To illustrate, Mueller (2007: 143) draws an image of a pebble thrown into a pond. The pebble is the historical event that Mueller calls the "Jesus event". The ripples created by that affect everything

they encounter. Some of the things moved by the ripples develop ripples of their own. Such is the impact of the resurrection faith of Matthew's and every Christian community. This seems to be the case with this account as seen in the developing traditions and their affect on orthodox Christianity. Thus, it may be assumed that Matthew's community would be aware of the Christological impact of the baptism of righteousness in light of the tradition that developed.

Twice Paul states that he delivered what he received (1 Cor 11:23, 15:3). Additionally, he instructed Timothy to teach what was taught to him and then those he taught were to teach others (2 Tim 2:2). At the time when there was no canon, the tradition was vital (cf. 1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thess 2:15, 3:6). However, in the canon, only Luke in Acts mentions John's baptism. In 1:22, it is a historical marker designating the *terminus a quo* for apostolic companionship with Jesus. The remaining accounts (10:37, 13:24, 18:25, 19:3-4) acknowledge the nature of John's baptism. Contrasting to 10:36 and the message of peace, John's baptism here is a *terminus a quo* relating to the shift in the message. The next occurrence (13:24) is similar to the one in 10:36. The final three are from an account where Apollos the Alexandrian was preaching but knew only John's baptism. He was immediately instructed that Christian baptism exceeded John's. The result was a baptism in (into) the name of Jesus (*eis to onoma kuriou Iēsou*). This early tradition demonstrates a significant shift in the nature of baptism. The original ontological mark was that of John's mission as the forerunner. The shift was to that of Jesus. The reason is not evident until later writings.

Ignatius is the earliest of the Christian writers to give insight into the tradition that had developed. In his Epistle to the Ephesians (18.2), he states that Jesus' birth and baptism was to purify the water (*hina tō pathei to hudōr katharisē*). The means of purification was his *pathos*. While this can mean experience in general, in the NT it is used of the suffering of Jesus. The Apostolic fathers provide no clear sense of the word but it may carry the same as the NT use (Kittel, Bromiley and Friedrich, 1964: 904-924). Lake (1912-13: 193, note I) comments that *pathos* alludes to the Baptism not to the Passion. It would seem that either would be fitting since the water would reference the baptism as empowered by the sacrificial death of Jesus. Additionally, this would align with Paul's understanding in Romans 6 where the baptism is the means of contact to the death and the benefits of that death.

Another interesting text comes from the Pseudo-Clementine Literature (*Recognitions of Clement*, 1.48) where the writer allegorizes water of Jesus' baptism as a suppressant for the sacrificial fires of the OT economy. This implies a pivotal event that connects his actions with the end of the economy and the introduction of his own. Tertullian (*An Answer to the Jews*, 8) picks up this same theme with reference to the *terminus ad quem* of the law and the prophets with John (11:13), making John the beginning of the fulfilment period. In this, he states that Christ's baptism sanctified the waters. Thus, more early tradition maintaining that Jesus' baptism held the significance of a change of essence for the baptismal act. He continues this thought in *On Modesty* (22) with a reference to the water and blood flowing from Jesus' side at the crucifixion. He calls these elements the materials (Lat. *paratura*, equipment) of baptism (cf. Jn 5:6-12). As in Romans 6, there is a direct connection between the baptismal waters and the passion of Christ.

From this, it may be possible to see why Paul's shift was to the ontological marking achieved in the baptism. Thus, rather than Paulinizing John's baptism, it is tenable that Paul knew and accepted the tradition that Jesus' baptism effected an ontological change in the act that effectually united the essence of the Christ to the baptismal waters. In this, the baptism of righteousness shared the same substance (*homoousios*) as naturally belonged to Jesus. It is not entirely clear why baptism plays no role in the Synoptic account of Jesus' ministry (contrast Jn. 3:22; 4:1-2), but the best suggestion seems to be, though this is not worked out in any systematic way, that there is a general assumption that those who respond to Jesus' ministry have already been baptized by John. Nolland comments that the baptism in 28:18 emerges because of the Gentile. Further, the baptism of 28:18 is *eis to onoma*. This shift from *eis metanoian* signifies the allegiance to or association with the power and authority of Jesus (Nolland, 2005: 141-142). All of this is an indication that the baptism of 3:15 that satisfies righteousness is more significant than Przybylski's (1980: 1) categories for the term, which will be discussed later.

### **5.3.3 Context and Link to 5:17**

The covenant context of this fulfilment statement is set in John's reference that having lineage to Abraham (3:9) is not enough since God had created the heritage of which they were so proud from Abraham who was a lifeless rock (Davies and Allison, 1988: 308), being too old to bear children. Gundry (1982: 46) puts it well when he states that

they were willing to exchange genuine righteousness for their foolish pride. In reality, the Christological significance of the son who pleases God as Abraham did should be their emphasis and priority. The religious leaders (and people according to Luke's account) needed to replace their cultic pride with pride in the work of God. The expression "fulfil" anticipates that there is a past connect that did not fully satisfy. Matthew found satisfaction in the fullness of righteousness. Ultimately, the reign of this one is realized in his authority to administer justice (based on perfect righteousness). "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (3:12).

The context firmly anchors the fulfilment statement into Matthew's milieu. However, there is a sense in which Matthew leaves the reader wanting. Covenant, messiah, and kingdom anticipate, at least for the historical economy, the necessity for the clear word of God. God had not hesitated to make his will known previously. If Matthew is attempting to restore the Abrahamitic tie, then, of necessity, the question of the law in relationship to righteousness is anticipated. Thus, the expectation is that the fulfilment of righteousness mandates a statement regarding the law. If righteousness is now fulfilled, what is the status of the law? Is it ineffectual? Viljoen (2011: 387) will argue that Matthew presents Jesus defending "the continuing validity of the Torah (Matt. 5:17-20) in a cohesive manner". This is anchored to the established standard that fulfilled righteousness. Both the standard and the fulfiller are tested in the wilderness where the affirmation of sonship is challenged with the tri-fold temptation of "if you are the son". Thus, Matthew's drama has moved from the incarnational scene that fleshed out righteousness to Jesus' formal proclamation of his authority as the one who pleases God (3:17; cf. 17:5). Although Matthew fills in the drama of the wilderness and the beginning of ministry, it is apparent that the fulfilment of righteousness concept is not complete. It is as if 3:15 anticipates something else. That which it anticipates is 5:17 (Luz, 2007: 140). Thus, an examination of 5:17 and ultimately the surpassing righteousness of 5:20 is needed.

#### **5.4 PLĒRŌSAI OUK KATALUSAI**

Interestingly, when Tertullian (*An Answer to the Jews*, 8) informed his readers of the sanctifying of the water by his Jesus' baptism, he also noted that Christ sealed (*signo*; mark or inscribe (Morwood, 2005: 174)) visions and prophecies by his advent

(*adventus*). He states that the advent fulfilled (*adimplevit*) this. While not designed as such, this certainly could be commentary on Matthew 5:17 and Jesus' insistence that his coming (*ēlthon*) was with the specific purpose of fully satisfying the will of God, which naturally includes the covenant law.

The covenant of Jeremiah 31 is written on the heart, finding satisfaction in the ontology of Matthew's fulfiller. The Christological emphasis of righteousness and sonship established the forthcoming "but I say to you" that is the authority recognized by the audience. Meier (1976: 41) sets the stage for the words that are pivotal to understanding the relationship between Jesus and the law, noting that 5:17-20 is positioned prominently in the Gospel. "Preceding all the *Streitgesprache* and other 'legal' material as it does", Matthew introduces Jesus and his view on the law. As such, this passage offers more problems than any or all of the rest of Matthew.

Robinson (1936: 36) considers verse 20 to be summation of the Sermon. From a contemporary perspective, it would be considered the text from which Jesus preached. With a single challenge, Jesus elevates his teachings above formative Judaism. Carter (1994: 45) suggests this is the "thematic sentence". The beatitudes, the salt and light parables, the Halakah on the law, and the stringent responsibilities put on the hearers mandate the listeners' responsibility in response to the sermon, anticipating that his audience would exceed the most prolific example of what was considered as righteousness—the Pharisee. This verse then becomes the key to understanding not only the current text, but also the whole of the sermon. Additionally, it becomes the apex for the scene moving from the fulfilment of righteousness via the demonstration and testing of sonship to the question of the law.

As a wise prophet, Jesus' begins by congratulating his audience for desiring true happiness (*makarioi*). The one who is truly happy finds it in the fullest expression of the law. Taken as a whole, the list of characteristics would be reminiscent of a blessed land flowing with milk and honey as recalled by the Deuteronomic writer (6:3). The religious significance of this phrase (milk and honey) in the cultic history cannot be overlooked. Stern (1992: 555) reveals that the various cultures (Canaanite, Babylon, etc.) understand this as God's provision. Merrill (2001: 161) describes this phrase as having two commodities that are the product of agriculture and nature, representing the full blessing of God's promises. In the same way, the *makarioi* are to be congratulated

“because of God’s response to their behaviour or situation” (Blomberg, 2001: 97). The Greek view of happiness is divided between the classes. The common citizen (*hoi polloi*) think happiness is found in pleasure, wealth, and honour. However, the “people of quality” (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1095a; lit. *hoi charientes*, the graced ones) would say that while the other has some effect on happiness, excellence and proper reflection are much more fundamental in shaping their perspective of happiness (Miller, 2010: 596). France (1985: 114) senses the same in his description of happiness as a condition of life realized in the intrinsic value and the outcome (right living). Thus, whether for the Jew or Greek, it is obvious that Jesus elevates happiness to mean the blessings of God related to his promises. The resulting lifestyle becomes salt and light to whomever sees this individual. Beginning here, Jesus has established that there is a higher plain that is achievable that does not seem to be dependent on the law. Following this produces appropriate actions. Matthew (as a compiler) has now set up his audience (his church community) with a model of discipleship that ensures that they are following Jesus (Viljoen, 2011: 390).

With this introduction, Jesus would seem to be exposed to questions regarding the continuing validity and benefit of the Law of Moses. While there is no evidence that Jesus was accused of misrepresenting the law, he begins his fulfilment statement with a defence of his right to speak to the law and fulfil it. As noted in the previous chapter, this is driven by *ēlthon*. This is a Matthean expression with Christological significance (Banks, 1974: 227). It occurs five other times with similar force (9:13; 10:34 11:19; 18:11; 20:28). Banks (1974: 227) senses that this may be redacted in 5:17 by Matthew to enhance the Christological importance of Jesus' work. Redacted or not, it certainly carries Christological weight as it precedes the authoritative Halakah to follow. Having established his right to speak to matters of the law, Jesus makes a startling statement that re-energizes the law with a new perspective. The remarkable statement that is to follow elevates Jesus well above Moses who could only be a mediator of the law. He is not the messenger bringing the law. Rather, he is the essence of the law understood as the surpassing righteousness. To understand this better, it is necessary to deconstruct this passage to see the integral parts.

#### **5.4.1 The Law and the Prophets**

Whether it is the law and the prophets or just the law, they express the concept of the authoritative word of God (Stanton, 1993: 49; Blomberg, 2001: 103; Meier, 1976:

52; Bruce, 1970: 104). As revelation, it functioned as the primary religious norm for Israel (Senior, 1996: 62). Matthew uses them interchangeably so they would seem to be synonymous (law and prophets 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; law 5:18, 25; 12:5; 22:36, and 23:23). Regarding the linguistic use of the term *nomos*, Meier (1976: 52) notes three possibilities: law, Pentateuch (Torah) or Scripture. He leans to Torah in light of the contrast with the prophets in verse 17, the use of command (*entolai*) in verse 19, and rabbinic parallels. Davies and Allison (1988: 491) make the point that this includes only the written law and not the rabbinic fence. For the purpose of this study, law will hold the primary meaning of the Torah covenant. This not only satisfies Matthew's use but also his context. This expresses the authoritative word of God, the commands (down to the *iotā*), and the full relationship with God. Even the smallest precept has significance recognizable in the ideal fulfilment (Bruce, 1970: 104). This would be an easy concept for his Jewish element to grasp and yet not be so exclusive as to alienate the Gentiles. Understanding this, what does Jesus do to the full expression of God?

Matthew steps out of the historical narrative to confront his own community (his audience) with the opening (*mē nomisēte*) (Luz, 2007: 213; Viljoen, 2011: 393). However, it is possible that Matthew maintained the historical setting here and has Jesus anticipating the ensuing conflict over the assumed antinomianism (Davies and Allison, 1988: 482). Either option makes sense as the antagonist who was at John's baptism may also have been there when Jesus was baptized. Had they assumed this was the one of whom John spoke, they may have already confronted him on his position on the law. Viljoen (2011: 393) makes a valid point with the linguistic emphasis on the second person plural that starts in 5:11 and is used in the next two verses. It is picked up again in 5:18 and 5:20. Additionally, this form is used in the Halakha of 5:22ff with the second person being the object of "But I say". Nolland (2005: 223) agrees with this, identifying the part Jesus' audience has in this matter. Witherington (2006: 127) agrees that they are disciples but does not indicate whether they are Jesus' historical followers or the disciples of Matthew's communities. However, in light of the intended purpose and context this study suggests, the opening becomes a literary tool to capture the audience (Matthew's church) and put them into Jesus' setting, creating the sense of a firsthand experience, suggesting that they choose carefully with whom they side. This becomes more obvious with the counter of verse 20 when *mē nomisēte* becomes *ean mē perisseusēi*. Now that he has their attention, Matthew suggests what they should think.

Destroy (*katalusai*) means to take down as one would a house or tent (2 Corinthians 5:1) (Robertson, 1997). In this compound, *kata* maintains the base idea of downward in *kataluō*. This strengthens *luō*, giving it the sense of put down. Even with various connections, the NT usually preserves the same meaning as the simple form (Büchsel, 1964: 338). This is similar to the use in the LXX. The idea behind the word is break up a journey and thus, by implication, a lodging-place such as a guest chamber or inn (Strong, 2009: 40). The LXX used *katalusai* in this way in Genesis 19:2, 24:23, 25, 26:17, 42:27; Numbers 22:8, 25:1; Joshua 3:1; 2 Samuel (2 Kings) 17:8; 1 Kings (3 Kings) 19:9. Ezra 5:12 used this word to talk about destroying a temple. The root is *luō* (to loose) and is often used in compounds with prepositions (*ana*, *epi*, *kata*, and *apo*) that give the word some variance from the original. In 5:17, the preposition is *kata* (downward) is used in the sense “to put down”. It is used in various connections, but in the NT usually has the same meaning as the simple form (Büchsel, 1964: 338). Confirm or enforce would seem to be the natural contradiction (Viljoen, 2011: 395). However, loosening respects the law for its permanency (5:18). Jesus wanted the audience to know that he had no plans to loosen the grip of the law. In fact, by surpassing the righteousness of the Pharisees (20), the law will have greater expectations. However, by his coming (*ēlthon*), the grip of the law would find the strength intended when God gave it to Israel. Stanton (1993: 49) stipulates that the interpretation of the law and the prophets is via the love-command (22:37, 39). Vaught (2001: 54-56) contends that the purpose of the law was to allow Israel fellowship with God. Charles (2002: 7, n. 23) confirms this by stating that it is in the divine covenant that the visible expression of relationship with God is evident. Even a cursory study of Jewish history indicates that this was not always evident. It was not that the law was ineffective or weak, but that Israel sinned and chose other gods. The weakness was not the law; it was the people. This is obvious from the message of the prophets (see chapter four) who reminded them of God’s faithfulness (*hesed*). To make the law effective, sin had to be handled effectively and permanently. Jesus fulfils righteousness, establishing a better means of maintaining the fellowship (cf. Heb 8:6). This is what Paul intended in Romans 8:3-4. Overcoming sinfulness required the incarnation that satisfied the law. Paul notes that the fulfilment is not in Christ but in us (*en hēmen*). Mounce (1995: 176) is close to the idea when he comments that humanity did not fulfil the law, but Christ did. This is evident by the use of the subjunctive for *plērōō*. God met the demands of the law (Mounce, 1995: 176, n.128). He did this because Christ is in us.

By the time Matthew's audience is reading this, they may have realized that God, through the Romans, ended the practice of the Temple cult. The destruction of the Temple validated Matthew's view of Jesus. Now, since there is no Temple and the people are scattered, content with the synagogue, Jesus' statement takes on new meaning. Jesus' words now satisfy the full essence of God's covenant communication with humanity. It is satisfying to Matthew's community to look back and recognize in Jesus' statement the ground on which they stand. This community would probably be aware of Paul's teachings of God's intention in Jesus resulting in a new house rule (*eis oikonomian tou plērōmatos tōn kairōn*). The new form of the law was in the life of the one satisfying it. This is an ontological emphasis.

#### **5.4.2 Until All is Accomplished**

The passing of heaven and earth is not designed to a fixed period for the termination of the law. Rather, it is a strong way of saying *never* (Bruce, 1970: 104). Jesus' reference to the removal of the least letter is based on the rabbis teaching that the Torah should not be altered. Those that altered were heretics (Levine and Brettler, 2011: 10).

Further, the idea of removing the smallest mark found its way into Jewish tradition. Rothkoff and Horodezky (2007: 728-730) remark that there was a sanctity to the Hebrew alphabet because they formed the word of God. Referencing Psalm 33:6, Rothkoff and Horodezky remark that the rabbis took this verse to indicate the power of the alphabet. Regarding the *yod*, which is often considered the equivalent of the *iōta* used by Matthew's Greek version (Louw and Nida, 1996; Nolland, 2005: 220), the Talmud reports that *yod* created the future world. Additionally, combined with *he*, the Hebrew letter that created the world, one of the names of God is formed. Interestingly, there is a Talmudic story of the book of Deuteronomy complaining that Solomon took a *yod* from the book because the law prohibits a king from having many horses, wives, or gold, yet he has all three! God replied that Solomon and more like him will die before one word passes from the law (Heschel, Tucker and Levin, 2005: 593). These illustrations and Matthew's use validate both the unity and the eternity of the word of God. He emphasizes this linguistically by the repetitious *mia* with each of the elements. This emphasizes the absoluteness (Hagner, 1993: 106). Further, Chouraki (2006: 61-62) conceptualizes the *yod* as the conscious part of being. It chooses, observes, and judges. When used in a possessive ending, it reflects the essence of the word. If used in this way, Matthew would be stating that Jesus would not destroy the law in its essence or in

reality. Thus, it was no small issue to remove the *yod* from the law and Jesus authoritatively forbade that it should happen.

Some, in order to hold the law over the new Israel, would maintain that the temporal clauses are in strict parallelism and mean exactly the same thing—the end of the world (Brown, Fitzmyer and Murphy, 1990: 641). However, there is a qualifier that indicates that the end of the world may not be intended. In 18b, *eōs an* establishes a *terminus ad quem* that is qualified as *panta genētai*. Luz (2007: 218-219) admits to difficulty in understanding this qualifier. Nonetheless, he considers the emphasis to be on the fulfilment, not the time stamp. Davies and Allison (1988: 491-494) question how Matthew can write about the eternal nature of the law and record accounts of Jesus' apparent movement away from the law. They give the examples of forbidding oaths (5:33-37), eye for eye principle (5:38-42), defending unacceptable actions on the Sabbath (12:1-8), and sending his disciples to Gentiles without instructions on circumcision (28:16-20). Nonetheless, they provide four reasons why this is valid in light of Matthew's work. First, there is not the tension in Matthew's mind as in the mind of most scholars today. Second, the Jews understood that the text itself could be modified (1 Macc 4:46) but this did not reject the validity of the Torah. Third, Judaizers were obligated to the law, and the relative freedom of the Gentiles while Jewish Christians were expected to keep the law. Davies and Allison (1988: 493) put Matthew with the latter.

In consideration of the covenant context, the Abrahamic covenant as the basis for both Jewish and Christian covenants is eternal in nature. The Hebrew *ōlām* refers to eternity in relation to time but not the philosophical sense (Holladay and Köhler, 2000). It is first used when God makes the rainbow promise (Gen 9:16, *berith ōlām*). More importantly for this study, it is used to describe the Abrahamic covenant in 17:7. This same expression is used of the covenant renewal with Isaac in 17:19 (cf. Ps 105:9, 10). Mary's speech in Luke references the eternal covenant. Here, Luke uses the phrase *eis ton aiōna* as the Greek equivalent. There is no indication why Matthew did not pick up this speech as part of his narrative since it would satisfy much of his quest for the Jewish heritage.

With this verse, Matthew has validated the law and the prophets. In this, he has also clarified what the fulfilment of the law is not. It is not a replacement as the law is

eternal. To validate further the authority of the law, Matthew now demands the keeping and teaching of the law.

### 5.4.3 The Least to the Greatest

Jesus brings his audience into the sermon with verse 19. Here he draws a distinction between two types of listeners. Jesus gives four illustrations at the end of the sermon that define this dualism: 1) The many and the few; 2) True and false prophets; 3) The one who does the will of God and the one who gives only lip service; 4) The wise and foolish builder. Verses 17-18 are a technical announcement about Christ, the law and prophets, and the apocalyptic terminus of the least part of the Torah. Now, verse 19 moves to the practicum (Meier, 1979: 235).

The connection between this and the preceding verses is found in the expression “these commandments”. Meier (1979: 235) maintains that the demonstrative adjective “these” should not be dismissed as a Semitism and remain untranslated. The emphasis of this verse is on the teachers of the kingdom. Jesus did not come to abolish the law. Thus, those who teach in his name should have the same objective and encourage others to do the same. They should teach and practice every commandment (Gardner, 1991: 104). Not all see this as clear cut as Meier. While “these” could refer back to the commandments (plural) of the law, this rendering is difficult because there is no plural noun in the preceding verse to which it could refer. In order for this to be the case, it would be understood that the law is a collective noun and the pronoun refers to the commands that make up the law. Another possible solution is that it refers forward to Jesus’ Halakah. While the latter may be grammatically possible and possibly the best sense for the speech as a whole (Mills and Wilson, 1995: 950), it seems best to follow the lead of Blass and Debrunner (1961: 77) who illustrate that generally, the plural can stand for *one* (emphasis theirs) person. One familiar example in Matthew is the expression *hē Basileia tōn ouranōn* where *ouranōn* is plural but translated as singular. Additionally, the masculine noun, *nomos*, refers to a class, not to one individual law. This is demonstrated in verse 18 where the law is broken down into its smallest parts where the references is to the content (Gutbrod, 1964: 1059).

Jesus stays with the emphasis of verse 20 with the expectation that the disciple, like Jesus will do and teach from the least to the greatest of the commands. Gundry (1982:

82) seems to find the important aspect. He insists that those guilty of antinomian attitudes are in the kingdom, but they hold the position of the least in the kingdom.

Within this portrayal on living the law, Matthew again focuses on the kingdom of heaven. Luz (2007: 135) finds this expression in synagogue usage and uses reign of heaven and reign of God interchangeably but with reason. Reign is the better understanding as *Basileia* is not a place but designates the rule of God (Davies and Allison, 1988: 389). Witherington (2006: 78-79) uses the term “dominion”, equating it to saving reign. Hagner (1993: 48) gives it the meaning of God reign and expands it with the idea of sovereign rule. Interestingly, Meier (1976: 98-99) combines location and reign by explaining that for Matthew, *Basileia tōn ouranōn* designates the point of origin from which God extends his reign to the world. However, he qualifies this by saying that the emphasis is on what he calls his “active exercise of kingly power”. However, in the context of 19-20, the idea must be expanded. The idea of *Basileia tōn ouranōn* as relational may better express the idea here. Dulling (1992: 57-58) expresses that the kingdom has many facets. It is both now and then. John’s preaching (3:2) and Jesus’ proclamation of the nearness (4:17) support the present spacial and temporal presence. However, the more frequent understanding is eschatological (5:19-20; 6:10; 7:10, 21; 8:11-12; 13:38, 41, 43, 47; 16:28; 18: 1,3; 19:23; 25:1; 26:29). In addition to these spacial/temporal expressions, Matthew has kingdom sayings with ethical implications. These are in the parables (13:44-45) and the Sermon on the Mount (7:16, 20). John expects the fruit of righteousness (3:15) before entrance is allowed into the kingdom. Similarly, the kingdom is expressed in a communal fashion. This is evident in the authoritative roles, functions, and social structures that include discipline. Dulling (1992: 58) summarizes by noting that the kingdom is both the message of and about Jesus, anticipated in the present with roots in the past. It has growth and is an expectation of Matthew’s community. This is expressed in an evolving institution. Outsiders are part of the kingdom of Satan.

In this, it is possible to find a conceptual equivalency to covenant. If a covenant is a promise relationship guided by *hesed*, the kingdom or reign of heaven (or God) is also a promise relationship bonded together by love. Doing the least may not exclude one from the kingdom but it does impact covenant relations. Nolland (2005: 222) concludes that to ignore even the least commandment is to insist that anything short of a commitment to the whole of the Law is equivalent to excluding oneself from the kingdom. If the ideal of covenant is not used for the guiding context of Matthew, then

this is possibly true. However, in light of God's gracious covenant, the legalism of breaking a single command bringing instant death (Nu 3:61; 2 Sam 6:1-15) is not to be understood here. Rather, from a relational perspective, the ideal of Romans 6 can be applied. Should someone continue to sin (and teach others) so that God will be more gracious? *Mē genoito*. The reason is simple. A relational bond has been created between Jesus (and specifically his passion) and the Christian (Matthew's disciple). This relational bond (covenant) is dominated by the love of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 5:14 and Paul's use of *synechō*). Blomberg (2001: 74) shows that the kingdom for John, Jesus, and Jesus' disciples (cf. 4:17; 10:7) was a new community. It held the possibilities of relationships and liberation of nature from corruption.

This new community is placed under the admonition of verse 20. The one doing and teaching has surpassed the benchmark of the Pharisees because they did not practice what they preached (Matt 23:3). This prompts Jesus to set a mark of excellence beyond what those of common Judaism thought possible. To do this, Jesus uses the second person to identify the part that the audience has in what he is saying (Nolland, 2005: 223).

Matthew used an aorist active subjunctive to express this concept of entering the kingdom of heaven. The subjunctive mood expresses the action as conceivable but not necessarily a reality. The subjunctive connects with some supposed or desired action. The aorist subjunctive is not concerned with the time of the action but rather, it is concerned with the action itself (Wallace, 1996: 461, 555). Further, Wallace (1996: 469) remarks that when used as a prohibitive subjunctive, it should be translated *do not* instead of *should not*.

The emphasis is on making the action happen, not just that it is repeated or continued (present subjunctive would be used for this). Clearly, Jesus is using words of decision making here. He is asking his audience to make a commitment to a lifestyle that would easily be identified as better than the religious leaders of his day. It would seem that Matthew has Jesus saying that the disciple must concentrate on the actions that would unquestionably identify the follower as one committed to Jesus and his greater understanding of the law. The distinction in Jesus' teaching is that he deals with the true nature of the law. Levine (1992: 255) envisions Jesus "collapsing the distinction between thought and action". This is the idea of Hebrews 4:12 where the word of God is able to distinguish between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and thoughts and intent.

This illustrates well the nature of Jesus expansion of the Mosaic system. Allen (1985: 46) agrees in that the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was based on external adherence to the letter of the law, but Jesus emphasized insight into the principles. France (1985: 111) comments that the sermon deals with character, duty, attitude, and even danger. “It is a manifesto setting out the nature of life in the kingdom of heaven”.

This prompts the question of what it means to surpass (*perisseusē*). Schneider (1990: 76) concludes that the NT usage indicates excess, superabundance, or rich in something. *Ean* with the subjunctive express a sense of probability anticipating that the audience will comply. Jesus has assumed that his audience has understood his position on the law and that the minimal standards set by the Pharisees does not satisfy his ideals. Now, what is left is to define the surpassing righteousness that Jesus mandates.

## 5.5 SURPASSING RIGHTEOUSNESS

Edin (1998: 355) places righteousness at the centre of Jesus’ teaching. In order to practice it as Jesus requires, Matthew had to come up with an adjective of excess. Higher, better, surpassing are terms that express the desire of Matthew to elevate this teaching in his work. He found this in the third person singular, aorist active subjunctive of *perisseuō*. This term provides a starting point for the examination of the surpassing righteousness.

Viewing *perisseusē* as an eschatological catchword, Meier (1976: 109) expresses righteousness as a requirement for kingdom participation. However, he insists that it is qualitative, not quantitative. The idea was not to keep count of the way one shows righteousness. Matthew does not include Luke’s story of the Pharisee in the temple whose prayer is an inventory of what he does and does not do (18:11-12). Viljoen (2011: 401) notes that it is not “bigger and better pharisaism” as is illustrated by the Halakah of the following verses.

To this point, the discussion has not provided an adequate understanding of righteousness. Introduced as a fulfilment of righteousness, Jesus was pictured as the ontological essence of the same. Moving from that to the practicum of 5:18-20 requires a more concrete understanding and an explanation of what Matthew and Jesus intended their respective audiences to understand with asked to surpass that of the Pharisees. In order to properly deal with this, it is necessary to build an appropriate model to analyze

the data regarding the fulfilment concept and righteous actions. It must be a model that makes sense of the data (Johnson, 2010: 4), not only in its historical setting but also in the continuous *Sitz im Leben* of Matthew's community and the church at large. The study now dedicates itself to this task. Within this model, Matthew's meaning and use of righteousness will be examined.

### 5.5.1 Model to Express Matthew's Concept of *Dikyosunēn*

Johnson (2010: 4-5) contends that a reader is expected to consider what the writer is actually saying and adjust their questions to them. The reader is not to force the writings to their own preconceptions. In order to do this, he suggests that there is a need for an interpretive model that respects both the individual writings and the collective whole. Such a model is needed for Matthew, especially for this *plērōō* statement. That such a model is needed is evident when the plethora of meanings for the "fulfilment of righteousness" statement is considered. Nolland (2005: 154) equates the righteousness fulfilled as right relationship with God and living rightly. For Blomberg (2001: 81), it means "*everything that forms part of a relationship of obedience to God*" (emphasis is Blomberg's). Walvoord and Zuck (1985) use it to stress Jesus' identity with sinners. Hagner (1993: 57) sees it as facilitating God's saving activity. This very short list of scholars is all that is needed to realize that a more definitive model is needed from which to draw conclusions. When the larger subject of righteousness in Matthew is put into the mix, the need becomes greater.

Other models that expand those just listed include Reumann (1992: 755-756) whose model places righteousness within God's eschatological gift with the greater emphasis on the response of the disciples. Thom's (2009: 314) model is best expressed in the Sermon on the Mount where the role of justice is dominant. Thom's (2009: 319) model is viewed through an Aristotelian perspective found in *Nicomachean Ethics* where *dikyosunēn* is a comprehensive virtue qualified as "the perfect virtue in relation to the other" (*teleia aretē pros heteron; Eth. Nic. 5.1.1129b*). Thus, Thom's Aristotelian model is the greatest value as practiced in society. Deines' (2008: 81) model is what he calls Jesus-righteousness. As the study progresses, the reader may sense that this model comes closest to the one drawn here. However, it is not. The reason is that Deines' model is defined as the actions like Jesus. He explains that the disciples practice righteousness while staying focused on Jesus. While Deines states that Jesus is righteous, this is qualified by the kingdom actions of healing the sick, feeding the

hungry, driving out demons and proclaiming the kingdom of God. This work will propose that Jesus' righteousness is an ontological characteristic that is intrinsically his and naturally produces kingdom acts. However, in Matthew's eyes, Jesus would be righteous even if he did nothing.

Przybylski's (1980: 3-4) model uses the OT as the point of departure, demonstrating the significant development of the concept of righteousness as evidenced in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Tannaitic literature. He insists that these documents provide the "intellectual milieu" in which Matthew is best understood. To establish this, he references the occurrences of the term righteousness in these writings to identify the Matthean concept. The primary problem with this model is that he enters with a predisposition based on the theoretical question of whether righteousness refers to God's gift to man or his demand on man (1980: 1). In effect, he is looking for verification of one of the two meanings. Przybylski concludes that *sèdâqâ* refers to God's saving, gracious activity and *sedeq* signifies the demand of God upon men (Kingsbury, 1983: 320-321; Burnett, 1983: 149-150; Przybylski, 1980: 37-38). It should be noted that Przybylski (1980: 76) seems to see more overlapping in the Tannaitic literature. Thus, the distinction is not as clear as the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Based on Johnson's definition of model, there is an obvious weakness in Przybylski's approach in that he does not respect Matthew's work based on its own merit. Additionally, Przybylski (1980: 77-78) considers the influence of the LXX on Matthew's work, concluding its equivalency to the Hebrew terms and the necessity of studying the Greek terms, yet he does not deal with the Greek background. Rather, he looks at the Greek term within the Matthean passages trying to determine how they were used. This does not properly consider the significance of the Greek terms. While deviating more than Mark and Luke (Blomberg, 2001: 30), Matthew is still obviously dependent on the LXX (Nolland, 2005: 100). Given that Matthew may have first written in Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament may need to function more than a departing point. Knowing that the final is in Greek, the dependence on the LXX should be obvious. Additionally, Matthew is clearly influenced by Formative and Common Judaism and the Essenes (assuming their involvement in the Dead Sea community) are not an apparent influence in Matthew, only the Tannaitic may be of concern in the study. Since these post date Matthew, they would reflect a later development of the concept, not necessarily a Matthean concept.

If Przybylski's model does not work and he draws into question the exclusive use of the OT and Paul (Kingsbury, 1983: 320; Waetjen, 1982: 318; Burnett, 1983: 149; Garland, 1982: 149), then what model will work? Johnson (2010: 5) provides some adequate guidelines for a working model. While his are for the writing as a whole (as a book), they are applicable to a theme as prominent as righteous. The model first understands that is a literary work. As such, this should take into consideration both the development and the final form of the concept. Thus, as this concept is viewed, it may be possible to determine if it is static in Matthew or if the form seems to be dynamic. Next, the model will allow for exegetical methods beyond the historical critical, including but not limited to anthropological and religious dimensions of the concept. This was a criticism of Waetjen (1982: 320) regarding Przybylski's work. He states that Przybylski's focus is theological, ignoring the sociological impact on language.

The model used in this study approaches the concept inductively, starting with the fulfilment passage as the anchor for the Matthean understanding. It is tenable to think that Matthew's community already had an understanding of the concept since he offers no definition at any time. From this perspective, Matthew's audience would understand the term and be able to assimilate that meaning into the context. After an analysis of the anchor verse, Matthew's other uses of righteousness (*dikaioῦn*) will be studied. This inside out approach should reveal how Matthew understands Jesus' fulfilment of *dikaioῦn* as well as give an indication of how the concept itself is understood. Additionally, this will allow the study to consider some of the other, necessary exegetical methods as well as the impact of the development of the concept from other sources such as the LXX and Matthew's Hebrew heritage. Of the word group (*dikē, dikaios, dikaiosunēn, dikaiō, dikaiōma, dikaiōsis, dikaiokrisia*), only *dikaioῦn, dikaiosunēn, dikaiō* are used in Matthew. The primary focus will be on *dikaioῦn*. However, *dikaioῦn* will be examined in relationship to Hosea 6:6 and Matthew's use of the concept of righteousness within the prophetic context.

### **5.5.2 Meaning of Righteousness**

While Przybylski maintains a normative position on the meaning of righteousness, it is necessary to gather some additional material to obtain a fair cross section. Hagner (1998: 367) proposes that Matthew's Jewishness draws on the Torah's demand for ethical righteousness, which is conformity to the Law. He maintains that this is Matthew's understanding of righteousness in a majority of the time he uses the term

*dikaiosunēn*. However, Hagner comments that there are instances in Matthew where the term does not deal with ethical righteousness. One such occurrence is in 5:10 where the reference is to eschatological "justice" and not as personal righteousness. The other two are in connection with John the Baptist and may point more toward God's saving action in Jesus. For Wenham (2008: 203), Jesus' fulfilling of righteousness (3:15) was the eschatological righteousness anticipated in the OT. This was not merely an ethical righteousness. Rather, it was a life-changing righteousness. Deines (2008: 72) also assigns the meaning of eschatological righteousness that Jesus came (*ēlthon*) to initiate in the kingdom of heaven (3:15; 5:20). Thus, the kingdom laws of the Sermon on the Mount are the instructions for the practice of the eschatological righteousness.

Przybylski (1980: 79) contends that 5:20 and 6:1 "may provide the best evidence for the meaning which Matthew attached to this term". This is based on their synoptic relationships and their use as headers for their respective pericope. He further contends that 3:15 does have no impact on the overall development of the concept. He (1980: 92-94) defends this by first concluding that scholarship Paulinizes 3:15, which is derived from extraneous sources and that this is in direct conflict with Matthew's use of *hēmin* (as restricted to John and Jesus, excluding Paul or sinners). From this, he neatly fits 3:15 into his predefined category of God's demand on man.

While it is tempting to Paulinize 3:15, using the fuller understanding of baptism in Romans 6, all of Matthew's fulfillment statements are designed to support his thesis in 1:1. While it is tenable to tie the Christology of 3:15 to Pauline concepts, it is these very Christological features of 3:15 that provide the anchor for both Matthew and Paul. To see how this works for Matthew, it is essential to look at the material that would have the most direct bearing on him, the Hebrew Scriptures, the LXX, and philosophy.

While Przybylski (1980: 116) is correct in his conclusion that righteousness as used by Matthew connects first-century Palestinian Judaism to the teachings of Jesus, he certainly misses the mark to say that it is not crucial to Matthew's understanding of discipleship. Rather, this work will propose that it is at the very heart of discipleship but not as understood by first-century Palestinian Judaism. As Garland (1982: 150-151) rightly concludes, Matthew's use of this term was in polemical situations with audiences composed of both disciples and non-disciples. This requires an understanding of the concept that goes beyond the writings of a segregated group (the Essenes). Although it may consider the pre-Tannaitic teaching and literature, it certainly does not

build on this since Jesus was obviously wanting to surpass that thinking (5:20). Thus, to gain a fuller understanding of the Matthean mindset, it is necessary to determine what the Hebrew Scriptures, the LXX, and philosophy contribute to Matthew's use. All three of these have a place in this discussion based on the assumption that Matthew's audience is mixed Jew, Hellenized Jew, and Gentile, each familiar with all three sources.

### **5.5.2.1 Philosophy**

While it would seem natural to start with the Hebrew Scriptures, thinking that Greek philosophy would not appear until much later, this is not the case. However, the use of philosophy does not limit this discussion to the Greek practice. Rather, based on Smith's (1981: 40-69) conclusion, Moses was the greater philosopher when compared to Plato (as representing the Greek philosophical thought). To demonstrate this, Smith (1981: 41-43) notes that there are three views about God and nature. The Platonic view has nature at the helm, which is materialism. Control was by the laws of nature. This was Plato's analogy of the gods. Other Greeks were deterministic in that all nature was a reflection of the activity of the gods. Nothing happened unless the gods willed it. Hebrew thought represented by the Mosaic influence in Genesis is that the analogy of the gods revealed both the supernatural and natural. The superior God created nature. Nature was not God and could only "remark" (Ps 50:6) that God existed (since he created) and that he was powerful (having created) (Rom 1:20). While powerful, the God who created restrained his power over humanity, giving him the right of free exercise of his power of the knowledge of good and evil (after all, he received both at the fall). The restraint of or free expression of this power was an intrinsic right of humanity. This was part of "being like God" (Gen 3:5, 22). Thus, Moses the philosopher draws the parallel between creator God and created humanity demonstrating that the Hebrew perspective is that both, due to their similarity, have an intrinsic nature that is the product of their essence.

Not unlike his Greek counterparts, Moses (Hebrew tradition) used biblical narrative to communicate his philosophical understanding of God and God's interactions with humanity. Within the narrative, God's ontological essence is revealed to humanity. That is, the real life of a select group that he has determined would be his witnesses (Is 43:8-13). The necessity of such a tool is evident in that, as in the study by Przybylski, predetermined definitions are set up like boxes into which an exegete can place his

scripture to say this one fits this box (i.e., God's gift to man) and that one in that box (i.e., his demand on man). However, this does not determine a meaning for righteousness. Rather, it provides categories for something called righteousness. Thus, to determine the meaning, it is necessary to begin philosophically and locate the essence of righteousness. It is mandatory that the investigation turn first to Hebrew tradition since this is the story of God, divulging his nature and intent for humanity. This approach will look for the source of the essence of righteousness. Next, an examination of the development will be followed through the LXX and into Matthew's milieu.

### **5.5.2.2 Hebrew Scripture**

Believing Hebrew Scripture to be a revelation from God raises the necessity to see if there are evidences of God revealing any understanding of the nature (essence) of righteousness. To find this, it will be helpful to examine some passages that may indicate this essence. Wilson (1978: 357) sets the stage for what may be found in the OT examples. He lists a variety of characteristics (justice, right, integrity) as the meaning but qualifies these by saying that they are *exhibited* (emphasis mine) in certain acts. He has done well to distinguish between what is intrinsically righteous (right) and what demonstrates that rightness. The following will explore some ideas regarding righteousness that should clarify this difference.

The first occasion found in the narrative for the introduction to righteousness is Genesis 15:6. In this verse, "the Lord assigns Abram's faith the value of righteousness" (Mathews, 2007: 167). From this idea, it should be obvious that righteousness (*ṣēdāqâ*) cannot be rightfully understood with the limited view of a demand put on Abraham. Rather, this is God responding to faith demonstrated. The sense of obligation is not apparent here. Thus, it was not a demand that God placed on Abraham nor was it merely God's gift to him. Rather, it was a response of God to escalate the value of his faith to the level of righteousness. He did not gift righteousness to him; he treated Abraham's faith the same as if it were righteousness. What this indicates is that righteousness is something measureable that is established by God and can be counted or valued in relationship to other measures (in this case, Abraham's faith). Feimer (2001) supports this in his examination of Ancient Near East literature, indicating that they understood that there was an implied standard or level of excellence that was considered right. These standards adjudicate the action to determine if it can be credited as meeting the standard. In the case of Genesis 15, Abraham's faith met a standard of acceptance in

God's perspective that would allow this faith to hold the same value as that which is right is God's judgment. To put it simply, Abraham's faith was right.

At this juncture, it is best to determine some understanding of this value or standard than to determine if actions or results fit the standard. The former looks to discern the standard rather than apply it, as in the case of Pryzybylski. In turning to the Hebrew tradition, this standard is stated clearly in the three divisions—Torah, Nebiim, and Ketubim.

In the Torah narrative of Sodom (Gen 18:23-28), Abraham is attempting to find as few as ten people who have met an implied standard that would prompt God not to destroy the city. Abraham's request is based on the assumption that God is righteous and will act according to that righteousness (Mathews, 2007: 228). As a righteous God, he has the right to impose such a standard that, if not met, would lead to people being judged and found worthy of death. This account indicates that righteousness, while measurable and able to be shown in actions, starts with a God-imposed standard. Verse 19 indicates that the way of the Lord is righteous because this is what he expects of Abraham. Confined to physicality as humans are, it is easier to conceive of righteousness in the physical actions (whether of God or man), but this does not indicate what constitutes rightness. This is found in the nature of God, as he is right.

The next narrative that brings this more into focus is the incident of the ten plagues of Egypt (Ex 9:27). Pharaoh declares that the Lord is right in his judgment that brought hail onto the land because the Israelites were not freed. This rightness is natural to God. Stuart (2007: 237) remarks that Pharaoh recognizes the truth of God's ways. He translates the passage as God is in the right. The concept of being true (the sources of absolute truth) is essential to the rightness of God's nature. This is a clear indication that the Lord himself is the standard of rightness against which all other actions, thoughts, and intentions are to be compared. However, it is in Moses' song of praise in Deuteronomy 32 that the concept of rightness as God's essential nature is clearly declared. Moses stands as God's character witness and lists his attributes (32:4). This list includes such characteristics as integrity (*tamim*, translated as perfect) and justice (*mispat*). Merrill (2001: 410) concludes that these attributes defend the Lord's character. Moses is defending the very character of God before the people. It is becoming obvious that to define the concept of righteousness is to define the very nature of God. Thus, God's is righteousness. This would be comparable to the statement that God is love (1

Jn 4:8). Akin (Akin, 2001: 178) calls this the “encompassing statement regarding the nature of God”. Neither the Hebrew text nor the LXX in Deuteronomy 32:4 uses a verb to connect God to the concept of rightness. Literally, the declaration is “Lord Righteous”. Thus, it is an attribute of the nature of God.

This is further pictured in the Psalms, which are poems in the Ketubim that praise and exalt the nature of God. Psalm 7:9 and 11 declare that God is righteous, using the adjectival form to state that it is his nature. Regarding Psalm 31:1, Bratcher and Reyburn (1991: 290) portrays God’s nature as only being able to respond fairly, always doing what is right. The same expression is used in 35:24. Without explanation, the psalmist in 50:6 informs the reader that the heavens make known (*nāgad*) his righteousness. Thus, even creation understands the nature of God as defining the essence of righteousness. Twenty-nine times, the New American Standard, 1995 update, uses the term “your righteous (judgment, ordinances, or words)” or “your righteousness” in relationship to various aspects of God’s nature (word or ordinances) and actions (judging).

In the final section of the Hebrew Scripture, the Nebiim, Isaiah (5:15-17) associates one of God’s most accepted characteristic, holiness, to righteousness by stating that the former will show itself within the latter. Isaiah states that God will separate or consecrate himself in righteousness. The essence of this is that God is distinctive (set apart from others) in his rightness. Clendenen (2007: 176) points out that there are two principles at work in this passage. The first is the ultimate exaltation of God and the second is that the exaltation will be through actions that demonstrate his holiness.

This small sampling of the Hebrew Scriptures certainly opens the possibility the in the Hebrew mind, the resulting action of righteousness is not the issue. Rather, the issue is the standard of rightness that determines the rightness of the action. To further benefit this different approach, a brief summary of systematic theology of the Hebrew Scriptures should shed some light on this ontological issue.

### **5.5.2.3 Old Testament Theology**

In order to appreciate fully the perspective that righteousness is part of the ontological essence of God, it may be beneficial to view this within the perspective of systematic theology. Eichrodt (1961: 239) identifies righteousness as one expression of the

covenant. Admitting that obstacles exist that prevent definition since the root has been lost, he does conclude that throughout the OT, it holds the idea of right behavior or disposition. Encompassing the ontological idea that this work endorses, he (1961: 240) states that it is predicated by God and humanity. In this sense, the predication would be the categories such as the work of God or the demand on man. However, it also implies that righteousness has an ontological essence about itself that can be predicated by someone or something. He (1961: 123) validates this by holding that the heart of the law is the commemoration of the wilderness wanderings consummated by the Sinai covenant. If the heart of the law climaxes in covenant, then this does not support the category of God's demand on man. Rather, it supports the idea that God's relationship with Israel is at the heart of the law. This being the case, his nature would control that relationship. Any actions would be understood as a actualization of his nature but not the essence. Actions give understandable form of the essence just as Jesus the incarnated provides physicality to the essence of God.

Further, he supports Cremer's (*Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre im Zusammenhange ihrer geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen*, 1899) conclusions regarding the relational aspect of righteousness by noting the significant presences of this in the community and psychology of Israel (Eichrodt, 1961: 240-241). Previously, he had tied this to the mutuality (*hesed*) of the covenant (1961: 239), which supports the ontology by the parallelism of righteousness and mercy (1961: 247). These express God's dealings within the fellowship. In addition, the prophets anticipate the function of the messianic king by the appellation of *yhwh sidqēnu*, the Lord Righteous (Eichrodt, 1961: 246). This profession of faith stresses the mediation of the Prince of Peace and, for Matthew, finds fulfilment in Jesus.

Brueggemann's (1997: 117) contends that a systematic view of the OT is, at best, difficult, complex, and problematical. The reason is simple. The God of the OT does not easily conform to Christian dogmatic theology or Greek philosophy. Because of this, it is speech about God (testimony, primarily Israel's) that is most beneficial. Normative speech of Israel regarding God is expressed in such statements as those of thanksgiving. Brueggemann's (1997: 127) first example is Psalm 7:17 where he finds form in thanksgiving that is prompted by God's righteousness. He states that God's presence in Israel is in his righteousness. While identified as precise actions, Brueggemann is clear here to say that God is present in the actions. His purpose is intervention; his interest is rehabilitation, restoration, and well-being. These actions are the essence of God

interacting with humanity for the good of humanity. While he does not state it, this certainly has an incarnational appeal to it.

As stated above, the term “your” in relationship to righteousness is oft mentioned. Brueggemann (1997: 132) insists that in the testimony of thanksgiving, *Thou* is Israel’s central and driving force. The concept of Thou (your) is the ontological presence of the very essence of God in acts that are identified as righteous because these acts are in nature like God and are the acts that he does. Thus, the ontology is at the heart of the definition.

von Rad (1962: 370-371) enhances the relational idea by stating that there is no concept in the OT with so central a significance as that of righteousness. He understands that it is embodied even down to how man treats animals and nature. However, he understands that this does not define the term. He contends that western influence (the Vulgate) has narrowed the understanding to the ethical. This is the natural, next step in Przybylski’s demand on man. It is oft reduced to ethical demands. Von Rad brings his readers one step closer to Matthew, also using Cremer (see above), by identifying that it is not just the relationship. Rather, it is the specific relationship in which the agent finds himself to be the specific norm of righteousness (von Rad, 1962: 371). Smith (1981: 222-223) diagrams this in this way: The covenant (Cremer, Brueggemann, and von Rad’s relationship) is supported by covenant faithfulness (*hesed*; Eichrodt (1961: 239)). This attitude of faithfulness gives meaning to what he calls the “ethical generalities” that includes righteousness. What can be drawn from this is that since the *ethos* of righteousness is driven by the *hesed* relationship, it is the ontological essence of God himself that anchors this and gives meaning to it. The righteousness is defined by the nature of God himself since righteousness originates in him as the greater good.

From the evidence above (space does not allow for the development of all of the examples), the Hebrew concept cannot be easily put into one of Przybylski’s boxes. These categories are helpful in sorting out the types of actions that are righteousness, yet they do little to offer definition for Matthew’s use. Additionally, the LXX must be considered.

#### 5.5.2.4 The LXX

Przybylski (1980: 77) is not surprised by the use of the LXX in Matthew. The reason is two-fold. First, the LXX is a bridge between the OT and the NT. As a bridge, it would be expected to bring over what was accepted in the OT. Second, Matthew uses the LXX in his writing. Nonetheless, a shift is evident in the LXX toward legal applications. Reimer (2001) agrees with Przybylski's on this shift. Additionally, an eschatological emphasis is realized. He (2001) notes that the book of Enoch (37-71) emphasizes the place of the righteous and wicked in the coming age. This would certainly align with Matthew 25 and the parables of judgment. However, as shall be seen, this does not set the boundaries for the full comprehension of Matthew's concept of righteousness. Schrenk (1964: 185) reinforces this same idea by stating that fundamental belief in God links firmly to judgment in the LXX.

Regarding the conceptual equivalency of the Hebrew to the Greek, Reimer (2001) builds his LXX concept on the foundation that God's actions are not how to understand the concept. Rather, God Himself is the norm. Was it a Freudian indication that he used the term "*being* (emphasis mine) the norm"? It would seem by this introduction to the section that this is certainly implicit. However, he does contend that by the time of the LXX, the concept of relationship has shifted due to the forensic and soteriological elements. The shift has historical impetus as they have survived the exile, the returning exiles support the remnant, and the city and temple are being rebuilt. Add to this Ezra's emphasis on the law and this naturally asks the question, "How do I keep the law?" Saiman (2007/2008: 102) illustrates the use of this logic when teaching a non-Jewish adult bible class. After multiple responses to the question of what is the first command in the bible, Saiman told them that for the Jew it was to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28). In response to how many children would qualify for fruitful and multiply, he concluded, "Well, then how do you know when you have done it? How do you know when you have been sufficiently fruitful?" What he is indicating is that for the Jew, this must be scrutinized with options such as, would one being enough? What if that one dies, you are no longer fruitful. Thus you need two. Should they be male, female, or a mix? If male, what if he does not marry? The questions seem endless. This mindset was the result of the LXX transition. However, does this mean that Matthew's use followed the LXX, the Dead Sea Scrolls or Rabbinic thought? Not necessarily. If this study is correct and Matthew is attempting to restore the Hebraic tradition, then his use would

mirror that tradition based on normative covenant ideals qualified with messianic expectations. Matthew's use, as well as the support of the Hebrew antiquity, emphasizes the ontology of righteousness rather than its product. This is demonstrated in the expression where Jesus introduces a surpassing righteousness. This righteousness is greater than the rabbinic ideal of knowing exactly how to fulfil a command. Additionally a study of 9:13 and 12:7 in reference to Hosea 6:6 may hold the key to understanding the ontological essence that this work recommends. If this is tenable, the question of how Jesus' baptism restores this ontological emphasis must be answered. Additionally, it must be answered in light of the proposed Matthean context of covenant, messiah, and kingdom. The following suggests that Matthew did answer this question.

### **5.5.3 Matthew's Use of *Dikaiosunēn* and *Dikaios***

Schrenk (1964: 192) calls *dikaiosunēn* the second stage of the development in relation to *dikē-dikaios*. He notes that words ending in *-sunē* date from the beginning of abstract thought and helps the linguist understand why a term not found in Homer or Hesiod occurs frequently as a virtue in the post-epic period (Schrenk, 1964: 192). Nonetheless, Greek life was shaped by the notion of what is right. As a word group, they linked to order, law, and a sense of implied judgment. Development in the West produces a forensic setting with theme of guilt and innocence. This drew much on the OT covenant. The result is more stress on grace than faith with emphasis on the Christological effect, viz-a-viz, the cross. This would seem to deemphasize the subjective sense of human effort (Reumann, 1992: 746-748).

The concept of an abstract idea carries well into the Matthean usage. The discussion below indicates that this is the intended usage by Matthew rather than a specific form as promoted by Przybylski. Using his work as a base, this portion of the study will discuss Matthew's use of these two words.

#### **5.5.3.1 *Dikaiosunēn***

The perspective of this study contends that 3:15 anchors Matthew's concept to the man Jesus but does not define the term. What this means is that Matthew's first intention is not to define but to establish that Jesus as messiah somehow brings the fullest expression of righteousness into the forthcoming kingdom. Matthew realized that his

community may have a working knowledge of this. If not, he would have needed to define this much earlier and/or more clearly.

Matthew uses this term seven times (3:15, 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; 21:32). Reumann (1992: 751) maintains a Matthean emphasis as all of these are unique to Matthew or use *dikaiosunēn* when absent from the parallels. Of these, only 6:1 has a textual variation with the Codex 038 (Washingtonianus Koridethi). See Przybylski's summary of the arguments on page 78 for the reasons to accept *dikaiosunēn*. Przybylski (1980: 79) holds that both the word and the context are redacted by Matthew as there are no synoptic parallels and these verses are important to the context. Because of this, Przybylski supports the idea that 5:20 and 6:1 provide the best evidence for the Matthean concept of righteousness since he was the final redactor. For this reason, he begins his study with these verses.

This study has already addressed 3:15 and 5:20. Agreeing with Przybylski, 5:20 and 6:1 fit neatly into Przybylski's categories. Reumann (1992: 751) will contend that 5:20 is a good fit with the OT emphasis of an ethical response to God's will (law). However, as pointed out in the study on 5:20, the appropriation of righteousness in an act does not properly define the rightness of the act. One cannot work from the act backwards to find the rightness. The act is right because, like Abraham's faith, rightness has been attributed to it to give value to the act. Davies and Allison (1988: 499) maintain that the meaning of righteousness is determined by what follows. It is what they call Christian character. No one would doubt that these actions are like Christ, but it is the Christlikeness that makes them righteous, not the action. To some, this may be semantics. To Matthew's Greek audience, the difference between the essence and the shadows (cf. Plato's Allegory of the Cave) is real. They understand that there is a major difference between the physical expression and that which makes the expression real. Gnosticism is already becoming an issue by the time Matthew writes. The Jewish audience would struggle more as a product of the post-exilic mentality. However, their acceptance of Jesus as Messiah may have stirred the slumbering chords of *hesed* love of the *Shema* (Deut 6:4-5).

Witherington (2006: 127) is certainly closer to the point when he points out that what is to follow indicates that Jesus is as concerned about the "root or heart causes" as he is about actions, which should also be taken seriously. This is demonstrated in the righteousness of 6:1. That righteousness fleshes out as almsgiving, praying, and fasting.

While Witherington sees all three as actions of righteousness, Reumann (1992: 751) limits the expression to almsgiving. Luz (2007: 295) gives this section the heading of *Attitude toward God*. He identifies the three forms of piety, which is Luz's (2007: 299) contemporary, conceptual equivalent of righteousness, and demonstrates exemplary possibilities of a right relationship. France (1985: 135) follows the same line by consistently referring to a new attitude.

Righteousness in the Beatitudes provides an excellent insight into the Matthean mindset. Matthew has certainly redacted these into his work, as Luke's parallels do not include the idea of righteousness. A variety of ideas are put forward as to Matthew's purpose for including the idea of righteousness in verses six and ten. The image produced by hunger and thirst after three parables dealing with the human condition of poverty, grief, and perspective, some would suggest that Matthew keeps this motif and is intending righteousness to be that of social justice (Hagner, 1993: 93; Blomberg, 2001: 99–100). Nolland (2005: 202-203) recognizes this as a possibility along with longing for more than physical satisfaction to an overt interest in righteousness such as 6:33. His conclusion is that Matthew was looking at social justice both now and in the eschatological kingdom. Gundry (1982: 70) comments that there is divine justice but does not commit to whether it is social justice now or eschatological justice in the future kingdom. Davies and Allison (1988: 451) put the emphasis on the seeking, not considering righteousness as a gift. Luz (2007: 195-196) contends that all Matthean passages are to be understood as human attitude or behaviour. They find parallels in Judaism and Hellenism with the idea of longing for or exerting oneself. They do find an understanding in God's covenant disposition and the resulting responsibilities of the elect. Luz (2007: 195) reminds the readers that from Origen on, Christ is considered the essence of God's righteousness. Thus, the expectation is that it is more than the fairness that is appropriated for humanity. The covenant concept agrees with France (1985: 115-116) who understands righteousness to be the desire for a relationship of obedience and trust. All of the commentators listed here agree in principle that righteousness in verse ten is the same as six.

As mentioned in the last paragraph, many relate 5:6 to 6:33. Witherington (2006: 154) remarks that it is God's righteousness that is to be sought. He then defines righteousness as conduct in light of the new eschatology introduced by Jesus. This makes the reader wonder how one sees conduct. He does not offer a suggestion for how to seek God's conduct. This certainly does not provide an adequate concept of righteousness in this

verse. Pryzybylski (1980: 89) states that this deals with God's righteousness as a norm. Followers are encouraged to live by this. However, he still needs to put this into one of his categories so he prefers to see it as a norm for man's conduct. Thus, seek first the kingdom is the norm for conduct for the disciple. This certainly makes sense. However, it is strained in that Pryzybylski is forcing a predetermined meaning onto the passage. If the meaning refers to God's nature as discussed, then it would be to seek first the kingdom and his nature. Basically, these say the same as will be realized in the conclusion to this section.

The final use is in 21:32, referencing John the Baptist. Here, Jesus is stating that John came with the authority of heaven (Blomberg, 2001: 322; Davies and Allison, 1988: 170). As the forerunner announcing the kingdom of heaven, it was essential that John speak with authority. Later, after the cleansing of the temple (21:23-27), Jesus would use this as opportunity to teach about authority, sharing the same source with John (Keener, 1999: 506-507). While this may look to John's obedience to his calling (Luz, 2005: 31) or possibly a glimpse into the process of salvation history (Hagner, 1995: 614), the best approach may be that he started the path that led to Jesus who is the righteousness of God. As the forerunner, he has the same vision of the kingdom of heaven as did Jesus. In their perspective of the kingdom, all is right between God and the world (Nolland, 2005: 863-864).

Individually, each of these may hold a special nuance of the ideal of righteousness. Collectively, they point to both a now and then kingdom of the beloved Son (Col 1:13). This kingdom condition was initiated by Jesus at his birth as he brought the essence of God to earth and at his baptism where all was satisfied that could be classified as righteous—actions, God or mans and the nature of God. This kingdom estate can be desired (5:6; 6:33), the reason for rejection by those outside of it (5:10), the surpassing standard of excellence (5:20), or the major heading acts of piety like almsgiving, praying, and fasting. Ultimately, it is the way all disciples must travel (21:32) to be part of the kingdom.

### **5.5.3.2     *Dikaios***

Matthew does give an indication of the meaning in the use of the adjective *dikaios*. The word is used seventeen times in fourteen verses. All but one (20:4) refers to a person who could be identified as righteous. Pryzybylski (1980: 101) remarks that 1:19, 5:45,

9:13, 13:17, and 23:28-29, 35 carry the significance of obeying the law. For 1:19, this is purely an assumption based on the fact that Joseph was a Jew who seemingly did as a good Jew would. The same is true of 13:17 since no argument is given. Thus, both are assumptions and cannot support Przybylski's category without prejudice. The same is true of 5:45. This is pure assumption as there is nothing in the context to determine that this pertains to the law. If it did, then this verse could support the idea that only Jews are righteous and all others unrighteous since only the Jews have the law. Here, righteousness is that of which Paul speaks in Romans 1 as being revealed. Both 9:13 and 23:28 could easily be associated with the law. Again, this would only be the action of righteousness, not the meaning. However, it will be discovered that 9:13 paralleled with 12:7 does provide some insight. This will be examined below.

Regarding 10:41, Przybylski (1980: 103) sees this as obeying the Jewish law, as opposed to obeying Jesus. He gives no real argument other than there seems to be a distinction between the Jewish and Christian disciple. The next treatment is on 27:19 and Pilate's wife's reference to Jesus. It seems difficult to assume that the righteousness to which Pilate's wife (27:19) refers is obedience to the law. As a Roman, she would be viewing this as not breaking Roman law. While this would still associate it with law in general, it only identifies actions resulting from a standard that is understood to be righteous. This may give an indication of what is a form of righteousness but does not identify the source or the essence of that righteousness. Przybylski (1980: 103) is correct to disagree with those who would say that this verse identifies "Christ as Righteous". The reference is to the man as there is no indication of faith in Pilate's wife.

The final group for Przybylski is 13:43, 49 and 25:37, 46. He (1980: 103) describes the use of *dikaïos* in these as Christian righteousness, and then only as future, not in the present. His conclusion is that this mimics the Tannaitic use of being declared righteous only in the afterlife.

In all of these, the concept of righteousness is, in most cases, assumptive based on supposed and possibly predetermined categories with which Matthew may not be familiar. It is often assumed that Matthew would view his Christianity according to contemporary theology. It should be obvious that none of these give proper definition to the idea of righteous. True, the law serves as a standard but does not define the concept. If it did, the conclusion would be that to be righteous is to do certain things. Recalling the OT qualities, this is hardly sufficient. Does this leave the reader in a quandary,

wondering if Matthew was trying to be clandestine? This is not the case, as mentioned above. The passage in 9:13 may hold the key to understanding Matthew and connecting him to God's view (the OT perspective).

Twice, during conflicts over the law, Jesus relies on Hosea 6:6 to set the standard for kingdom righteousness (9:13; 12:7). Jesus lifts the phrase "I desire mercy not sacrifice" from Hosea to focus the Pharisees on the true ideal of service to God. Reumann (1992: 751) notes that there are three possibilities for understanding Jesus' comparison of the righteous to the sinner. First, it could be used as irony. Jesus did not come to be part of the religious majority. This would be comparable to 20:28 where Jesus likened himself to a servant, not the one being served. Next, Reumann comments that the righteousness could equate to those keeping the law. Jesus has already confirmed the law (5:17). The third possibility is that Jesus may be contrasting righteousness to the Pharisee's self-conception of their righteousness. This could be supported by Jesus' expectations of a surpassing righteousness that exceeds that of the Pharisees.

Edin (1998: 356) suggests that 9:13 is the appropriate starting place to study righteousness, which she equates to the covenant concept of *hesed*, using mercy as synonymous. However, midstream, she (1998: 358) shifts from mercy to love based on the Hebrew *hesed* used by Hosea. He said, "*Hesed* I desired not sacrifice". The shift comes without explanation and then she shifts back to mercy (1998: 359). This gives the impression that for Edin, these terms are interchangeable. It is beneficial for the reader to understand what is intended in Hosea and determine if this could be Matthew's understanding.

Davies and Allison (1988: 104) maintain that the quotation in 9:12 comes from the LXX. Black (1977: 108-109) contends that Matthew made a word-by-word translation of the Hebrew, independently rendering the Hebrew. Understanding this and that Matthew was preserved in Greek requires that the reader have an understanding of the concept of *eleos* and its relation to the Hebrew it translated. As a post-exilic writing, *eleos* in the LXX picks up the classical usage of mercy and sympathy (Sakenfeld, 2002: 15) based on attitudes regarding the wrath and judgment of God. Maccabees (2 Mac 2:7; 7:29) pictures the age of salvation as the age of mercy (Bultmann, 1964: 481). This was based on the exilic experience and the loving mercy of God to return Israel to their home. Thus, the Hebrew was flavored by the *Sitz im Leben* of the prophetic community who foretold the impending doom and restoration. This carried over into the NT usage

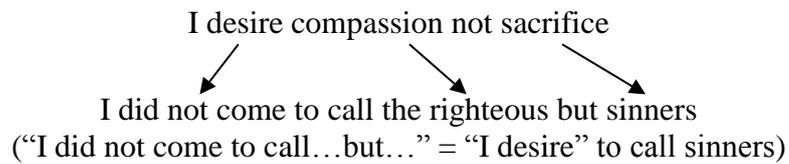
as evidenced in the rabbinic usage of *hesed* as an act of love and frequent exhortations to mercy.

*Hesed* in Hosea is a reciprocal relationship among men and an explicit relationship toward God. Ultimately, *hesed* applies primarily to a covenantal relationship with God with demands of loyalty, justice, and righteousness (God to man, man to God, man to man) (Glueck, 1967: 56). Thus, the entire message of Hosea is dominated by the theme of covenant-obligation understood as covenant-loyalty (Black, 1977: 109). He (Black, 1977: 109, n.3) notes that all six occurrences of *hesed* in Hosea either appear explicitly or implicitly in this context and other covenant terms. Further, Black (1977: 109, 118) stresses that Matthew was aware of the OT covenant-language, especially the way it was used by Hosea. Sakenfeld (2002: 147) contributes that there are two central polarities for understanding theological *hesed*. These are God's care for humanity, individually or collectively and God's character in any type of covenant. She comments that Hosea's use is not in reference to God showing mercy to Israel. Rather it is what God desires from Israel. This is true in five of the six times the Hebrew is used in Hosea. However, in 2:19, God reaffirms his relationship with Israel (after their exile, 2:14). This covenant pictured as a marriage between God and Israel is an act of love. It is an act of covenant love renewed in a new covenant (Garrett, 1997: 93). Israel's indifference to the request for *hesed* does not keep God from renewing the covenant out of his own *hesed* toward them. Hosea's point is to draw a contrast between Israel and God and the way they love. Israel is not steadfast (Edin, 1998: 359); God is. This is true if the reader understands that *eleos* is the conceptual equivalent of *hesed* as a covenant concept belonging to the nature of God. To this, Sakenfeld (1992: 380) maintains that *hesed* is the entire Decalogue in a word.

Black (1977: 110-111) ties this back to Matthew very well by pointing out that Matthew is translating the Hebrew of Hosea 6:6 into Greek using the same sense as the original in the quotation. Jesus is affirming that his disciples are to relate to God on his terms. He indicts the Pharisees for neglecting the important parts of the law. Neglecting (*aphiēmi*) is from the same word group used by Luke in Acts 2:38 regarding the releasing of sins. The Pharisees have knowingly released the important matters to stress the lesser. Black (1977: 110) is correct in his assessment that Matthew is attempting to give content to righteousness. This is a righteousness that surpasses that of the Pharisees. In Matthew's version of Hosea 6:6, he includes only the first line. Using a

parallel structure, Matthew equates compassion (*eleos*) with righteous. and not sacrificing with sinners.

### Matthew's Parallel Structure Equating Compassion with Righteous



As noted above, Edin equates *eleos* to righteousness, which is correct based on the parallelism illustrated above. However, as noted, even using the Greek, the term *eleos* must be understood within the covenant context and not as just a series of deeds that show compassion. Further, Jesus introduces Hosea's statement by alternating positive and negative statements where desire (*thelō*) and come (*ēlthon*) stand in a similar relationship. Using positive and negative in this manner reduces the chance that the audience will misunderstand the true purpose of the coming (Carter, 1998: 45). Carter (1998: 54) points out that Matthew sets the Hosea statement in the context of healing and forgiving, further clarifying Jesus' mission. However, Matthew omits Hosea's ending regarding the desire for the knowledge of God. He has implied this in his opening statement of "Go and learn". The audience understands that Jesus' mission is confirmed in scripture (Carter, 1998: 55). Matthew confirms Jesus' mission with the verb *kalesai* that connects his audience with the commissioning statements of 1:21-23 (Carter, 1998: 57).

As a fitting close to this section, one last point needs to be made concerning Matthew's use of *eleos*. Five times he uses the aorist active imperative in relationship to healing. In four of these five (9:27, 15:22; 20:30, 31), Jesus is called Son of David. As discussed earlier, this is a messianic concept. As Edin (1998: 357) points out, not only does Jesus talk about mercy, he shows it. He himself is practicing the surpassing righteousness that he expects of his followers. He is the great messiah who both teaches and practices what he teaches. Why does he do this? He practices what he teaches because it is his nature. He is righteous himself. Thus, he naturally produces good deeds.

For Black (1977: 117), this passage from Hosea is designed for Matthew's community to set the content and meaning of the better righteousness that Jesus expects. Agreeing with him, Jesus has here and again in 12:7 demonstrated the true content and meaning that Matthew intends for his community to understand and practice. This is evident in

light of Matthew 18 and the church dealing with internal problems and the response to Peter (18:21-35) regarding forgiveness. Jesus anticipates that there will be mercy between brothers because God is merciful.

#### **5.5.4 Final Thoughts—the Matthean Concept of Righteous/Righteousness**

Tertullian (*An Answer to the Jews*, 8) summarizes well the focus of this study on righteousness. He states regarding the day Christ was born, “And (then) ‘righteousness eternal’ was manifested—that is, Christ”. Tertullian was not confused over the nature of righteousness. He understood that it shared the same essence (*homoousios*) with Christ who also shared the same with God. The reason for this is that righteousness is more than a standard in the NT; it is a nature. It is characteristic of Christ. Therefore, it is characteristic of all who are in Christ and Christ in them. The result is actions that are the same as Christ would do, thus both the actions and the one acting are righteous. While actions can be categorized, the better understanding relating to Matthean use is to follow the ontological ideal. Banks (1974: 242) summarizes this well by stating that it is an all-inclusive term that “signifies the character of the instructions Jesus sets before his followers”.

Origen taught that Christ is the essence of God’s righteousness. If only Matthew’s writings were available, then it would be comfortable to fit the meaning of the term into one of the two categories discussed. However, other writings are available. Paul’s pictures of being *in Christ* paints a portrait of a Christian whose nature is so involved in the nature of Christ that it is difficult to see the difference. The result is right acts that always look like Jesus. How then does Matthew use this term? It will always be built on the nature of Jesus. In 3:15, Jesus is fulfilling righteousness by enfleshing it so that it can be duplicated by his disciples. In 5:20, the surpassing righteousness is identical to what Jesus would do and would be driven by the same attitude. Disciples would desire (hunger and thirst) to be like Christ. The result would be social justice and an eschatological ideal achievable through the grace of God. Disciples would be persecuted because Jesus was persecuted. Disciples would seek his kingdom because that is where his divine presence is. Ultimately, like John who came before Jesus “in the way of righteousness”, doing what was expected by the one who commissioned him, so the disciples would continue the same trek. Was Przybylski wrong? He was not. Rather, it is his emphasis. He is attempting to find definitions that will be perceivable to humanity. Human physicality is best realized by actions. He was simply following

human nature and trying to discern Christ in that form. Jesus came to make that possible. However, it was his very essence that gave meaning to the actions and declared them as right.

This study by no means answers all the questions about righteousness nor does it clarify totally the meaning of the term. What it does is offer a perspective that drives to the heart of the matter. Like Jesus' Halakha, he stresses the cause rather than the result. If the reader grasps the underlying essence of righteousness, the actions will become more natural. They will become apple trees producing apples. The product will match the essence. From here, it is necessary to visit the formulary passages that identify how Jesus satisfied the OT expectations in light of Matthew's *Sitz im Leben*.

## **5.6 PLĒRŌTHĒI TŌN PROPHĒTŌN**

Much has been made of the contextual fulfilments because these form the foundation for Matthew's emphasis on discipleship, especially regarding righteousness and the actions of the community. The context of covenant, Christology, and kingdom permeate these verses. As demonstrated in the last chapter, the prophetic background is also rich in this context as well, although the Christological element will be the most obvious. This would seem to be Matthew's intent just as Jesus the Christ is at the forefront of the theses of 1:1. While all will be mentioned in various relationships, the formulary statements will accentuate the Christological element as this is the apex of the covenant and the subject of the kingdom. The format of this section will be to take the verses in the order appearing in Matthew's drama and examine them for their contextual relationship as well as the meaning that Matthew may have intended to support the Christological ideal.

### **5.6.1 God with Us (1:21-23)**

*Kaleo* plays a significant role in Matthew's gospel. Nineteen of the twenty-six times that the verb is used, there is an explicit or implicit emphasis. The emphasis can be divided between naming and election. It is the former that is connected to the first *plērōō* statement of 1:22. *Kalesies to onoma autou Iēsoun* is literally *you will call the name of him Jesus*. The actual name of Jesus holds the place of importance as Matthew will demonstrate in the next verse. However, Matthew is specific to say call the name (*onoma*). The development of the term *onoma* indicates that naming gives special

designation to the object named. There is a universal belief that the name of an object, man, or higher being is more than a label. Name is an indispensable part of personality. “One might say that a man is constituted of body, soul and name” (Bietenhard, 1999). Luz (2007: 95) is certainly correct to call this both a high point and a Christological messianic statement speaking of Jesus in Jewish context. For Luz (2007: 95), the term *laos* used in 1:21 is a reference to the genealogy and Israel also indicating Jesus’ messiahship. Nolland (2005: 98) notes that is a heaven-given name, an OT practice (Gn. 16:11; 17:5, 15, 19; Is. 8:3; Ho. 1:4, 6, 9; cf. Is. 7:3, 14).

The prophet on whom Matthew depends is Isaiah. It was shown in the previous chapter that this prophet is a favorite of Matthew with four references (7:14, 9:1, 42:1-4, 53:4). As a reminder, Isaiah’s emphasis was primarily the southern kingdom but with universal application as well. While this passage falls under the judgment portion of Isaiah (Freeman, 1999: 191), it points to his emphasis on redemption (chs. 40-66). Relying on the LXX, Matthew reminds his readers that Isaiah speaks for the Lord (Blomberg, 2001: 59; Nolland, 2005: 100). Immanuel, translated for those not familiar with the term (*lākem*), suggests a general hope for a Davidic ruler. In the OT context, this heir would replace Ahaz (Clendenen, 2007: 212–213). However, Brown (1973: 15-20) reminds his readers that the OT writers did not foresee the details of Jesus’ life. Their concern was their own *Sitz im Leben* and the near future impact of their predictions. Brown puts the fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophecy of the virginal birth to be seven hundred years before Christ. Blomberg’s (2002: 19) double fulfilment takes this one step farther. It is not just the literal fulfilment as some historic time within the prophet’s experience. Rather, it is that when passages such as Isaiah 7:14 are read within context, they reveal possibilities that cannot be satisfied by any OT-age event.

Brown (1993: 28-29) suggests that possible reasons for Matthew’s birth account may be apologetic against those still following John the Baptist (cf. Acts 19:1-7) or he may be contesting the teachings of the Docetist. However, he considers the more reasonable suggestion is to answer the Jewish claim of Jesus’ illegitimacy. Matthew offers an explanation, allowing for the irregularity of Jesus’ birth while defending the purity of Mary and the purity of the child (Brown, 1993: 29). He continues by showing that due to the later date of the Gospels and the questions raised about the nature of Jesus, Matthew’s position on the birth pictured the accepted orthodoxy regarding Jesus’ physical and metaphysical nature. Matthew involves his community into this defence by

changing the second person singular future (*kaleseis*) to the third person plural future (*kalesousin*) (Luz, 2007: 96). They would call him Immanuel.

Ultimately, it would seem that Matthew's intent was to use scripture to validate that Jesus' presence surpasses the mere physical lineage that validates his relationship to David and Abraham. Vital as this is, Matthew has moved Jesus to the higher plain by his declaration that God is among us. This is a validation of sonship that is to be repeated at the baptism, temptation, and with Peter's confession (16:16). Of the sixty-six times the expression "son of" is used, Son of Man is used thirty-one times and Son of David, ten times. This divine nature relates to Matthew's community in several ways. First, as Jesus (emphasis on his historicity), he will save his people. This has both covenant and Christological emphasis. Davies and Allison (1988: 210) translate Jesus to mean "Yahweh is salvation", making God the "he" in he will save his people. Elsewhere, Matthew uses saves (*sōsei*) in association with Jesus. This and the use of Immanuel make implicit Matthew's pre-Nicean declaration of Jesus' relationship with the father. The concept of "his people" is a precursor to Jesus' statement that his mission was only to Israel (15:24). At this point, Matthew chooses not to include any concepts regarding Jesus in a position to reign over this house he saves. This will come later. Finally, God with *us* becomes significant for his community in light of the fact that many may not be Jews. Jesus is the universal saviour.

### **5.6.2 I Called my Son (2:15)**

Matthew's next *plērōō* statement continues the son motif with the allusion to one of the most important events in Israel's history—the exodus. The problem with this passage is that Matthew has Jesus fulfilling a historical event. Howard (1986: 315-320) list four commonly offered solutions to the understanding Matthew's use of Hosea. First, there is predictive prophecy where the passage in Hosea is taken as looking to a future fulfilment. Commonly, this is based on the use of the future perfect for call. This is problematical in that it is linguistically and contextually difficult. The second solution is to understand Hosea as an example of *sensus plenior*, or the deeper meaning. In this, the external message relates to the Exodus. However, hidden, waiting to be revealed is a deeper understanding. Howard's concern regards inspiration. Objectivity is at risk as how can one know if they have reached the fullest depth of meaning. Additionally, *plērōō* need not be limited to prophetic fulfilment or finding deeper meanings. The third solution maintains that Matthew used an exegetical technique called Midrash-Pesher

that was similar to that used at Qumran. Again, problems exist. There is a distinctive absence of the Matthean formula (*hina plērōthē*). According to Howard (Howard, 1986: 318-319), this may be due to the fact that Qumran thought they lived in the last days to which all prophecy looked. As a result, all exegesis was thought to pertain to their community. In their exegesis, the Qumran community did a line by line study. This is hardly Matthew's technique in 2:15. The final solution offer is typology. In this, Hosea somehow typified some element of Jesus' life. As with *sensus plenior*, the exegete can never be sure that all of the realized types have been identified. For example, since there is no messianic content or allusion in Hosea, some may find it difficult to associate with Matthew's very distinctive messianic ideal. The first three solutions do present problems in dealing with Matthew. However, typology may not be as problematical as Howard would lead the reader to think. Bruce's (1996: 1214) definition that earlier phases/events are recapped or fulfilled by a later one may contribute to the discussion. Matthew could be said to be reiterating the Exodus event with the new Moses. Typology can use a different character in a similar event to the historical past and satisfy a similar meaning. However, there may be a better solution than any of these four.

Blomberg (2001: 67) correctly states that Hosea's statement was not predictive. Rather, it was part of the collective memory of Israel of God's love. Kingsbury (1975: 16) understands Matthew's concept of *plērōō* to have been inaugurated by Jesus' coming (the *ēlthon* concept discussed in detail previously) that ended prophecy and initiated fulfilment (cf. 11:13). Thus, *plērōō* is not necessarily tied to completing a prophecy as much as simply bringing to completion or satisfaction God's intentions begun with Israel. In this way, Matthew's use can be termed analogical correspondence (Howard, 1986: 322; Blomberg, 2001: 67). For Matthew, there is a historical parallel of events of God's two sons, Israel and Jesus, and their migration through Egypt. Matthew connected two events in which he saw Jesus as the One who "*actualizes and completes* all that God intended for the nation" (Howard, 1986: 322). Gundry (1982: 34) uses the terms recapitulated and anticipated. For Blomberg (2001: 67), these events cannot be coincidental. God has initiated a covenant in each. In fact, of all the *plērōō* statements, none have more of a direct tie to the covenant than this one. The covenant motif is evident in the Hosea passage where the son is called beloved (*āhab*). The Hebrew term signifies more than just simple affection. It points to love that elects. Calling and

election are covenant elements obvious in the OT. Matthew's use of these concepts attaches his new community umbilically to the parent idea of the Abrahamic covenant.

Matthew uses two Christological signals that were as important to Hosea as they are to his community. Israel and Jesus were not just beloved. They were "my" beloved. Walvoord and Zuck (1985) go to the heart of the matter by stating that God adopted Israel but Jesus was his firstborn (Col 1:15). Israel is called firstborn in Exodus 4:22. Historically, their "birth" was via the election of Abraham. Whereas, Matthew has made it clear that via his own Spirit, God has visited humanity in Immanuel. As resurrection faith matures, John can declare that God has given his *monogenēs*. Matthew will solidify the son image in the baptismal proclamation. Most certainly, this depicts a Christological anticipation of a covenant experience that is comparable to that of the Exodus. This experience promotes happiness (5:1-12) and the law (5:17-20). Moving from 2:15 through 3:17 and 4:1-11 Matthew portrays an unfolding drama that gradually clarifies sonship relating to Jesus (Nolland, 2005: 123). From this unfolding drama, Matthew's readers understand the idea within the realm of messianic hopes (Luz, 2007: 121).

For Matthew's Jewish community, this excites the collective memories of the exodus story told at every Passover. Luz (2007: 119) emphasizes that there are additional parallels between Moses and Jesus. Whether the Jewish element of his community recalled these in detail or the major story of the exodus, the cultic pride would swell as they reminisced about their heritage. Even if Hellenized, these memories could not be distorted or concealed by their new perspectives. However, Matthew's Gentile community will not make an immediate connection. They have no ethnic history that equates the Exodus. They have no covenant promises or faithfulness (*hesed*). As Paul paints them, they were "separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2:11). However, they are no longer separated from Christ. Now they have an adopted heritage, having been grafted into the covenant (Rom 11:24). This is why Matthew is not hesitant to include specific Jewish history. This gives opportunity (behind the pages of the drama) to discuss the historical events that set the stage for God's universal acceptance through his beloved son. In this, he has set the context of covenant and Christology to make the history of Israel a real heritage for those grafted into God's cultivated olive tree. On this premise, the kingdom of heaven can infiltrate

all ethnic groups (28:19). As son, he can identify with all children everywhere (cf. Eph 3:14).

### **5.6.3 A Voice was Heard (2:16-18)**

The escape of Joseph's family and the Magi prompted the bitter rampage on Bethlehem and the neighboring regions. Herod wanted the boy king killed. Approximating Jesus' age, he has all the *tous paidas* (masc. noun; male children) two and under killed. Robertson (1997) puts the number between fifteen and twenty. This is reasonable for a small town (cf. Hagner, 1993: 37). As horrible as this was, Josephus did not record it. It is assumed that it was such a small atrocity compared to some of his other known violent actions that it was not worth mentioning (Robertson, 1997; Walvoord, Zuck and Seminary, 1985; Hagner, 1993: 37). Matthew uses this carnage to continue what he started in the previous verse. For Luz (2007: 121), the point of this pericope is the conflict between God and Herod. He sees the death of the children as secondary, on the reverse page of the real struggle as if it is not an issue with Matthew (cf Hagner, 1993: 37). This certainly misses the point as Matthew has left the exodus pericope and quickly scanned history, stopping at a pre-exilic point. This is another milestone in Jewish history. Huey (2001: 274) notes that in Jeremiah's account, there is a shift where the prophet "graphically describes the emotional pain of exile (v. 15), the Lord's compassionate love and promise of deliverance (vv. 16–17, 20–22), and Israel's sorrowful repentance (vv. 18–19)". Just as Jeremiah shifts to the reality of the coming judgment of God, so Matthew shifts the scene to the judgment of Herod against the new king of the Jews. Israel's messiah is in Egypt. It is a time of sorrow. However, Jeremiah's passage is also a passage of hope. Reflecting on this, Gundry (1975: 210) parallels these two passages stating that the mourning of the Israelite mothers for the exiles was a prelude to their return. In like manner, the grief over the slaughter of the innocent in Bethlehem is also a prelude "to the Messianic future through divine preservation of the infant Messiah". As in 15, Matthew is refreshing collective memory for his Jewish audience and creating it anew for his non-Jewish element.

If Matthew is connecting his community to this history, then he is also connecting them to the covenant, especially the new covenant that follows the parallel verses in Jeremiah. In 31:37ff, Jeremiah tells Israel and Judah that God will repopulate the land. The Lord was responsible for the exile. Thus, he is responsible for the rebuilding of the nation (Huey, 2001: 278). Repentance is mandated by God five times in verses 15–22.

Martens (1986: 193) understands this to have a double meaning. They are returning home because they have turned to God. This is the essence of covenant. Matthew uses the term *apollymi* that is commonly translated lost or destroyed frequently (nineteen times in seventeen verses). Three of them carry the same theme of lostness, indicating the need to return (10:6; 15:24, 18:11). The first two are specific to Israel (the lost house) and the last general in that the mission of the Son of man is to seek those lost. It is obvious from this that Matthew continues the theme of Jeremiah throughout his book. He wants his community to know that Jesus has sought and found.

#### **5.6.4 A Light Dawned (4:14-17)**

Jesus' response to John's imprisonment was to change residences. He leaves Nazareth, moving to Capernaum. Davis and Allison (1988: 380) question Matthew's motives for the interest in the geography. Is it theological or is it a vindication of aspects of Jesus' ministry in light of Jewish objections? It is noteworthy that Jesus did not choose to settle in Jerusalem, starting directly with the religious leaders and the temple. According to Matthew, Jesus went to the temple during the time of temptation (4:5) and again the week before his death (21:12). Luke brings Jesus back to Nazareth and puts him in the synagogue announcing his fulfilment of Isaiah (4:14-24). Otherwise, Luke matches Matthew. Mark's only visit was during his last week. John, however, has Jesus in the temple often (5:14; 7:14; 8:2, 20, 59; 10:23; 11:56; 18:20). Matthew's lack of interest in the temple indicates that Jesus' interest was people. This can be read into 9:13 and 12:7. Hagner's (1993: 72) observation is that the distance from Jerusalem moves him away from the Pharisees' centre of power. Here, Jesus is free to begin his preaching of the kingdom (4:17).

Regarding the geography and the problems associated with it, the various commentaries have handled this in detail. The concern for this work lies in the intent of the fulfilment passage. Davis and Allison (1988: 379) may give the first indication of the intent by the reminder that Isaiah is Matthew's principle prophet associated with the Gentiles. Is this written in anticipation of the great commission? This is certainly probable. As was discovered in the previous chapter, Isaiah's scope is broad based. The intentionality Matthew demonstrates by the use of this particular passage is intriguing. There are many passages that would seem to be more fitting than this one. Isaiah 2:2 speaks of all the *ethnē* streaming to Jerusalem. This is a prediction of the time the nations come to Jerusalem to be taught by a Davidic Messiah who is left unnamed (Clendenen, 2007:

275). The humble servant of Yahweh in Isaiah 49:6 is made to be the light of the nations. The task of serving Israel was too small for such a servant, so a more important responsibility was given him so that he would receive worldwide honor (Smith, 2009: 348). This humble servant of Yahweh is an implied association of the holy and sure blessings of David (Bruce, 1968: 78). See Bruce, 1968: 83-99 for an extended treatment on the Servant of Yahweh. Any of these and others could have been used by Matthew. Nonetheless, 9:1 relates in at least two ways that the others may not. First, it introduces the Davidic intent of the preaching of the kingdom of heaven in 4:17. The *terminus a quo* does more than create structure for Matthew. As stated in chapter three, it introduces the hero on a kingdom mission. After, the Prologue and Parados, he immediately puts the hero into action, accumulating the necessary kingdom components—a constitution and disciples. This latter idea leads to the second way in which 9:1 relates. Eight times after this passage, Matthew will emphasize the concept of light (5:14-16; 6:22-23; 10: 27; 17:2). This passage and the others have the common feature of including the Gentiles. Luz (2007: 158) indicates this may be Matthew's intent with this passage. Further, Luz (2007: 159) draws from Matthew's version of the Isaiah passage an inference regarding the use of *laos*. This always means Israel. Davis and Allison (1988: 383) find the key to Matthew in verse 15 and the expression *Galilaia tōn ethnōn*. Matthew reworks this phrase giving it a positive makeover. Nolland (2005: 173) is not convinced of the validity of this based on the eight century context of the original statement. The former would seem to be the better fit with Matthew's perspective. For Matthew, *ethnē* ranges from outsiders to a universalistic perspective. The latter view is focused on the work of Christ (Mt. 10:18; 12:18, 21; 24:14; 28:19) (Nolland, 2005: 173–174). Of special interest is Luz's (2007: 159) point that Jews sit only in darkness but the Gentiles in death. He questions whether this refers to Jesus or his teachings. However, in light of what was said about righteousness as the essence of Jesus, teaching could also be described in this way. Not the action of but the essence of the content. Jesus was teaching others his own nature.

Blomberg (2001: 88) and Keener (1999: 148) separate 16 and 17, with the latter under the heading of the development of the ministry (Blomberg) and Calling Fishers of People (Keener). Davis and Allison (1988: 387), Luz (2007: 160), and Hagner (1993: 71, 74) realize that Jesus' preaching of repentance is vital to the understanding. Hagner is correct to call it a turning point (1993: 74) in that it is the transition from John's preaching of repentance to that of Jesus. The changing emphasis focuses on Jesus. Luz

(2007: 159) questions what Matthew may mean by the light that has dawned, which is the reason for the change of focus in 17. Is it Jesus the person or Jesus' teaching? Of course, the obvious answer is that it is both as it is impossible to separate the man from the message. Keener (1999: 147) views the quote more like a text used to "illuminate" Jesus' Galilean ministry. Certainly, Blomberg (2001: 88) is correct when he states that Matthew has depicted Jesus as the one who comes, satisfying the expectations of Son and Servant. Jesus' baptism introduces him into this mission. He must now find his first disciples and begin to show the light that will shine to both Jew and Gentile.

The Abrahamic covenant comes into view with the expansion of the Gospel to the Gentiles. With Matthew's interest in the universal appeal of the Gospel, the Abrahamic context is anticipated. As indicated above, there certainly is the context of the kingdom here as this is what Jesus began to do. Notice that the *ēlthon* concept was not used. Jesus was here and recognized (by his baptism). All that was left was for him to preach the kingdom of heaven.

#### **5.6.5 He Himself Took (8:17)**

Following an epic account of faith like none Jesus found with anyone in Israel (8:10), Matthew records a cycle of healing that prompts the *plērōō* statement in 8:17. In the previous *plērōō* statement, he brought salvation. Now, the shift is to the servant motif. Jesus immediately demonstrates his right to speak as he has by performing miracles. First, there are healings (8:1-17)—a Leper, Centurion, and generally "others" among whom is Peter's mother in law. Finally, almost in desperation, he states "many". These displays continue with intermittent dialog through 9:35 where the summary implies the authority of Jesus. In the midst of this display of authority (that appropriately follows his display of authority in his teaching), Matthew inserts a *plērōō* statement both to invoke the validation of scripture and to qualify Jesus' healing capacity. This authority to heal is a display of his messianic calling. Sanders (1985: 157) asserts that it is Jesus' intention to verify his mission by means of the miracles and include sinners who, to this point, have been excluded. Matthew states that the demon possessed and the ill were brought to Jesus. Matthew recorded a similar episode in 4:24 when Jesus' popularity was growing and many were brought to him for healing. The Greek of 4:24 regarding those brought to Jesus is *tous kakōs echontas*. Literally, it is *the ones having (echontas) the bad (tous kakōs)*. This idiomatic expression could be translated "those who had it bad", as in cases with which the doctors could do nothing (Robertson, 1997). In 4:24,

Matthew specifies certain conditions that qualify as “having it bad” (various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics). The phrase appears again in 14:35 but without qualification. In 8:16, there are only two categories of victims, demon possessed and those having it bad. Luz (2001: 14) makes an excellent point that one reason for this account in verse 16 is to confirm the absolute authority of Jesus. This is realized in the term *logō*. This is the dative of means or instrument, embracing a root idea of the case. It is typically an actual action that requires an agent to use it (Wallace, 1996: 162). While Sanders (1985: 157) thinks it is erroneous that exorcisms are a sign of the kingdom, Barber (Barber, Pitre and Bergsma, 2007) does not. He concludes that exorcisms and healings are a Davidic ideal that is confirmed by the term Son of David being applied to him when people appeal for healing (Matt 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30). As in the Sermon, the power of Jesus’ word is evident as the instrument of healing.

This certainly serves a Christological purpose as Matthew connects the Isaiah passage directly to Jesus’ work. France (1985: 162) reminds his readers that the Isaiah passage does not deal with physical healing alone. The LXX uses the word *harmatias* for the Hebrew but Nolland (2005: 361) and France (1985: 162) thinks this is Matthew’s translation and not the LXX as he does not use the word *harmatias* but uses *astheneias* and *nosous*. However, France maintains that this is the intent of the Isaiah passage since the terms transgressions and iniquities are used in the context of 53:4. This may be realized in the term *asthenēma*. The word group, which holds the idea of *weakness* or *powerlessness* of various kinds is used eighty times in the NT. Of these, almost forty times it suggests sickness (Zmijewski, 1990). While Isaiah’s intentions are assumed, Jesus clarifies how Matthew’s community understands it. In 9:5-6, Jesus asks, “Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Get up, pick up your bed and go home”. Davies and Allison (1988: 92-93) approach the logic of Jesus’ contrast of healing and forgiveness by stating that the healing is the harder of the two to accomplish. It is easy enough to pronounce forgiveness. Nonetheless, Jesus accomplished the more difficult by healing the paralytic. If he can heal, then his critics may wonder if he can also forgive.

Blomberg (2001: 144–145) encourages the readers of Matthew to be careful of neo-orthodoxy that will use this passage (and others) to attach the idea of atonement to Matthew’s intentions. However, as he points out, the focus is on the cure of diseases, not forgiveness. While atonement may be in the background and Matthew’s community

now understands the vicarious attribute of Jesus' death, Matthew is using Isaiah to validate Jesus' healing ministry as a sign of his authority. The death is not in sight at this time. Matthew is still building his character, preparing him for the climax and the unexpected turn of events in the resurrection.

#### **5.6.6 My Chosen Servant (12:17-21)**

In his longest OT quote, Matthew indicates that there is a major shift in the development of his drama. It is somewhat subdued but nonetheless, it is there. Luz (2001: 191) seems to struggle to find the "bridge" that he feels connects verse 16 and the quotation. He states that the bridge is narrow and the quotation is a "reach". However, Luz is correct that Matthew has placed this passage here for a reason. The paradigm shift that is happening in the narrative is the separation of Jesus from Israel. This would certainly explain the uses of this very important prophesy. The problem is that Luz has attached this to the wrong verse. He connects it to verse 16 and the command to silence. This is tied to verse 19 and the silence of the servant. More properly, this should be attached to verse 14 and the Pharisees separation from Jesus. They have tested him and he has failed. It is time for them to devise a plan that will destroy Jesus. In this, a schematic by Menken (2004: 64) illustrates the exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees. The catalyst for this is the decision by the Pharisees based on his answer.

Blomberg (2001: 489) rightly notes that Sabbath violation plays no role in the trial of Jesus. Obviously then they did not play a key role in Jesus' death since he was accused of blasphemy and not breaking Sabbath laws. France (1985: 209) summarizes this well by pointing out that a single infringement of scribal regulations does not justify killing Jesus. What it does do is to provide the key to understanding Matthew's shift in the drama and the fact that the Pharisees only represent the shift. They were the intersection of common Judaism and rabbinic Judaism. Their separation leaves a vacuum that Matthew fills with the Isaiah passage, introducing the beloved servant. Thus, Matthew 12:12-21 complements the Matthean theme and interests. It fits well with his need to demonstrate the nature of Jesus (Davies and Allison, 1988: 324).

Isaiah's chosen servant is a common idiom for Israel (1 Chron 16:13; Ps 105:6, 26; 41:8-9). At times, the association is via the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Nonetheless, it is signifying Israel and the Abrahamic covenant. David is also used in

reference to the idea of the chosen servant (1 Kings 3:8, 11:34; Ps 78:70; 89:3). Obviously, Isaiah's covenant context is vital to this quotation. Matthew follows the LXX, using the term *pais*, which can mean either son or servant. This makes the application to Jesus stronger as he is both (Hagner, 1993: 338). This makes Jesus' connection to Israel strong as they also were called sons (Ex 4:22; Deut 14:1; Hos 11:1). The opening line moves to a text similar to the language of 3:17, beloved son in whom I am pleased (Davies and Allison, 1988: 324; Hagner, 1993: 338; France, 1985: 210). This is further extended with the reference to the Spirit *ep auton*. Matthew uses this expression in 3:16 relating to the actions of the Spirit coming from heaven. The parallel between these two are striking. Hagner (1993: 338) reminds the reader that the presence of the Spirit *ep auton* was for the purpose of equipping Jesus for ministry. Luke spells this out using Isaiah 61. There the specific purpose of the anointing is *euangelisasthai*. Matthew connects the anointing to *angellei* with *kai*. This indicates the unity of the two in the servant's life. There is one other connection that is missed by the commentators. This is the object of *angellei*. The word used is *krisin* that Luz (2001: 193-194) states "probably" means judgment. He notes that judgment for the Gentiles will be positive but the judgment of 12:41-42 is negative. Rissi (1990: 318) records that Matthew uses the term twelve of the forty-seven times it is used in the NT. Decision of the judge or the OT sense of justice is normal. This ties directly to Matthew's introduction of Jesus as righteousness when, at his baptism, he sanctified the means of coming to him, securing the judgment for his disciples. More appropriately, he introduced righteousness into the world, making it accessible through baptism. Specifically, Matthew, using Isaiah, made the Gentiles the direct object. Jesus proclaims righteousness *tois ethnesin*, satisfying the Abrahamic covenant of promise. Luz (2001: 194) is correct in making this a positive relationship with the *ethnē* since in the name of Jesus, all Gentiles will hope. It is a verb, not a noun. Thus, hoping is active.

#### **5.6.7 Behold! Your King is Coming (21:4-5)**

The final Christological fulfilment statement is cast in the pericope of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The paradigm shift of chapter 12 is about to bring the confrontation that will lead to his death. First, the king must make his entry into the holy city. This *plērōō* statement is injected not as Jesus enters and the question is asked "who is this" (21:10), nor is it placed in context of the religious leaders who contest the adulation (21:16). Rather, Matthew places the OT confirmation of the king's conquest

of Jerusalem at the time of the selection of his ride into Jerusalem. This is a major shift toward the unexpected that is seen throughout the rest of the book as Matthew prepares his Jesus for the dramatic reversal. As anticipated from the way Matthew builds his story, Jesus must die. He has seemingly opposed the religious order, comes humbly into Jerusalem, and is confronted and crucified. The unexpected reversal of the resurrection is intended to send the audience reeling. While Matthew's audience already knew the end of the story, this in no way weakens his dramatic conclusion that results in a commission to take this story to the world.

While the accepted text does not name the prophet, several witnesses (M<sup>mg</sup> 42 it<sup>c</sup> cop<sup>ms</sup> Hilary) do by adding *Zachariou* before or after προφήτου. Still other witnesses (vg<sup>4</sup> cop<sup>ms</sup> eth) provide the name of Isaiah (Metzger and Societies, 1994: 44). This is because Matthew seems to combine text from both prophets. The first line comes from Isaiah 62:11 and the rest of the quotation is from Zechariah 9:9.

Luz (2005: 7, n. 34) maintains that Matthew does not know Zechariah since in 27:9 he attributes the *plērōō* statement to Jeremiah rather than Zechariah. Hagner (1995: 592) attributes this to either the writers poor memory in which he mixes two passages or liturgical use in his community. Davies and Allison (1988: 118) further questions if the reference to the rejoicing of the daughters of Zion was inappropriate due to the hostility with the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem. Hagner (1995: 592) holds that Matthew's form simply indicates that they parallel each other, referring to the residents of Jerusalem (so Davies and Allison 1988: 119). There is no negative connotation in either term. Nonetheless, the main intent by Matthew seems to be centred on the term humble (*prajtes*) (Luz, 2005: 7; France, 1985: 302; Hagner, 1995: 594; Davies and Allison, 1988: 119-120). It would seem that Matthew's intent here is to put Jesus in the position of a servant in the context of announcing him as Jerusalem's king. Matthew has made it clear that as the son of man, his purpose is to serve, not be served (20:28). The allusion to Jesus as the humble servant is an important theme of Matthew (4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21) that comes to a climax here.

Twice prior to this event, Jesus has spoken to this quality of gentleness. In the Beatitudes, he congratulates those who are gentle because of their promised heritage. In 11:29, Jesus makes a statement regarding his nature (essence from *esse*, present active participle of *eimi*). He states *prajs eimi*. The only difference from John's "I am" statements is the absence of the emphatic *egō eimi*, **I** am. What is Jesus saying about

himself? Nolland's (2005: 477) contribution is helpful. In Greek ethics, gentleness (*praÿtēs*) is a well-regulated control of anger. However, in his treatment of 5:5, he gives the more probable usage in relationship to the disciple. Basing his conclusions on Jewish Greek usage (LXX; Ps. 36(37):11; Is. 61:1), Nolland (2005: 201) concludes that rather than gentle, the better understanding is that gentleness expects God to rescue the "gentle one" because they cannot help themselves due to their powerlessness and inability to forward their own cause. He continues that the intention may be to inject a sense of humility before God, (Nolland, 2005: 201, n. 42). This quality is obvious in 27:14 when "Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge--to the great amazement of the governor". The writer of the book of Hebrews explains who the Christian community understood this quality of Jesus in relationship to his death and resurrection. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (Heb 2:9).

## **5.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Matthew builds his drama on the escalation in the tone of the prophetic messages used to validate the Matthean thesis. Beginning with the statement that God is with us and reaching the crescendo of the arrival of the king, Matthew has identified the covenant, Christological and kingdom ideal for Jesus. The contextual and formulary statements open with a messianic statement that God is with us (1:22). Next, Matthew makes the connection to the OT heritage with a covenant related association of Jesus with the exodus (2:15). He quickly recalls the grief of the exile, again connecting Jesus to the covenant and the messianic hope of Israel (2:17-18). Matthew next introduces into his drama a fulfilment concept that qualifies the messianic Jesus of the covenant. With this one (3:15), he points to the nature (essence) of Jesus as the one whose rightness validates the rite of baptism for his followers. The natural outcome is Matthew's first statement of fulfilment that includes the Gentiles (4:16-16). When the larger audience has been established, Matthew puts Jesus in front of them to fulfil the law. He does this in such a way as to involve his whole audience, Jew or Gentile, satisfying the very essence of the law (5:17). Jesus' greater law is realized in Matthew's servant who expected and demonstrated compassion (*hesed*), enforcing the idea that compassion comes before sacrifices and offerings (9:13; 12:7). The dynamic way in which he does this is to take upon himself human frailty and sickness (8:17). If he can heal, he should

be able to forgive. Recalling the baptism of 3:17, Matthew takes his readers closer to the purpose of Jesus' death with a strong emphasis or possibly reminder that the Gentiles will now have hope. If they have hope, surely Israel will be saved. Finally, the humble servant enters Jerusalem to face death (21:4-5). Jesus' *kenosis* put him in a weakened condition where his total dependence (obedience, Heb 5:8) was honored by the ascent to the right hand of the father.

What can today's student, scholar, or the church take away from this? Matthew's intentions were to validate his thesis that Jesus is the Christ, son of David, son of Abraham (1:1). His presentation of this was in a drama that was suitable to life. He put Jesus in a real setting, with real people. He built his character by showing his nature, especially in conflict with the common understanding of his people and their religious leaders. He elevated the messianic hope to a reality found only in Jesus and realized ultimately in his church, the collective group of disciples who are dedicated to him. His validation of Jesus took many forms but the *plērōō* statements stand out as most effective in that they involve the accepted revelation of God to his chosen people. By using this revelation, Matthew has reconnected his Jewish audience, whether orthodox or Hellenized, as well as offered an enticement to the Gentile segment, giving them a connection via Jesus. Matthew has truly built a foundation on which the two can become one (Eph 2:15-16). This may be why Matthew was such an effective evangelistic tool for Thomas in India. Matthew took Jesus universal. A small town Jew of humble origins led captive the world, taking them to the very throne of God.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The motivating question of this work focuses on Matthew's use of the verb *plērōō* to demonstrate Jesus' nature, satisfying the Christological design for the prototype apostle who introduces the reign of heaven as the new covenant community. While the possible approaches to this are many and varied, this work starts with the structure of the Gospel as an essential step before the historical and cultural backgrounds are examined. This leads to conclusions regarding Matthew's use of *plērōō*.

### **6.2 MATTHEW AND CULTURE**

Since *plērōō* represents a Greek perspective and Matthew's intent is to defend Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, how does Matthew reconcile the cultural differences? The beginning chapters evaluated the cultural influences on the form of Matthew's Gospel in an attempt to understand how this may have motivated his use of *plērōō* to support the Jewish heritage of covenant, Christology, and kingdom. The concept and historical background of Greek drama was examined as the most probable structural design used by Matthew to relate the story of Jesus in the role of fulfiller.

Accepting that narrative and story are common Jewish tools to convey cultic ideas, Matthew had to consider that his mixed audience might have a strong Hellenistic influence. Admittedly, the complexities of the Jewish/Gentile interests are difficult to separate when viewed in a holistic perspective. While the Jewish element may dominate the majority of Matthew's work, the Gentile influences are observable (8:5-13, 15:28, 28:19). The dominant prophet (Isaiah) represents universalism in the covenant, messianic, and kingdom context in which there is a blending of cultures that works well with Matthew's drama.

Thus, this work concludes that the Matthean audience was familiar with cultic Judaism influenced philosophically by Hellenism. Since Jesus' Jewish roots (e.g., son of David and Abraham, the genealogy) were foundational to the Jesus story, it was essential for Matthew to bond his audience with this Jewish heritage. However, this posed a problem of how to do this for the Hellenized element (Jewish or non-Jewish). Understanding the power of drama in the Jesus story, Matthew used a literary form that best exemplified

the great reversal of the Gospel. From Matthew's account, death for Jesus is certain. The great reversal of the resurrection takes this story from tragedy to victory.

### **6.2.1 The Jesus Story in Five Acts**

Two elements are obvious that leads to the conclusion that drama is the intended form. They are the use of the literary markers and conflict. Matthew structures the drama, using these elements to lead to the great reversal that was part of Greek drama. In this, Matthew as playwright (editor/author) sets up the episodes by an introduction (prologue) of the hero (Jesus) as Christ (Christology), king (Davidic kingdom), and covenanter (Abraham). He skilfully uses conflict in the introduction to set the mood of the play. Matthew builds five episodes on this introduction by interweaving events and dialogues that utilize conflict and teaching to emphasize Jesus' nature. To move from episode to episode, Matthew provides a (choral) response (stasimon) to the actions and dialogue, ending each with a literary marker that indicates Jesus' use of logic to defeat his opponents. Ultimately, the conflict ends in Jesus' death. However, Matthew's climax is not the defeat of the hero but the great and unexpected reversal of the resurrection that stunned his opponents.

### **6.2.2 Literary Markers**

Matthew's literary markers (*kai Egenetō hōte etelesēn* [7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1] and *apō tote* [4:17; 16:21]) provide a definite insight into the structure of the Jesus drama. Their uniqueness is not simply in the fact of their formula type appearance. These markers come at notable times in Matthew's story, providing a shift that is both visible and intelligible, indicating a significant shift at an exact time. The shifts focus either on the coming action (*apō tote*) or concluding a narrative (*kai Egenetō hōte etelesēn*). These markers provide not only this time recognition but also the primary subject for the scene, which is the logic of Jesus (rabbinic in nature) used in defence of his teachings and mission.

Each of Matthew's episodes put Jesus in the position of logician who carefully constructed his arguments around key elements of his Christological kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount (Episode 1) set a new constitution in order that logically combined elements of the Jewish law and Greek ontology. Next, the selection of his key followers (Episode 2) set the precedent for mission to the Jews first, giving them

priority in the kingdom. Matthean logic is represented in this episode by the way he structures the episode. A unique form of logic was used in the form of parables (Episode 3) that emphasized kingdom principle at work. Essential to the kingdom mission was the establishment of a new assembly, using the Greek ideal of the *ekklesia* (Episode 4). For the Jews, this was a new assembly (synagogue) that was unique in comparison to their tradition idea of synagogue. For the Hellenized and non-Greeks, there was a great logic in Jesus' more personal approach to assembly that was built on human interaction. Finally, Matthew puts his messiah in the place of prophet, logically drawing all things to a conclusion with warnings and future hope restored.

### **6.2.3 Characters**

The final, vital indicator of the Matthean drama is the use of conflict with prominent characters. These include government officials (Herod and Pilate), Satan, religious leaders (Temple officials, Sadducees, and Pharisees), and his disciples. While all of these play an essential part, the Pharisees are most critical to Matthew's thesis. Their position on the Law prompted Matthew's two great fulfilment passages (3:15; 5:17-20). These are contextual rather than formulary based on a prophetic statement or idea. These passages depict Matthew's messiah as one who is by nature righteous (3:15) and as such, is the only legitimate representative regarding the law (5:17-20). This sets the stage for the conflict with the Pharisees, the accepted representatives of the law. In episodes 2-5, the Pharisees are the central characters using rabbinic logic against Jesus, who responds in like manner, always bringing them to silence. From this, the conclusion is that Matthew structured his drama around the conflict so that Jesus, as the essence of righteousness, could demonstrate that he satisfied all aspects of the law, demonstrating that the traditions of the Pharisees were the practices that fell short of this perfection. In Jesus, a surpassing righteousness is accessible universally.

Matthew's use of characters indicates the impact of the Jewish culture as it may have set the stage for the use of *plērōō*. This puts Jesus face to face with the cultic expectations of Matthew's contemporary Judaism, especially as anticipated in the controversies with the Pharisees. The dramatic setting of Jesus and the various opponents gives opportunity for Matthew to bring Jesus directly into his culture, yet be culturally appealing to the non-Jewish element of his audience. This came alive in the historical and theological development of the plot in Matthew's story. The special emphasis on the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees demonstrated Matthew's intent to show Jesus as the

only logical choice to satisfy (fulfil) the requirements of prophecy, righteousness, and law.

### **6.3 JESUS' CULTURAL HERITAGE**

In light of Matthew's desire to tie his audience to the Jewish heritage, it was necessary in this study to examine the source Matthew used to acquaint his audience with that heritage. This was done in part by the use of *plērōō* in context to the fulfilment of righteousness and the law. This was also accomplished by using *plērōō* in a prophetic formula ("spoken by the Lord through the prophet" or "spoken through the prophet"). The former associated Jesus with key Jewish elements and the latter with the prophetic message of select Jewish prophets.

#### **6.3.1 Matthew's Dependence on the OT**

Matthew develops three important Jewish themes—prophecy, righteousness, and law. An evaluation of the use of *plērōō* within the context of the three distinct categories indicates how Matthew understood the relationship to covenant, Christology, and kingdom. In Matthew's choice of the word *plērōō*, it allowed him to move from the Greek environment of the word back into his cultural heritage. This was aided by the development of the concept, especially as filtered through the LXX. He understood that it help span the gap for the Hellenized Jew.

Focusing the aim on Matthew's use of *plērōō* in determining the Christological characteristics that endorse Jesus in this divine initiative raises the question of the impact of the pre-Matthean culture as it may have set the stage for the use of *plērōō*. Understanding this helps to demonstrate how Jesus fulfils the cultic expectations of Matthew's contemporary Judaism. Additionally, the prophetic background identifies the background of *plērōō* as covenant, Christology, and kingdom in the culture prior to Matthew's milieu. The pre-Matthean cultic history that set the stage for Matthew's milieu was found in the primary prophets referenced in the Matthean drama. These were Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah, and Zachariah. The use of these prophets implies that at one time and/or in some setting, something was lacking that needed to be filled, completed, satisfied, or accomplished. In righteousness, law, and prophecy, Matthew is appealing to his OT heritage to connect to covenant, Christology, and kingdom. From this study, it is evident that the covenant lies at the center of the Jewish heritage and the prophetic

implications cannot be understood outside of that context. Implicit to the covenant was a relationship with God that was in anticipation of a coming servant who would satisfy the Davidic covenant, keeping an anointed descendant on Israel's throne. Matthew's use of *plērōō* was underpinned by these ideals. Matthew used this as foundation to portray the climatic actions of God in Jesus to satisfy all righteousness, law, and the direct statement of these four prophets.

### **6.3.2 Matthew's Concepts for Fulfilment**

It seems that Matthew's intent was to demonstrate how Jesus fulfilled "all righteousness", "the law", and "the prophets". His intentionality raises the question of the continuity of the Hebrew covenant, which is satisfied by the connection made between his audience and the Jewish heritage.

With structure identified and the cultic heritage examined, conclusions regarding how Matthew uses the term were drawn. Matthew's *plērōō* is a Greek term that combined the cultural integration of the Greek ideal meshed with Jewish intent. To relate this synergetic idea to his audience, Matthew divided the use of the term into its use contextually (3:15; 5:17) and in formula statements (1:22; 2:15; 2:17-18; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 21:4-5).

Contextually, the term connects his theme to a broader OT concept as opposed to a specific prophetic setting. While both of these (3:15 and 5:17) effectively connect with Matthew's theme of Christ, covenant, and kingdom, they also identify more precisely with and support a specific thematic context. This context is the righteousness of God, which is his ontological nature exhibited in specific actions. These actions support the Matthean theme and the suggested context of covenant, Christology, and kingdom. The ultimate purpose of the thematic context is to demonstrate that the fulfilment of righteous (3:15) and the fulfilment of the law (5:17) support Jesus' overarching theme of surpassing righteousness (5:20). Within this theme, Matthew's Jesus ultimately satisfies (fulfills) the requirements needed to support his right to be covenanted messiah whose authority is realized in the reign of God in the kingdom of heaven.

The formulary statements are OT in context. Introduced by *hina/hopōs*, they are tied to prophets, sometimes by name and sometimes not. Matthew's intent was to prove that Jesus is the fulfilment of Jewish scripture and tradition. Set in drama, this put Jesus in

direct opposition to the Jewish leaders. The prophetic background sets the stage to accentuate the Christological element, as this is the apex of the covenant and the subject of the kingdom.

#### **6.4 MATTHEW'S UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS**

Matthew stands out from the other gospels because of the unique contributions he makes to the early Christian movement. First, his interaction is solidly built and dependant on the Jewish heritage of the covenant and messianic hope. Next, Matthew's universal appeal utilizes the well-known literary genre of the theatre to dynamically appeal to the human perspective on life, combining Judeo-centric passion for covenant with God and the Greek passion for humanity. This was satisfied in an incarnated messiah whose essence was Godlike and whose compassion was unequalled. Another contribution to the study of the Gospels was Matthew's interest in logic (*logos*). Rather than taking the theological approach of John's work, Matthew utilizes the ideal of rabbinic logic regarding the law to establish Jesus as the fulfiller of the law. The five literary divisions of Matthew employs the idea of logic (three times, he specifically uses the term in episode transition and the other two implies it). Matthew's use of the OT is unparalleled in the Gospels in that he uses prophets whose ministries built on covenant, messianic hope, and kingdom fulfilment. With covenant at the core, the use of the OT prophets did more than substantiate Jesus as the messianic fulfilment. These demonstrated that Jesus was the only possible candidate in the lineage of David who could successfully maintain the original covenant (Abrahamitic) and keep the law intact. Finally, Matthew characterized covenant continuity in a kingdom perspective called church that embodied the essence of God's ideal in covenant.

#### **6.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE *plērōō* STATEMENTS WITHIN CONTEXT**

Of primary consequence of the *plērōō* statements is the all-inclusive nature of the Jewish covenant. Matthew's perspective maintains a continuity of God's intentions with covenant while initiating a discontinuation by offering in Jesus the true embodiment of the Torah. The personification of the Torah in Jewish thought as the voice of God active in creation and life is now in Jesus, the ultimate form of pure righteousness, identifying the nature of God in real form. The law becomes realistic and humanity has the perfect portrait of God's goodness in Jesus. The intent of Torah was a covenant bond in blood

that physically manifested the Shema in the nation of Israel. Matthew's Jesus identified with the same oneness appealed to in the Shema.

## **6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The impact of drama and the theatre is unquestionable for the early Christian society. In light of this, further study into the impact of drama on the two other synoptic gospels is necessary. While both Mark and Luke's intended audiences are accepted as non-Jewish, the fact that the Jesus story maintains the strong cultic setting demands the investigation of drama as an acceptable literary genre for these works. This would require a new look at their structure to see if the narratives reveal similar signs to that of the Greek drama (Chapter 1).

Additionally, the understanding of the essence of righteousness and the law (Chapter 5) in the Synoptic Gospels is a worthy subject for further investigation. Accepting that the normal tendencies are to find the expression of righteousness in the normal forms of God's gift or man's obligation, a study of Mark and Luke's use of *dikaïosunēn* as the essences of Jesus (and therefore, God) is demanded. This study should also overflow into the work of Paul where the divisions (God's gift or man's obligation) are more succinct, answering the question of whether these actions give any indication into the nature of God.

Of major importance in this work is the Jewish idea of covenant (Chapter 3), which is taken up in the NT. Further research on covenant as the best perspective to view Christianity is certainly a worthy project. Since the Gospels bear the greater Jewish markings (the Jesus drama in his cultic and historical setting), this is the most appropriate place to start. As a natural result, the covenant idea as the effective norm for understanding operative Christianity (life-style Christianity) is mandated to determine if it holds the proper motivation for Christian living. This would direct the researcher into a study of the biblical attitude of *chesed* and its influence on the covenant idea. Within this research, there would be a basis for a comparative study of the essential nature of the God of covenant and Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.

In light of Matthew's, Luke (in Acts), and Paul's emphasis on church, this subject would need to be examined within the context of covenant. It has been thoroughly examined within the Christological and kingdom context but has been neglected as

cultic study (due to the Jewish heritage and early years as an exclusively Jewish assembly) that influences and entices the non-Jewish element to learn not only the Jewish roots but also the Jewish ideal of relationships found only in covenant. This study will find a new expression to the Pauline ideal of being *en Christō*.

The Pauline ideal of being *en Christō* recalls the need for an examination of the contributing influences of Paul's theology on Matthew. The probable Antiochene connection, Matthew's ideal of righteousness and the law, discipleship, and the church are all paralleled in Paul giving rise to the shared interest in the Jewish heritage obvious in Paul and the desire for full Christlikeness that is the conceptual equivalent to Matthew's picture of a disciple.

## **6.7 FINAL THOUGHT**

The aim of this thesis is to examine Matthew's use of the verb *plērōō* to determine whether it reveals the Christological characteristics that endorse Jesus' divine initiative of proclaiming the coming reign of heaven within the hermeneutics of covenant. This is essentially tied to the very nature of God demonstrated in covenant (*berith*) and compassion (*chesed*). If Matthew's intent was to show continuity of the covenant ideal in Christ, then this mandates that the covenant should hold a place of greater importance in the Christian community. Matthew built on covenant with the expressions son of David and Abraham. Matthew identified the nature of Jesus to be that of pure righteousness so that he satisfied the full ideal of law. Matthew demonstrated the logic of Jesus' message. Matthew mandated the continuation of the mission of Christ to the world (*ta ethnē*).

For today's church, the drama of the Christ-event (birth to resurrection) is a covenant responsibility driven by the passion of God in us for a world to which Jesus came and demonstrated attainable righteousness. The shared righteousness of God in Christ is the ultimate ideal of Matthew's drama. The great reversal continues as Jesus lives and the covenant continues.

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