



Comparative study of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical understandings of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9

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Thesis accepted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy in Theology with New Testament at the
North-West University

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Graduation: July 2026

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

BC	–	Belgic Confession
BDAG	–	Bauer, Danker, Arndt and Gingrich
GLuke	–	Gospel of Luke
GMark	–	Gospel of Mark
GMatthew	–	Gospel of Matthew
KJV	–	King James Version
LN	–	Louw and Nida
LSJ	–	Liddell, Scott and Jones
NIV	–	New International Version
NP	–	Noun/noun phrase
NT	–	New Testament
OT	–	Old Testament
PPVT	–	Percentage participation value of theme-codes
PPVU	–	Percentage participation value of units of analysis
SD	–	Semantic domain
TNT	–	Total number of theme-codes
TNPT	–	Total number of participating theme-codes
TNPU	–	Total number of participating units of analysis
TNU	–	Total number of units of analysis
VP	–	Verb/verb phrase

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Ph.D. thesis to the memory of

Late Rev. (Papa) F. W. Umoren

Late Rev. U. C. Akpan

*by whose encouragement I returned to pursue a Ph.D. degree,
but whom I could not satisfy before their passing;*

and

Late Mrs. Helen A. Ante

for everything she meant to my family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Soli Dei Gloria!

***For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak,
and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will
not tarry.***

Habakkuk 2:3, KJV

He has made everything beautiful in its time

Ecclesiastes 3:11, NIV

I have found the fulfilment of these Scriptures on this long and difficult journey. I thank God, who remained my Fortress of strength, Rock of defence, and Fountain of peace. I have learnt to trust Him more as a result of my experiences and His interventions. I thank the Holy Spirit for His gentle guidance whenever I did not know what to do. I am here today because God made it happen. May He be praised forever. Amen.

Professor Dr. François Petrus Viljoen was a passionate, exceptionally kind, and patient promoter. I am profoundly grateful for his steady guidance, which began during my Master's programme and continued unbroken throughout this study. I could not have chosen a better study leader. May God bless you, Prof. F. P. Viljoen.

The North-West University (NWU), Potchefstroom Campus community has been my doorway to the world. I cherish our journey together and the things I have learnt since 2006. Staff members were very supportive. I cannot recall all the acts of kindness I received or all those who rendered them; however, I wish to thank Annelize Liebenberg, Sandra Horns, Tienie Buys, Godfrey Rapheso, Nauma Blom, Hester Lombard, and Tumelo Thoolebe for the various ways they assisted me. I appreciate the Faculty of Theology for making learning both engaging and inspiring. I also thank NWU and the Faculty for the bursaries I received throughout my study. In appreciation, I commit to being a credible ambassador of the University and the Faculty.

Back home, this felt more like a community project. I sincerely appreciate Professor Charles Obot for assisting with the initial editing of the work. I am also grateful to Dr. (Mrs.) Idongesit Ashameri, whose professional critique greatly improved my language use and research discipline. Miss Mfonobong Otu, despite carrying "a thorn in her flesh" at the time, gave her best to the formatting of the final copy. Others also contributed significantly: Blessing-Jewel Daniel, Unyime Otu, Mfoniso Usendia, Ofonime Ekpo, and Lydia Inyang. Rev. Ema Ebong's concern and prayers were a blessing. Rev. A. F. Abia also deserves gratitude for his guidance at the start of my journey with NWU and his consistent counsel to persevere. My family

doctors, Dr. Udemé Akpan and Prof. (Mrs.) Mkpouto Akpan, did not only treat me whenever I fell ill, but also formed a counselling support system that helped restore my stability whenever my emotions became overwhelming. Thank you, Doctors. I also appreciate Pastor Emmanuel Israel for his goodwill toward my academic progress. Elder Enamidem Umoh, Rev. Ndifreke Amos, and Mrs. Eno Akpabot supported me immensely.

My boss and Chairman of the Conference of the United Evangelical Church, Rev. Samuel U. Ebukiba, made the work environment conducive for study while working. I also appreciate my colleagues at the Church's Apex Office for their moral support. I undertook this study while also fulfilling my ministry responsibilities with the United Evangelical Church Campus Fellowships and the Abak/Ikot Ekpene Township District. It was indeed a heavy combination, and I thank God for how both arms of the Church contributed to shaping me. I acknowledge the support of Mrs. Uduakobong Ukeme, Mrs. EnoAbasi Dennis, Israel Otu, Ojone Edicha, Glory "Gloshine" Ben, Nsikap "Adiaha Africa" Esua, Miriam-Idongesit Chukwu, Grace "Amara" Olisa, Barrister Abasienyene Afiaowo, Idongesit Ikopbo, and Blessing Ikeh. A word of thanks is also due to Father Etido Jerome, Dr. Emem Ante, and Mr. Ojoniko Abah, who served as my overseas book-purchase "agents". I appreciate my second mother, Mrs. Aniebiet Udoh, for her encouragement. I look forward to congratulating my sister, Mrs. Akaninyene Uwemedimo, when she completes her own doctoral journey.

Family is home for success. I most deeply appreciate my wife, Emediong, for her prayers, sacrifices, and understanding. Andikan, Uyama-Abasi, and Iberedem were all very supportive in their own ways. I also appreciate the solace I found in Surv. IdoAbasi Ido's home. Emmaido Idong-Umoh, your laptop computer was a lifesaver at a critical time. My siblings were always available to assist with aspects of this study, even at very short notice. Thank you, Mrs. Seama Umoh, Mr. Udemé Akpan, and Mr. Iniobong Akpan. To all other extended family members, this is my way of saying, gracias! I would choose you again and again as family.

God bless everyone who has been a blessing to me, and may this work offer hope to a world in need of compassion and healing.

Most sincerely,



Aniedi Akpan
December, 2025

ABSTRACT

This was a comparative study of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical understandings of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. Its overarching aim was to develop a hermeneutic key that could demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches to the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. The key was also anticipated as one of the possible means of fostering cooperation between the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions, contrary to the often-dichotomous or antagonistic conception of them. To achieve this main aim, the study focused on the following objectives: to study the meaning and role of “miracle” in the New Testament; to study the history of interpretation of New Testament miracle stories within Reformed and Pentecostal traditions; to study the natures of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutics; to examine the meaning of Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9 from a Reformed exegetical perspective; to examine the understandings of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 by contemporary Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters; and to develop the hermeneutic key. The methodology for achieving these objectives encompassed a critical engagement with literature in the aforementioned areas; exegetical analyses of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, adapting Du Toit’s (2009a:120-148) Reformed approach; and an empirical investigation of sampled Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the passages.

Chapter 2 explored the meaning of the concept “miracle” in the New Testament, investigating philosophical, etymological and socio-historical, and biblical-literary viewpoints. It concluded that while all the perspectives are useful in their unique ways, the first two have serious deficiencies that would detract from the biblical notion of “miracle”. Philosophy was seen to be largely entrapped in arguments against the possibility of “miracle” or at least that excise religious significance from it. Etymological inquiry emphasises the external character of wonderment at the expense of the concept’s religious or even theological significance. The study therefore recommended a biblical-literary approach that simultaneously articulates the various shades of meaning of the NT quadruplet terms—σημεῖα, τέρατα, δυνάμεις, and ἔργα—as used by Jesus in the Gospels. The chapter also outlined the role of “miracle” in the NT to include revealing Jesus as the promised Messiah of Israel, signalling the dawning of the kingdom of God, and serving apologetic and theological purposes.

Chapter 3 investigated the history of interpretation of NT miracle stories within Reformed and Pentecostal traditions. It reviewed the various conceptions of NT miracles by the Reformation leaders. Luther posited that miracles were not a means of revelation of the divinity of Christ, whereas Calvin held that they issued from Christ’s inherent power and testified to his divinity.

Zwingli anchored his conceptualisation of miracles on Christ's work of redemption. Overall, they tended toward cessationism. Among contemporary Reformed theologians, NT miracle stories are conceived to fulfil Christological and soteriological roles and validate the divinity of Christ. Miracles are granted today as Christological "signs" and "redemptive analogies" and as a means of resolving human existential needs. From the Pentecostal perspective, the study suggested that Pentecostalism has from its origins been open to miracles, especially anchoring its disposition on Mark 16:17-18. Its forebears taught a range of ideas, including that physical healing was the birthright of Christians, that God always wants to heal the sick, and that healing is part of Christ's redemptive work. Contemporary researchers opine that NT miracle stories function missiologically and soteriologically, and that healing is integral to the salvific work of Christ.

Chapter 4 investigated the natures of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutics. It noted that Reformed hermeneutics emphasises the authority of the Scripture as God's inspired word and filters the meaning (or meanings) of a biblical passage through the overarching redemptive message of the Bible. It identified the principles of Reformed hermeneutics to include acknowledgement of the historical and literary contexts of Scripture, careful investigation of the grammar of the passage, and analogy of Scripture. Pentecostal hermeneutics was described as an experience-, narrative-, and praxis-oriented approach to Bible reading in which the Holy Spirit plays an active role. Its principles were identified as: narrative, intertextual and Christological reading of the Bible, openness to a supernatural-experiential intervention, and negotiating meaning within the triadic framework of Spirit, text, and community.

Chapter 5 focused on the exegeses of Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9. The analyses emphasised a literal interpretation of the passages in general and the miracle imperatives in particular. It combined synchronic and diachronic tools as necessary, and also interpreted the various parts of the passages in relation to one another. It synthesised the lessons from the three passages into applications for today. These included that the church should cultivate disciples who are wholly committed to following Jesus, no matter the cost, as well as engage both clergy and laity to authoritatively preach God's good news and perform miracles among those in need. The socio-historical significance of exorcism in GMark and GMatthew formed a basis for the church to be challenged to authoritatively confront social ills, confident of ultimate victory.

Chapter 6 analysed sixty (60) sampling units that were drawn into six (6) sample groups. It used ATLAS.ti 24 to identify and code twelve (12) pre-determined themes that were prominent or implied in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. These included: kingdom, authority, disciple, demon, exorcism, leprosy, preach, dead, heal, miracle, mission, and "we".

The study generated 434 theme-codes from 397 quotations, classified them as “strong” or “weak” depending on whether they agreed or disagreed with the theoretical and exegetical conclusions in the preceding chapters of the study, and grouped them based on similarity of assertions. It further summarised and evaluated the group assertions under each of the themes identified above, from where it drew inferences regarding the hermeneutical issues involved in each instance. The inferred hermeneutical patterns for the “strong” theme-codes included that certain assertions were biblically informed, reflected awareness of the genre and literary as well as socio-historical contexts of the passages, followed a continualist view of miracles, and so on. On the other hand, the “weak” theme-codes suggested that the interpreters lacked the insights of word-study and broader literary context, tended toward eisegesis, and paid limited attention to grammatical rules, among other things.

Based on these inferred patterns, the researcher formulated hermeneutic hints that could enhance interpretation of the themes, and in turn, proposed a multidimensional hermeneutic key that could both demonstrate the strengths and mitigate the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the four miracle imperatives broadly identified in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, namely, “heal the sick”, “raise the dead”, “cleanse the lepers”, and “drive out demons”. The hermeneutic key suggested that interpreters of the miracle imperatives should attend carefully to the literal meaning of the miracle imperatives, undertake careful word-study of concepts, investigate the literary and socio-historical contexts of the passages, and emphasise the literary connections between the miracle imperatives and the mission mandate in the passages, among other things.

The study reached a conclusion in chapter 7, highlighting biblical testimony as the essential guiding principle for scholarly or pragmatic reflection on the NT “miracle” subgenre. It also concluded that from NT evidence, miracles and the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 are valid today. It emphasised the strict literal meanings of the imperatives on a synchronic level, while conceding that they bore subtle political and social undertones within their original settings. Based on evidence in this study, the researcher concluded that both Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters grapple with differential understandings of the meanings of the miracle imperatives in the passages, indicating that the two traditions need a hermeneutic key that can improve their interpretations of these motifs. The study therefore recommended that Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters should take seriously the existential implications of the maladies being targeted by the miracle imperatives in the passages, and therefore should interpret the imperatives in hermeneutically faithful ways in order to practically and effectively help resolve such problems today. It also recommended that they explore the suggestions offered in the hermeneutic key formulated in this research.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Keywords

New Testament, Miracle, Miracle imperatives, Healing, Exorcism, Raising the dead, Cleansing lepers, Hermeneutic key, Strengths and weaknesses, Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19, Luke 10:1-9.

1.2 Background and problem statement

1.2.1 Background

1.2.1.1 Reformed and Pentecostal understandings of the miraculous today

Miracle stories are conspicuous and integral components of the Gospel narratives of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. However, beyond the record of his own miraculous activities, the Synoptic Gospels report that Jesus extends this miraculous authority to his first disciples when he commissions them to go out and preach the gospel, with explicit imperatives to perform miracles in the process (Matt. 10:1-8; Mk. 3:13-19; Lk. 10:1-9). Numerous New Testament (NT) accounts attest that the disciples performed miracles, both during and after the earthly ministry of Jesus (Lk. 10:17; Ac. 3:1-10; 5:12-16; 6:8; *passim*).

Walker (2015:85) affirms the above view of the extension of miraculous activities from Jesus to his disciples when he states that “Jesus extended his ministry to The Twelve *and others* through calling them to participate in his Kingdom mission through *imitating him in word and deed, particularly miracle working*” (emphases mine). He further suggests that Jesus performed most of his miracles publicly, both to achieve self-identification and to instruct his followers to perform miracles after his example. Jack Hayford Ministries (2020:1) also affirms miracles at the present time, when it says that contrary to preconceptions, God is not miserly with healings and miracles, but frequently grants them in the course of proclamation of the truth in Jesus’ name. On his part, Winston (2006:230) gives an eschatological dimension to miracles when he predicts: “*In the last days, God will work miracles beyond anything we have heard of in our lives, and He will do them through us. It is a time for miracles. God wants us to develop our faith so He can use us to work miracles in this last hour*” (emphasis mine).

However, not all scholars (and preachers) agree with Walker's or any other similar view. Indeed, from the early Christian period to the present, "miracle claims have boasted significant detractors" (Keener, 2011:83). Similarly, McCune (2016:1) submits that discussion of biblical miracles has in the main suffered the fate of disagreement regarding questions of their nature, purpose, and longevity. In some cases, scholars advance outright arguments against the possibility or desirability of miracles today. Again, Keener (2011:83) opines that the a priori repudiation of the miraculous assumed its worst turn since David Hume's argument. For instance, Shapiro (2016:18) argues that as supernatural activities, miracles are improbable events and therefore extremely rare, if at all they occur or make sense. He predicates this argument on what he calls the "simple idea" that "[s]upernatural events should be as far from the normal course of things as one can imagine". So, for Shapiro, claims of both biblical and contemporary miracles deserve to be questioned, even including the resurrection of Jesus (2016:110).

Among those who allow for biblical miracles but doubt contemporary ones is Reformed NT theologian, Engelsma (2000:1). He submits that the Reformed church does not need miracles today, but is content with the NT doctrine taught by the apostles as those who heard from Christ. His thesis is that miracles were "signs of apostles" (2 Cor. 12:12; cf. Mk. 16:20; Ac. 14:3); that is, they were given to authenticate the apostolic office. He therefore postulates from Hebrews 2:3-4 that God bore witness to this apostolic doctrine (and only to it!) with various miraculous manifestations. Another Reformed scholar, Cole (2013:1), advances another reason for rejecting miracles today. He argues that biblical miracles mainly occurred "during critical times in the history of [God's] people", particularly during the exodus under Moses, during the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, and during the time of Christ and the apostles. His justification for this limited manifestation is that the miracles were needed *to authenticate the word of God or his messengers*, and that beyond such "critical times" the frequency of miracles was low¹.

Nonetheless, a number of other theologians—Reformed, Pentecostal, or otherwise—do speak in favour of both biblical and contemporary miracles. Reformed scholar, Griffith (2017:1) observes that although Calvin did not attempt a technical description

¹ This is perhaps a mild way of saying that the relevance of miracles reduces or even totally vanishes outside those so-called "critical times".

of miracles, he nonetheless displayed a positive disposition for them. According to him, Calvin described miracles as “testimonies to [Christ’s] divine power”; “not human acts, but events in which the ... power of God reigns and stands out clearly”; “shining demonstrations of Divine power”; “signs of his saving work”, etc. In a similar vein, Reformed scholar Poythress (2016:18), whose work is set in a Christological-redemptive framework, apparently supports contemporary miracles by identifying miracles as “signs of redemption”, “the Saviour’s mighty acts”, as well as the “acts of God, which dramatically indicate his power at work”.

Pentecostals generally take miracles and miracle imperatives seriously. For them, miracles are a legitimate aspect of the Christian experience for all times, a claim that implicitly gives backing to the contemporary relevance of miracle imperatives. For instance, Sanzana (2014:131, 137) opines that healing is a strength in Pentecostalism, and that Pentecostal churches are “healing and restoration spaces that have their real effect *today*”. For her, the expectation of miracles today is based on the fact that the call to preach the gospel encompasses not only the message of Jesus’ miracles but also the assurance that his followers would even do “greater things” than his. As such, “[t]he Pentecostal hermeneutic horizon” anticipates a methodology that necessarily allows for replication of the miracle claims found in the Gospels (2014:132).

Similarly, Kolenda (2011:99) believes that present-day believers should pray to see miracles. Foregrounding the argument with a description of miracles as one of the ways that God manifests his glory, Kolenda asserts that people do not only want to *hear* the gospel with their ears but also to *experience* it. In his words, “[a] person who hears the gospel should have an experience that needs an explanation, not just an explanation of something that needs experience.” In his submission, the manifestation of God’s glory through miracles is in fact an everyday experience, not just what happened in biblical times. In a similar thrust, Eckhardt (2011:167) views the miraculous as “an important aspect of the kingdom of God”, observing that Jesus began in Galilee with the message of the kingdom coupled with numerous exorcisms (cf. Mk. 1:39). Based on a similar trend in the case of the disciples of Jesus (cf. Mk. 6:13), he warns that it would be futile to try to advance the kingdom apart from supernatural manifestations. He identifies deliverance (by this term he encompasses exorcism and all kinds of healings) as the ministry of Christ, and calls on believers to have compassion on the sick and demonised as Christ did. For him, in fact, the ministry

of Christ continues through his church, and deliverance is a sign that should follow all believers (cf. Mk. 16:17).

These are some of the arguments regarding the interpretation of the NT miracle motif and the possibility or desirability of miracles today. They bear ramifications for what the correct attitude of the contemporary church should be toward miracles. The implication is perhaps more acute when one turns attention to the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. How best might the church understand these imperatives?

1.2.1.2 Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical methodologies

While distinct features undoubtedly characterise Reformed and Pentecostal theologies, these traditions need not be seen as mutually exclusive or even antagonistic to each other. Indeed, scholarship can be gained by studying aspects of the two traditions or their hermeneutic practices side by side. Baker (2018:1) reports on dialogues between these two traditions since 2001 and extols the cooperation that now exists between them, instead of the antagonism that previously prevailed. On his part, Tanis (2016:1) cites a statement reportedly made by a participant at one of such conferences, vis-à-vis the significance of the dialogue:

Folks from Reformed and Pentecostal churches relate to each other in a variety of contexts around the world. Those interactions are often marked by false assumptions or stereotypes that folks on one side make about the other. The dialogue is important because it allows us to overcome the stereotypes and dig into the depths of each tradition.

This study assumes the desirability and possibility of such understanding between Reformed and Pentecostal traditions, especially in the field of hermeneutics. It is hoped that this comparative study of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical understandings of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 will in part foster that understanding. But just how do the two traditions approach Bible interpretation?

1.2.1.2.1 Reformed hermeneutical methodologies²

Reformed hermeneutics seeks to retrieve from the text of Scripture a meaning that fits the text and its context in particular, as well as the overarching historical-redemptive

² The methodology to be reviewed here is not necessarily exclusive to Reformed hermeneutics, but is significant and crucial for Reformed approaches.

message of the biblical canon (Akpan, 2018:139). Reformed interpreters use both diachronic and synchronic methods to do this. Diachronic methods investigate the historical, social and cultural contexts within which the texts arose, and the situation with the first readers that the texts sought to address (Du Toit, 2009a:122). Of historical investigation in particular, Viljoen (2017:27-31) specifies questions of introduction, source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism. He justifies this approach by arguing that rather than being purely “literary”, biblical texts are “primarily referential”, alluding to entities beyond themselves; hence to interpret them, one needs some understanding of their historical backgrounds (2017:27).

One traditional method that incorporates many diachronic approaches is the grammatical-historical method, which has long been predominant among Reformed interpreters. It entails “reading of the text with a clear excavation of the literary forms, grammatical structures and meaning *from the social and cultural historic influences*” (Vorster, 2017:270, emphasis mine). In other words, Bible interpretation is dictated by the grammatical rules and cultural realities that characterised the milieu within which the Bible texts arose.

According to Vorster, this approach is informed by the Reformed doctrine of organic inspiration, which states that God used human beings in an organic way to pen the Scriptures, and in the process harnessed their languages, cultural conventions, and social conditions. As such, it is justifiable to argue that, to truly gain insight into biblical material, one needs to step backward and seek to understand how things were *then* before one can successfully interpret or apply the text *now*. This aligns with Vorster’s (2017:269) position that “[b]iblical material must ... be used and applied as it emerges from its specific historical context”. From a Reformed-hermeneutical perspective, Coetzee (2017:66) also affirms the grammatico-historical method and in fact binds the Bible interpreter to it, on the basis that as a theological science, hermeneutics “determines the principles for interpreting Scripture from Scripture itself”.

Historical data are affirmed to be useful for exegesis, yet not without pitfalls. For instance, Lategan (2009b:94) warns against a tendency to reconstructionism, which in his view produces hypothetical results at best. On his part, Goede (2017:16) describes historical analysis as “indispensable in a proper understanding of the text, yet not determinative”. His reason for this statement is that there are other important

aspects that bear significance for understanding biblical texts, such as textual analysis, genre, canonical criticism, grammatical analysis, semantic analysis, and revelation-historical placing. Still, to omit historical inquiry, according to him, amounts to “a literalist and/or fundamentalist reading of the text, which in turn leads to a distortion of the message” (2017:23-24). He therefore calls for a “balanced view” of the significance of historical data, in which the interpreter, on the one hand, does not neglect the socio-historical context of the text, and on the other, does not use it as a hermeneutic key for determining the meaning of the text, particularly if it is formulated outside the scope of the text itself (2017:24).

For the synchronic approach, Viljoen (2017:26) explains that the literary text in its canonical form is read “in its self-contained world, abstracted from its historical context”; that emphasis is laid on the text as “a structural entity” where different elements of the text are perceived to be in dialogue with one another and therefore cannot be read independently (2017:32); and that the object of exegesis is what the text is saying now, taking account of the text’s structural arrangement and how that determines meaning (2017:36).

A variety of synchronic methods can be identified. One can think of *text-immanent approaches*, in which the texts, “as the literary product at hand”, are “read as ‘self-contained worlds’, regardless of the original authorial intent of the text”, and meaning is generated based on the result of the interplay among individual words, phrases and scenes (Viljoen, 2017:32, 33-34; cf. Du Toit, 2009a:122). Synchronic approaches equally explore the *contributions of linguistic science, structuralism and literary theory*, where discourse analysis, narrative analysis, semiotics, etc. are engaged to investigate the text’s inter-relationships. *Pragmatic approaches*, which explore “the ‘performative’ power of language” to affect participants—e.g., speech act theory, rhetorical theory, reception theory, etc.—are also said to be useful (Lategan, 2009a:45, 48-49). Finally, the *contribution of communication science* is considered. This assumes that the NT texts are forms of communication, with the implication that communication theory³ can contribute to exegesis (Du Toit, 2009a:112-113).

3 Particularly taking note of the primacy of the text and the context, in that order, for determining meaning.

Reformed exegetes deploy the above-mentioned methods in some combined forms.

Du Toit (2009a:110) justifies this multiple approach as follows:

Regarding the use of methods, there is an emerging consensus that, in order to determine this essential message, no single method will suffice. Responsible exegesis needs a multidimensional approach, making use of all the relevant methods available Several disciplines contribute towards a better understanding of our exegetical task No serious scholar can afford to ignore the contribution of these disciplines.

Viljoen (2017:25-26) also supports the idea of multiplicity of methods when he asserts that a text can be approached in different ways; that owing to the multiplicity of aspects of a text, its interpretation necessarily involves a multifaceted process and the use of complementary methods; and that because each method has its shortcomings, a plurality of methods helps in reinforcing each of the methods and fosters “a richer and more integrated grasp of the meaning”. However, Du Toit (2009a:110) above implicitly calls for the deployment of only “relevant methods”, thus indicating that not all available methods or combinations of methods will be useful for interpreting a particular text. In this light, Viljoen (2017:26) suggests that determinant factors are *the text at hand* and *the need being addressed*. He calls this “a problem-oriented approach”, by which he means an approach in which “the challenges and issues presented by the text suggest which method should be used”. He therefore warns against indiscriminate engagement with methods and argues that, in deciding on method(s) to be used, the interpreter should take cognisance of “the requirements of the text and the question to be answered”.

1.2.1.2.2 Pentecostal hermeneutical methodologies

Three elements are said to be crucial for Pentecostal⁴ hermeneutics. These are the Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and the believing community⁵. According to Nel (2015:6),

⁴ “Pentecostalism” is difficult to define, owing to the fact that it is a heterogenous movement, notwithstanding that there are commonalities among the different groups. The diversity hinges on the varying historical claims of Pentecostalism’s origin, the geo-cultural path that each sector follows, as well as the theological orientation of each. To that extent, one can talk about Trinitarian, Apostolic, Oneness (or “Jesus Only”), Wesleyan Holiness, and Finished Work groups as some main identifiable branches of Pentecostalism, which began to emerge in 1913. Even before this, the so-called Holiness Pentecostals could be identified as distinct from the “Baptist” Pentecostals. The likes of Parham and Seymour had Holiness roots and taught that sanctification was a pre-condition for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, while those from Baptist roots taught that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was open to every believer (Archer, 2009:11-13; Melton, 2025:1).

⁵ Similar to the explanation regarding Reformed hermeneutics above, the Pentecostal hermeneutical methodologies are not exclusive to Pentecostals; they at best emphasise the hermeneutic elements that are significant and crucial for Pentecostal approaches.

The three main elements of a Pentecostal Hermeneutics can be described as: The interrelationship between the *Holy Spirit* as the one animating *Scriptures* and empowering the *believing community* with the purpose that members be equipped for ministry and witness in culturally appropriate ways.

Similarly, Archer (2009:197, 213) talks about “a tridactic negotiation for meaning between the biblical text, the Holy Spirit and the Pentecostal community”, drawing support from Acts 15 where he says the believing community engages these elements dialogically to formulate ethical guidance for the Gentile believers. With these elements, some Pentecostals proceed with non-historical-critical approaches, while others still espouse critical methods. The former usually isolate the text, verse, phrase or word, and interpret it without necessarily giving attention to structural, literary or background details. Bible Reading Method (BRM) is closely associated with this approach. Acknowledging BRM as a tool among early Pentecostals, Archer (2009:55, 89, 101) describes it as

... A commonsensical method that relied upon inductive and deductive interpretive reasoning skills. Once the data was analysed, it was then synthesised into a biblical doctrine. Harmonisation was the acceptable and necessary way to synthesise all the biblical data on a particular subject.

Another method is the *pneumatic-experiential* approach, which is based on the theory that the Bible was produced from experience with the Holy Spirit which the authors “described in phenomenological language” (Nel, 2007:526). Put differently, “Bible reading *is* an experience in the Spirit just as its writing *was* an experience in the Spirit” (Akpan, 2018:68). To that extent, Bible reading is an attempt to re-live the experience (or phenomenon) that the text is speaking about or from which it arose. This allows for new interpretation(s) of the text/phrase/word differently from the convention.

For Pinnock (2013:237-238), therefore, Pentecostal hermeneutics is “Spirit-hermeneutics”, by which he means that it is “a strategy of reading Scripture in such a way that the Spirit has the liberty to speak”. At the same time, Pentecostals typically express concern for the control of interpretation. For instance, Pinnock (2013:241) proposes the principle of “controlled liberty”, which means such liberty that reckons with both the original meaning and the text that needs to be opened up, thus allowing for the fusion of past and present horizons by the Spirit. Another control mechanism

is the demand for accountability of the interpreter to the Pentecostal faith community (Archer, 2009:213; Pinnock, 2013:244).

Pentecostals also follow a *narrative-didactic-pragmatic* approach. They read historical narratives as didactic documents, formulating doctrine and praxis from them. In other words, they often interpret descriptive biblical passages as *prescriptive* (Anderson, 2010:1; Akpan, 2018:73). Archer (2014:102) vehemently defends this approach in his “narrative canonical” interpretation of the book of Acts on the work of the Holy Spirit in the early church. Not only so; he affirms that Acts in particular should be read as both a descriptive and a prescriptive document so as to get the best out of it (2014:103). Beyond formulating doctrine, these narratives must be re-lived in a way that is similar to their plot as depicted by the biblical text and that positively affects situations at present. Similarly, Nel (2007:532) says: “The Bible is to be implemented, demonstrated and realised rather than understood. The emphasis is on the practice, the experience of the modern believer, of the divine reality that the Bible witnesses to.” Therefore, Pentecostal interpretation is complete only when its product is realised pragmatically.

Other Pentecostals lean toward historical-critical methods. Oliverio (2012:133-134) believes, in fact, that this has been the trend among “Evangelical-Pentecostal” teachers in Pentecostal seminaries. By his observation, some of such practitioners advocate “a unidirectional movement from Scripture to experience” with marginal regard for experience-related presuppositions, while the rest give priority to the role of experience in biblical interpretation. Longenecker (2004:45, 47) also justifies historical-critical methods by arguing that the Christian faith as a religion of revelation is also a historical religion in the sense that all of God’s redemptive activities were prosecuted at some historical *time*; hence the legitimate need to raise questions that seek to understand the cultural contexts, life situations, interests, and distinctive exegetical conventions of the day.

However, Archer (2009:198, 201) criticises traditional Evangelical methods for not accommodating “[c]ontemporary Christian experience”, and blames them for the compromise of Pentecostal identity in North America in particular. In an effort to rectify the alleged anomaly, Archer (2009:212-260) proposes a new approach, which he calls “a contemporary Pentecostal hermeneutical strategy”. In its “tridactic negotiation for

meaning”, this proposed method arrives at meaning “through a dialectical process based upon *an independent dialogical relationship* between Scripture, Spirit and community” (2009:213, emphasis mine). Beyond this emphasis on the tripartite interplay between these three elements, Archer’s (2009:215-223) proposal also seeks to boost the role of the text with insights from semiotics, BRM and inner texture analysis.

History of effects (or *Wirkungsgeschichte*) is another method of Bible interpretation that has in recent times been espoused among some Pentecostals. According to Archer (2013:43-44), this method “seeks to understand the impact, influence, or effect that biblical texts have had on the Church and society throughout the centuries”. She explains further that this method is deliberate in seeking to bring the text and the reader into a direct relationship, and justifies the prospect by arguing that since the Christian faith relates with Scripture “as its sacred text”, “the history between the texts and the reader cannot be separated because this history ‘is an expression of the text’s own power’”. For her, an outstanding merit of *Wirkungsgeschichte* is its emphasis on “the power that biblical texts possess as an expression of ‘the living Christ’”. This makes Pentecostals regard Scripture as not “a static book of norms belonging to the past”, but as “a *living* word for the present”, whose interpretation continues to manifest its power in different situations in the life of the church.

Archer (2013:44) cites Powery (1999:15) as in fact recommending this approach for Pentecostal hermeneutics because it calls for the examination of the impact of different interpretations as a criterion for judging the validity of such approaches to biblical texts. In this way, Archer urges Pentecostals to seek to account for the effects that their readings have had throughout their history and on the Pentecostal movement in the present-day. She uses “history of effects” as one of the methods in her research on Pentecostal liturgy based on the Apocalypse of John, entitled “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (Archer, 2013:53-95). Another example is a study on Mark 16:9-20⁶ that she reports to have been undertaken by Thomas and Alexander (2003). The study, she says, examined the history of effects of Mark 16:9-20 for early Pentecostals, and as a result the authors make bold to invite Pentecostals to “reappropriate Mark 16.9-20 in Pentecostal theology” (2013:44). In Archer’s (2013:44-45) words:

6 This is in this researcher’s estimation a telling example, owing to the omission of Mark 16:9-20 from majority of the early manuscripts and thus its relative regard before most scholars.

After providing a text-critical analysis of Mark 16.9-20 and comments about the structural, literary, and canonical function of this text, the authors lift up *Wirkungsgeschichte* as a means for recovering the significance of this passage for Pentecostalism: “Owing to this text’s unrivaled significance in early Pentecostalism, perhaps biblical scholars working in the tradition have been too quick to dismiss the role of this text in the canon, owing to its non-Markan origins Perhaps theologians working within the tradition should be more intentional about its importance in the articulation of contemporary Pentecostal theology”.

In sum, there are various ways in which Pentecostals approach Bible interpretation, including Bible Reading Method; pneumatic-experiential approach; narrative-didactic-pragmatic approach; a tridactic negotiation for meaning between the text, the Spirit and the community; “history of effects” method; and still for some, historical-critical approaches.

In consideration of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical methodologies, it is apparent that there are both common grounds and differences between them. These similarities and differences beg the question regarding the ways in which the two traditions understand biblical miracles and would in particular interpret the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.

1.2.2 Problem statement

The role of the miracle imperatives to “*heal the sick*” [ἁσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε], “*raise the dead*” [νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε], “*cleanse those who have leprosy*” [λεπροὺς καθαρίζετε], and “*drive out demons*” [δαίμόνια ἐκβάλλετε] in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 is at issue in this study. These passages focus on Jesus’ sending out his disciples to proclaim the kingdom of God (Matt. 10:5, 7; Mk. 3:14; Lk. 10:1, 9). However, they also seem to incorporate miracle imperatives into the commission:

As you go, preach this message: “The kingdom of heaven is near.” *Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.* Freely you have received, freely give.

(Matt. 10:7-8, emphasis mine)

He appointed twelve—designating them apostles—that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach *and to have authority to drive out demons.*

(Mk. 3:14-15, emphasis mine)

When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. *Heal the sick who are there* and tell them, “The kingdom of God is near you”.

(Lk. 10:8-9, emphasis mine)

A hermeneutical polarity exists between those who interpret these miracle imperatives as valid instructions for today and those who do not. In reference to Matthew 10:7-8, Reformed theologian Poythress (2016:165-166) opines that this was a commissioning of the disciples with the power to perform miracles in the same order as Jesus' miracles of healing and exorcism. As accompaniments to the proclamation, "*The kingdom of heaven is at hand*" [Ἡγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν], he identifies the anticipated miracles as "signs of the kingdom, signs of God's mighty saving power at work", as well as pointers to "the supreme miracle of Jesus's resurrection". Clark (2015:1), a Pentecostal, agrees with the general propositions that the New Testament miracles "were signs, or pointers, to the future kingdom finding *expression* in the here and now", and that in view of this, miracles *should be anticipated today* as evidence of the in-breaking of the kingdom.

On the other hand, Harris (2011:1), a Lutheran minister, believes that something has changed between the ministries of Jesus and his apostles and those of present-day preachers. Arguing from Matthew 10:8 and 2 Corinthians 12:12, he asserts that Jesus gave the apostles authority to perform miracles *as a proof of their calling*, but postulates that contemporary preachers have a different ministry than that of Jesus or his apostles. Consequently, he is not bothered that he has not performed any miracles in his ministry, and is sure that the lack of miracles in his ministry does not make it inferior to that of Jesus or his apostles. He understands that his own commission is to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments, not to perform miracles. Nor in fact can the pursuit of miracles in the present-day church be justified in his view. In this light he points out (apparently in a negative sense) that the only place outside the apostles' ministry that the miraculous gifts are mentioned is in the *troubled* congregation of Corinth (approximately 56 A.D.), beyond which no miracle imperative is emphasised in the NT. His conclusion, therefore, is that claims of miracles today are "lying signs and wonders" and a mark of the end-time (cf. Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess 2:9).

The question of which position is correct may not have a straightforward answer. It may therefore be safe to assume at this point that so far as NT miracle stories are concerned, Reformed and Pentecostal approaches exhibit varying degrees of strength and weakness in their interpretations and applications. This is expected to be the case particularly for the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. Therefore, in view of the different hermeneutical conclusions above, this study

aims at ***developing a hermeneutic key that can demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal approaches to the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.*** The anticipated “hermeneutic key” is intended, however, as a flexible guideline for evaluating the plausibility of the sampled interpretations of the three passages, not as a strict criterion for determining their correctness or for broader evaluative functions. This implies that, as conceived in this project, the “hermeneutic key” to be developed does not purport to be final or to have the capacity for evaluating any Reformed or Pentecostal interpretations of the NT miracle material; it only contemplates the samples of interpretations that are specifically drawn for analysis in this study. At the same time, if found helpful, it can be used or adapted for use for interpreting other miracle imperatives in the Synoptic Gospels⁷.

The main research question arising from the above-stated aim is: ***What hermeneutic key can be developed to demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches to the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9?***

Questions arising from this problem are:

1. What are the meaning and role of “miracle” in the New Testament?
2. What is the history of interpretation of New Testament miracle stories within Reformed and Pentecostal traditions?
3. What are the natures of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutics?
4. What do Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9 mean from a Reformed exegetical perspective?
5. How do contemporary Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters understand the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9?
6. What hermeneutic key can be developed to demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches to the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9?

⁷ This restricted functionality of the anticipated “hermeneutic key” is maintained throughout the study.

1.3 Aim and objectives

1.3.1 Aim

The main aim of this research is *to develop a hermeneutic key that can demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches to the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.*

1.3.2 Objectives

The main objectives of this research are:

1. to study the meaning and role of “miracle” in the New Testament;
2. to study the history of interpretation of New Testament miracle stories within Reformed and Pentecostal traditions;
3. to study the natures of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutics;
4. to examine the meaning of Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9 from a Reformed exegetical perspective;
5. to examine the understandings of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 by contemporary Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters; and
6. to develop a hermeneutic key that can demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches to the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.

1.4 Central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this research is that a hermeneutic key can be developed to demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches to the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. However, it should be acknowledged that, as in the present study, the development of any hermeneutic key inevitably involves a measure of subjectivity. Likewise, the identification of interpretive strengths and weaknesses, being dependent to some extent on the researcher’s evaluative judgments, is not entirely free from subjective influence. These limitations are therefore recognised and remain in view throughout the study⁸.

⁸ Subsequent references to “strong”/“strength(s)” and “weak”/“weakness(es)” with respect to samples of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 should be understood in the light of this concession.

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 The framework of the study

This study is done within the framework of the Reformed tradition. Reformed theology may be defined as a family of Christian traditions that embrace the 16th-century reforms of the Church; that subscribe to the five *solas* of the Reformation (namely, *sola Scriptura*/Scripture alone, *solus Christus*/Christ alone, *sola gratia*/grace alone, *sola fide*/faith alone, and *Soli Dei Gloria*/to the glory of God alone); that see the Scripture as teaching “the doctrine of grace” or “the five points of Calvinism” (namely, Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the saints = *TULIP*); and with some believing fully and others moderating belief in the continuity between the Old and New Testaments (Vrbicek, 2017:1). The Reformed tradition was developed to facilitate the return to Scripture against the pervasive authority of the Church at the time. As such, it accentuates the authority of Scripture, by which is implied that all Christian teaching and activities rest on Scripture alone (the so-called *sola scriptura* principle). Other distinctive characteristics of the tradition include the regulative principle of worship and a view of life as religion (Challies, 2006:1).

1.5.2 Methods for answering the research questions

This study follows a qualitative research methodology, which generally sets out to investigate the quality (and not the quantity) of research data. Such data are usually drawn from textual, audio, and video sources. Methods for qualitative research include narrative investigation, phenomenological investigation, grounded theory, case studies, and content analysis (Creswell and Creswell, 2018:254; Taherdoost, 2022:55-57). Each item drawn for investigation is called a unit of analysis, and the content analysis approach is used to systematically investigate it for claims, patterns, biases, and themes (Taherdoost, 2022:57).

The following methods are used to answer the respective research questions:

1. In order to study the meaning and role of “miracle” in the New Testament, a literature study of journal articles, textbooks, Bible commentaries, etc. is done.
2. In order to study the history of interpretation of New Testament miracle stories within Reformed and Pentecostal traditions, a literature study of journal articles, textbooks, Bible commentaries, etc. is done.

3. In order to study the natures of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutics, a literature study of journal articles, textbooks, Bible commentaries, etc. is done. Also, audio and video sources are investigated where available/possible.
4. In order to examine the meaning of Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9 from a Reformed exegetical perspective, the method proposed by Du Toit (2009a:120-148) is adapted, with conclusions reached particularly on the meaning of the miracle imperatives in the passages, and general applications formulated for the present.
5. In order to examine contemporary Reformed and Pentecostal understandings of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, samples of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the passages are drawn and analysed by way of content analysis.
6. In order to develop a hermeneutic key that can demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches to the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9,
 - i. similarities and dissimilarities are noted across the sampled Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the passages. The collected data are selected and categorised through analysis, interpretation and synthesis;
 - ii. the data are weighed against the results of the exegeses of the passages. The strengths and weaknesses of the sampled Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the passages are isolated and categorised, based on the results of the exegeses of the passages;
 - iii. the strengths and weaknesses are respectively synthesised as “observations” under each theme and for as many patterns as are identified across the sampled Reformed and Pentecostal conclusions;
 - iv. the “observations” are evaluated and inferences are drawn as to what apparent hermeneutical issue(s) is (are) involved; and
 - v. hermeneutic hints that suggest a plausible approach to each theme are formulated based on the inferences, and are in turn used to develop a hermeneutic key to demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of the sampled Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches to Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.

1.5.3 Exegetical approach and its implication for the study

The exegetical model proposed by Du Toit (2009a:120-148) is adopted. The method is synchronic, but also incorporates relevant diachronic insights. Du Toit also adds that it is amenable to scrutiny and can be easily adapted and further refined (2009a:121). It apparently lends itself, therefore, to what Viljoen (2017:26) calls a “problem-oriented approach”, in which case the most viable combinations of inquiries will be deployed for each of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.

Du Toit’s method involves: (1) preliminary selection of passage(s), which in this study are Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9; (2) first reading, during which to identify and resolve difficult lexical and grammatical elements, translate the Greek word-for-word, and determine the inner (textual) composition of the passage; (3) demarcation of the text by use of lexico-grammatical, literary and semantic criteria; (4) textual criticism, during which a decision is made as to the best textual option in the circumstance; and (5) determining the socio-historical setting of the passage, to gain all possible knowledge of the various facets of the socio-historical context of the passage relevant for understanding it.

Other steps are: (6) determining the literary type of the text, particularly the macro-genre and any available micro-genre(s) that make up the text; (7) determining the place of the micro text within its literary macro-structure, to in turn determine its meaning as well as its contribution within that larger context; (8) analysing the structure of the text to determine the interrelations between the various sub-units, how the argument flows, and what the main theme and possible sub-themes are; (9) detailed analysis of the passage, to determine the semantic content and thrust of the text, to note the stylistic conventions, to analyse the performative aspects of the text, and to carry out intertextual analysis; (10) formulating the message as it would have been understood by its original first-century readers, with particular attention to the text’s content and rhetorical impact; (11) suggestions for actualising the text for today, which involve using all necessary criteria to formulate clear guidelines for contextualising the message for the contemporary audience; and (12) translation, which anticipates at least a near-equivalent translation of the Greek text.

It is believed that the result of this study’s exegeses of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 will be reasonably credible and will therefore serve as a working

benchmark against which to assess the sampled Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical conclusions on the passages. The conclusions that agree with the results of this research's exegetical programme or contribute further insight will be considered to constitute the strengths of the sampled Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the miracle imperatives in the three passages; while those that do not agree and cannot otherwise be justified will be considered to constitute weaknesses. A hermeneutic key will be developed by synthesising and harnessing the strengths of Reformed and Pentecostal conclusions on the one hand, while on the other hand attempting to rectify the weaknesses based on appropriate exegetical evidence.

1.5.4 Sample size and delimitation

A total sample size of sixty (60) will be investigated. Ten (10) units of analysis for each of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 will be collected for the Reformed samples, making it a sub-total of thirty (30). The same sizes will apply to the Pentecostal samples. (See Table 1.1 below for a summary of the sample sizes.)

As the overall populations of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations cannot be ascertained, the samples are not presumed to be representative. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised to the entire populations, although they should offer a meaningful indication.

Population	Investigated Bible passage	Sample size	Sample size sub-totals/total
Reformed	Matthew 10:1-8	10	30
	Mark 3:13-19	10	
	Luke 10:1-9	10	
Pentecostal	Matthew 10:1-8	10	30
	Mark 3:13-19	10	
	Luke 10:1-9	10	
			Total = 60

Table 1.1: Sample sizes for the study

1.5.5 Methods of data generation and sample collection (inclusion/exclusion criteria)

Data will be generated through content analysis of text-, audio-, and video-type interpretations (depending on what turns up in the search) of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. Units of analysis will be admitted only after ascertaining that they originate from either Reformed or Pentecostal sources. To achieve this,

background checks will be done to ensure that the authors of such interpretations are either Reformed or Pentecostal, and the specific sectors of the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions that they represent will be highlighted. Prospective units of analysis whose authors cannot explicitly be identified as either Reformed or Pentecostal will be excluded from the investigation. Moreover, units of analysis will be limited to interpretations generated between 2000 A.D. and the present time. In this way, the source date will be critical for admitting or excluding units of analysis: those with explicit date (date/month/year, month/year, or year of publication) will be admitted, while those with no explicit date will be excluded.

Samples will be drawn from online sources. The collection of samples will follow a non-probabilistic approach, meaning the likelihood of any given population member being selected is not known (Martinez-Mesa *et al.*, 2016:1). Particularly, a combination of quota sampling and convenience sampling is considered to be appropriate for the study. In quota sampling technique the population is first classified based on characteristics and then sampling units (or units of analysis) are selected to fill each quota. On the other hand, convenience (or consecutive) sampling is a sampling technique in which units of analysis are selected according to their order of appearance and convenient accessibility. The process continues until either the required sample size is attained (sample saturation) or the stipulated time frame for data collection is exhausted (time saturation) (Martinez-Mesa *et al.*, 2016:1). Once admitted, audio- and video-type samples will be transcribed using “Audio-Text Converter” and “Video-Text Converter” applications respectively. Qualified audio- and video-type sampling units presented in languages other than English will first be translated using “Google Translate”, before being transcribed into text forms.

The study involves *Reformed* and *Pentecostal* interpretations of *Matthew 10:1-8*, *Mark 3:13-19* and *Luke 10:1-9*. This gives six (6) distinct populations that broadly divide into two, *Reformed* and *Pentecostal*. By means of quota and convenience sampling methods, each of sample groups representing these six populations is filled to saturation. For this study, sample saturation refers to the first 10 qualified sampling units of each of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of *Matthew 10:1-8*, *Mark 3:13-19* and *Luke 10:1-9*.

1.5.6 Coding technique

Populations, samples, units of analysis, and data will be coded manually using a “flat coding frame”. This means that the researcher will use his discretion to assign codes, but in such a systematic way that codes for each of the populations, samples, units of analysis, and data lie on “the same level of specificity and importance” (Medelyan, 2020:1). Furthermore, the data generated from the units of analysis will be coded thematically and hierarchically. Thematic coding is employed at the primary level of identifying relevant data, and implies that code generation will depend on themes identified from within the unit of analysis. A “hierarchical coding frame” will also be used for themes at a secondary level, to allow for them to be organised according to the way they relate to one another (Medelyan, 2020:1). The hierarchical structure fits this study since theme-codes will be broadly identified and entered as either “strong” or “weak”.

Tables 1.2 and 1.3 below show the predefined *nth* codes⁹ for the various data categories as explained above:

⁹ “n” represents the position number in the sequence: 01, 02, 03, ...

Population	Code	Sample group	Code	Unit of analysis (counted from 01 to 10)	Code	Theme in unit of analysis	Code	nth assertion in unit of analysis (counted from 01 to n)	Code
Reformed	R	Matthew 10:1-8	RMat	nth admitted interpretation of Matthew 10:1-8	RMat01, RMat02, ..., RMat10	e.g., "heal" in RMat01	RMat01-heal	e.g., first assertion on "heal" in RMat01	RMat01-heal-01
		Mark 3:13-19	RMrk	nth admitted interpretation of Mark 3:13-19	RMrk01, RMrk02, ..., RMrk10	e.g., "kingdom" in RMrk08	RMrk08-kingdom	e.g., 6th assertion on "kingdom" in RMrk08	RMrk08-kingdom-06
		Luke 10:1-9	RLuk	nth admitted interpretation of Luke 10:1-9	RLuk01, RLuk02, ..., RLuk10	e.g., "authority" in RLuk04	RLuk04-authority	e.g., 5th assertion on "authority" in RLuk04	RLuk04-authority-05

Table 1.2: Coding template for Reformed data

Population	Code	Sample group	Code	Unit of analysis (counted from 01 to 10)	Code	Theme in unit of analysis	Code	nth assertion in unit of analysis (counted from 01 to n)	Code
Pentecostal	P	Matthew 10:1-8	PMat	nth admitted interpretation of Matthew 10:1-8	PMat01, PMat02, ..., PMat10	e.g., "exorcism" in PMat09	PMat09-exorcism	e.g., 12th assertion on "exorcism" in PMat09	PMat09-exorcism-12
		Mark 3:13-19	PMrk	nth admitted interpretation of Mark 3:13-19	PMrk01, PMrk02, ..., PMrk10	e.g., "preach" in PMrk02	PMrk02-preach	e.g., 17th assertion on "preach" in PMrk01	PMrk02-preach-17
		Luke 10:1-9	PLuk	nth admitted interpretation of Luke 10:1-9	PLuk01, PLuk02, ..., PLuk10	e.g., "dead" in PLuk05	PLuk05-dead	e.g., 5th assertion on "dead" in PLuk05	PLuk05-dead-05

Table 1.3: Coding template for Pentecostal data

1.5.7 Data analysis tool

The study will analyse data using ATLAS.ti 24 application for Windows. The justification is that ATLAS.ti generally supports qualitative academic research; is rich in a wide range of innovative analysis tools and visualisation features, including a coding dialogue; and has a quotation reader that makes data exploration easy. It can perform automatic entity and sentiment analyses, as well as integrate inductive and deductive coding features, thus allowing for coding flexibility with a variety of methodologies. It also provides for coding of comments, where, for instance, code definitions can be offered, and has a reliable backup facility (Hecker, 2020:1; Opayinka, 2020:1).

CHAPTER TWO

THE MEANING AND ROLE OF “MIRACLE” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to briefly explain the meaning of “miracle” as an NT concept and the role that miracles play in the NT. First, the meaning of NT miracles will be explored from philosophical, etymological, and biblical-literary perspectives, after which a working definition will be proposed. The NT has copious narratives of miraculous events. This, plus the fact that this study is focused on NT texts, necessitates an attempt to understand the role that miracles play in the NT. That investigation will also be briefly covered in this chapter.

2.2 The Meaning of “Miracle” in the Bible

2.2.1 General overview of the subject matter

The term “miracle” means a wide range of things to different people. For instance, McCoy (2015:1) identifies as flippant and ubiquitous the way the word “miracle” is used in the English vernacular, and alleges that this has “created an atmosphere of uncertainty surrounding the entire concept”. McCune (2016:1), in fact, postulates that his (American) culture, including Christianity, has “greatly overused” the word “miracle”. Such *overuse* generally encompasses a range of phenomena: unusual events, impressive manufactured products, financial windfalls; unexpected outcomes (such as passing a difficult interview), abrupt behavioural changes (such as someone suddenly breaking a drinking habit); outcome of developments in science, technology, or arts; and a “wonderful” invention or creation. Still in a narrower sense, “miracle” is often used to describe events that are “extraordinary”—in terms of them not conforming to human knowledge of the world and its regularities, e.g., surviving a plane crash from a considerable height (McCune, 2016:1; Świeżyński, 2012:89).

The above allegations of flippancy, ubiquity and overuse of the concept of “miracle” state no more than the obvious. As this researcher has often observed, one only needs to participate in an average Christian meeting to hear the events that are branded “miracles”: a minister *prophesies the “miracle”* of financial breakthrough, while the congregants thank

God for *the* “miracle” of sleeping and waking up, *the* “miracle” of seeing a new month (or a new year), and so on. To such an extent, it appears there is really no difference between everyday (or regular) and miraculous events. If, as has been noted here, both ministers and congregants equally assign a miraculous status inappropriately to everyday events, then Świeżyński’s (2012:89) assertion that such understandings are found among “ordinary people” who hardly concern themselves with the need for precision, is at best an understatement. It raises doubt as to whether the allegations of overinterpretation and overuse can ever be confidently refuted. Perhaps one has to agree with McCune (2016:1), not just about the discomfort produced by the endlessly wide range of meanings of “miracle”, but more importantly about the concern that “if everything is a miracle, nothing is truly a miracle”.

Still, the meaning of “miracle” tends to elude NT scholars, too. Twelftree¹⁰ (2014:322) identifies some reasons for this dilemma¹¹ to include the tendency to define the concept of the miraculous in terms of violation of “the laws of nature” (or “natural law”), the wide variety of understandings exhibited by NT authors on the subject matter, and the regrettable fact that, to date, there is a deficiency of material on which one could rely for a clear and comprehensive understanding of the miraculous in the NT period. The few available resources bear “incomplete representations of the available data, filtered through the lenses of special or *ad hoc* scholarly interests”, and therefore still leave a gap for research that would adequately account for provenance, date, translations, texts and commentaries, in order to avail a rich-enough source for comprehending the miraculous at the time of writing the NT documents (Twelftree, 2014:323, 327).

Explication of the first two reasons will be taken subsequently under philosophical and biblical-literary perspectives, where they respectively and properly belong. For the third reason, one cannot but understand that most—if not all—literary works (including the NT documents) are written with a specific agenda and bias, and therefore may never fulfil

10 He himself adopts a narrow scope of the meaning of the terms “miracle” and “miraculous” to cover only “healings”, “exorcisms”, “resuscitations”, and so-called “nature miracles” credited to Jesus and his followers.

11 The other issues he raises are the alleged inadequacy of the Western mindset—spoiled as it were since Bultmann used an argument from the advances of science to repudiate any belief in “the New Testament world of daemons and spirits”—to make sense of the miraculous, as well as the alleged inability of the historian to adequately make a case for the occurrence of a miracle (Twelftree, 2014:323-327).

such a comprehensiveness criterion that Twelftree here envisages. One can only hope for the availability of literary works that, whether wide or narrow in scope, adequately treat their concerns so that one can pool their thoughts together to gain a far-reaching insight into the subject matter.

Interestingly, in what she calls “a sourcebook”, Cotter (2003:1) affirms a high volume and popularity of “miracle stories as we call them” in the Graeco-Roman world. Conversely, she asserts that unlike “the witty apophthegms or *chreiai*”¹², miracle stories assumed relatively low regard in terms of “form” and as such did not command such classroom attention as did “the famous wisdom stories of the greats”, which in turn explains why the Graeco-Roman milieu has no record of what form was expected of a miracle story. Among the things said here by Cotter, and in a way supporting Twelftree’s claim of literary bias above, the clause, “miracle stories as we call them”, apparently signals something of a difference between what the present generation understands to be miracles and what the Graeco-Roman world understood to have been miracles. Unfortunately, this concessional statement as well as the acknowledged insignificant paedagogical and literary attention accorded miracles in ancient Hellenistic milieu (see, for instance, 1 Cor. 1:22), challenge the integrity of Cotter’s work as “a sourcebook” for miracle stories in the Graeco-Roman world.

However, it is noteworthy that Cotter carefully distinguishes between “miracle stories” and other forms of “wonder” tales at the time, such as “[n]ature’s genetic anomalies, often called *terrata*”, or “nature’s strange inexplicable phenomena, sometimes called *paradoxographia*”. According to her, these “freakish wonders” of nature were recorded, published, and discussed by “the *literati*” and “might well be termed *mirabili* (miracles) by anyone in the Greco-Roman world”. Nevertheless, these were in her opinion not stories in the first place and do not fit the idea of “miracles” in her work (2003:1-2). Again, one sees how fluid the boundaries were between Graeco-Roman *mirabili* and “miracles stories as we call them”, as well as how difficult, without imposing some external grids, it is to

12 According to Cotter, an “apophthegm” belongs to “sayings” (2003:3), whereas “a chreia” is “a concise statement or action which is attributed with aptness to some specified character or something analogous to a character” (2003:1).

realistically harvest miraculous events from the Graeco-Roman milieu. Below, the subsection on etymology will nonetheless work toward a resolution.

Added to above-noted issues is the fact that, since Hume and the Enlightenment, philosophers and empiricists have debated the possibility of miracles in a world that purportedly runs as a closed system. For instance, Shapiro (2016:18) was mentioned in Chapter 1 as a philosopher who thinks that if at all miracles occur, they, as *supernatural* activities, are highly improbable—and therefore extremely rare—events. As will be seen shortly, others who allow for a concept of “miracle” define or discuss it around the notion of violation of laws of nature. The effect of this has not been limited to philosophical circles but has extended to theological discourse, thus moving some Christian scholars away from the idea of “miracles” originally espoused by biblical authors and further complicating the challenge of defining “miracle”. In pursuit of that meaning, attention is now given to philosophical, etymological and biblical-literary considerations.

2.2.2 Philosophical considerations

2.2.2.1 Justification

As was indicated in the preceding subsection, philosophers have contributed so heavily to the conversation around the concept of “miracle” that considering their theses and antitheses is nearly inevitable. This subsection, therefore, sets out to briefly examine some philosophical postulations on “miracle”, beginning with David Hume’s, given the influence that they have exerted from the outset.

2.2.2.2 “Miracle” as contravention of “the laws of nature”

The notion of contravention of “the laws of nature” is a legacy of the Scottish philosopher, David Hume (1711-1776), and is commonplace when “miracle” is being defined. Hume was himself influenced by a 13th-century notion that a miracle contravenes (violates or transgresses) the laws of nature. That notion—credited to the scholarly generation of Oxford theology professor, Alexander of Hales—birthed the skepticism about miracles that later burgeoned in the West. Hume therefore had scholarly roots in a context that constituted a major shift from the worldview of the first twelve centuries (Sulmasy, 2007:1223; Pawlikowski, 2007:1231). It is no wonder, then, that he was an absolutist

skeptic, to say the least. Apparently, he was determined to use every conceivable line of reasoning to annihilate the idea of the miraculous in his *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748, Section X: Of miracles). According to him,

A miracle may be accurately defined *a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity or by the interposition of some invisible agent*.

A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined.

And what have we to oppose to such a cloud of witnesses, but the absolute impossibility or miraculous nature of the events, which they relate? And this surely, in the eyes of all reasonable people, will alone be regarded as a sufficient refutation.

(Hume, 1748:579)

Three major elements constitute the above statements: that miracles transgress the laws of nature, that miracles are caused by “*the Deity*” or “*some invisible agent*”, and that human experience is sufficient as a rule by which to judge the truthfulness or falsehood of a miracle claim. While causation of a *miracle* is an *a priori* settled question among religious people, the assertion of violation of the laws of nature by miracles and the high view of human experience for evaluating miracle claims are questionable. On the charge of violation, it must be stated that at face value, this is an empirical question that deserves a clear, scientifically-informed answer, but that neither Hume nor any of his students or admirers could offer. It is difficult to identify the particular law(s) that are “violated” in an instance of a miracle. Besides, philosophical conceptions of nature or even the existence of “natural laws” vary—and therefore fall short as formidable standards of judgment. Given these issues, and because further attempts to refine definitions of “miracle” based on “natural laws” only deepen the dilemma, the best course is to abandon that approach entirely (McGrew, 2019:1).

Moreover, the concern for transgression of the laws of nature by miracles presupposes some kind of possible invasion or imposition by “*the Deity*” (= God) from *another realm*, which in part sets up a dualist cosmological scheme where the one is *natural* and the other is *supernatural* and in part portrays God as an intruder into the affairs of the same

nature that he created. These corollaries are entirely foreign to the holistic worldview of the Christian Scripture. Jewish cosmology, from which the Gospels were written, envisioned a world where God was directly involved. For instance, Augustine (1506:6.13.24) reasoned that “miracles might appear to be contrary to nature ... but they do not appear so for God”, being that “for him ‘nature’ is what he does”.

The disposition was not any different in the Medieval Era¹³, which preceded Hume’s time. “Miracles” were regarded in the period as “signs of God’s marvelous presence and activity”, rather than a negative or interventionist notion of God suspending the laws of nature. They were “*praeter* or *supra naturam*” [beyond or above nature], rather than “*contra naturam*” [against nature] (Colle, 2011:239-240). Aquinas (1485, Pt. 1, Q. 105, Art. 8) in particular averred that “some miracles performed what was impossible in nature but that others what nature could yet in supernatural ways”. The reasoning is the same in the modern time. Examples can be noted in such claims as “God created the world, and all phenomena were related directly to Him” (Pawlikowski, 2007:1230) and the belief that, for the authors of the Gospels, “[w]hatever happens in the world ... is [*God’s*] action in *his* world” (Dickson, 2008:1).

By pure cosmological indices, therefore, Hume’s miracle-epistemology falls flat as an *extra-contextual* conjecture. It is also anachronistic in nature given that the conception of “immutable natural laws” came at a much later time than the miracles that Hume was evaluating (Keener, 2011:130; Twelftree, 2014:323; McGrew, 2019:1). There is more to critique in Hume’s thesis, especially the role it assigns to experience for evaluating miracle claims. Suffice it to say, however, that the argument above has shown Hume’s postulations to be, at best, a flattering and misleading construct.

Iwuagwu’s (2018:64) definition is less problematic and may be considered as a fair in-field alternative to Hume’s: “A miracle is an extraordinary event in the physical world that apparently surpasses all known human or natural power and is beyond any natural or scientific explanation.” The natural/supernatural dichotomy is not eradicated though, but

13 The “Medieval Era” or “Middle Ages” (approximately 476–1400/1500 C.E.) is the historical mid-way period after the fall of the eminent Roman state *and* before the cultural revival that is called the “Renaissance”. It is also sometimes referred to as the “Dark Ages”, owing to the collapse of civilisation and the existential challenges for most of Europe (Merriam-Webster dictionary. 2023).

the definition also does not rely on the idea of violation or imposition. Rather than *violate*, a miracle “apparently surpasses” what is known and “is beyond” what can be explained. Limiting the *extraordinariness* of a “miracle” to the level of knowledge yet available to the observational framework is not only modest or realistic but also scientific. Such an approach to epistemology effectively allows for improvement and progress, rather than speaking as if all that needed to be known is already known.

2.2.2.3 “Miracle”, supernatural agency, and intentionality

As stated above, causation is a given. Clarke (2003:459) asserts that a “miracle” is “an intended outcome of an intervention in the natural world by a supernatural agent”. McGrew and Larmer (2024:1) indirectly promote the idea of causation by stating that a miracle is an event that exceeds explanation in terms of “human action and natural causes [alone]”, necessarily “exceeds the productive power of nature”¹⁴, and requires a religious context for proper definition. For them, too, the Latin word *admīrārī* (to wonder at) used for “miracle” fits the context of causation because “it appears to require, as its cause, something beyond the reach of human action and natural causes”. Put straight, supernatural agency is key to the eventuation of a “miracle” and a convincing definition of a “miracle” must account for a supernatural agent. Defining a “miracle” this way gives it “religious significance” (Clarke, 2003:459; McGrew and Larmer, 2024:1). Despite the prominence of vestiges of dualism in the above definitions, the claim of a *cause* for “miracles” is an appropriate conclusion for the Christian faith, whose God is eminently represented in the Bible to be responsible for all miracles.

Intentionality is also prominent in Clarke’s definition above. He believes that the supernatural agent behind any miracle “specifically intends that that event occurs, in order for it to qualify as a miracle”. Causation comes with intention and purpose; to that extent, a “miracle” is never an *accident* like when “[n]ature’s genetic anomalies” are listed in ancient Graeco-Roman *literati* among “wonder” tales (Cotter, 2003:1) whereas the very word “anomalies” signals at least an assumed accident. Intentionality is of value because miracles are usually thought of as “acts that have religious significance”. They are

14 “Nature” here is a broad term used for humans “and any other creatures substantially like ourselves”.

considered as being instrumental to the realisation of the plans of supernatural agents, “as interpreted by natural agents” (Clarke, 2003:460).

However, Luck (2003:465-469) counters Clarke's submissions by altogether rejecting the criterion of intentionality (although without much to convince his reader otherwise), as well as the requirement for “natural agents” to interpret an event as being miraculous. His contention is partly that the proviso of interpretation reduces the religious significance of a “miracle” to mind dependency and for instance implies that the creation of the world did not assume the status of a “miracle” until God created human beings and they in turn accorded it a “miracle” status. While fearing that Clarke confuses epistemology and metaphysics, he concludes that it is “intuitively wrong” to attempt to delay the religious significance of the creation of the universe, and rather asserts that religious significance is integral to any natural event that is caused by “a supernatural agent” (2003:468-469).

In this researcher's view, Clarke's criterion of intentionality (or instrumentality) is sound, because as shall be seen later in this chapter, one of biblical words for “miracle” is σημεῖον (“a sign”), which both semantically and theologically points toward *intended* signification. Similarly, the criterion of interpretation, as well as the corollarial appropriation of religious significance to a *miracle* by a natural agent, is not only necessary but also unavoidable. To start with, what humans call a “miracle” is a *natural* or *normal* event with the omnipotent God. In the same way, he himself *does not need* the religious signification of his works, whereas his creatures in general and the believing community in particular need it. Events are in fact called “miracles” because they shock and daze human beneficiaries and/or witnesses, and through them, these beneficiaries/witnesses somehow acknowledge (or deny) *the Hand* that has done what is *impossible with* (or beyond) human beings. At that very moment, they have done nothing but credited the events with religious significance. Therefore, *contra*. Luck, the human mind is needed to interpret miraculous events; whereas doing or failing to do so does not necessarily change the inherent character of such events with regards to God. They are what they are to God, whether they are known, seen, interpreted, religiously ascribed, or not. This is one point that Hume (1748:579) got right in his discussion of “miracle”: “A miracle may either be discoverable by men or not. This does not alter its nature and essence.”

2.2.2.4 Summary

In the wake of Hume's proposals, events termed "miracles" have conceptually been understood by the majority of philosophers as those which violate the laws of nature. This is found to be alien to biblical worldview, and therefore inadequate for defining NT miracles. Nor is any other definition that builds on the natural/supernatural dialectic adequate. Instead, a definition that acknowledges a "miracle" as an event that exceeds nature is more convincing. In the same vein, the criteria of causation, intentionality and therefore religious significance are helpful, as they give core characteristics to events identified as "miracles". Philosophical reflection on the subject matter will certainly not end; yet from the overview above, a Christian can engage with extant and upcoming postulations in some fruitful ways.

2.2.3 Etymological and socio-historical considerations

2.2.3.1 Scope

Here, the linguistic roots and socio-historical understanding of the concept of a miracle are investigated. The investigation is however limited to the ancient social contexts and linguistic hegemonies that constituted the immediate provenances of the idea of a miracle. In doing so, it is not in any way suggested that the original meanings have necessarily been retained till today, irrespective of historical epochs or contexts; it rather seeks only to explain how the concepts were understood back in time. With this delimitation in mind, the Latin and Graeco-Roman etymologies of "miracle" are briefly reviewed in what follows:

2.2.3.2 Latin roots

There is a bit of concern that borders on the religious integrity of the Latin word, *miraculum* (English: *miracle*). This is especially disturbing against the backdrop of Garland's (2011:1) claim that the Latin *Vulgate* (383 A.D.) does not use *miraculum*; but that rather "[f]aithful to the Greek", it uses for "miracle" such words as *signum*, *prodigium*, and *virtus*, while *miraculum* only appears in patristic and later theologies. One therefore wants to know how the term *miraculum* found its way into the church lexicon and became such a household name as it is today.

However, while Encyclopedia.com (2019:1) agrees that no biblical term corresponds exactly to the Latin word *miraculum* "in its strict theological sense", it mitigates the

aforementioned tension by explaining that *miraculum* is absent only from the Vulgate NT, but appears six times in the *Vulgate* OT, howbeit for events or acts considered by the Hebrews to be “wondrous” but “not necessarily miraculous in the ordinary sense” (e.g., 1 Sam. 14:15; Jb. 33:7). It appears then that *miraculum* was adopted from general Latin parlance for wondrous events; but for such Greek NT terms as σημεῖα, τέρατα, δυνάμεις, and ἔργα (e.g., Ac. 2:22; 2 Cor. 12:12) covered by “miracle” in church vocabulary, the *Vulgate* NT uses *signum*, *prodigium*, and *virtus* (Garland, 2011:1; Catholic Online, 2022:1; Catholic Encyclopedia, 2023).

It is significant, therefore, that Merriam-Webster (2022) dates the first known use of *miraculum* to the 12th century. According to this source, *miraculum* is a compound word built from *mīrāri*¹⁵ (*to wonder at, to marvel, to be astonished*) and *culum* (*being a “suffix of instrument”*). It has since then been translated as “miracle” in English and used primarily in the sense of “an unusual or wonderful event that is believed to be caused by the power of God” or “a very amazing or unusual event, thing, or achievement”, the main point being the element of *wonder, amazement, astonishment*, etc. To that extent and in what appears to have been a major shift from the original contemplation, Harper (2022:1) asserts that from the mid-thirteenth century, *miraculum* came to be used in reference to “something that excites wonder or astonishment, extraordinary or remarkable feat”, *without necessarily ascribing it to divine or supernatural power*¹⁶.

The above-identified Latin linguistically-based definitions not only lean too heavily toward wonderment; they also tend toward a more general use than in a religious context, not to mention the distance of their perspectives from that of the NT. Little wonder that Bloom (2015:1) expresses doubt that “miracle” qualifies as a term for “a historical discussion¹⁷ of Jesus’ healings and exorcisms”. A number of other issues challenge the Latin linguistic background of the conception of “miracle”. Firstly, that *miraculum* shifts attention from the intrinsic value of the event that it aims to describe (what it is, essentially and objectively)

¹⁵ More properly, *admīrāri*.

¹⁶ Harper’s observation here simply confirms the allegation of overuse raised in section 2.1 above, and shows that the challenge has long roots in history.

¹⁷ It is therefore instructive that Bloom advises students of history to adopt the perspectives of those they are studying rather than view things from their own perspectives, if ever they are going to understand their subjects and adequately attend to “the subtleties in the evidence”.

to an extrinsic value (wonderment, amazement, etc., which lie outside the event's essential domain), creates an epistemic problem. It is a case of abandoning the primary value of a substance to emphasise its secondary value.

Secondly, and more critically, it alienates the concept from its original, biblical-theological construal and rather subsumes its meaning to the psychological-reactionary conditioning of the person(s) observing the miraculous event—and that can hardly be a trusted epistemological ground. For instance, it is not uncommon that while one set of persons expresses excitement about a miraculous event, another set condemns the same event; e.g., the Beelzebub controversy (Matt. 12:22-24//Lk. 11:14-16). The question would then be, which of the two reactions better describes the miracle performed by Jesus; or, otherwise, how can a middle ground be determined between the two reactions for the purpose of properly describing the miracle? No answer may suffice. On the whole, the Latin worldview is deficient for the purpose of defining a miracle and a better alternative should be sought.

2.2.3.3 Graeco-Roman roots

For the ancient Graeco-Roman world, a miracle was “a sociological event, one that generated a sense of astonishment and wonder in those who witnessed it”¹⁸ (Garland, 2011:1). This conclusion is inferred from the observation that the pre-Christian-Era Greek word θαῦμα (English: “a wonder” or “a marvel”)—like its Latin counterpart, *miraculum*—is the closest that can be found for “miracle”. Garland (2011:1) aptly shows that both the Greek and the Latin emphasise “the reaction of spectators to ‘that which is amazing’”. However, and rightly so, he judges that “[s]ince what is amazing is not invariably or necessarily the same as what is miraculous, it follows that neither θαῦμα nor *miraculum* carries the same force as the Christian concept of ‘miracle’”.

This observation of inequation between “wonderment”/“amazement” and “miracle” is a telling one: if what is amazing does not automatically mean what is miraculous, then θαῦμα may not be used to represent the NT idea of a miracle. This restriction is reinforced by the meanings entered for θαῦμα by Liddell, *et al.* (1940:290): “whatever one regards

¹⁸ As will also be seen shortly in Cotter's definition below, the element of *wonderment* was crucial for Graeco-Roman understanding of miracle.

with wonder, a wonder, marvel”. “Whatever” pronominalises *anything* and indeed *everything*, and a miracle cannot be *whatever*, *anything*, or *everything*. This is just how lexically deficient the term θαῦμα is for describing an NT miracle.

For Cotter (2003:2), miracles were in the Graeco-Roman milieu events “in which a *wonderful* rescue or salvation of someone takes place by the overturning of ‘the canons of the ordinary’ through the intervention of a deity or hero” (emphasis mine). However, so-called Graeco-Roman heroes most commonly performed miracles as a benefit of winning the favour of some god in that aspect and could do so without a petition to a deity. Five classes of such heroes that had powers to heal, scaled hierarchically from top to bottom in the “order of popular familiarity to the Greco-Roman world”, were the Pythagoreans (Pythagoras himself and Empedocles), political rulers (Pyrrhus [Greek], Caesar Augustus and Vespasian [Roman]), Apollonius of Tyana, Asclepiades of Augustus, and the prophets of Jewish scripture (Moses, Elijah and Elisha) (Cotter, 2003:36-37).

That Graeco-Roman historiography relegates Jewish miracle tradition to the background of its own versions of miracle is obvious from this list. Besides, it is of significant consequence that Cotter (2003:37) places Jesus on the list of other *heroes* who raised the dead, including Empedocles, Apollonius, Elijah, and Elisha. If nothing else, it shows that Graeco-Roman historiography appended limited, bestowed divinity (specifically of a hero’s status) to Jesus, rather than full, inherent divinity as in the NT tradition. It is also obvious from Cotter’s definition that she delimits “rescue or salvation” to “someone”, thus circumscribing miracles within only the human socio-anthropological circle and excluding all non-human entities—like, for instance, Balaam’s donkey which in Jewish tradition had its eyes opened to see God’s angel, and its mouth loosed and given a human voice (Num. 22:23).

Two, the definition also sounds completely positive, indicating (or presuming) that for the Greeks and Romans, all miracles were *beneficial* in the immediate sense—unlike, for instance, the NT story of the fig tree that withered after Jesus cursed it (Mk. 11:12-15, 20-22), or the death of Ananias and Sapphira after Peter rebuked them for lying to the Holy Spirit (Ac. 5:1-10). Three, a problem arises with the phrase “canons of the ordinary”, for which Cotter gives credit to Remus (1983:7-26) and which she says refers to “the system

that holds within the cosmic order”. As has already been argued, human understanding of the so-called “cosmic order” is limited, and thus deficient for use as a measuring apparatus for the miraculous. Science, it is said, only formulates theories based on what has been experienced previously; this does not preclude possibilities outside of experienced realities. It rather looks like this is a covert, perhaps inadvertent, dualistic understanding of the world and its operations, and would logically lead to a dichotomy between the “ordinary” and the “extraordinary”, and ultimately a distinction between the “natural” and the “supernatural”. Such a dichotomy has already been jettisoned.

2.2.3.4 Summary

Etymological and socio-historical evidence seen above indicates that both the Latin word, *miraculum*, and its Greek counterpart, θαῦμα, lean more toward a *reaction* to an unusual occurrence than to the constituent or definitive elements of the event itself, and consequently emphasise the element of wonder, surprise, amazement, etc. by beneficiaries/observers other than the event’s implicit merit(s). Also, their English translation, *miracle*, only approximates the meanings of the “miracle” group of words in the Bible, without capturing all the nuances of those biblical words. A point to be noted seriously, as Garland (2011:1) warns above, is that it does not follow that what is amazing is automatically *miraculous* as it seems to be the point in Greek and Latin thoughts. Despite helping one to understand the mindset of the Graeco-Roman and Latin contexts where the notion of *miracle* was largely explored, the above submissions still fall short of the NT sense of the word. Attention now turns to biblical literature for guidance.

2.2.4 Biblical-literary considerations

The NT texts use four Greek words for *miracle*, namely, σημεῖα, τέρατα, δυνάμεις, and ἔργα. They are translated as: σημεῖα (plural of σημεῖον), “signs”; τέρατα (plural of τέρας), “wonders”; δυνάμεις (plural of δυνάμις), “mighty deeds”, “power”, or “inherent ability”; and ἔργα (plural of ἔργον), “works” (Garland, 2011:1; Bersee, 2020:177-178). For Garland in particular, these Greek terms constitute a “Christological” definition of *miracle*, based on literary evidence that Jesus himself used these words, and had more to do with their religious significance than with their effect (i.e., their wondrousness). In his words, “Collectively, they were primarily perceived as signifiers that had greater value and

meaning than simply their impact upon the phenomenal world; or as St Augustine (*City of God* 22.10) puts it, “their purpose was that ‘faith may prosper’”.

Three crucial points arise from this statement by Garland:

1. σημεῖα, τέρατα, δυνάμεις, and ἔργα were (and would be) best understood *together*. This can be defended by the bare fact that the NT uses these four terms on an almost equal footing. To that extent, the one is not more important than the other; but more significantly, they each supply perspectives that the others lack.
2. They, unlike the Latin *miraculum* or the Graeco-Roman θαῦμα, stress the essential (or intrinsic) value of phenomena called *miracles* over against their secondary (or extrinsic) value (like their ability to cause wonder). Again and again, it is evident that Jesus performed miracles out of necessity, never in response to the clamour for impression (Matt. 12:39; 16:4;). Moreover, it is common with Jesus to charge a miracle beneficiary to not speak about (or, *testify*, to use today’s language) the miracle (Matt. 8:4; Mk. 7:36; 8:26; Lk. 5:14; 8:56). Among other motivations, it can be adduced that the Gospel’s Jesus was intentional about mostly playing down on the excitement that came with miracles.
3. They contribute to the experience of faith. This is a typical Johannine miracle-theology as shall be seen below, and can be sufficiently defended by the textual claim of John 20:30-31 that the miracle stories (John: “signs”) “are written that you may believe” (v. 31).

Σημεῖον (item 33.477 in Louw and Nida [1989a:443]) is grouped under the domain of “Non-Verbal Communication” and refers to “an event which is regarded as having some special meaning” (cf. Matt. 24:3), especially pointing to “a reality with even greater significance” and “inevitably an unusual or even miraculous type of occurrence” (cf. Jn. 2:23). Bersee (2020:178) explains further that besides the meaning of a “sign” in the general sense, σημεῖον also means a “prodigy” or “portent”, that is, an occurrence that is unusual and transcends the then-known “common course of nature”. It may also apply to imminent, remarkable events in the eschatological sense, i.e., “as portents of the last days”; or miracles and wonders that God uses to endorse people that he sends on assignment (cf. Ac. 14:3), to validate a divine commission, as a testimony in support of a message from God, or even to bear witness to his presence (Bersee, 2020:178). For all

intents and purposes, it is clear that σημεῖον does not describe the content of a miraculous event but its function of signifying something else.

Exclusively in the plural form, τέρατα (“wonders”) is usually combined with σημεῖα by NT authors¹⁹. Although not so frequent; but that the combination, σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα (“signs and wonders”), cuts across the Gospels, Acts, Letters and Epistles indicates that it was a common formula in the Graeco-Roman provenances of the NT books. It may well also mean that there is something the two terms share in common and that their combination conveys an emphatic literary (and performative) effect. For Scott (2006:77-78), the combination might be “suggesting that something was experienced far greater than the actual spectacle”. The events so described bear credit to God, surprise human observers, and evoke awe from them—much like the case in the OT²⁰.

Δυνάμις (particularly δυνάμις^c, equivalent to κράτος^b, entry 76.7 in Louw and Nida [1989a:681]) means “a deed manifesting great power, with the implication of some supernatural force” (cf. Ac. 2:22; Lk. 51). While δυνάμις^a [74.1] means “the ability to perform a particular activity or to undergo some experience” (cf. 2 Cor. 1:8) and δυνάμις^b [76.1] means “the potentiality to exert force in performing some function” (cf. Ac. 1:8), δυνάμις^c exploits their meanings but with the nuances of *the outcome* of such ability to perform and/or exertion of force (= “a deed”) and the attribution of that “deed” to “some supernatural force”. In other words, δυνάμις^c is a deed performed by an agent that manifests that agent’s supernatural (or, more accurately, divine) power. This further implies a religious interpretation of δυνάμις^c, thus emphasising the fact that unlike δυνάμις^a and δυνάμις^b, δυνάμις^c makes sense only in a religious context.

Ἔργον is translated as “work”, “*deed*”, and “*action*” with various perspectives. One of the perspectives is “*deed*, not word” (Liddell, *et al.*, 2014:682-683). This perspective is most suitable for its NT usage with respect to the concept of miracle. Take for instance where Jesus challenged those who could not believe his self-disclosure as the Christ to believe the *works* (cf. Jn. 10:25, 38; 14:10-11). In other words, he advised those who did not

19 Cf. Matt. 24:24//Mk. 13:22; Jn. 4:48; Ac. 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 7:36; 14:3; Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4.

20 This is similar to the way the phrase is used in Exodus 7:3 (cf. Deut. 6:22; 34:11; Neh. 9:10; Psalms 78:43; 105:27; Jer. 32:20-21), where it refers to the miraculous escape of the nation of Israel from Egypt.

believe his *words* to believe his *works*. This was also implied by his reference to the miracles he was performing when John the Baptist's disciples came on their master's behalf to find out if he was the Christ (Lk. 7:19-23, especially v. 22). So, Bersee (2020:178-179) is right (in this narrow sense) when he avers that ἐργα refers to Christ's actions, as well as the believers' "greater works" (cf. Jn. 14:12).

The nuances between the NT terms for *miracle* listed above have led Bersee (2020:179) to conclude that "a single definition of 'miracle' cannot be based on these ancient texts and that this is why most studies of the biblical texts either omit or offer very short definitions of *miracle*. In a way, this conclusion calls attention to a possible reason for most definitions selectively focusing on one or two of the terms and omitting the rest, or even rather adopting completely anachronistic and/or philosophically-informed definitions with the consequence of drifting far from a truly biblical meaning of *miracle*.

The selectivity just alleged is starkly manifest even in Bersee's own definition, that "in the context of biblical faith a miracle is an event that causes amazement, awe, or wonder, based on an empirical situation that reveals or discloses more to a believer than what can be observed" (2020:179). While she premises her definition on the event itself and fails to make reference to the source of the event, she also highlights *only* the τέρας ("wonder") and σημεῖον ("sign") aspects of a miracle, and herself falls short of the same expectations that she seeks to address. Notwithstanding that she fears that a biblically-informed, comprehensive definition is not possible, this study will propose one in what follows.

2.2.5 A working definition of "miracle"

The definition that follows is comprehensive and represents an attempt to move beyond Bersee's (2020:177-178) caveat that no "single, clear-cut definition of 'miracle'" is possible based on the biblical texts:

A miracle is (1) a work of divine power (2) that brings some form of *humanly* impossible, unexpected, unprecedented, and/or unusual rescue or dramatic judgment to its target(s); (3) sometimes without subordinate (or intermediate) agents and at other times through human, angelic, or natural agents; (4) that points to the goodwill and good purposes of God, sometimes foreshadowing or instantly displaying his eternal plan; and (5) that stirs the heart to wonder, awe, gladness, faith, holy fear, and other such (or even contrary) emotions and reactions.

This definition incorporates, among other things, the four most prominent NT terms for “miracle”, namely, σημεῖον, τέρας, δυνάμις, and ἔργον. Below is an explication of the thought behind it:

- i. A miracle is a *work* (ἔργον) of *divine power* (δυνάμις). This speaks to the fact that whatever the NT calls a miracle comes from God in an exclusive sense. A miracle is *a work of God* executed by the deployment of *his power* (or *might*). Biblical examples are the creation of the world (Gen. 1:1-3 and following; cf. Psalms 33:6, 9; Hebrews 1:3) and the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Romans 6:4; Ephesians 1:19-20).
- ii. A miracle has a primary purpose, and that is *rescue* or *judgment*. It resolves (or even creates) empirical situations, which is contrary to the 20th-century idea of miracles as “the empirical element that is *only* the carrier” of the message that God wishes to communicate (Pawlikowski, 2007:1233, emphasis mine). In other words, “the empirical element” is significant in its own right and needs not to be subordinated to the value of “the content” that it carries, that is, its spiritual value. The idea of a miracle as *rescue* abounds in both the OT and the NT (Exodus 14:21-22; Daniel 6:16-17, 22; Mark 4:38-39; Luke 7:11-15). Still, one can account for *judgmental* miracles in both testaments as well (Exodus 14:29-30; Leviticus 10:1-2; Acts 5:5, 10; 12:21-23; 13:11).
- iii. Underlying the transformed empirical situation is the σημεῖον (“sign”) that a miracle communicates. A miracle may immediately *point* to God’s personal attributes, like his compassion (Matthew 9:36; Luke 7:13; cf. Psalm 86:15; 111:4), his goodwill, favour, and good purposes (Genesis 21:1-2; Luke 1:24-25, 57; 2:7, 14), his omnipotence (Luke 1:37; cf. Jeremiah 32:27), and his disapproval of sin/rebellion (Leviticus 10:1-2; Acts 5:5, 10; 12:21-23; 13:11). It may secondarily *point* to a theological truth that lies in an entirely different domain of meaning, like revealing a theological truth about the person of Christ (*the bread of life*, John 6:5-13; 33, 35, 51; *the resurrection and the life*, John 11:35, 43-44), or the arrival, imminence, or certainty of the eschatological kingdom of God (Matt.

12:28//Lk. 11:20). This transference of meaning justifies reference to miracles as parables²¹ (Blomberg²², 1986:329, 347; Vela²³, 2016:1).

- iv. The *rescue* or *judgment* that a miracle brings is *humanly* impossible, unexpected, unprecedented, and/or unusual. Firstly, “humanly” is italicised to call attention to the fact that the claims conveyed by the adjectives that follow it hold *only* as far as prior human experience is concerned. So, in a miracle one is talking about what humans would have considered to be impossible (2 Kgs. 7:2; Lk. 1:18, 34), what they may not have expected (Lk. 24:9-11, 22-24), what they may not have seen or heard of or experienced before (Lk. 5:26), and/or what has happened but in a different fashion than they have ever known (Mk. 11:14, 20-21).
- v. Miracles sometimes happen without subordinate (or intermediate) agents (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 1:19-20) and at other times through human (Exo. 14:21-22; Lk. 10:17; Ac. 3:6-8), angelic (Ac. 8:26; 12:7-10), or natural agents (Ac. 16:25-26).
- vi. A miracle stirs the heart to wonder (τέρας) (Matt. 15:31; Mk. 6:51; Lk. 11:14), awe (Matt. 9:8; Lk. 5:26; Ac. 2:43), gladness (Lk. 1:58; Ac. 12:14), faith (Ac. 13:12), holy fear (Mk. 5:15//Lk. 8:35; 16:8; Ac. 5:11), and other such (or even contrary) emotions and reactions (Jn. 9:16, 24; Ac. 4:16-18). The impact of a miracle on its target(s) may well be described as its performative function, for which reason Augustine may have proposed that “their purpose was that ‘faith may prosper’”.

2.2.6 Summary

The search for the meaning of the term “miracle” in the NT is challenged by the many standpoints from which it is done. In everyday traditional English language, the term is overused to mean just anything that amazes or shocks an observer. In philosophy, where it is at all allowed, it is generally seen to be an event that violates the laws of nature. From the etymological standpoint, neither the Latin *miraculum* nor the Greek θαῦμα is useful,

21 However, this study favours only a partial description of miracles as parables, for the reasons that like the parables, they transfer meaning from one domain of meaning to another; but unlike parables, the narrative contents of a Gospel miracle are actual and factual.

22 According to Blomberg, “[a] description of the function of the gospel miracle stories ... ties these narratives very closely to the parables” (1986:329), and “[t]he narratives of the nature miracles when examined in their earliest forms recoverable from the gospel texts depict in symbol the identical in-breaking kingdom, often with striking parallels in both imagery and significance to specific parables of Jesus” (1986:247).

23 According to Vela (2016:1), “there are instances where a miracle story functions as a kind of living parable that the gospel author uses to illustrate a broader spiritual truth or historical example”.

as they lean more toward a reaction of wonder, surprise, amazement, etc. to the unusual event than to its constituent or definitive elements. One only comes as close as possible to the conceptual meaning of “miracle” in the NT through studying the Greek terms σημεῖα (“signs”), τέρατα (“wonders”), δυνάμεις (“mighty deeds”, “power”, or “inherent ability”), and έργα (“works”) that are commonly used by the NT authors. These Greek terms are said to constitute a “Christological” definition of *miracle* on the basis that Jesus used them with focus on their religious significance (Garland, 2011:1). It is proposed that they are best understood together, as each supplies a perspective that the others do not. Unlike most definitions, the working definition adopted in this study is formulated in such a way that accounts for these four perspectives.

2.3 The role of miracles in the New Testament

2.3.1 Scope

Having reviewed definitions and adopted a working definition of the concept of “miracle”, the next question to ask is whether miracles play any significant role in the NT. To answer this question, and on the premise of his view that the kerygma is “the essence of the Gospel” as well as varying scholarly attention on the miraculous in the constructed, critical “lives” of Jesus, Twelftree (2014:329) calls for commitment to articulating “the place of the miraculous in the reconstruction of the life of Jesus”. In his words,

Was the miraculous of minor importance in how [Jesus] was understood, or was it more significant, perhaps to the point of being a—or the—key to how he was understood? ... Whatever the importance of miracles to the historical Jesus, their meaning for understanding him also remains in question.

This study presumes that the miraculous had a significant place in the earthly life and ministry of Jesus as well as in the ministries of his apostles. In this subsection, therefore, attention will be given to that proposed significance. The following issues are discussed:

2.3.2 The volume of miracle narratives in the NT

The volume of miracle narratives in the Gospels and Acts seems to affirm that miracles have significance in the NT. Focused only on the miracles that Jesus and the apostles *performed*, Matthew has 22 miracle stories, Mark has 20, Luke has 21, and John has 8. 29 miracles are counted in the book of Acts (Moore, 2018:1). In an interview with *The Pneuma Review* (2012), Craig S. Keener, assigns miracle narratives as much as 31

percent of the entire Marcan Gospel, or 40 percent of its narrative bloc, and 20 percent of Acts (about the same volume as speeches). These are no mean statistics, to say the least. They justify Keener's regrets about particularly Western apathy toward the miracle motif in the NT in general as well as his surprise that for Acts in particular, scholars tend to focus more on the *speeches* at the expense of the *acts*, a situation he describes as "a blind spot in our Western readings of the text since David Hume"²⁴. More importantly, his warning is apt, that "[t]o ignore the question of miracles is to ignore a hefty portion of the biblical text" (*The Pneuma Review*, 2012). Indeed, looking at the volume and space that the four Gospels and Acts allocate to the miracle motif, it is safe to assume that the miracle subgenre has considerable significance in the NT scheme of things, particularly for understanding the Gospel portrayals of Jesus and the ministry of the first apostles. Conversely, a dismissive approach to their significance would have telling consequences on the overall understanding of the NT canon.

2.3.3 Miracles and Jesus as Israel's Messiah

Mostly found in the Gospel of Matthew (GMatthew) and Gospel of Luke (GLuke), miracles revealed Jesus to the nation of Israel as their promised Messiah (Christ, *the Anointed One*). In the encounter with the Canaanite woman petitioning him to heal her daughter (Matt. 15:21-28), Jesus himself confesses that he "was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" (v. 24). Earlier, while commissioning his disciples (Matt. 10:1-8), he warns them to restrict their activities to "the lost sheep of Israel" (vv. 5-6). In Matthew 8:17, his healings are summarised as fulfilling the Jewish prophecy of the Suffering Servant (cf. Isa 53:4), while the Lord's Anointed One in Luke 4:18-21—poised to perform various miracles, or, at least, described with fascinating miracle language—is the same person as the one eulogised in Isaiah 61:1-2. These data with miraculous elements certainly affirm the connection between Jesus as *Israel's Messiah* and miracles as *God's auspicious visitation on his people*.

24 *The Pneuma Review* (2012) credits to Keener the complaint that scholars have since Hume treated the Gospel miracle narratives "as an embarrassment", ignored them, "[explained] them away", and "[allegorised] them in ways we wouldn't do with most other narratives".

A number of scholars identify miracles with the messiah-ship of Jesus. Poythress (2015) supports the idea of the gospel miracles as fulfillments of Messianic prophecies, particularly that the Messiah would descend from David (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-9) and that he would be a healer (Isa. 35:5-6; cf. Lk. 7:22). For Roberts (2011:1), the so-called “nature miracles” (multiplication of food, walking on water, stilling of storms, etc.) also connect Jesus to the OT. (Compare, for instance, the claims of the Lord’s ability to still “the surging sea” in Psalm 89:9 with Jesus’ stilling of the storm in Mark 4:39.)

Cadenhead (2008:17), for his part, underscores how Matthew’s versions of the miracle stories accentuate the “[m]essianic qualities” of Jesus, to the extent that Matthean miracle narratives which do not highlight these qualities “are judged to be less central to his story”. The relative brevity of Matthew’s versions of Jesus’ miracles, when compared to Matthean teaching material and the parallel miracle stories in other Gospels, is also an indicator to Cadenhead that Matthew was more focused on stressing Jesus’ duty of teaching and interpreting the Mosaic Law than on the healings themselves. Cadenhead (2008:34) goes further to assert that Matthew’s connection of Jesus to the Hebrew prophets was a deliberate effort to distinguish Jesus from other miracle workers of his time, much as he notes that Jesus accomplished healings by simply speaking and/or touching his beneficiaries unlike the ritual-laden methods of his contemporaries.

In sum, the Gospel miracles served to identify, affirm and distinguish Jesus as the Messiah of Israel.

2.3.4 Miracles and the kingdom²⁵ of God

There is also reason to believe that the NT miracle motif has a strong connection with the NT (as well as the OT) kingdom motif. For one, the commissioning of the disciples to preach the good news of the kingdom of God comes with further instruction to perform miracles (Matt. 10:7-8; Lk. 10:9; cf. Mk. 3:14-15; 6:12-13; Lk. 9:1-2). The *miracle*-language constructions of the Evangelists (Matt. 10:7-8; Lk. 10:9) place the imperative to heal the

²⁵ According to Bersee (2020:180), when “his Kingdom” is used in reference to God, “it almost always refers to His authority or to His rule as the heavenly King”, and refers to a *restoration* not only of the spiritual domain, but of *all* creation by the ideal “king of righteousness”, which begins by personal redemption since distortion of personal relationships is “at the root of all *distortion in creation*”.

sick alongside the imperative to proclaim the kingdom of God²⁶ (Shinall, Jr., 2016:174). Interestingly too, Jesus replied to the charge of his affiliation with Beelzebub by informing his accusers, in part, that his exorcisms “by the finger of God” meant that the kingdom of God had come upon them (cf. Lk. 11:20; cf. Matt. 12:28). This claim by Matthew and Luke’s Jesus are spot-on indicators of the proposed relationship.

The question now is: In exactly what way(s) do miracle and kingdom motifs relate? To answer this question, it is important to note that there is yet no clear representation or critical evaluation of this relationship. Nonetheless, it is fair to assert that the miracles of Jesus may have been evidence of either “the *dawning or nearness* of the kingdom of God”, being the major theme of Jesus’ message, or “the eschatological kingdom being *expressed or realised*”, as explained in Jesus’ teaching (emphases mine). Of particular significance to this assertion is the high volume of exorcisms in the Synoptic Gospels, whatever else they may signify (Twelftree, 2014:330).

It may be a purely academic exercise to frame the significance of Jesus’ exorcisms in these contexts as an either-or proposition. After all, the realised eschatology (“the already” dimension of the kingdom of God) which characterised Jesus’ first advent was, to use today’s parlance, work-in-progress—and necessitated a continuous call for repentance by both Jesus and his messengers (akin to “the purifying preparation for the coming of the kingdom of God”). Simultaneously, Jesus claims—even if only once (cf. Matt. 12:28; Lk. 7:22)—that his exorcisms were synonymous with the realisation of the eschatological kingdom (akin to “the purifying realisation of the kingdom of God”). As such, the point to note is that Jesus’ exorcisms (indeed, together with other miracles) were media for communicating the reality of the kingdom of God in the here-and-now.

Roberts (2011:1) and Scott (2006:39-40) are more specific about a connection with *the arrival* of the kingdom of God. They separately believe that all of Jesus’ miracles in the four Gospels were integral to his message that the kingdom of God had arrived, asserting that the narratives of healing miracles in fact had embedded in them a message to this effect. For Scott, Jesus announced “God’s coming reign” by means of both *words* and

26 See Roberts (2011:1) also.

works, and the *works* “both illustrated the kingdom of God and demonstrated its presence”. In a similar fashion, Roberts instructively concludes that “if you take away the miraculous from the message of Jesus, you severely truncate his announcement of the kingdom and, at the same time, you are left with a Jesus whom most people would have ignored”.

Bersee (2020:180) follows a similar line of thoughts. According to her, in fact, the link between the work of Jesus and the expectations and realisations of deliverance in the OT is obvious. For instance, in 1 Chronicles 29:11, “Yours, Lord, is the kingdom” can be noted; in Daniel 3:33, “the metaphorical expression of God’s Kingdom” significantly deploys miraculous language; and in Daniel 4:3, such miracle-language as “signs” and “wonders” connect to the notion of God’s “eternal kingdom”^{27,28}. In Bersee’s (2020:180-181) words,

In the Old Testament, this Kingdom is to be fulfilled through the line of descent of King David’s family. The Christian assertion of Jesus as the Christ (Messiah) stems from this Jewish theocratic belief in the Kingdom...

In the stories of miracles about Jesus linked as sign-events of the coming Kingdom of God, his audience would have understood the connection with the earlier promises of fulfilment, known from their common Jewish heritage. The New Testament writers portrayed *Jesus* as the one who had been sent from heaven to herald the Kingdom as the final completion of God’s deliverance.

With this connection in mind, it becomes easy to understand why NT authors, exemplified by John, use σημεῖα (“signs”) to refer to some miracles (e.g., Jn. 2:11; 6:14; 20:30). It goes to show that the miracles are not an end in themselves, but point to a reality or realities beyond themselves, one such being the dawning of the kingdom of God (cf. Matt. 12:28; Lk. 7:22). They point to “the meaning of the healing miracle”, “[help] us understand a revelatory and redemptive event caused by and through Jesus”, and “[channel] the witness’s attention to the deeper meaning of the miracle” (Scott, 2006:78). In this light, it makes sense that McCoy (2015:5) identifies a primarily redemptive goal as the religious significance of biblical miracles. In his words, “The entire reason for healings ... always

27 In Daniel 4:2, King Nebuchadnezzar refers to his experience as “the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me”. The “signs and wonders” construct here resonates much with the NT.

28 The kingdom-constructs in these or any other OT passages are not exactly like the Greek βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ (or βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν in Matthew) mostly used in the NT (Bersee, 2020:180).

returns to providing a rationale for belief and to glorify God”. This assertion is apt, and logically grounds McCoy’s warning that this rationale must be maintained if, when and where miracles are claimed today.

2.3.5 Miracles and faith

It is believed that the NT miracles also have a literary-pragmatic connection with faith. However, the direction of that connection is obviously different in the Synoptic Gospels than in the Gospel of John (GJohn). While for the Synoptics, faith comes before miracle, in GJohn miracle elicits faith. Cadenhead (2008:21) says about GJohn that “Jesus performs miracles to convince people that he is the ‘light’ and *to instill faith in them*” (emphasis mine). This logic is fairly consistent in GJohn. Of course, for John, after Jesus turns water into wine at Cana in Galilee, “his disciples put their faith in him” (2:11). At Bethesda, he heals “an invalid” (5:5) without asking or waiting for his faith—not even waiting for the man to recognise who he (Jesus) is (5:13)—and only confronts him with the need to stop sinning *later* in 5:14. In Bethany, Martha argues about the hopelessness of the situation till she and Jesus get to Lazarus’ grave (11:39), and Jesus’ challenge to her on faith (11:40) does not need to drag on till she believes—so he goes ahead and raises Lazarus from the dead (11:41-44). A climactic Johannine statement on the transition from miracle to faith is captured in 20:31, where one reads that the “miraculous signs” are recorded “that you may believe”.

The reverse seems to be the case in the Synoptic tradition: in Matthew 8:10, 13 and Luke 7:9, Jesus performs miracles in response to faith, particularly commending the faith of foreigners. In Matthew 9:28, he interrogates two blind men, confirms their faith, and heals them *according to their faith*. In Mark 9:23-24, he challenges an unstable father to believe in his son’s deliverance, and upon his confession, heals the boy. In Mark 11:23, he teaches that faith can uproot a mountain. In Luke 1:45, there will be fulfilment of the promise to those who believe. Indeed, across the Synoptic tradition, one reads repeatedly, “... your faith has healed you” (Matt. 9:22; Mk. 5:34; 10:52; Lk. 8:48; 18:42); and in some places, Jesus rebukes particularly his disciples for having “little faith” (or, for doubting) (Matt. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20). Similarly in Acts 14:9, a miracle is premised on the beneficiary’s being noticed by the apostle to have “faith to be healed”.

Given the role assigned to faith in the Gospels, it appears that the miracle stories themselves function as an invitation for the reader to place faith in Jesus—whether *for* or *in response to* his miracles. Indeed, “[t]hese signs contained the quintessence of the Gospel itself, *promoting faith*, and that faith is a personal response to an act of witness” (Scott, 2006:v, emphasis mine).

2.3.6 Miracle stories and early Christian apologetics

Geisler (2008:1) opines that Jesus was an apologist, insofar as apologetics is broadly defined as “providing evidence and arguments for the truth of the Christian Faith”. Unarguably, the Jesus portrayed by the Gospels employed a variety of evidence to present his message, and of the nine apologetic approaches that Geisler credits him with, his miracles and his resurrection are relevant to the argument here. Miracles were to Jesus’ monotheistic Jewish audience “divine confirmation of truth claims” (cf. Jn. 3:2; also see Matt. 12:39; Exo. 4:1-8; 1 Kgs. 18:24, 31-39), as well as evidence that he was fulfilling the prophecy in Deuteronomy 18:14-20 that God would raise another prophet like Moses for Israel (Geisler, 2008:2).

Particularly Lucan miracles, while enhancing attention on the kerygma²⁹ and without necessarily negating their historicity³⁰, constitute an apologetic material in the sense that they function as “a sign of God’s eschatological Spirit throughout Acts”. Apparently keeping faith with the NT miracle-apologetic material, many patristic writings on Christ’s miracles—including those of Origen, Justin, Anselm, Tertullian and Augustine—bordered on apologetic proof of the divinity of Christ as well as a definition of miracles in terms of their “sign value” (Wadholm, 2005:29-30, 32-33, 37-38).

The proposal that the Jesus of the Gospels used miracles for apologetic purposes finds support in a number of NT passages. Against the backdrop of the questioning of his

29 Acts 2:5-41, 43; 3:11-4:4; 5:10-11, 12-16; 6:3, 5, 8-10; 8:6-7, 13, 39-40; 9:34-35, 40-42; 13:9-12; 14:3, 9; 15:12; 16:25-34; 19:11-20; 28:5-6, 8-10; cf., 8:18; 9:1-9; 10:3, 44-48; 12:23-24; 16:18; 20:10-12.

30 Wadholm (2005:34-35) however observes that in the 19th century, tension arose as to the historicity of the Acts miracles, following the “recognition” by the Tübingen School of the apologetic agenda embedded in Lucan historiography and “signs and wonders” narratives. He says that within this tension, some claimed that Acts was a mere apologetic material without historicity (e.g., W. W. Gasque), while others averred that notwithstanding the seemingly apologetic overtones, Acts was accurate (e.g., William Ramsay and Mathias Schneckenburger). 20th century apologists that make his list include James Dunn, Robertson McQuilkin, and Leo O’Reilly

divinity, he invites the doubters to “*believe the works*, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father” (Jn. 10:38, emphasis mine), as well as to “at least *believe on the evidence of the works themselves*” (Jn. 14:11, emphasis mine; cf. 5:17, 20, 36; 10:25, 32, 37; 15:24). Even his appeal to divinity and the kingdom of God in the Beelzebub controversy (Matt. 12:28; Lk. 7:22) can rightly be regarded to have served apologetic purposes. Similarly, the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful gate and the reaction of the people turn out to be an apologetic-evangelistic opportunity (Ac. 3:1-26). Peter not only explains how it is not them but Jesus that has healed the man (vv. 12, 16), but also validates Jesus by proclaiming that “[the] God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, *glorified his Servant Jesus*” (v. 13, emphasis mine). Then, he invites them to repent and put their faith in *this Jesus Christ* whom “the Lord” would send (vv. 19-20) at “the times of restoration of all things” (v. 21). In effect, both Jesus and his apostles variously took advantage of miraculous events to defend the truth of the gospel.

But more than the miracles that Jesus performed, his resurrection was also an apologetic tool at the hands of Jesus and his apostles. He foreshadowed this in John 11:25-26 where he linked his claim of being “the resurrection and the life” to eternal life for those who believed in him. Then came the moment of confirmation, his actual resurrection, which distinguished him from other “saviours” who made similar claims but could not confirm them in the actual sense. His resurrection, “the crowning miracle of His ministry”, was also significant in that it fulfilled the prophecy of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53:8-10, where it was predicted that he would be “cut off from the land of the living” (signifying his death), but also that he would “see his offspring and prolong his days” (signifying his coming back to life). Adding Psalm 16:10, where it is predicted that the “Holy One” will neither remain in Sheol nor see “decay”, Jesus’ resurrection constitutes a hardline apologetic tool for Christianity. It is “the most important miracle” and “remains to this day the best apologetic for the truth of Christianity” (Geisler, 2008:5-6).

Not only so; Markos (2013:1) observes that even when some apologists are not sure of what to say about other miracles, they exercise no reservations in presenting Christ’s resurrection in defense of Christianity. In a similar vein, Nash (2018:1) explains that both Christ’s incarnation and his bodily resurrection are the bases of the truth of the Christian

faith. According to him, even though these and the question of the possibility of miracles in general invite the attack of enemies, for the Christian theist, *miracles are a part of the belief system*, based on belief in a personal God who created the world *ex-nihilo* and established the same natural laws that naturalists often cite to deny the possibility of miracles. On his part, Cowman (2019:1) affirms that contemporary Christian-apologetic defense of the possibility of miracles in general and the historicity of the resurrection of Christ in particular, simply “provides grounds to believe that Christianity is true ... because it is authenticated by miraculous signs and wonders that only God can do”.

Particularly regarding the apologetic utility of Christ’s resurrection, one cannot but notice how in 1 Corinthians 15:12ff. Paul vehemently argues for the centrality of Christ’s resurrection to the Christian faith and the hope of the believer’s ultimate resurrection:

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified that he raised Christ from the dead.... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.... If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

(1 Cor. 15:14-15, 17, 19)

So, from the pages of the Scripture to the volumes of scholarly works churned out over time, it is clear that the NT miracles are deliberately used as apologetic tools.

2.3.7 Miracles, human distress, and divine compassion

In the context of NT miracles, “compassion” in English Bible versions is translated from the Greek word σπλάγχνον³¹ (plural: σπλάγχνα). Idiomatically, σπλαγχνίζομαι and all its other conjugal forms refer to that bowel-like stirring inside of a person whereby they *feel* or *are moved with* sympathy for another (or others) facing misfortune or distress, and therefore (want to) do something to bring relief. The Gospels variously record that Jesus takes pity on suffering individuals/families/communities and goes on to heal them. GMatthew consistently links healing of crowds to Jesus’ compassion for them (9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34). GMark uses the same word three times in miracle stories (Mk. 1:41;

³¹ Literally, σπλάγχνον refers to any of the internal organs of the human body such as the heart, lungs, liver, etc. Figuratively, it refers to “the emotions”, “affections”, and “seat of the feelings” (Strong, 2021). σπλάγχνα were regarded in poetry by the ancient Greeks as the repository of such “violent passions” as anger and love, while for the Hebrews, its equivalent, רַחֲמִים, housed “tenderer affections” such as kindness, benevolence, compassion, etc. (Thayer, 2011).

8:2; 9:22), while GLuke uses it once for a miracle (7:13) and GJohn uses it once (11:33) and implies it twice (5:6; 11:35).

These NT evidence indicate the close relationship that exists between divine compassion and human distress, and affords the understanding that miracles are compassionate responses of God to human existential needs. The people who witness Jesus' miraculous restoration of life at Nain exclaim, "[a] great prophet has appeared *among us*" (Lk. 7:16, emphasis mine). Indeed, Jesus' works fulfil the expectations of an immanent God (Matt. 1:23; Psa. 46:1) who resolves life's distresses among his people (Matt. 12:17-21). Wadholm (2005:143) correctly captures this idea when he describes miracles as "works of salvation" that "reveal the true value of [his] ministry", here following Lucan comprehensive frame of thought that places spiritual, social and physical rescues equally under "salvation"³². Grundmann (2014:5-6) thinks in much the same way. According to him:

The simple fact that Jesus healed clearly indicates that to him *salvation had unquestionable bodily dimension*. In his ministry, *healing became a legitimate corporeal aspect of salvation*, albeit he never equated healing with salvation (see Mark 2:1-12). ... [I]n Jesus' ministry, *salvation was always accompanied by healing*. No one who was sick or diseased was sent away without being restored to health fully. Jesus, thereby showed that healing is characteristic of the reign of God (see Rev. 21:4; 22:2).

(Grundmann, 2014:6, emphases mine)

It must be conceded that some, if not all, of the absolutes in Grundmann's statement above ("unquestionable bodily dimension", "a legitimate corporeal aspect of salvation", and "salvation was always accompanied by healing") can be challenged, at least tentatively. He needs to explain whether by "salvation" he means the OT/Lucan wide range of rescues or the narrower NT concept of soul salvation. However, the point adequately made here is that the earthly ministry of Jesus intentionally met the existential needs of his various audiences. This fits with the character of Israel's Yahweh (now incarnated in Jesus, *Jn. 1:1, 14*), who obligates himself to his covenant people as "the Lord, who heals you" (Exo. 15:26), whom Jewish prophets portray as being

³² According to Anderson (2002:5), particularly in Pentecostalism "salvation" or sometimes "full salvation" is a holistic term that usually refers to "a sense of well-being evidenced in freedom from sickness, poverty and misfortune as well as in deliverance from sin and evil".

compassionate, merciful, and kind (Psa. 103:8; 111:4; Jl. 2:13), and of whose image Jesus the healer is “the exact representation” (Heb. 1:3; cf. Matt. 9:36; Ac. 10:38). With their distress, therefore, the suffering people in the Gospels represent a distressed humanity in need of divine compassion and rescue; and with miracles (even with the repeated claim of him healing *all*; Matt. 4:24; 8:16; 12:15; Lk. 4:40; 6:17-19), the Jesus of the Gospels presents himself as *the compassionate Immanuel* who rescues the distressed.

2.3.8 Miracle stories and theological agenda of the Evangelists

Watson (2012:1-2) significantly rejects two early 20th-century understandings of miracles, namely, as mere “tales” (Martin Dibelius) and as “narratives intended to demonstrate Jesus’ divine power and authority” (Rudolf Bultmann); and rather upholds a more recent description of miracle narratives being presented “synchronically as structured forms, diachronically as reproduced narratives, and from a functional point of view as symbolic actions” (Gerd Theissen). If nothing else, Watson’s affirmation of Theissen’s view here rightly indicates that those who used the miracle stories had specific reasons for doing so. Watson in fact postulates that the Gospel writers actually modified the NT miracle accounts to enhance their theological agendas, claiming impetus from redaction-critical comparison of the NT miracle texts to extant Mediterranean forms, sources, traditions, etc. (2012:2). The theological goals of the Evangelists are in focus in this cursory review, and attention will be paid to the influence of those theological goals on the narrative plots and contexts of the Gospel miracle stories.

Regarding the theological significance of the miracle narratives’ plots, a potent example is the motif of Jesus conveying healing through touch. In Matthew 8:1-4, Jesus’ touching of a leprous man is noted (v. 3), while three similar plots feature successively in Matthew 9:18-31, beginning with the woman with the issue of blood touching him (v. 20), then his touching and raising the dead daughter of the synagogue ruler (v. 25), and finally his touching the two blind men (vv. 9:27, 29-30). Commenting on this third case, Cadenhead (2008:17) opines that Matthew sometimes displays “new aspects” to Jesus’ healing miracles, and then states that the touch brings “a more personal connection between Jesus and the person asking for healing”. Although Cadenhead does not explain further the intention with the proposed “personal connection”, it may well be that such plots

accentuate the immanence of the God Incarnate and overturns the ostracism that such seekers/victims were prone—or, in fact, condemned—to facing in their societies.

The “new aspects” in Matthean rendering of miracle stories can also be observed in the other stories, all of which are told in a Law-miracle dialectical context. Although Matthew’s Jesus affirms the Law in his Sermon on the Mount discourse (cf. Matt. 5:17-19), he seems in the succeeding narrative bloc (8-9) to ignore aspects of that Law. This is particularly so with the purity law surrounding leprosy, in which case the leprous man does not only come close to Jesus (8:2), but he (Jesus) also “sympathetically” stretches out his hand and touches him (8:3). Thereafter, he does not undergo any rite of purification for himself, although he instructs the restored man to observe the prescribed purification rite in the Law (v. 4; cf. Lev. 13–14; Num. 5:2). Similarly, the haemorrhaging woman in 9:20-22 touches Jesus and *gets away with it*, as against the Jewish regulation in Leviticus 25–30; and then he consciously takes the dead girl by the hand (*contra*. Num. 5:2; 19:11-13) (Viljoen, 2014:1).

These three events traditionally call for separate purification rites in the Jewish religious milieu, but why does Jesus not observe any³³? Over against the concerns of the Jewish religious leaders for ritual purity, Viljoen (2014:4) aptly suggests that the Matthean agenda was “to inform his readers of an alternative interpretation and application of purity regulations, as demonstrated by Jesus” and already encapsulated in 5:8. What is now required most is a pure heart. Culpepper (2016:5) affirms this claim when he asserts that besides displaying Jesus’ power “in word and deed”, the leprosy healing narrative also illustrates that for Jesus’ followers (cf. Matt. 5:8; Psa. 24:3-4), purity has left the outer body as it were and now focuses on the heart.

Above, Viljoen and Culpepper deal with the macro-narrative context of these miraculous events (Matt. 5-9). However, a closer look at particular pericopes makes it easier to see the points of the argument. The restoration of the leprous man *without purification rites on*

33 Particularly for the leprosy case, Culpepper (2016:5) agrees that although a possible contact with the body fluid of the leper might not have caused transmission of the disease, it certainly would render the second party unclean—which for all intent might have made Jesus undergo the cleansing rite. He goes further to propose that Jesus’ extreme hospitable attitude toward these socially ostracised persons (by touching them) did not have so much significance of him not showing fear of pollution as it had significance of him accepting them back into the community.

the part of Jesus (8:1-4) follows directly after the claim of the superior teaching authority of Jesus over that of the scribes (7:29), and can well be understood to illustrate Jesus' superior authority over the Law. Similarly, the healing of the haemorrhaging woman and the restoration to life of the dead girl (9:18-26) follow closely after another authority-controversy episode where Jesus is in fact accused of blasphemy (9:1-8) and his dinner with "tax collectors and sinners" (9:9-13). While the religious sects in turns allege blasphemy and doubt his consecration, he by physically touching the victims proves his superior authority, akin to his earlier statement, "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins ..." (v. 6). He also demonstrates the acceptance of so-called good-for-nothings (speaking to the metaphor of the sick in need of a doctor, the lesson on mercy, and his goal of reaching out to sinners [vv. 12-13]).

Another miracle story that bespeaks a theological agenda is recorded in Matthew 12:9-14, where the Evangelist uses the story of the healing of the man with "a shriveled hand" *rhetorically* to bring home the message that "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (v. 12), against the antagonistic posture of the Pharisees introduced back in the incident of Jesus' disciples plucking corn to eat for hunger on a Sabbath (12:1-2) (Cadenhead, 2008:17). In the view of this researcher, it does look like Matthew in this instance wanted to underscore the superiority of mercy (v. 7) over the Pharisees' detailed concern for the Law; and so, after illustrating with the story of David in the OT (vv. 3-4), he also went ahead to use the miracle story in the next pericope (12:9-14). Indeed, many NT miracle stories are told in tension with the law of the Sabbath³⁴; and often end by vocalising, explaining, or alluding to the lesson of mercy over Law and/or superiority of "the Son of Man" over the Sabbath: "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath". This kind of conclusion suggests a theological agenda.

Mark, Luke and John also demonstrate theological underpinnings to their miracle stories. Examples include Mark 11:12-14, 20-25, where Mark goes from the story of the fig tree that withered after Jesus cursed it, to a theological lesson on the power of faith when directly and authoritatively addressing issues as well as when praying to God (vv. 20-25).

³⁴ cf. Matt. 12:1-8//Mk. 3:1-6//Lk. 6:6-11; Mk. 1:21-28, 29-31; Lk. 13:11-17; 14:1-6; Jn. 5:1-18 (note 5:9b, 16 and 7:21-24); 9:1-12.

In Luke 11:14-28, the Beelzebul controversy sparked among the watchers after Jesus exorcised a demon from a man, afforded Jesus the opportunity to reveal that the kingdom of God was *already* in manifestation among them (v. 20) and demanded among other things that they “hear the word of God and obey it” (v. 28). In John 9, John eases from the story of healing of the man born blind (Jn. 9:1-12) and the controversy it sparks among the religious bigots (9:13-34), into a lesson on spiritual blindness (9:39-41). The apparent theological goal of the miracle story is to present Jesus as the One who can cure the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees or any other persons, provided they believe in him. In John 11:17-44, the Evangelist uses the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead to teach that Jesus is “the resurrection and the life” (v. 25) and other accompanying theological lessons (faith, the hope of resurrection, etc.) that come with that truth.

One crucial example that cuts across the four Gospels is the miraculous feeding of 5,000 men by Jesus (Matt. 14:13-21//Mk. 6:30-44//Lk. 9:10-17//Jn. 6:1-15). It is noticeable that the four Evangelists use the same story in fairly different literary contexts. For Matthew and Mark, Jesus’ rejection in his *Jewish hometown*, his bemoaning of that discourteous treatment (13:53-58) and his withdrawal to more receptive communities (with fairly tremendous results) seem to form the major narrative plots around the miracle (although arranged differently). On his part, Luke’s climactic plot is Jesus’ self-disclosure to his disciples as “[t]he Christ of God” (9:18-20). On the whole, it appears the Synoptics seek to deal with the need for the people to believe in and accept Jesus as the Christ (cf. Lk. 9:20), and as a benefit they would witness the beneficial manifestations of his power as in the miracles that he and his disciples perform on “the other side” (Matt. 14:22//Lk. 8:22) or “from village to village” (Mk. 6:6b). A fitting theological conclusion would then be that without believing, no one, not even the Jews, could enjoy the divine benevolence availed to them and the world through Christ.

Characteristically, John sets his feeding story (6:1-15) in a completely different theological context³⁵. For him, the theological lesson (6:22-69) comes forth the following day (6:22), when the same people fall over themselves looking for Jesus for the sake of “food that

35 However, it somewhat literarily agrees with Matthew and Mark in respect of the miracle of Jesus walking on water, Jn. 6:16-21//Matt. 14:22-33//Mk. 6:45-52.

spoils" (6:27a). Jesus now introduces himself to them as "the bread of life" (6:35, 48), and demands of them to work for "food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give" (6:27b). Controversy arises from 6:41 and culminates in his rejection and discipleship withdrawal on the one hand (6:41-59, 60-66) and discipleship commitment on the other (6:67-68), based on the conviction (or otherwise) that he is "the Holy One of God" (6:69; cf. Lk. 9:20)³⁶. Added to the subject matter of "the bread of life", disciple issue seems to be John's preoccupation with the story.

To conclude, two issues call for attention: One, the narrative location of Gospel miracle stories (like other stories) is different from the actual historical moment when those miracles occurred. Put differently, the narrative contexts of the Gospel miracle stories do not equate their historical contexts. This is explained by the liberty with which the Evangelists employ those stories in service to their theological objectives. However, the literary-contextual differentials have nothing to do, and do not call to question, the historical validity of the miracle reports. Two, the above analyses leave one without a doubt that the four Gospels variously record miracle stories in pursuance of specific and identifiable theological agendas. (If any doubt remained regarding this point, the account of the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 dispels it entirely.) An acceptable interpretation of these and other miracle stories in the NT will consequently require proper accounting for their theological perspectives.

2.3.9 Summary

The sheer volume occupied by the miracle motif in the Gospels and Acts alone indicates their pride of place in the NT, and ignoring the subgenre would be counterproductive. NT miracle motif unambiguously identifies Jesus as the expected Messiah; affirms the arrival and reality of the *already* dimension, as well as foreshadows the *not-yet* dimension, of the eschatological kingdom of God; and demonstrates that God grants miracles *because* people believe (GMatthew, GMark, GLuke and Acts), as well as *to* make people believe (GJohn). It provides evidence and material for Christian apologetics; gives evidence of God's concern for humanity's existential sufferings, his compassion toward them, and his

³⁶ It should be noticed that in GJohn, *unlike GMatthew and GMark*, the idea of controversy and rejection comes toward the end of the story, and that GJohn introduces the idea of discipleship commitment to strike a balance between Jesus' rejection on the one hand and the commitment of his disciples to him on the other.

commitment to rescuing them; and functions as a tool for theological formulations and claims.

2.4 Summary and conclusion

This chapter aimed to explore the meaning and role of “miracle” in the NT. To explore its meaning, three avenues were pursued: philosophical, etymological/socio-historical, and biblical-literary. However, the study demonstrated that while some aspects of philosophical reflection are helpful (e.g., the notion of causation, intentionality and religious significance), the Humean notion of the contravention of the laws of nature is neither acceptable nor helpful. Similarly, the etymological/socio-historical route is not helpful; both the Latin *miraculum* and the Greek *θαῦμα* rather focus on the reaction of beneficiaries/witnesses (namely, wonder, amazement, and the like) than on the substance of the event whose miraculous nature they aim to describe. The biblical-literary approach ultimately gives the needed lead. It isolates four Greek terms that the NT authors variously used to describe what is called a “miracle”. These are σημεῖα (“signs”), τέρατα (“wonders”), δυνάμεις (“mighty deeds”, “power”, or “inherent ability”), and ἔργα (“works”). These terms all have respective emphases that sum up to give a complete picture of what is understood as a “miracle” in the NT. A working definition was offered that not only accounts for this holistic picture but also accentuates the criteria of causation, intentionality and religious significance of a miracle.

For the role of miracles in the NT, it was argued that the relatively high volume of the subgenre, its connections to the subject matter of faith, compassion and the kingdom of God, its messianic portrayal of Jesus, and its apologetic and theological functions, all demonstrate that miracle stories are intentional and significant inclusions in the NT canon. It is concluded here that a proper understanding of NT “miracle” is enhanced by a critical reflection on related NT terminology as well as the respective ways that the Evangelists employ the stories.

CHAPTER THREE

OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION OF NEW TESTAMENT MIRACLE STORIES WITHIN REFORMED AND PENTECOSTAL TRADITIONS

3.1 Scope

This chapter aims to examine how the NT miracle stories, as a literary sub-genre, have been interpreted throughout the historical development of the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions up to the present. This examination will help establish a context for the Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical understandings of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. Indeed, NT miraculous phenomena began to be interpreted right from within the NT canon, with evidence in the Gospels and Acts in particular (e.g., Matt. 12:24//Mk. 3:22//Lk. 11:15), and have in the course of church history attracted serious attention and heavy debates with diverse but rich submissions informed by theology, science, philosophy, and other fields of intellectual engagement. However, the scope of this study only allows for a consideration of the conceptions of “miracle” within the Reformed and Pentecostal theological traditions. These are discussed below.

3.2 Reformed perspectives

3.2.1 Overview

The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century brought various forms of transformation to church life, theology, and even social systems. Despite their good intentions, however, the Reformers conceded much of the theological ground concerning miracles that they had inherited from earlier thinkers. Understandably, early Protestant formulations on the subject of miracle were reactionary, being efforts to tame the perceived excesses of the various Medieval-Era Catholic claims of apparitions, saintly miracles, Eucharistic miracles, and miracles related to relics and holy sites (Weddle, 2010:163; Medievalists.net, 2023:1). Still, while it was necessary for the Reformers to raise some objections, such formulations that condemned all contemporary miracles and tended toward cessationism were a case of throwing away the proverbial baby with the bath water. The Protestant Reformers could have formulated biblical criteria to distinguish authentic miracle claims from the cultic ones promulgated by Roman Catholicism.

Unfortunately, the principal Reformers—Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and others—held varying understandings of miracles, both biblical and contemporary, and thus failed to provide the Reformation with a clear, unified direction on the matter. The variations have persisted since and can still be traced at present, for instance, in the works of two major Reformed theologians, Vern Poythress (who gives miracles a Christological and soteriological interpretation) and Wayne Grudem (with a largely providence-oriented and dispensationalist understanding). What follows briefly discusses the contributions of Luther, Calvin and Zwingli (representative of the Reformation), as well as those of Poythress and Grudem (representative of current Reformed scholars).

3.2.2 Martin Luther (1483–1546)

The founder of the German Reformation, Martin Luther, exhibited significant inconsistency in his understanding of miracles (Sullivan, 2017:1; Resane, 2017:2). He on the one hand affirmed miraculous exploits by faith and on the other tended toward cessationism (Sullivan, 2017:1), the closest to a cessationist position being his statement that “the days of miracles [were] past” (*LW*, 1955:79; Colle, 2011:241). In the end he became “a de-emphasiser” (Sullivan, 2017:1) and placed far too little significance on the miracles of Jesus (*LW*, 1537-1538:372). As I. D. K. Siggins reportedly explains, miracles were for Luther,

the least of Christian works, for the devil was defeated in weakness, not magnificent miracles; the earthly effect of Christ’s miracles cannot compare with the heavenly effect of faith in him; and it is one of St. John’s superiorities over the Synoptics that he stresses faith where they stress miracles.

(Resane, 2017:2)

Unless this is an exaggeration or misrepresentation, it indicates that Luther’s approach to NT miracles was based on criteria other than their inherent merit. For instance, his comparison of miraculous healings and resurrections to Christ’s defeat of the devil (on the cross) or the soteriological implications of his redemptive work (*LW*, 1537–1538:372) is at best a comparison of hardly-compatible phenomena. Raising the dead, making the blind to see and such other miracles do not purport to have more than corporeal significance in the immediate sense; it is in fact only when looking at the theological implications of such events that their significance can be extrapolated to the spiritual order. On the other hand, the cross event was purely spiritual in nature and its redemptive

significance holistic and certainly more far reaching than pockets of corporeal miracles. But it is all too obvious that Luther's disposition toward biblical miracles was cautious, if not conservative, and has in fact influenced the Lutheran tradition till date. *A Lutheran Layman* (2016:1) gives further evidence when it says that Luther's exposition of Micah 1:15 pointed in the direction of all other NT miracles calling attention to the consummation of redemption that was about to be proclaimed through the cross event.

In terms of Christology and soteriology, and unlike other Reformers, Luther believed that Christ's miracles did not serve the end of revealing his divinity, but were "divine works, wrought by the power of God himself" and "the works of the Word of the Father that became incarnate in Jesus" (*LW*, 1537:256, 404; Resane, 2017:3), while their true significance was "the spiritual work of God in the soul" (Colle, 2011:241). Luther also questioned the uniqueness of miracles and rather believed that they had value "alongside the other *soteriological* works of Christ". To that extent, "miraculous evidence" (in the faith community) does not suffice, but must be accompanied by a change of heart. Indeed, miracles were for Luther *sichtbare Predigt* (a "visible sermon") (*LW*, 1537:365); that is, they were "like visible, tangible expressions of Christ's teaching" (Resane, 2017:2).

Despite this attitudinal relativity, Luther on occasions acted in gifted faith (cf. 1 Cor. 12:9) and saw some miraculous results. These were the miraculous healing and deliverance from the dead of his friends and companions, Frederick Myconius (after Luther sent a "faith" letter to him) and Philip Melanchthon (who immediately revived after Luther prayed fervently for him on the basis of the promises he found in the Scripture). At the trial at Worms, with the demand to recant his writings which the established church branded as heretical, he is said to have come out of the place of prayer with what has been dubbed "faith to face a thousand Goliaths" and with it stood his ground against the demand of the tribunal (Hyatt, 2017:1).

It is surprising that, especially with the testimonies of contemporary miracles just noted with Luther, he had been so indisposed to a favourable interpretation of NT miracles. Not only are his relativising and spiritualising of NT miraculous phenomena worrisome, but also that these led to a complete ignoring of the existential significance of the miracles as reported by the Evangelists. If this attitude implies that Luther showed little concern for

the relief of the beneficiaries of NT miracles, one must question the extent to which he believed in God as “the God of all flesh” (Jer. 32:27). He might not have come out clearly to propose cessationism, but his de-emphasis of NT miracles has contributed in a significant way to the post-Reformation low view that the subgenre has received.

3.2.3 John Calvin (1509–1564)

French Reformer, John Calvin’s attitude toward contemporary miracles might well have been influenced by his humanist past, with his teacher, Erasmus, being remembered for “a healthy disregard for ecclesiastical superstitions”, “satires of monastic trickery”, and giving credence to only biblical miracles (Jensen, 1979:135). Calvin’s perspective covered both OT and NT miracles, and was that miracles were “divinely ordained ‘seals’ of the gospel and ‘true’ doctrine” (Yoder, 2016:55), or, to use Zachman’s (2007:154-157) words, “signs confirming the truth of the Word of God”. For Calvin, therefore, miracles enhanced the knowledge of God through the testimonies of those who bore the divine message, as well as validated the messengers themselves (both OT and NT) (Yoder, 2016:55).

In Moses’ case, God used miracles as “sanctions of the law ... to proclaim aloud that he was an undoubted prophet” (Calvin *ICR* 1.8.5; cf. *ibid.* 4.12.20). For Christ, miracles were “[an exertion of] his own inherent might ... performed by his own energy, and therefore [an] ample testimony to his divinity” (Calvin *ICR* 1.13.13) (*contra*. Luther). As such, the purpose of miracles was fulfilled in his life and resurrection, while apostolic miracles were a temporary gift that confirmed the role of the apostles to establish the church and affirm the teachings of Christ (Calvin *ICR* 4.19.19). Without calling it exactly so, this conception of Calvin laid the seedbed for cessationism.

Theologically, Calvin interpreted biblical miracles spiritually, and in fact overextended this perspective to promote key Protestant doctrines like *sola Scriptura* and *sola fide*. Miracles were “divine declarations of inner healing from spiritual evils, sin, and decay, available to the individual through faith” (Yoder, 2016:56). In this way, Calvin gave a soteriological interpretation to miracles and prioritised their spiritual merits over their corporeal value. But unlike Luther’s relativity, Calvin placed the function of miracles in mutual parity with that of the Word. He said on the basis of Acts 14:3:

Let us therefore learn reverently to consider the works of God, that our wonder at them may serve as an entrance for doctrine. There is therefore an inseparable and mutual relationship between miracles and doctrine. The miracle prepares for or confirms faith in the doctrine, even as the doctrine reveals to us the meaning and purpose of the miracle.

(Zachman, 2007:299)

The statement above should ordinarily be taken to represent an affirmation of the currency of miracles wherever the Christian doctrine is taught. However, it turns out to be a contradiction of some sort because Calvin shortly backtracks in a cessationist manner by averring that evangelicals need not bother about contemporary miracles to confirm their preaching/teaching, given that their job is but “to recover the Gospel that has already been confirmed by the miracles of Christ and the apostles”. Indeed, for him, miracles necessarily terminated once the truth of the Gospel was established (Zachman, 2007:300).

Calvin based this view of the temporariness of miracles on two factors: first, to “render the new preaching of the gospel forever wonderful”, and second, “owing, in some measure, to the ingratitude of men” (Calvin *ICR*, 4.19.18-19). The first factor is positive, and here further speaks to Calvin’s solo commitment to the Word, and hence his effort to promote its preaching, even if at the expense of miracles or anything else. The second factor is negative and a moral charge against humanity in general and the believing community in particular—even though it is not necessarily a sustainable charge. According to Calvin, their desire for miracles, perhaps after all that God has done through Christ’s redemptive work, is a sign of ingratitude and, by extension, greed. This further justifies his assertion that any miracles claimed by the Roman Catholics of his day were “not the work of God but rather the deceitful tricks of Satan, set forth to deceive the simple and unlearned” (Zachman, 2007:298). With this, he undoubtedly pushed the argument further toward the cessationism that has prevailed in Reformed Protestantism since his time, just as his over-emphasis on the spiritual significance of miracles also consistently overshadowed whatever minimal existential value he still accorded them (Yoder, 2016:56).

Other legs to Calvin's spiritualisation of miracles were seen in his conclusion that OT miracles were "a form of the sacraments"³⁷ that God used to confirm the certitude of his promises and the Law mediated³⁸ by Moses (Zachman, 2007:154-155). A similar confirmation principle applies in Calvin's dealing with the NT miracles, except that he called them "visual confirmation", and here focused on the confirmation of the truth of the gospel that Jesus and his disciples taught (2007:298). Still, he warned against overdependence on miracles as a means to guarantee God's promise (like Ahaz and Hezekiah did), and rather prescribed dependence on "those natural signs God has given for the benefit of the whole church" (2007:155).

However, while this sounds like good economy of utility, it is unfortunately a bias possibly born out of Calvin's humanist background and strong predisposition to providential (natural) revelation over against special revelation. It must be noted here that Calvin was not so much interested in "discrete divine interventions" (miracles) as he was in "creation's constant communication of God's goodness" (providence) (Lavery, 2022:1). This is in fact very clear in *The Institutes*, where Calvin swiftly switches from a relatively brief treatment of angels and demons to an elaborate treatment of "God's constant revelation in creation" (cf. Calvin, ICR, 1.14.20).

Besides this noted bias, Calvin also exhibited minimalism in his view that, although miracles still happened in his day, they were not exactly as in the days of the apostles (Yoder, 2016:55-56). This adds to his already established cessationist presuppositions. Set against Calvin's contention with perceived Catholic miracle-related infractions, it is just fitting that Resane (2017:2) describes Calvin's perspective on miracles as "forthrightly polemical".

37 Set in OT context, "sacraments" as used here are "generally all those signs which God has ever signaled to men to render them more certain and confident of the truth of his promises". These at times came as natural events, and at other times as miracles. Miraculous examples, for Calvin, include the dew on the fleece by which Gideon confirmed the promise of victory (Judg. 6:37-38) and the backward movement of the sun dial that confirmed the promise of extended life for Hezekiah (Isa. 38:7).

38 Such miracles as Moses' forty-day-and-forty-night experience on the mountain; the lightening, thunder, and trumpet sound on the mountain; his radiant face; and the death of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram are for Calvin examples of sacraments that authenticated the Law (Zachman, 2007:155).

3.2.4 Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531)

Huldrych Zwingli is remembered as the “third man of the Reformation” (after Luther and Calvin). Ever before hearing of Luther, he was influenced by his teacher at Basel, Thomas Wyttenbach, from whom he learnt that “the death of Christ is the sole price of the remission of sins” (Mark, 2022:1; Dierks, 1943:25). This lesson was to stay with and influence his Christian ministry ever after. Zwingli was the protagonist of the Swiss version of the 16th-century Protestant Reformation.

In the context of miracle discourse, he is remembered for his rejection of the Catholic Mass and the Eucharist as a miracle of transubstantiation (*contra*. Luther) (Mark, 2022:1). According to the 18th item of his Sixty-seven Articles, Zwingli states: “That Christ, having sacrificed himself once, is to eternity a certain and valid sacrifice for the sins of all faithful, from which it follows that the mass is not a sacrifice, but is a remembrance of the sacrifice and assurance of the salvation which Christ has given us” (Christian History Institute, 2025:1). For him, rather, the Eucharist is together with the sacrament of baptism “[a gesture] of membership in the Christian faith but has no other attributes” (Mark, 2022:1). It is “a memorial, not a miracle”. Therefore, it should be understood as “a ‘practice’ or ‘ceremony’ of remembrance and thanksgiving for the sacrifice that Christ had performed once, and only once, some 1500 years earlier” (Leaman, 2025:1).

This position was heavily influenced by Zwingli’s earlier training in philology, according to which he sought the meaning of the Latin word, *sacramentum*, and found it to have been originally used for a *pledge*. On this basis, the Eucharist could for him never have miraculously become the body and blood of Christ and hardly could it have produced a miracle. It was rather “proof that we trust in the death of Christ, glad and thankful to be in the company which gives thanks to the Lord for the blessing of redemption which He freely gave us by dying for us” (Leaman, 2025:1).

According to Dierks (1943:25), Zwingli distinguished between *visible* and *invisible* miracles. The visible miracles constitute “every miracle of Christ ... perceived and transmitted by someone”, while the invisible miracle is “faith, which a person cannot give to himself, ... an *afflatus* of the Father ... felt in the soul, in the heart, and in the virtues of the mind”. However, the distinction here was aimed to emphasise the impossibility of

Eucharistic miracles, because according to Zwingli, nothing miraculous occurred in the Lord's Supper. "What God instills and inspires in our mind is not numbered among the miracles, but what happens in crass things outside of the (natural) order, that we dignify with the name miracle." Zwingli appears to have held a dualist concept of the miraculous, as suggested by his statement: "what happens ... outside of the (natural) order". Zwingli's lack of passion—one might even say his disdain—for the miraculous is also evident in the phrase, "but what happens in crass things ... that we dignify with the name miracle".

Zwingli's presumed cessationist position may be deduced from Harvey's (2017:1) assertion that he saw NT miraculous events as "'one off' miracles, never to be repeated". Otherwise, it may be that Harvey, a Catholic priest, has overstated this claim, understandably in his effort to posit Orthodox high view of the spiritual-moral effect of Christ's incarnation on creation against Zwingli's own absolutist and fundamentalist distrust of a spiritual value in anything material (cf. Jn. 6:63). According to Harvey, Christ's taking of matter upon himself (through his incarnation) purified the whole of matter (i.e., creation) and effectively empowered it *to communicate grace*. While this is a Catholic argument in favour of all and any imaginable Eucharistic miracle claims, Zwingli's interpretation of John 6:63, "the flesh profits nothing", confronts such phenomena as not just impossible but also undesirable.

Harvey's argument above extends to NT miracle claims from people's *physical contact* with Jesus (Matt. 9:29; Mk. 6:56; Lk. 8:43-48), the Apostles or their shadow (Ac. 3:7; 5:12-16), as well as mediated objects (Ac. 19:12). These are, according to him, a demonstration of the vitality of matter and a validation of such and similar physical contacts as current means of effecting miracles. Of course, while this is a logical argument in favour of Catholic sacralising and usage of saintly relics and holy sites for the performance of miracles in the Middle Ages (Weddle, 2010:163; Voice of Healing, 2018:1; Medievalists.net, 2023:1), Zwingli exhibited zero tolerance for all such physical representations—be they sculptured, painted or embroidered—and eventually ordered them to be removed from the places of worship (Harvey, 2017:1). These *points of contact*—so to call them—were for Zwingli as much misplaced faith as seeking miracles from the saints. On moral grounds, Zwingli (1522:65) condemns it in no ambiguous terms:

Concerning the miracles which are done by the saints we have spoken before. Who knows through whom or why God decrees this? We should not attribute this so readily on account of our unbelief to the saints when we hesitate concerning Christ and run to those creatures for help. This all is proof of a weak faith and small hope in Jesus Christ, whom we do not rightly and entirely trust. Why do we flee from Him and seek aid from the saints, especially as we do not recognize certainly from the Scriptures that they are our intercessors?

The rebuke here is typical of the non-mediatory, evangelical commitment of the early Protestants and a confrontation of “the wrong craze for miracles” in Zwingli’s day. More than that, saintly miracle claims were in Zwingli’s consideration a theological aberration and in truth the devil’s work:

Miracles are not a sign of divinity, as Christ himself declares, Matt. vii. 22, but where real miracles do occur through the saints God does them himself, never the saints, as St. Peter speaks in the Acts iii. But there occur many miracles by the aid of the devil, so Matt. xxiv. 24: He also accomplishes miracles, and changes himself into the shape of an angel of light.

(Zwingli, 1522:189)

Zwingli had his first encounter with the NT in 1502 at Basel. Then, early in his pastorate in Zurich in 1518, he devoted himself to teaching on the words and miracles of Jesus. It was in the course of this that he saw a marked difference between the Gospel and the rules of the Catholic faith, and hence decided to preach directly from the texts of Scripture rather than using church lectionary. His earliest attention in this regard was focused on GMatthew and Acts, and his goal with GMatthew was “to present the life and work of Jesus”, while with Acts it was “the picture of the spread of the Gospel and of what the church should be” (Bishop, 2023:1).

It therefore should ordinarily have been surprising that Zwingli believed that miracles were not enough to accredit the divine authority of Jesus, but that he (Jesus) based his authority on Scriptures: “We know also that Christ appealed to Scripture, who yet gave by sign and teaching sufficient proof whether he spoke from God, so that neither a Catabaptist nor any other should dare to demand credence for himself when he speaks without Scripture authority” (Zwingli, 1522:176). However, a plausible explanation of this reductionist Christological perspective may be that, pursuant to the unreserved Protestant push-back against all medieval doctrinal, pastoral and ecclesiastical postulations that did not directly derive authority from Scripture, Zwingli might have thought to minimise the validating role of miracles in Jesus’ earthly ministry and hence to upscale the value of

Scriptures. To that extent, Zwingli audaciously demanded that whoever had reservations for his teaching should do so on the basis of scriptural and not personal authority.

3.2.5 Vern Poythress (b. 1946)

Vern Poythress, an American Calvinist, studied for degrees in theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. and the University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch, South Africa (with an expected intersection of American and African worldviews). He is a Professor of New Testament at Westminster and an ordained teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church of America. Among his other publications, *The miracles of Jesus: How the Savior's mighty acts serve as signs of redemption* (Crossway, Wheaton) is a relevant masterpiece to the present study.

According to Poythress (2015:1), NT miracle stories have twofold significance—Christological and soteriological. He states: “The Gospels record the miracles in order to indicate what happened, but they also have a religious purpose. Through understanding who Jesus is and what he did, *we are invited to place our faith in him*” (2015:1, emphasis mine). That is, the Gospel miracle narratives function in a descriptive sense by recounting factual events; but also in a double theological sense, by shedding light on the person and works of Jesus as God’s Anointed One as well as leading from story to faith and from hearing to believing. This functional duality of NT miracle narratives, as proposed by Poythress, aligns with the nature of narrative in general: “Narratives are valuable not only for the information that can be extracted from them, but also for the effect they have on the readers and the way they achieve these effects” (Viljoen, 2018:1). Similarly, Beers (2015:82) affirms that “all texts have agenda” and therefore rejects “the modernist ideal of ‘neutral’ texts”. This is an implicit way of saying that written matter definitely produces some effects in the reader/user, and therefore an affirmation of the story-to-faith transition of the NT miracle stories afore-proposed.

The effect of NT miracle stories in the context of Poythress’ discourse is eliciting *faith*, just as Paul teaches that “faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ” (Rom. 10:17). The faith in this context can refer to belief for an existential miracle or, occasionally, for salvation, as Poythress suggests. From Luke 5:1-11, one can for instance draw an analogy for this claim by showing how the text

describes the miraculous catch of fish at the word of Jesus, fulfils a Christological revelation of Luke's Jesus to Peter, and highlights Peter's faith both for a solution to the problem at hand and for salvation. After a whole night of unfruitful labour, Peter hears Jesus' "word" and in faith throws the net again simply because Jesus says to do so (v. 5). When the miraculous catch occurs (vv. 6-7), he suddenly realises his spiritual bankruptcy, falls at Jesus' knees and says, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man"', which should be understood as a confession of submission and not of resistance. In sum, both existential and soteriological solutions coincide in this story; but they do not always have to come together to be valid.

The sermon delivered by Bishop Paul Smith of the Lutheran Church of Australia during the 2023 Convention of General Synod held in Melbourne, may have been borne out of a story-to-faith understanding of Matthew 14:13-21 (the story of the miraculous feeding of 5,000 men). An excerpt from the sermon states:

There is certainly something good and helpful for us here; something to tune into; something to guide us as God's people as we step forward in faith seeking God's good and gracious will for his church.... This story will prompt us to anticipate the hand of God working miracles far beyond anything we could ask or think of. Of course, this message is not just for the work of the church for those gathered for the Convention of General Synod, but for all of us in our walk by faith in the name of Jesus

(Lutheran Church of Australia, 2023:1)

So, for the Lutheran Bishop and his followers, the Matthean story provokes faith in God's power to superabundantly supply the needs for the church's ministry. It is abundantly clear that the clergyman believes that the story can inspire faith action among present-day church workers and volunteers.

Based on Acts 2:33, Poythress (2015:1) further asserts that the same Jesus who long ago *lived* on earth but now continues to *live* in heaven having ascended to the right hand of God, continues to act "with power and compassion" *now* like he did while here on earth. That this remark points in the direction of continualism is not difficult to see. Besides, in what can safely be adjudged as implicitly affirming the historicity of the NT miracle claims, Poythress avers that every one of the miracles recorded in the Gospels "happened uniquely at one time and at one place" and "[i]n their detailed configuration" are never

repeatable. On the one hand, the description here subtly affirms the historicity of each of the NT miracle stories and conforms with the general Reformed conviction that NT narratives (including miracle stories) are historically factual reports. On the other hand, should the stories have been lacking in uniqueness, it would have given room to suspect that they are created, rather than reported, narrative content. The description also exhibits apparent descent from, as well as a clear and meaningful expansion of, Zwingli's "'one off' ... never to be repeated" description of NT miracles seen in Harvey (2017:1) above.

For Poythress (2015:1) too, NT miracles mean a lot to the present time, "because they are 'signs' (John 20:30-31)", demonstrating three aspects of truth about Jesus. These are:

- i. The divinity of Jesus. Like John 1:1 textually asserts the deity of Jesus, so also do his miracles as "works of divine power". He is God in the flesh according to John 1:14 and a prophet according to Luke 7:16; but unlike the miracles of Elijah and Elisha in the OT, Jesus' miracles were a demonstration of "innate power". In Poythress' words, "When we understand the miracles of Jesus in the context of who he is, we see that they are works that Jesus did by his own power, not merely works of God done through a human prophet" (*similar to Calvin, contrary to Luther*).
- ii. The humanity of Jesus. Although divine, Jesus is also fully human (Heb. 2:14-18). As human, he did miracles that were similar to those done by the OT prophets.
- iii. The one and only Messiah. The miracles identified Jesus as Israel's Messiah predicted by OT prophets to come through the descent of David (Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-9). This "Servant of the Lord" is said to be filled with the Spirit of the Lord and to set captives free (Isa. 61:1-2). Jesus himself quoted a portion of this prophecy to indicate that he was fulfilling it (Lk. 4:18-21). He also identified his miracles as signs of fulfilment of Isaiah 35:5-6 when John the Baptist sent messengers to find out if he (Jesus) was the expected One (Lk. 7:22) (Poythress, 2015:1).

It should be noticed from this "sign" approach to the Gospel miracles that Poythress has carefully circled back to and reaffirmed his initial claim that miracle stories all at once serve historiographical, Christological and soteriological purposes. The just-explicated threefold truth about Jesus fully addresses Christology by pointing out that the miracle narratives speak to both Jesus' divinity and his humanity. Therefore, the Gospel miracle narratives are in their own right testimonials of the mysterious incarnation of God in the

Son—"the Word was made flesh"—thus revealing divine transcendence and immanence all in one. More than that, the "sign" meaningfulness of miracles for today also brings eschatology into focus, whereby the miracle stories serve as admissible evidence of the manifestation of the "already" eschatological kingdom of God in the days of Jesus on earth (Matt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20). Insofar as there is no contrary evidence till date, the "already" reality still stands and will continue to be here with miracles and other tokens until, and as a foretaste of, the "not yet" consummation.

Elsewhere, Poythress (2016:30) claims that NT miracles are more or less "redemptive analogies" that point to what he calls "the ultimate miracle", that is, Christ's crucifixion and resurrection from the dead (2016:37-39). In his explanation, the healings accomplished by Jesus in the NT speak to numerous physical consequences of the Fall. Poythress asserts that sickness is a kind of precursor to death, which is "the complete destruction of the functions of the body" and the ultimate consequence of the Fall. Therefore, restoration from physical sickness *signifies* "the restoration of full bodily health in a resurrection body", which hope is anchored in the resurrection of Christ. In soteriological terms, healing from sickness is equally "a kind of metaphor for healing from sin" (2016:40).

Thus, unlike Luther for whom miracles were inferior to salvation or Calvin for whom they were symbols at best, Poythress' redemptive approach moves miracles from the margins to the center of God's work, with literal continuity and current relevance. They have Christological, salvific and eschatological values, but so also do they have existential significance as foretastes of the restorative benefits of the ultimate redemption. Going by this, NT-kind of miracles may be sought both as cures for present human maladies and as expressions of a firm hope in the eschatological resurrection of the redeemed who once were helpless victims of the curse of the Fall, into undefiable strength and immortality.

3.2.6 Wayne Grudem (b. 1948)

Wayne Grudem is a Baptist Calvinist and a Research Professor of Theology and Biblical Studies at Phoenix Seminary, Arizona. He studied extensively at Westminster and once served the American Christian ecumenical community as President of the Evangelical Theological Society (1999), among other scholarly engagements. His *Systematic*

Theology has dedicated sections to “the doctrine of miracles”. According to Grudem (2025:1), a miracle is “a less common kind of God’s activity which arouses people’s awe and wonder and bears witness to himself”. As he admits, this definition is “very unusual”. It is also simplistic, relativistic, and statistically-oriented. It is simplistic because it does not address any empirical transformation that happens to the beneficiary/object of that “less common kind of God’s activity” that is called a *miracle*, but only the emotional impact (“awe and wonder”) on people as well as the self-witness theological consequence for God himself. Its emphasis on the emotional elements of “awe and wonder”—no doubt biblical—is similar to that of the Latin *miraculum* and therefore an incomplete effort of explicating the material implications of a miracle. Besides this, the theological element of God’s self-witness is essentially not unique to miraculous events but equally available in divine providence (Psa. 19:1-6).

The definition is also relativistic because it says that a miracle is “a less common kind of God’s activity”, implying that there is *a more common kind of God’s activity*; so that it is as the former is juxtaposed with the latter that its identity becomes prominent. It is equally statistically-inclined because “less common” (or less frequent) and *more common* (or more frequent) imply some kind of counting of such activities, itself fraught with the possibility of error. In any case, Grudem has adopted the above approach in an effort to avoid the dualistic, other-worldly, interventionist and disruptionist complications that are ever so common in definitions of “miracle”. Just so to eliminate the idea of an autonomous world which God *steps into from out there* in the name of a miracle, the definition correctly takes into account the perpetuity of divine providence according to which God is *always* (or *more commonly*) working by way of preserving, controlling and governing (cf. Heb. 1:3; Eph. 1:11).

Among the NT records of miracles, Grudem (2025:1) ranks the incarnation of Jesus and his resurrection from the dead as “the central and most important miracles in all history”, because “our salvation depends on those”. This claim is incontrovertible, but must be understood as equally expressing a soteriological bias toward these and perhaps other NT miracles. Nor for Grudem is the idea of a miracle in the NT limited to transformations that spectacularly occur at the word of Jesus or his apostles (Jn. 11:43; Ac. 3:6), but also

includes “unusual answers to prayer” that amaze people (cf. Ac. 28:8-9). Furthermore, Grudem (2025:1) teaches that, without prejudice to the concentration of miracles in the lives of Elijah, Moses and Jesus, miracles are “characteristic of the New Covenant Age”, which he situates between Jesus’ death/resurrection and his second advent, and verifies by the Christian sacrament of Holy Communion on the basis of Jesus’ Last Supper statement: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood” (Lk. 22:20). The “powerful move of the Holy Spirit that began with Pentecost and may be expected to continue through the Church Age” makes miracles possible within this period. Within this period, too, the miraculous is something to greatly expect and the teaching on it an encouragement to the Christian’s faith to pray more for it.

However, Grudem (2025:1) ties expectation for the miraculous to faith implanted in the heart by means of encounter with the word of God. Still, for those who work miracles, he teaches that they cannot do so at will but as their hearts are stirred by the Holy Spirit, or put differently, as they sense that it is God’s will to heal one person or the other. It is a welcome modesty to think that those gifted with miracles depend totally on God to fulfil their ministries; however, having first to discern God’s will for particular cases makes ministering to the needy too subjective and open to either doubt or presumption, not to mention that such a position can be harshly contested by those who believe that it is *a/ways* God’s will to heal (cf. Exo. 15:26; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3 Jn. 2). But what is important in all this is that Grudem’s poise is continualist.

Still as a logical consequence of “the New Covenant Age”, Grudem (2025:1) argues that in the NT, miracles are not limited to the apostles only but that other believers perform miracles as well. This is, according to him, implied by such texts as Galatians 3:5, which refers to believers in the Galatian group of churches other than the apostles; Luke 10:1 and 9, where the Seventy receive the same authority for miracles as the Twelve; and 1 Corinthians 12:28, where the working of miracles is mentioned in the context of parts of the body of Christ and implies that miracles are part of “the New Testament Church” (here still referring to “the New Covenant Age”). The argument here is plausible, and is in tandem with his continualist posture earlier identified. If it were not, it would mean that there have been no God-given miracles since the death of the last apostle.

The miracles in the time of the apostles, Grudem (2025:1) continues, was in fact meant to set a pattern for the church. To that extent and without prejudice to doctrinal differentiation, miracles performed today by all those who truly profess Christ, believe in his incarnation and deity, as well as exhibit the fruit of the Spirit, can be trusted to be authentic (1 Cor. 12:3), while false miracles can similarly be identified by means of their workers' denying the gospel by their lifestyles. While this whole statement has relevant ethical ingredients—and the body of Christ should by no means support people who are not living in righteousness, no matter the wondrousness of their works—it is doubtful whether all ungodly lifestyle issues are synonymous with miracle counterfeiting. Granted, Matthew 24:24//Mark 13:22 predicts the dubiousness of signs that would be performed by false prophets (cf. Rev. 16:13; 19:20); yet it does appear that character flaws, although a hinderance to the cause of the gospel in some ways, may not be sufficient ground to invalidate the miracles performed by such persons. Of course, this argument does not apply to such biblical reports as in Acts 8:9-25 and 13:6-11, where the persons involved are clear enemies of the cross.

Finally, Grudem (2025:1) outlines the significance of NT miracle stories. Against the popular cessationist argument that miracles were meant to attest to the initial proclamation of the gospel at the time that the Bible was not yet available, he simply explains that the NT exhibits more than just one purpose of miracles while of course not downplaying the former (cf. Jn. 3:2; Heb. 2:4). Among the roles played by NT miracles are the attestations that Jesus came from God (Jn. 3:2) and that he is God (Jn. 2:11; Ac. 2:22). Miracles are an incentive to faith (Jn. 2:11) and a confirmation of the gospel that the apostles preached (Lk. 10:1, 9; Ac. 2:43). Miracles “give evidence that God is truly at work and so serve to advance the gospel” (Jn. 4:28-29; Ac. 8:4-8; 9:32-35, 36-42). They bear witness to the coming of God's kingdom (Matt. 12:28; Lk. 4:18), help resolve people's existential needs (Matt. 14:14; 20:30, 34), eliminate hindrances to people's ministries (Matt. 8:15; Phil. 2:27; Ac. 9:36, 40-41; 1 Cor. 12:7), and bring glory to God (Matt. 9:8; Jn. 9:3).

These submissions, although mostly inductively reached and somewhat utility-driven, are based directly on Scriptures and therefore can be taken seriously without allowing for

unnecessary dogmatic burdens. After all, it is safer to rely on Scripture with simple faith than to look to high-sounding dogmatic formulations that may end up as hindrances to miracle-seeking faith. According to Grudem, whereas miracles should not be sought for personal gain (Ac. 8:21-22) or for entertainment (Lk. 23:8), and whereas miracles should not be performed to prove a point to sceptical unbelievers whose motive in seeking for miracles is to find a ground for criticism of gospel preachers (Matt. 16:1-4), it is alright to seek miracles for proper purposes as outlined above (cf. Ac. 4:29-30; 9:38; Jam. 5:14). Still, it is good that his high view of miracles does not lead him away from the consensus that although miracles accompany the gospel, what saves people is the gospel and not miracles (cf. 1 Cor. 1:22-24).

3.2.7 Conclusion

Within the Reformed framework, Martin Luther was “a de-emphasiser”, neither fully committed nor totally averse to miracles. He accorded them a relative role in the earthly activities of Jesus. Miracles were also for him not tokens of Christ’s deity but works of God through Christ more significant for salvific purposes than any other consideration. Conversely, John Calvin saw miracles as signs that confirm the truth of God’s word and validate God’s messengers. For him, they issued directly from the divinity of Christ and were a temporary apostolic gift that enhanced the establishment of the church. He also overly spiritualised the meaning of miracles, thus emphasising soteriology over their corporeal merits. On his part, Huldrych Zwingli was frontal in the rejection of the notion of the Eucharist as a miracle or a sacrifice; he rather posited it as “a remembrance” or “a memorial” of Christ’s once-for-all-time sacrifice. His statement about miracles as being “one off” arguably suggests a cessationist tendency. However, his homiletical devotion to the Gospels’ records of the words and miracles of Jesus was second to none, leading the way to his preaching directly from the texts of Scripture rather than from the lectionary.

For the modern time, Vern Poythress holds a twofold view of NT miracles, namely, Christological and soteriological views, according to which NT miracles reveal who Jesus is and invite people to place their faith in him. Miracles point to the expected eschatological restoration, just as the NT miracles were “redemptive analogies” of Christ’s resurrection. Finally, Wayne Grudem views miracles as different from God’s providential

acts only in the sense that they are uncommon, generate awe and amazement, and bear witness to God. A clearly continualist proposition is his claim that miracles are key features of “the New Covenant Age” or “Church Age”, which is now. According to him, NT miracles demonstrate the divinity of Jesus, confirm the gospel preached by the apostles, testify to the presence of the eschatological kingdom of God, and provide solutions to people’s existential needs.

In conclusion, Reformed views on NT miracles are diverse. All the viewpoints reviewed above contribute useful perspectives, no doubt; yet what is lacking is at least a near-consensus understanding of the motif. This situation may not change any time soon given that contemporary Reformed theologians and preachers still hold on to certain irreconcilable positions. The way forward will require the Reformed community to engage in continued internal dialogue, with a view to collectively moving toward common ground.

3.3 Pentecostal perspectives

3.3.1 General overview

The early 20th-century Pentecostal emphasis on the miraculous was phenomenal, given that it represented a significant discontinuity with the skepticism that began to build in the 17th century (Craig, 2020:1). It was indeed a time of revival of the orthodox faith and a rehabilitation of the reality of miracles (Zwi Werblowsky, 2023:1; Resane, 2017:4; Pawlikowski, 2007:1233). Coincidentally, developments in the physical sciences, philosophy and archaeology converged to catalyse the revival. The influence of Quantum Physics had brought changes to scientific dynamics with particularly the “rigid and mechanical concept of causal determinism” being heavily questioned (Zwi Werblowsky, 2023:1; Pawlikowski, 2007:1233). In the field of philosophy, miracles had come to be seen as *signs*, with a corollary emphasis on the message that God was communicating to humanity through the event, rather than the empirical phenomenon that was seen to be no more than a container of the message (Pawlikowski, 2007:1233).

The early Pentecostal propagation of the *signs* gospel was further boosted by the chance discovery in 1906 by Charles Freer, of a Greek manuscript that contained the much disputed, longer ending of GMark (16:9-20). One discovery too many, it coincided with the onset of the Azusa Street revival and apparently legitimised Mark 16:9-20, especially

as the debate about the authenticity of the text had already divided the Pentecostal-Holiness circles (McGee, 2010:175). The significance of this discovery and the fact that the text of Mark 16:9-20 was attested to be effective at the Azusa “Holy Ghost meetings” may well serve as an explanation of why, till today, the majority of Pentecostals do not pay attention to conservative or text-critical concerns about the authenticity of Mark’s longer ending. For them, the text is a “kind of litmus test for the authenticity of their experience” and should in fact be reappropriated in Pentecostal theology (Archer, 2013:44).

Moreover, the activities and emphases of the drivers of the Holiness Movement of the late 19th century might have been preparing the Western world for the early 20th-century Pentecostal paradigm, with the major bridging ideology being their emphases on the “‘four-fold’ gospel as the only true gospel”. This comprised salvation, Holy Spirit baptism, divine healing, and the imminent return of Jesus. The doctrine of divine healing, for instance, can be traced to A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (Ng’etich, 2023:3-4). Similarly, the early Pentecostal movement emerged from “increasing extra-biblical views on sanctification in the late 1800s”, which evolved into “a radically new theology of the Holy Spirit at the turn of the 20th Century” (Arnold and Claydon, n.d.:25).

But beyond this multilayer Pentecostal ancestry, many Pentecostal brands and charismatic movements sprang up in the 20th century that normativised and popularised miracles. Through them, and without undermining the pursuit of holiness and related ideals that began to be emphasised by the Holiness Movement, those Pentecostal and charismatic movements succeeded to reintroduce “a dynamic sense of divine presence and action” into Christianity in a way that embraced more than “the interior work of grace” (Colle, 2011:245). The sections that follow examine the contributions of some early Pentecostal key players, namely, C. F. Parham and W. Seymour, as well as those of contemporary scholars, T. Samuel, Ø. G. Andersen and G. D. Fee, to the interpretation of NT miracles.

3.3.2 Charles Fox Parham (1873–1929)

Charles F. Parham stood as the bridging factor between the late 19th-century Holiness Movement and the early 20th-century Pentecostal Movement. Originally trained in a

Methodist seminary, he considered himself as the “applecart pusher” and a pioneering influence “from Stone’s Folly to Azusa and to the end of his life in 1929” (Nelson, 2020:39, 42). He is described as having been afflicted from childhood with rheumatic fever, but that his decision to return to his original calling as a preacher after some years of training for the medical profession saw him miraculously healed. At another time close to the end of the 19th century, he and his son, Claude, had taken ill together and could not be cured by available medicines. Parham is said to have seen this predicament as divine judgment for his failure to preach divine healing, and after vowing not to see doctors any more but rather to preach divine healing, was miraculously healed together with his son. His emphasis on divine healing is adjudged to have drawn many followers and to have produced many testimonies on its merit. However, it should also be understood that this success may have been enhanced by the inefficiency of the medical profession at the time (Fermor, 2002:3).

Particularly, Parham taught physical healing as “the Christian’s birthright”, asserting that “it was always God’s will to heal sicknesses”. He was so convinced about this that he began to speak against medicine. On one occasion when he was asked whether the Bible opposed medicine, he answered with the exclamation, “We say yes, most emphatically YES” (Cloud, 2016:1, emphasis his). Furthermore, together with William H. Durham, Parham is credited with a twofold ideological fight against the cessationism of Conservatism and the liberalism of Higher Criticism. The duo explained that this middle position was not a fight against “men or churches”, but aimed to “displace dead forms and creeds or wild-fanaticism, with living truths” and to oppose “the mouth of the Devil” which had no problem recognising unseen natural forces such as electricity, gravitation, air, heat and cold, but judged biblical miraculous records as fictitious myths (Lee, 2015:3, 5, 8, 10).

Parham had sufficient reasons to take such a position as described above, particularly as one who had suffered from sickness for much of his life. Once miraculously free, he must have felt compelled by hatred for the agony of sickness to speak against sickness and everything around it, including medicine. Therefore, whether people taught that miracles had ceased or claimed that they were myths, they would face a Parham polemic. Indeed, his assertion that God always wants to heal the sick is an enduring Pentecostal legacy

and till today still fuels the passion for miraculous healings among Pentecostal preachers and followers.

3.3.3 William Seymour (1870–1922)

Zielicke's (2022:126) account of William Seymour pins on the latter's severe affliction with small pox as the motivation for him to finally yield to God's call to the ministry. Seymour led the 1906- Pentecostal revivalism from 312 Azusa Street, Texas. He was originally a Methodist and an admirer of John Wesley for the latter's commitment to prayer, holiness, healing, and a non-discriminatory disposition; but he left the Methodist when the denomination allegedly began to drift from its doctrinal foundations (Worsley, 2021:1). Although a victim of racial discrimination in Parham's class, Seymour could rightly be described as Parham's ministry protégé (Zielicke, 2022:125). Still, some of Seymour's emphases were different from Parham's. For instance, while Parham taught speaking in tongues as initial proof of the Spirit's baptism, Seymour ultimately sought in the same experience a unity of the community of believers undivided by race (Zielicke, 2022:53, 163, 211-212).

Healing was integral to Seymour's preaching (Zielicke, 2022:22), although with not so much emphasis (Au, 2011:69). Healing and exorcism, much like glossolalia, were in his estimation some of the signs that followed Spirit-baptized believers (Zielicke, 2022:54). Credited to him in this respect is the statement, "We that are the messengers of this atonement ought to preach all of it, justification, sanctification, healing, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and signs following. God is now confirming His word by granting signs and wonders to follow the preaching of the full gospel in Los Angeles" (Zielicke, 2022:176; Pete, 2025:1). But whereas Seymour did not lay much emphasis on healing and exorcism as such, miracles reportedly took place while he preached, as attested to by the crutches, walking sticks and other support tools that were stored in the upper room of the Apostolic Faith's house (Au, 2011:69).

In a clearly redemptive approach to healing, Seymour taught that before the Fall, humanity, "pure and happy ... knew no sickness"; and that after (or better put, as a result of) the Fall, humanity's "system was poisoned" and that the poison "has been flowing in the blood of all the human family down the ages until God spoke to His people and said,

‘I am the Lord that healeth thee’”. He also believed and taught that “the children of Israel practised divine healing”, citing David’s psalmodic testimony in Psalm 103:3 of God healing *all* his diseases. Seymour also cited Isaiah 53:5, “He hath born our griefs”, and concluded that the word “griefs” meant “sicknesses”. The inference then was that because Jesus had borne humanity’s sicknesses, “they should not have to bear them” again. For him, “full salvation [deliverance from anything individuals need to be delivered from—including sickness and disease] is available through Jesus’ atonement” (Pete, 2025:1). Apart from instant-case healings, Seymour also tended to believe that the atonement effected sanctification for the human (physical) body “from inherited disease”. The basis of this *bodily sanctification* is that

God the Father sent Jesus into the world, sanctified Him—spirit, soul and body—and gave Him for the imperfect bodies of men. Men ought to honor Jesus’ stripes, because “with his stripes we are healed”. “Every sickness is of the devil.” Jesus “was manifested to destroy the works of the devil” [Isaiah 53:4, 5; 1 John 3:8].

(Pete, 2025:1)

Seymour’s redemptive approach is supported by particularly the text of Isaiah 53:4-5. There is no question that וְהָלֵינוּ and וּמַכָּאֵינוּ in v. 4 can respectively be translated as “our sicknesses”/“our diseases”/“our griefs” and “our pains”/“our sorrows”/“our sufferings”, both of which the Suffering Servant was going to bear (Strong’s Lexicon, 2483 and 4341) and which Matthew 8:17 cites in connection to Jesus’ miraculous healings. This logically leads to the prophetic claim in v. 5, לָנוּ: נִרְפָּא-וּבַחֲבֵרָתוֹ (“and by his stripes we are healed”), which is in turn cited in 1 Peter 2:24. Clearly then, it can be concluded that extant Pentecostal appeal to the messianic-redemptive programme to support the doctrine of miraculous healing no doubt has its root in Seymour’s bold stance on the literal meaning of Isaiah 53:4-5 and its implications.

Affirming this, McGee (2010:182) asserts that to early Pentecostals, “salvation and physical healing represented two vital aspects of the redemptive work of Christ—a conception of salvation blended with health and healing into an integral whole” (cf. Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 8:17; 1 Cor. 12:9; Jam. 5:13-16). He goes on to cite a typically Pentecostal postulation that “[i]n the great Redemption Chapter, the 53rd of Isaiah, it is *our* sicknesses, as well as *our* sins that Jesus bore, making one privilege as universal as the other”. In

other words, the same atoning work that provided for forgiveness also provided for healing; the same way people benefit from this work in terms of their regeneration, they also may benefit in terms of their health. This conviction, formulated in various but related ways, describes the way some Pentecostals interpret the role of miracles in the NT, particularly in their understanding of the meaning of Matthew 8:17 and its connection to Isaiah 53:4-5. Early Pentecostalism's emphasis on healing as part of the package of Christ's atonement in fact stemmed from the belief of the Holiness Movement that promoted instantaneous sanctification in which sin and disease (as a consequence of sin) were fully defeated in this earthly life through the Atonement (Anderson, 2002:6).

But whether there is *bodily sanctification* "from inherited disease" is open to debate. Moreover, Seymour may have gone too far, if indeed he did, to identify rheumatism as the disease from which David was healed in Psalm 103:3 or to have apparently believed that divine healing lasted among the children of Israel until Solomon went astray to introduce idolatry and sorcery due to his involvement with foreign women (Pete, 2025:1). There are no such explicit or implicit claims as these in the Bible. The claim of termination of divine healing going from Solomon's days implies that before Solomon's tangential behaviour, there was no sickness in Israel and that after him there was no divine healing. It ignores OT claim of divine healing of Hezekiah for instance (2 Kgs. 20:1-7) and would imply that Elisha's sickness unto death (2 Kgs. 13:14) was due to Solomon's sin. Rather than paying attention to these controvertible assertions, it should suffice that Seymour holds a thorough-going redemptive belief with regards to healing and health.

3.3.4 Thomas Samuel³⁹

Thomas Samuel is an Indian who had a lecturing stint at the IPC Theological Seminary Kottayam, a ministerial training institute of the Indian Pentecostal Church of God, before relocating to Luton, London to establish and run Wembley Christian Fellowship. His M.Phil. research on early Pentecostalism and Luke–Acts, completed at the London School of Theology (moderated by Middlesex University), combined with his intersection

³⁹ This individual's date of birth could not be verified from available academic or archival sources as of October 2025, but his work is a relatively recent one (i.e., 2015).

of Asian and European Pentecostal worldviews, makes his perspective valuable for this study.

Working on Luke–Acts, Samuel (2015:116) believes that in GLuke, miracles function both missiologically and soteriologically, and that in the Acts accounts, they lean in the direction of the church’s missionary activity. In his words, “Having salvation-historical significance, signs and wonders are part of the landscape, which contributes to the numinous atmosphere that pervades Luke’s narrative of the life and mission of the early Church”. It is not just that the early church happened to perform these signs and wonders, but, according to Samuel, “*preaching and signs and wonders*” constitute “two indispensable parts of Jesus’ final command to his disciples” (2015:117-118, emphasis mine). This is a different way of saying that the early church was more or less obligated not only to bear witness to Christ but also to perform miracles. The likelihood is high that the “final command” here is none else than the command to preach and perform miracles in the longer ending of GMark (particularly, 16:15-18). If so, it still goes to show the polemical significance of the text to contemporary Pentecostals, much as its functional significance was alluded to in section 3.3.1 above.

According to Samuel (2015:128), the “missional significance of miracles” is actually “prefigured” in Luke’s version of the Gospel, where Jesus builds miracles into his “mission manifesto” (cf. Lk. 4:18; 7:21), sends out his disciples “with power to heal” (cf. 9:1-2), as well as sends out another seventy-two (or better, seventy) “with authority over the powers of the enemy” (cf. 10:19). To further underscore this point, Samuel asserts that for all strategic uses of miracles in GLuke, “they are attached to proclamation”, and on the basis of the twin commissioning in Luke 9:1ff. and 10:1ff. concludes that proclamation and miracles were integral parts of their commission (Samuel, 2015:129).

There is good reason for this conclusion, given the fashion in which proclamation and miracle narratives are weaved together in Luke–Acts. Doeden’s (2021:102, 117) study highlights the missional implication of Lucan miracle narratives in Acts. Paul’s encounter of Barjesus (Ac. 13:6-12) is “an act of powerplay” that clears an obstacle out of the way of the gospel of Jesus Christ targeted at Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of the island of Cyprus. Similarly, reference to the Lord’s granting of signs and wonders as means of

confirmation of “the word of grace” (Ac. 14:3) portrays miracles functioning as “amplifiers of the word”. In short, in Acts, miracles are part and parcel of the proclamation of the gospel.

Moreover, Samuel avers that Lucan miracle-role is prominent in his generous use of the term, σημεῖον: Luke–Acts accounts for twenty-four out of seventy-seven occurrences of σημεῖον in the NT, with only two not connected to the miraculous (Lk. 2:12, 34). Against this backdrop, Samuel is right to conclude that “in the Lucan narrative, ‘signs’ have a significant place in the progress of mission” (2015:128). Also significant in Samuel’s view is Acts 2:22, where immediately after citing Joels’ prophecy (itself “a programmatic” paradigm), Peter goes ahead to identify “miracles, signs, and wonders” as God’s means of accrediting Jesus. This and similar accreditations of the apostles through signs and wonders in later parts of Acts show the importance of miracles in the mission of the early church (2015:129).

On what might be termed the performative role of miracles in the early church’s mission, Samuel (2015:130-131) suggests that miracles helped to create “the numinous atmosphere” that was ever so pronounced in Acts, as well as to create “an atmosphere of awe and amazement among witnesses (Ac. 3:9; 8:13; 14:11ff.)”—the “fear” of which suggests that “the apostolic word [was] received as a Word from God”. This claim can indeed be corroborated from other passages in Acts. Miracles added value to the apostles’ reputation and as it were created more opportunities for effective mission (cf. Ac. 5:12-16; 14:8-25; 19:11, 12). The missiological significance of the miracles of Acts stands all the more out in that they elicit faith through the message brought by witnesses (cf. 5:14; 9:42; 13:13; 19:18). Of particular note is the healing of the cripple at the Beautiful Gate in Acts 3:1-10, which if considered as belonging to the same bloc of thoughts down to 4:22, paves the way for the conversion of as many as 5,000 persons (4:1-4, 16).

3.3.5 Øyvind Gaarder Andersen (b. 1950)

Ø. G. Andersen is a Norwegian pastor, a missionary to Tanzania, and currently a First Lecturer (Førstelektor) in Systematic Theology at the Norwegian School of Leadership and Theology (HLT). He is a board member of the Christian Council of Norway as well as the leader of the Theological Reflection Group within Norwegian Pentecostalism. His

research interests include Christian apologetics and Pentecostal theology. One of such publications is “Healing and Preaching: The eschatological and legitimizing perspectives on healing constitute a unity that has important implications for the Church”, which is reviewed in this study.

Similar to Seymour’s redemptive perspective above, Andersen (2020:2, 4) submits that Pentecostals see healing as integral to the salvific work of Christ, but also adds that this necessarily makes healing a manifestation of the kingdom of God and justifies their use of Acts as “a key book in the development of Pentecostal theology”. To that extent, miracles in Luke–Acts literature fulfil both eschatological and legitimising roles; that is, they are simultaneously “a manifestation of the kingdom of God” and “a confirmation of the message being preached” (Andersen, 2020:1). For the eschatological explication, Andersen builds on the Beelzebub-controversy narrative (Luke 11:14-22) to interpret Jesus’ healing: “But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you” (v. 20). This refers to nothing but the “already” (as against the “not yet”) manifestation of the kingdom, which is the extent of the kingdom that has “arrived in a very real sense through the person of Jesus Christ” (Andersen, 2020:5).

Within the context of the “already”, Jesus’ “liberating ministry” fulfils Isaiah’s prophecy in Isaiah 61:1-3, of which Jesus himself quotes in Luke 4:18-19 and which constitutes his “mission manifesto”, to use the words of Samuel (2015:128). Similarly, the healings and restorations being witnessed in Jesus’ earthly ministry (Lk. 7:18-23, particularly v. 22) constitute an eschatological fulfilment of Isaiah 35:5-6: “The promised time of salvation had come, the kingdom of God manifested itself, the eschatological reality could be seen—even if not in its fullness, yet in a real way” (Andersen, 2020:6).

It is also important to note that the eschatological meaning of Lucan miracles legitimately spans the existential as well as the spiritual domains. Andersen explains the speech of Jesus in Luke 4:18-19 as follows:

This speech can be read as a heading of the events in the following part of the Gospel, *and his promise is to be understood not only spiritually or metaphorically but also literally*. This is illustrated, for example, by Luke 7:21, where it is stated that Jesus healed (gr. *therapeuo*) “many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind.

(Andersen, 2020:6, emphasis mine)

This assertion represents a typical Pentecostal departure from the overly-spiritualised view of the Protestant Reformers noted earlier. Irrespective of one's theological tradition or orientation, it has to be settled like Andersen has done here that, as prefaced by the messianic thematic in Luke 4:18-19, the Gospel miracle narratives are *factual* reports of *empirical* events in which *real-life* circumstances were transformed. No doubt, they have transferred meanings into the spiritual domain, which suits Blomberg's (1986:329, 347) idea of *miracles as parables*⁴⁰; yet they are first of all kingdom-manifesting autonomous (although not atomistic) events that touch lives in real-life transforming ways before they function in the Gospel texts as theological tools with metaphorical, theological and spiritual meanings.

Further with the eschatological understanding of Lucan miracle texts, Luke 4:31-34 and 9:2 give reason to believe that “the presence” of the kingdom of God has a twofold manifestation, namely, proclamation and liberating acts, both of which constitute “eine Wesensgemeinschaft’—*an essential unity*” (Andersen, 2020:6). To that extent, the Gospel miracle stories, as self-contained reports on their own merit, are tokens of the presence of the kingdom. This is what Andersen means when he says that

the healings are not just signs that symbolise the presence of the kingdom, they themselves being qualitatively different from the reality of the kingdom. No, healings as signs of the kingdom are also themselves part of the kingdom—just as snowdrop flowers are signs of spring as well as part of spring.

(Andersen, 2020:6)

Andersen (2020:7) equally avers that Luke's healing miracles are “Missionsaktiva”; that is, they serve a missionary purpose. This is based on Luke 5:15, where news about Jesus' healings spreads everywhere “so that crowds of people came *to hear him* and to be healed of their sicknesses” (emphasis mine). This missionary rationale of NT miracle narratives is a valid view and can legitimately be traced in other Gospels and the Acts. In Mark 1:45-2:2, one of the lepers that Jesus healed spreads the news of his healing rather than contain it like Jesus admonished, and as a result large crowds gather *to hear Jesus* and *to be healed* by him. A similar reaction to Jesus' miracles is recorded in John 6:1-2; although its portrayal as a teaching opportunity is supplied in the Marcan parallel (Mk.

40 See Footnote 22 in section 2.2.5 above for further explication.

6:34). These can be taken to validly imply that NT miracle narratives serve missionary purposes among other things.

The legitimising (or confirmatory) function of Lucan miracles is also important to Andersen. This has to do with the way miracle stories are used to evoke (or are understood to have evoked) response from different audiences. Especially where repentance and acknowledgement were expected as in Luke 10:13 and 19:37, Luke captures the joyful mood in which “the crowd of disciples” in Jerusalem praise God for all the *δυνάμεις* they have witnessed (19:37) and acknowledge Jesus as “the king who comes in the name of the Lord” (19:38; cf. Ps. 118:26). On the other hand, he captures Jesus’ disappointment and condemnation of the audiences in Chorazin and Bethsaida because they do not respond with repentance to the *δυνάμεις* that are performed among them (10:13).

This legitimising role of Lucan *δυνάμεις* actually begins earlier, with a similar understanding applied to the disciples’ proclamation, according to which towns that do not welcome the bearers of the message of the in-breaking eschatological kingdom of God will receive a worse judgment than Sodom received (10:10-12) (Andersen, 2020:7-8). If nothing else, the apparently equal judgments on those who reject the proclamation and those who reject the miracles together affirm Andersen’s earlier assertion that proclamation and miracles are twin aspects of the manifestation of the eschatological kingdom. In his words, “It is the rejection of the combined reality of the miracles and the preaching that leads to such a judgment. This clearly tells us that the miracles, in addition to the eschatological aspect, also have a legitimizing function” (2020:8).

The legitimising role of the Lucan miracle stories does not necessarily have to be negative as seen above. For instance, one recalls the Christocentric example in Luke 7:18-23 where, besides fulfilling an eschatological function (cf. Isa. 35:5-6), Jesus’ miracles confirm his identity as the Messiah (cf. Matt. 11:1-6). Alternatively, other texts use intensification tools to describe either the condition from which Jesus rescues people or the way observers react to such rescues. Examples include Luke’s description of the illness of Peter’s mother-in-law as a “high fever” (Lk. 4:38), while it is simply described as a “fever” elsewhere (Matt. 8:14; Mk. 1:30); as well as his description of the man who

approaches Jesus for intervention as being “covered with leprosy” (Lk. 5:12), whereas Matthew 8:2 and Mark 1:40 simply report that he is “a man with leprosy”. The reaction of the onlookers is also intense in GLuke. *All* the people are “filled with awe” and remark that they “have seen remarkable things today” (Lk. 5:26). In another miracle narrative, the people were excited about “all the wonderful things he was doing” (Lk. 13:17).

By Andersen’s assessment, the legitimising role espoused above in GLuke is also heavily present in Acts through the miraculous healings performed by the apostles, to the extent that he asserts that it is suggestive of the focus of the book. He argues this thesis from two standpoints: the many detailed stories of healing, as well as the miracle summaries “that tell us how many more occurred than what is narrated in detail and how significant this was for the church” (Ac. 5:15-16; 14:3; 19:11-12; 28:9) (2020:9). He also points to the high frequency by which miracle terminologies are used in Acts to further underscore the legitimising role of miracles. To accentuate the significance of this, it is obvious that those terminologies are used in a positive sense to refer to miracles performed by preachers of “the message of Christ”, as against the magic practised by those who opposed it (e.g., Simon, Ac. 8; and Elymas, Ac. 13) (Andersen, 2020:10). In all, reactions trail the Acts miracles: conversions (9:35; 16:25-34), faith in Christ (9:24; 13:12), amazement (3:10), and awe (Gr. *phobos*) (2:43; 5:5, 11; 19:17) that potentially leads to faith (Andersen, 2020:11).

But besides descriptions of reaction, Luke also pursues the legitimising role of miracles in Acts by way of textual claims, as when the church prays that God would stretch out his hand to heal and do miracles (4:29-30), as when the Lord bears witness⁴¹ to “the word of his grace” through signs and wonders (14:3), and as when the Jerusalem Council quietly listens to Barnabas and Paul tell of the miraculous signs and wonders done by God through them among the Gentiles (15:12) (Andersen, 2020:11-12). In Acts, *preachers* are also legitimised through miracles, like with Philip⁴² (8:6-7; cf. 2:22; 5:12-14; 6:8; 28:7-10). On the contrary, the demoniac’s mocking attack on the exorcist sons of Sceva, with a

41 Andersen (2020:11) explains that the concept of bearing witness (gr. *martureo*) is the same as to “confirm” (Gr. *bebaioo*) in Mark 16:20, which he says is “a clear parallel” to Acts 14:3.

42 Although Andersen correctly thinks that the difference between legitimising the message and legitimising the preacher is “fluid” (2020:12).

query about their *identity* with respect to Jesus and Paul (Ac. 19:14-17), also shows that where genuine messengers of Christ are legitimised by God-given miracles, presumptuous miracle-mongers are conversely invalidated. This is not a case of them not having faith like Jesus keeps chiding his disciples about in the Gospels; but that these men do not have a standing before God, and therefore no confirmation of their words from him. In sum, NT miracle narratives are signages of the presence of the kingdom of God as well as a means by which God validates the message and messengers of that kingdom.

3.3.6 Gordon D. Fee (1934–2022)

Gordon Donald Fee, an Ashland-born American, was born into and grew up to become an ordained minister in the Assemblies of God. However, he imbibed some aspects of Calvinist, Reformed theology that made him critical of some key components of Pentecostal confessions and practices; e.g., the doctrine of subsequence and Prosperity Gospel. A Professor of New Testament at Regent College, Vancouver, Canada, Fee was a towering figure in Pentecostal scholarship from the late 20th into early 21st centuries. He centered his research around pneumatology, textual criticism, hermeneutics, translation, Pauline studies, etc. He was an epitome of a healthy combination of scholarship and fervent faith, thus earning a tribute as a “scholar on fire”. Fee stands astride between Pentecostal and Reformed/Evangelical faiths, and although brief, his opinion on NT miracles counts.

Fee (2018) differed with other Pentecostals who teach that Jesus’ miracles issued from his divinity. He rather believed that Jesus performed miracles in the NT “because the Spirit and the power of God were with him”. He cited Luke 4:14 to explain that Jesus “went forth in the power of the Spirit” and that it was indeed the coming of the Spirit that gave evidence that he was the Messiah. His explanation is that it was the Messiah who was “to uniquely be the one who had the Spirit as the text in Isaiah [cf. Isa. 61:1ff.] regularly reminds us; precisely because he was the unique bearer of the Spirit, this was the evidence that the age of the Spirit was dawning—that the new age was coming”.

By this submission, Fee viewed NT miracles more through pneumatological lenses than through Christological ones. On the one hand, this was a slight variation from Luther, for

whom miracles were the work of God (the Father) through Christ; on the other hand, it varied completely with Calvin, who believed that miracles issued directly from the divinity of Christ, as well as with Parham and Seymour, for whom miracles were (although not formally stated as such) the direct work of God. It can also be inferred from Fee's thesis on "the age of the Spirit"/"the new age" that he was a continualist, especially when compared to Grudem above. Indeed, the description of Fee as an *austere* theologian fits his extremely conservative Pentecostal-theological flare, even if the term means more or less than whatever Price (2015:1) contemplates. One would equally be right if one says that Fee's position was due to his hybrid theological orientation (wedding Calvinist-Reformed theology to his original Pentecostal convictions).

3.3.7 Conclusion

Within the Pentecostal framework—altogether continualist—Charles F. Parham taught that God would always heal sicknesses and that, in fact, physical healing was the birthright of Christians. He frontally fought against the cessationist conservatism and mythological views of NT miracles of his time. On his part, William Seymour taught that miracles were evidence of God's work and a fulfilment of the divine word. For him, healing came together with and needed to be preached along with salvation, justification, sanctification, and the other benefits of redemption.

Among contemporary Pentecostal theologians, Thomas Samuel teaches that NT (particularly Luke–Acts) miracle stories can be understood in both missiological and soteriological terms, being that they are integral to the great commission in Mark 16:15–18 and that NT miracles sometimes lead people to believe in Jesus. For Ø. G. Andersen, healing is a benefit of redemption. Miracles in Luke–Acts fulfil both eschatological and legitimising functions by respectively manifesting God's kingdom and confirming the message of the kingdom being preached. Even so, miracles are phenomena with both existential and spiritual meanings. On Gordon Fee's part, NT miracles are pneumatologically mediated, beginning with those of Christ himself.

From the earliest Pentecostal forebears to their contemporary successors, the conviction remains generally the same: that miracles are part of the redemptive package and should be actively sought. However, there is a fair diversity of views regarding who of the

members of the Trinity is directly responsible for miracles. Nonetheless, the various roles assigned by respective Pentecostal scholars to NT miracles all converge in the claim of their normativeness or, at least, irreducible significance. Miracles are without any question immediate solutions to existential problems as well as props for theological reflection.

3.4 Summary and conclusion

The review above aimed to highlight the ways that NT miracle stories have been understood since the respective inceptions of the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions. Closely studying the progenitors and contemporary thinkers, it is obvious that there have really not been rigid ways of understanding the subgenre within these traditions. However, Pentecostal theologians tend to agree more than they disagree, while this can hardly be said about Reformed theologians. A possible reason for Reformed divergence is that Reformed theologians focus more on formal issues (e.g., theological, Christological, and eschatological implications) with all the attendant arguments and counter-arguments involved, while Pentecostals pay more attention to the applicative (redemptive, pragmatic, missiological, etc.) merits of NT miracles.

The dispositional tendencies and convergences of the two traditions form hermeneutical prisms that pre-set and circumscribe their exegetical goals when handling NT miracle narratives. It is safe, too, to anticipate similar effects on their understandings of NT miracle imperatives—in the instance of this study, those found in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. Reformed and Pentecostal conclusions on these imperatives will in general likely reflect the respective hermeneutical heartbeats of these traditions. While desirable, complete harmony in interpreting the NT miracle subgenre may never be realised. The church should therefore continue to seek guidance from the Bible itself, remaining open to what the Author of Scripture may reveal—as well as charitable, rather than antagonistic, toward those holding divergent views.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NATURES OF REFORMED AND PENTECOSTAL HERMENEUTICS

4.1 Scope

This chapter briefly explicates the concepts of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutics, with particular attention to their key attributes and emphases. Under these, some distinguishing elements, presuppositions and principles of the two traditions will be discussed, with a view to showing how Reformed and Pentecostal exegetes and preachers approach biblical texts. However, attention is first given to the subject of hermeneutics generally before narrowing down to biblical hermeneutics and then Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches. The Reformed section, in particular, will form the theoretical basis for the exegeses of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 in Chapter 5, which will in turn be used to evaluate samples of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations in Chapter 6.

4.2 The concept and meaning of hermeneutics

4.2.1 The conceptual background of hermeneutics

Hermeneutics is “the theory and philosophy of understanding and interpretation”. In turn, interpretation can be understood epistemologically or ontologically. In the first instance, interpretation borders on the “method or cognitive strategy we employ to clarify or construct meaning”, or put differently, to gain valid understanding of “meaningful ‘objects’”, like texts, spoken words, artefacts, and experiences. From the ontological angle, interpretation rather focuses on the way human beings naturally experience the world through their self-understanding, moods, concerns, and practical encounters with people and things around them. These two perspectives can be studied side-by-side; among other things, they help one appreciate that meaning depends not on cognition alone, but that the constitution (or being) of the interpreter is equally a decisive factor (Kerdeman, 2014:375).

But whether from an epistemological or ontological perspective, or both, the concept of hermeneutics builds on the need and desire to interpret communication properly—and proper interpretation calls for guidance (Poythress, 2009:60). Archer (2016:315) affirms this assertion when he states that central to hermeneutics is “the concern for proper

interpretation—coming to a ‘true’ or ‘correct’ or ‘legitimate’ or ‘accurate’ or ‘fair’ understanding of the subject being observed or investigated”. The variety of adjectives (“true”, “correct”, “legitimate”, “accurate” and “fair”) that describe a “proper interpretation” here constitute an early signal that the acceptability of an interpretation is not cast in iron, but that there is considerable flexibility regarding the grounds of plausibility of an interpretation. This should be borne in mind while of course conceding that the descriptive adjectives are fairly complementary to one another rather than mutually exclusive, and that the flexibility here referred to is anything but arbitrary.

4.2.2 Meaning of hermeneutics

Etymologically, a reflection on the role of ancient Greek mythology sheds some light on the meaning of hermeneutics. *Ἑρμῆς* was a winged messenger-god, an eloquent speaker and a cunning trickster, trusted to relay divine messages to mortals (Zimmermann, 2015:24). Accordingly, the English word, *hermeneutics*, stems from a related Greek verb ἐρμηνεύω (“to explain, interpret or to translate” [cf. Lk. 24:27]) and noun ἐρμηνεία (“interpretation” or “translation” [cf. 1 Cor. 12:10]) (Klein *et al.*, 2004:4; Briggs, 2023:1; cf. Zimmermann, 2015:24). Although Zimmermann (2015:24) rightly questions whether there is sufficient linguistic evidence connecting the term *hermeneutics* to *Ἑρμῆς*, he agrees that the association clarifies that hermeneutics involves “the deciphering of unclear messages” and is “essentially an act of mediation”.

The “explanation” perspective of ἐρμηνεία is most directly helpful to this study; it pertains to “the re-expression of ideas in new words” in a general sense, and for a textual matter, focuses on “the rendering of one set of words into another that explains (or interprets) it” (Briggs, 2023:1). Clearly, Briggs emphasises the point that the explanatory sense of hermeneutics has to do with interpretation, and in turn with “self-reflection” on the attributes and goals of interpretation as well as the effort to critically assess alternative interpretations. This elastic understanding of “hermeneutics” reveals that although it is commonplace to use “hermeneutics” interchangeably with “interpretation”, the former is broader in scope than the latter.

Hermeneutics is also defined as “the art of understanding and of making oneself understood” (Zimmermann, 2015:25), in which case the obligation to ease

comprehension equally lies with the speaker/writer/sender. For instance, speakers/writers/senders who are conscious of this obligation intentionally control, say, the degree of esoterism in their message, just so to reduce possible obstructions from their end and heighten the chances of effective communication.

Linguistically, the notion of “hermeneutics” as simply *to explain* or *to interpret* communication, “describes the principles people use to understand what something means, to comprehend what a message—written, oral, or visual—is endeavouring to communicate”. Particularly with such fields as literature and biblical scholarship, it has to do with “the task of explaining the meaning of a piece of writing” (Klein *et al.*, 2004:4). This narrower meaning of hermeneutics is crucial for a study such as this, which focuses on written biblical texts. In this respect, Vorster (2017:256) makes an insightful statement when he refers to hermeneutics as a concept that “explore [sic] how we read, understand, and handle texts, especially those written in another time or context of life different from our own”. A key takeaway from this statement is that in addition to explaining the meaning of a text, the enterprise of hermeneutics also tries to theorise on the process by which a reader makes sense of a text.

Along the lines of exploring the background of understanding, Lategan (2009a:14) states that hermeneutics is “the discipline that concerns itself with the nature, the conditions and the process of understanding”. By this definition, hermeneutics aims to explain at a metacognitive-philosophical level what understanding itself is, the factors that make understanding possible (or otherwise), as well as the transaction that takes place as a result of which understanding is secured. Porter and Stovell (2012:9) reason in a similar way by asserting that “[w]hereas *exegesis* and *interpretation* denote the *actual processes* of interpreting texts, *hermeneutics* also includes the second-order discipline of asking critically *what exactly we are doing when we read, understand, or apply* texts”. This relationship of functionality between the two concepts is important to note as indeed one’s hermeneutics determines one’s exegesis. To that extent, proper hermeneutics leads to proper exegesis, and faulty hermeneutics conversely leads to faulty exegesis.

Granted, hermeneutics is needed when dealing with documents that originate from other provenances than the reader’s. The idea of bridging the gap between an alien reader and

an alien text is also captured by Nel (2022:39), according to whom hermeneutics involves the attempt “to discover meaning”, raises the question of what is involved in the effort to “[uncover] indubitable meaning”, and “[makes] comprehensible that which is foreign, strange and separated in time and space”. In consideration of these assertions, it is affirmed here that hermeneutics involves the attempt to discover or uncover meaning, or for that matter “indubitable meaning”. However, that it involves *only* “that which is foreign, strange and separated in time and space” is not convincing enough. To be sure, foreign and antiquated communication (in whatever form it is available) needs specialised skills to gain understanding; but much so are hermeneutical skills involved—even if subconsciously—in *all* communication contexts.

This is in fact how Silva (2007:17) sees it when he says that principles of interpretation are needed in the contexts of insignificant conversations and non-verbal events. For Silva, in fact, hermeneutics in its traditional meaning is “the discipline that deals with principles of interpretation”. While this may at face value suggest only a formally acquired discipline, Silva’s perspective is broad enough to cover both formally and informally acquired hermeneutical skills. The implication is that given that people do understand communication in most cases, they have *previously* acquired a hermeneutical skill-set that makes that understanding possible. This view is indeed supported by Gilley’s (2017:1) assertion that “[h]ermeneutics is essentially a codification of the processes we normally use at an unconscious level to understand the meaning of a communication”. It is interesting that for everyday communication, people have acquired hermeneutical skills right from birth (Silva, 2007:17), and have only had to learn special interpretative skills where and when necessary.

Porter (2024:10) acknowledges the complexity and diversity that attend the field of hermeneutics, and hence gives a broad definition of hermeneutics as being “concerned with understanding and interpreting the world around us”. Hermeneutics has its footprint in virtually every epistemological field, and given that the struggle to understand the Bible is what eventuated in the development of what now goes by the name of hermeneutics, various fields of knowledge have in turn helped shape biblical hermeneutics. Even within the specific province of biblical studies, hermeneutics is far from being a singular or

narrow discipline. It rather applies to a wide range of approaches to interpretation and understanding, which include secular hermeneutics, biblical hermeneutics, and biblical interpretation (Porter, 2024:11-12).

Still to explore the broad scope of hermeneutics, Archer's (2015:319) position is considered here:

Hermeneutics is the art and science of interpretation. Hermeneutics is concerned with interpretation, communication, truth and falsehood, linguistic significance, embodied existence, spatial distance, formational experiences, historical distance, appropriateness of methodological procedures, epistemological issues, community formation, and personal identity. Hermeneutics enables learning, apprehension of understanding, and critical reflection upon preunderstanding and the expansion of one's own informed horizon of understanding. "Hermeneutics explores *the conditions and criteria* that operate to try to ensure reasonable, valid, fruitful, or appropriate interpretation."

This explanation comprehensively draws in multiple dimensions of reflection on hermeneutics. Beyond *interpretation* and *evaluation of interpretations*, hermeneutics reflects on the personality of the interpreter, the sum total of the effects of their individual and communal backgrounds, and the methods they employ to effect understanding. It also measures the plausibility of interpretation; that is, whether it is "reasonable, valid, fruitful, or appropriate". Seen this way, it is clear why Archer and a number of other scholars talk about hermeneutics as not just the art *or* science, but as the art *and* science of interpretation. To put it straight, there are validly both subjective and objective commitments that lead up to proper interpretation of communication.

Particularly for the subjective aspect, it is acknowledged that the wisdom and epistemological base of one's community and traditions affect one's understanding. In effect, human understanding develops within a communal context, implying that understanding is facilitated by one's "embedded communal belonging" (Archer, 2015:319). Even so, one's present understanding constitutes preunderstanding in just the next stage of the hermeneutical circle, since the constant interaction with tradition and reality keeps transforming one. Archer's (2015:320) further statement sums it all up:

Our understanding, then, is not static, fixed, or closed, because our horizon of understanding via constant hermeneutical engagement is always moving, growing, correcting, modifying, revisioning, reforming, and affirming. Human "understanding is, in effect, cumulative and embedded in the flow of time."

Because of this, human understanding is necessarily limited, plural, partial, and perspectival.

In conclusion, it may be said that hermeneutics is the sum total of predispositions, competencies, methods, tools and processes that facilitate interpretation and understanding of communication. As has been observed above, particularly the receiver of communication may or may not be conscious or even be aware of some of these factors or their operation; but s/he depends on and *actually uses* them and their interplay to make sense of communication—be it oral, visual, textual, real-time, or ancient. Hermeneutics, therefore, depends not only on standardised, objective rules, but also on the individual involved in the process of interpretation. Every assessment of a hermeneutical endeavour therefore has to factor the story of the individual into its grid. This is true in all fields of human communication and interaction, including, as shall be seen in what follows, biblical studies.

4.3 Biblical hermeneutics: meaning and justification

Attention is given here to the meaning of biblical hermeneutics as well as the need for it. This background needs to be created since the study is centered around *hermeneutical issues* in the interpretation of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. Briggs (2023:1) has done a good job in addressing some of the basic questions that pertain to a helpful definition of biblical hermeneutics. One of them is the question of what might be the chief concerns of biblical hermeneutics: method/truth, meaning, or readings/readers' identities? This also leads to the question whether biblical hermeneutics is "a descriptive project or includes a normative or evaluative element, resulting in options for singular or plural 'meaning(s)', 'method(s)', and so forth". As was demonstrated toward the end of the preceding section, hermeneutics is generally open to a plurality of methods and a plurality of meanings. The same is true for biblical hermeneutics because it is an epistemological field with a variety of concerns, approaches and outcomes.

4.3.1 Meaning of biblical hermeneutics

Based on the points above, biblical hermeneutics can be defined as a specialised field of biblical scholarship that develops the theories, principles, and methods necessary for a proper understanding of the biblical text. This is a general statement, however, since one

person's judgment of a "proper understanding" may not be shared by another. In fact, according to Porter and Stovell (2012:19), "biblical hermeneutics is a complex field—one might even venture to say, a minefield—of potentially competing orientations, assumptions and foundations for determining meaning". Therefore, in defining biblical hermeneutics, one has to necessarily acknowledge the variety of available approaches and their goals, as well as the fact that a hermeneut within any given tradition is informed by a set of presuppositions that influence their interpretation.

In what may fit into the notion of the so-called hermeneutical circle, interpreters live within a narrative (or "storied") existence, and this existence is ultimately shaped and normed by the Bible's own *authoritative* story of the world (Compton, 2016:178). The ideal biblical-hermeneutical goal is therefore not one that ignores or denies the existence of presuppositions or that pursues some *correct* or *neutral* interpretation; but one that allows readers or hearers of the biblical text to generate a plausible meaning, yet accommodating who they are and where they are coming from. This explains why two persons may reach different meanings of the same text: they do not only "[receive] something from a text" but also "[bring] something to the text" (Angell, 2021:5). They bring their experiences, knowledge, presuppositions, and so on, and demonstrate the fact that interpreting a text is not a one-directional but a two-directional activity.

This in turn places a mandate on the shoulders of the interpreter of a biblical text to acknowledge and embrace as a reality their subjective involvement in the process of interpretation. Thus, the so-called hermeneutical circle comes into the picture, whereby the reader originally comes with influences to a text, the text offers what it has for and influences the reader in such a way that opens up a new perspective, and they return again to the text different from their original selves, and the text again refines their perspectives, and so on.

Besides ongoing individual transformation, biblical hermeneutics also accommodates the interpreter's cultural background. This assertion does not need further defence than the variously-stated claims above that interpreters are generally conditioned in some ways before approaching Scripture and that that conditioning affects and is affected by the light that Scripture brings to them. Van den Belt (2018:95) is therefore right when he describes

hermeneutics as “the way in which the Bible is read, interpreted, and applied in a specific cultural context” and “the analysis of the interaction between the text and its meaning in its original context and the way it is understood by its readers in present contexts”.

This emphasis on the role of culture is however tamed by the normative role of Scripture itself. Van den Belt states further: “The way in which texts are interpreted is always related to the cultural context.... This historical and cultural diversity is inevitable and is not problematic as long as Scripture remains normative in all these historical and cultural contexts” (2018:96). Perhaps the advocated contextual liberty (or flexibility) can be illustrated by Smit’s (2021:135) call for Singaporean readers of the Bible to move away from so-called Western “colonial”/“colonising” methods, to in turn allow for the voice of the local context to be heard as a legitimate understanding of the Scripture. Without necessarily acceding to the charge of colonisation, this researcher believes that Smit’s summons is legitimate and should actually be the case for all biblical interpreters.

4.3.2 Justification of biblical hermeneutics

Scripture is not putty in the hands of the interpreter, to be shaped into any form and made to say what the interpreter desires it to say. It is the Word of God and must be handled carefully and correctly.

(Fish, 2021:1)

For any conscientious interpreter of the texts of Scripture, this call is both deep and searching. The problem of misinterpretation has been around right from the inception of human history. For instance, the dialogue in Genesis 3:1-5 between Eve and the serpent presents itself as a hermeneutical battle around *what was said by God* and *how* what was said by God *was understood by Adam and Eve*. Humanity’s rebellion and fall resulted from the poor hermeneutics the couple applied to God’s instruction (vv. 6-7), as they failed to see through the smokescreen of the devil’s hermeneutical fraud. Sadly, that morbid hermeneutical transaction was only the beginning of multi-millennial, multi-generational and multi-faceted human struggle with sin and its pervasive impediment, including the inability to understand fully or properly. Incidentally, the faith for redemption from sin and its consequential impediments is also hinged on a proper understanding of the word of God (cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-4). Even so, the Messiah-Redeemer himself rode on the wings of

proper hermeneutics to resist the old serpent and to go on to procure that redemption (cf. Matt. 4:3-11).

The juxtaposition of sin and redemption as both products of hermeneutics goes a long way to corroborate this researcher's assertion elsewhere that "the way we interpret and understand Scripture has serious theological implications for our faith" (Akpan, 2018:43; cf. Klein *et al.*, 2004:19). Similarly, the following warning by Kaiser Jr. (2007b:241) is apt: "Biblical interpretation is one of the fields of study that is most critical for the theological task. Any failure in the interpretive mission immediately affects the results obtained in theological constructions." Some conclusions reached or actions taken by biblical characters resulted from faulty interpretations. Again and again, one encounters the problem of misunderstanding in both the OT (cf. Isa. 6:10; Jer. 5:21; Eze. 12:2) and the NT (cf. Lk. 24:25-26, 31, 25; Ac. 8:30-35; 2 Thess. 2:2; 2 Pet 3:16). But not only so; "[a]lmost from the very beginning it can be said that many listeners and readers of the message of the Bible were slow to apprehend the spiritual truth it contained" (Kaiser Jr., 2007c:257).

The post-biblical period has not been any different with respect to the challenge of misunderstanding of divine communication. Take, for instance, what Du Toit (2009a:121) says about readers and hearers of the biblical message:

When reading or hearing a biblical passage, immediate and essential understanding may occur, but partial or even total misunderstanding is a real and constant hazard. In order to minimise this, we are forced to control our initial understanding by focusing, chronologically, on the individual elements of the understanding process.

The impression here is that as it is with communication generally, the process involved in biblical communication may succeed or fail. It is this possible failure that Du Toit calls "a real and constant hazard". Quite soberingly, Lategan (2009b:66) warns that a written text "represents an enormous concentration of energy", and therefore invites cautious and respectful interpretation, in order for it not to release this energy in "a surplus of meaning". In short, if not checked, the interpretation of a biblical text can have very damaging consequences, like the way proponents of the South African apartheid rode on wrong interpretation of the Bible to justify—in fact, "sacralise"—their unjust political policy (Vorster, 2017:273).

Elsewhere, Lategan bemoans the possibility of miscommunication due, for instance, to interruption or conflict, with the odds rising higher in proportion to the width of the historical, cultural and geographical gaps between sender and receiver, as it is with particularly biblical texts. He in fact asserts that the biblical documents themselves invite committed effort at understanding them (2009a:14-15, 20), and understandably so because they are “part of a dynamic process of communication aimed at discerning the will of God and its existential implications” (Akpan, 2018:47). Discerning the will of God can in some instances be difficult, not to mention ambiguities occasionally encountered. These and other challenges make hermeneutical intervention imperative (Lategan, 2009a:20).

Even believers with good intentions sometimes err in their efforts to understand divine communication. Part of the problem is the dialectic of God’s transcendence versus human finitude: Whereas God is “a member of a language community that includes human beings”; yet “because God is God, and is greater than we are, we can never plumb to the bottom the depths of divine communication” (Poythress, 2009:18-19, 165). This transcendental gap, supported by Isaiah 55:9, is all by itself an overweight challenge confronting the hermeneutical process. Related to this, Silva (2007:18) explains that whereas God speaks with such clarity that “if there is any word that might not require a hermeneutics, it would be the divine word” (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21); yet hermeneutics is seriously needed “because in addition to being divine, [the Bible] is a *human* book”. Being partly “a *human* book” means it is subject to the natural ambiguities of human language and that “the *potential* for misinterpretation is almost always there” (Silva, 2007:18). To such an extent, a “hermeneutical support” is nothing short of a constant need. Quite helpfully, the diversity of richness of the Bible itself stands as an advantage to the reader, who may leverage the authorial and illuminating involvements of God’s Spirit (cf. Eph. 1:17-18; Isa. 55:10-11), as well as the enlightenment that one biblical book/text sheds on another in their mutually-aided richness (Poythress, 2009:180).

It is therefore desirable and in fact obligatory to endeavour to access plausible meaning(s) of biblical texts. Bartholomew (2015:5) puts it right: “If, as I like to think of it, Scripture is

that field in which is hid the pearl of great price, then healthy biblical interpretation that keeps on excavating this pearl is vital not just for the life of the church but also for the life of the world.” Indeed, the pursuit of God’s word as a precious stone hidden in the texts of Scripture compels whatever price that one may have to pay to get at the divine message. In the end, both the Bible expositor and the Christian brother or sister reading the Bible by themselves need to lean on the hermeneutical staff to make sense of the text lying open before them.

4.4 The nature of Reformed hermeneutics

4.4.1 Meaning of Reformed hermeneutics

By its very name, Reformed hermeneutics is an approach to biblical interpretation followed by Reformed exegetes. It has its root in the 16th-century Reformation; emphasises the authority of the Scripture as God’s inspired word, as well as God’s medium of disclosing his truth to humanity; seeks a meaning (or meanings) that properly fits (or fit) the text of Scripture being interpreted as well as the overall biblical message of redemption; and adapts to a combination of methods/tools that are suitable to the investigated text and that together produce a result that satisfies the rule of faith (Akpan, 2018:139). While this definition does not purport to be unique, it captures key emphases of Reformed biblical interpretation in particular and the necessary ingredients of proper biblical hermeneutics in general.

4.4.2 The background of Reformed hermeneutics

As has already been indicated, Reformed hermeneutics stems from the Reformed tradition, which is in turn a child of the 16th-century Reformation—itsself “a hermeneutically-driven struggle” of which Martin Luther is identified as the pioneering agent (Monergism, 2008:1; Kommers, 2017:7). Luther came into the scene at a time when the so-called fourfold sense of Scripture (namely, *sensus literalis*, *sensus allegoricus*, *sensus tropologicus*, and *sensus anagogicus*) was the vogue and had long neutralised the earlier “one basic meaning” hermeneutical disposition of the early Church Fathers. Luther’s “new” hermeneutic (1515 A.D.)—actually a bold return to the long-abandoned patristic literal-historical approach—was a necessary development to counter the thoroughly allegorical methods of those he dismissed as “salt-free and worthless

dreamers” (Monergism, 2008:1; Kommers, 2017:6). For him, the literal sense was the operational sense in interpretation, and as such, “the preacher should remain within the framework of the testimony which comes to us from the true *sensus literalis* and which kindles faith” as “the proper, and ... also the only, sense of the Holy Scriptures” (Kommers, 2017:4).

A key feature of Luther’s hermeneutic was an acute focus on Christ as the content of Scripture and the One crucified; hence the Reformer’s exegetical and homiletical efforts to project Christ and impose the effect of his history on the hearer’s history (Kommers, 2017:7, 12). Another attribute of Luther’s approach was the integration of soteriology into Christology, so that virtually everything he said about Christ and his work bordered on salvation (Kommers, 2017:13). Luther’s hermeneutic flowed from “the indicative” to “the imperative” elements of Scripture, according to which the latter rests on the former, and the “order is irreversible” (Kommers, 2017:5). It was also text-centered, text-informed and conscious of divine sovereignty. In the words of Kommers (2017:4-5):

Luther’s focus on Christ in all his sermons determined his theology to the end. It was crucial for him to be confined to the text. He did not want to run away with his own insights, nor with a preconceived dogmatic presupposition. God who speaks had for him the actual government in the exegesis of Scripture.

This statement excellently demonstrates that right from the early days of the Reformation, the doctrine of the sovereignty of God was crucial in Bible interpretation. Moreover, Luther’s literal-historical approach set the stage for the so-called historical-grammatical (or grammatico-historical) method of biblical interpretation (Pitchford, 2006:1; Monergism, 2008:1) that has had a significant influence on Reformed hermeneutics.

Another Reformation influencer was John Calvin. His doctrine of Scripture influenced his reading of the Bible and has also influenced the Reformed tradition (Aubert, 2022:116). Calvin’s attitude to Scripture was absolutely reverential, and is best captured in the Epistle Dedicatory to his commentary on the Book of Romans. He states:

Such veneration we ought indeed to entertain for the Word of God, that we ought not to pervert it in the least degree by varying expositions; for its majesty is diminished, I know not how much, especially when not expounded with great discretion and with great sobriety. And if it be deemed a great wickedness to contaminate anything that is dedicated to God, he surely cannot be endured, who, with impure, or even with unprepared hands, will handle that very thing,

which of all things is the most sacred on earth. It is therefore an audacity, closely allied to a sacrilege, rashly to turn Scripture in any way we please, and to indulge our fancies as in sport; which has been done-by many in former times.
(Calvin, 1998:19)

For Calvin, too, Scripture is a magisterial guiding light that must be obeyed as a first principle of divine revelation. His statement in the *Institutes* makes this clear:

If true religion is to beam upon us, our principle must be, that it is necessary to begin with heavenly teaching, and it is impossible for any man to obtain even the minutest portion of right and sound doctrine without being a disciple of Scripture. Hence the first step in true knowledge is taken, when we reverently embrace the testimony which God has been pleased therein to give to himself. For not only does faith, full and perfect faith, but all correct knowledge of God, originate in obedience. And surely in this respect God has with singular Providence provided for mankind in all ages

(Calvin *ICR*, 1.6.2)

For practical exegesis, Calvin was given to the analogy of Scripture. In his introduction to the *Institutes*, John Murray acknowledges this by stating that Calvin's expositions were "not ... afflicted with the vice of expounding particular passages without respect to the teaching of Scripture elsewhere and without respect to the system of truth set forth in the Word of God"⁴³ (Calvin *ICR*, vol. 1, p. 5). Calvin's disposition was facilitated by his humanist training in Hebrew and Greek and his interest in philology (Aubert, 2022:117). He states,

I may add, that there can be no doubt that the analogy of faith by which Paul enjoins us to test every interpretation of Scripture, is clearly with us in this matter. Let those who oppose a truth so clear, consider to what standard of faith they conform themselves

(Calvin *ICR*, 4.17-32)

As was earlier hinted at and as can in fact be derived from the principle of analogy of faith, Calvin also bequeathed the rule of reading and understanding Scripture relative to Christian doctrine. One had to acknowledge and in fact utilise one's doctrinal commitment, and could hardly study the Bible successfully apart from doctrine (Aubert, 2022:119). This implies that, without necessarily framing it with some technical jargon, Calvin acknowledged the role of presupposition in biblical interpretation. In this instance, it is that one's doctrinal commitment to Scripture determines the way one will interpret it.

⁴³ This is Murray putting analogy of Scripture and analogy of faith together in his description of Calvin's exegeses. As shall be seen below, these two form cardinal principles of Reformed hermeneutics.

A concrete example is Calvin's belief that the Scriptures were written for the edification of the Christian (cf. 1 Tim 6:3-5); hence, his hermeneutical goal to gain edification from reading it as a living revelation (Aubert, 2022:120). Another good example is his summons on the interpreter, due to his high view of Scripture noted above, to be discrete, rigorous and sober—otherwise which, for him, it almost amounts to a sacrilegious handling of the Word. In a similar fashion, Wolhuis' (2011:33) assertion that the Scripture is primarily “an internal document” for God's people inspires a sense of ownership in the Christian community as “an interpretive community” and stirs faith to come to it for *their* Word.

To conclude, the Reformers laid the seedbed for what is now known as Reformed hermeneutics. They helped create a path that is wary of the fourfold sense of Scripture and in its place emphasised the literal sense. The sovereignty of God in Bible interpretation was prominently established, just like it was established that doctrine and interpretation were a necessary pair—with the former influencing the latter. The analogy of Scripture and analogy of faith gained prominence, and stand as a legacy for Reformed hermeneutics today. The above background investigation therefore serves as a launch pad for understanding the nature and aspirations of Reformed hermeneutics, which is a twin part of this comparative study and the conceptual basis for the exegeses of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.

4.4.3 Distinctives of Reformed hermeneutics

It has already been averred that there is a connection between the 16th-century Reformation interpretative practices and current Reformed hermeneutical approaches. The former constitutes a foundation for the latter. To be sure, some of the characteristics of Reformed hermeneutics overlap with those of other traditions. However, one can still identify some key Reformed hermeneutical distinctives, as follows:

1. Reformed hermeneutics is redemptive-historical (Hiebert, 2016:1). This means that Reformed hermeneutics entails “interpreting revelation in the manner in which it was revealed. It could otherwise be said to be a hermeneutics that takes seriously and faithfully follows the trajectory of salvation history. In Hiebert's words, “God is creator, author, and interpreter of his revelation in the process of redeeming his people”, and the Reformed method “enters into the exact same unfolding pattern in which God

himself records his infallible Word and interprets his works” (2016:1). Among other characteristics,

- i. Redemptive-historical hermeneutics is historical-grammatical. This means that Reformed hermeneutics takes seriously the historical and grammatical components of biblical texts. To navigate these, the Reformed exegete has to properly account for the genre, the socio-historical context, as well as the literary context of the text. According to DeLashmutt and McCallum’s (2023:1),

The historical-critical method assumes that words and expressions have a relatively stable meaning during given periods of history. Therefore, we begin by taking what we can determine as the normal, everyday meaning of the words, phrases, and sentences to the extent possible. In other words, our interpretation must correspond to the words and grammar in the text in a reasonable way. Otherwise, the interpreter could assign meaning of his own without objective control. The Bible would become a horoscope of vague sayings we try to plug into our lives however we are able.

Indeed, the historical-grammatical approach insures the interpretation process against arbitrariness and manipulation. Other scholars support this position. For Beville (n.a.:1) and Viljoen (2017:27), the historical investigation is necessary because the Bible is a product of human history, and being grounded in history, Christianity cannot afford to ignore history. The biblical texts “are primarily referential, referring to entities beyond the texts themselves, and not purely ‘literary’” and therefore require an idea of their historical contexts to make sense of them (Viljoen, 2017:27).

That said, it is needful that the exegete steers clear from the use of historical data to determine meaning as that may amount to an affront on the authority of Scripture. Historical data therefore play a supportive role and do not act as a hermeneutic key (Goede, 2017:16, 24).

- ii. Redemptive-historical hermeneutics is Gospel-centered. Following the example of the NT authors, Reformed hermeneutics understands the Bible through the lenses of Christ’s atonement and resurrection (cf. Matt. 20:28; Jn. 6:35-40), “for this is the singular point of all of Scripture” (cf. Lk. 24:25-27; 1 Cor. 2:1-2; 15:1-4; Heb. 1:1-2) (Hiebert, 2016:1). God’s ultimate self-disclosure is achieved in Christ (Heb. 1:1-2); the OT writings were about him (Lk. 24:27); and the gospel that is needed is one

that has the redemptive work of Christ as its central motif (1 Cor. 15:1-4), even as Paul's missionary message was nothing else but "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:1-2). These connections therefore justifiably suggest that any fruitful exegesis must take the atonement into crucial account.

- iii. Redemptive-historical hermeneutics requires that Scripture interpret Scripture. Clearer portions of Scripture interpret less clear ones, thus limiting the meaning of a text to "that which fits with the rest of Scripture". To that extent, the meaning of any given portion of Scripture is "understood in the context of the Bible as a whole" (Hiebert, 2016:1). This in fact demonstrates the belief that the Bible is a record of the trajectory of the Salvation History from Genesis to Revelation, requiring also that a redemptive-historical hermeneutic is necessarily a hermeneutic that is biblically-based.

- 2. Reformed hermeneutics is based on the text and context of Scripture. Du Toit unambiguously asserts the primacy of text and context in exegesis:

The text is the final arbiter of meaning. The first and decisive rule of exegesis is respect for the supremacy of the text.

(2009a:112)

Unless we know the social or life setting of an utterance, multitudes of meanings are possible.

(2009a:113)

All ... aspects of social context have consequences for determining meaning. It is therefore absolutely indispensable that the exegete should piece together all available contextual information and integrate it into the reading process. The main mistake in fundamentalist reading is that historical context is ignored, with the result that almost anything can be read into the text. But non-fundamentalist readers (including preachers!) also misunderstand New Testament texts or miss their distinctness, depth and variety when they do not give sufficient attention to the social contexts concerned.

(2009a:115)

There are two methodological implications that stem from this distinctive. One, regarding the text, the need for the reader to pay attention to the text, its claims or demands, its genre and relevant text-critical data, etc. If, as Du Toit states above, the text is the "final arbiter of meaning", then it is *the superior* contributor of meaning in the hermeneutical negotiation (or clash) between itself and reader-factors, for

instance. Like Kommers (2017:13) puts it, it is “the door which gives access to the reality of God”—and no reasonable exegesis would want to miss this goal. Lack of attention to the text, therefore, cannot escape speculative results. Two, with respect to context, it is helpful to take cognisance of as many contextual realities as possible—socio-historical, literary, etc. As such, unlike this researcher suggests elsewhere to read “behind the letters” (Akpan, 2018:142), interpreters of biblical texts need to read *both behind and around* the text. This would help uncover useful insights from the historical and literary contexts that would in turn enhance a deeper grasp of the text’s meaning.

4.4.4 Reformed presuppositions for biblical hermeneutics

Reformed exegetes come to the Bible with presuppositions⁴⁴, and Coetsee and Goede (2022:15-19) have identified some of them based on Articles 1–7 of the Belgic Confession (BC). What follows is a summary of some of the relevant insights of these authors taken together with those of other scholars, all of which this researcher accedes to and are acclaimed to influence Reformed approach to biblical interpretation:

1. God exists (BC Article 1). That God exists is the most basic belief of the Reformed tradition (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:15; Vorster, 2020:3). This doctrine in turn influences Reformed view of Scripture, viz.: “... God exists and makes himself known to man in Scripture”. This confession holds crucial ramifications for Reformed hermeneutics, namely, (i) that Reformed hermeneutics is different from “intrinsically atheistic or agnostic” branches of hermeneutics; and (ii) that the revelation of God in Scripture calls for careful and reverential exposition and application, since that “God exists, and ... is *sui generis*”⁴⁵ (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:15). The persuasion that God exists and is knowable by humans is what Calvin predicated his theology on and why he called for a reverential treatment of Scripture as seen above.

44 According to Coetsee and Goede (2022:20) other hermeneutical paradigms share in the Reformed assumptions identified in this section, but not necessarily in all; even noting that within the Reformed family, there are some who challenge some of these assumptions. Among them are, for example, those who charge the classical Reformed hermeneutical approach with naivety, fundamentalism and Biblicism.

45 That is, God exists and is in a class by himself.

2. God makes himself known to humans (BC Article 2) through his “general revelation” (in his creation, preservation, and government of the universe) and through his “special revelation” (in his word). Calvin called this bivalent means of self-disclosure, “*duplex cognitio Dei*” (Vorster, 2020:4). The implications of this presupposition for Reformed hermeneutics are that: (i) since God reveals himself, humans can through both nature and Scripture know him, his works and how they fit into his overall design; (ii) Scripture is “God’s self-revelation”, rather than a human intellectual product as such; (iii) in the matter of God’s self-revelation, Scripture is primary, given that the revelation of God in it is “‘clearer’, ‘fuller’ and ‘more complete’ than his revelation in nature”; and (iv) “God’s revelation in his Scripture is ‘holy’ and ‘divine’”, and therefore “authoritative”, deserving reverential obedience (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:16).

The superiority of Scripture over nature for God’s revelation is enhanced by the deficiency of nature itself: “The perfect knowledge of God was a creational gift”, but it was “distorted and corrupted by sin”. To that extent, the “seed of religion ... divinely sown in all” (Calvin *ICR* 1:4:1) that avails “the light of reason and a moral sense in every human being”, can still not sufficiently lead humans back to God; only in Christ’s atonement could there be reconciliation, which knowledge God reveals in Scripture as “an act of free grace” (Vorster, 2020:4). This high view of Scripture makes a proper reading of it obligatory.

3. Scripture is divinely inspired (BC Article 3).

Scripture, containing the sixty-six canonical books, is an ancient text in the sense that people wrote the texts in a certain time and place, but it is more than any other ancient text because it was inspired by God (*theopneustie*).

(Vorster, 2020:5)

The claim of divine inspiration logically follows the belief in God’s self-disclosure in Scripture (cf. 2 Pet 1:21). Specifically, this inspiration is “organic”, by which is meant that while the human authors of the respective books of the Bible wrote within the context of their own time and culture in history, as well as within the context of their own spiritual experiences and individual idiosyncrasies, they nonetheless wrote everything that is in Scripture under the guidance of the Spirit of God. Reformed hermeneutics therefore distinguishes itself from other approaches that regard

Scripture as “a human reflection about God”; or those who hold the doctrine of mechanical inspiration, which denies human input in the Scripture; or the so-called “dynamic theory of inspiration” that divests Scripture of divine authority (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:16-17; Vorster, 2017:268-269).

In terms of hermeneutics, the concept of organic inspiration calls for an approach to biblical interpretation that accounts for the historical, social, cultural, linguistic and other provenanced realities behind or within the text (Vorster, 2017:268-271). To be sure, this requirement does not suggest some demythologising work like Bultmann proposed, “but a thorough grammatical-historical reading of the text with a clear excavation of the literary forms, grammatical structures and meaning from the social and cultural historic influences” (Vorster, 2017:269).

4. Divinely inspired Scripture is authoritative (BC Art. 5). Only the 66 canonical books are authoritative in matters of faith, and only they “can bind the conscience of man”. The logic is that “[s]ince these books and they alone are inspired ... they alone are viewed as authoritative” and that God speaks in and through them to his people. Moreover, the church believes not *some* things but *all* things which Scripture contains, convinced that “‘the Holy Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God’, and that these books ‘contain the evidence of’ being from God ‘in themselves’”. The Reformed tradition is therefore mindful of the correlation between the inspiration and authority of Scripture, with the hermeneutical implication that “all of Scripture should be treated as the authoritative Word of God and interpreted as such”. The church has no option but to submit itself to Scripture and obey it completely as “the always applicable Word of God” (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:18-19).
5. Divinely inspired Scripture is sufficient (BC Article. 7). Reformed theology holds the view that Scripture “fully contains the will of God”, “that all that man must believe in order to be saved is sufficiently taught therein”, as well as that “the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in it at length”. In other words, there is enough information and instruction in Scripture for the knowledge and worship of God and for the salvation of mankind, and no additional revelation is needed for these purposes. Reformed rejection of “whatever does not agree with this infallible rule”

makes Reformed hermeneutics different from any hermeneutical system that looks to extra-biblical sources for revelation or confirmation (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:19). This has been the view of Scripture right from the inception of the Reformed tradition. Vorster (2017:267) testifies that for classic Reformed tradition,

Scripture is seen as a record and explanation of divine revelation, which is both complete (sufficiency) and comprehensible (perspicuous). In other words, Scripture as a whole contains all one needs to know in this world to be guided in the way of salvation, service and moral conduct.

This confidence in Scripture makes Reformed exegesis focus primarily on biblical material for couching its message, while every other source is of secondary and in fact subservient significance.

In conclusion, this section has just listed five presuppositions that Reformed exegetes work with. The ubiquity of Scripture as may be observed above implies that Reformed hermeneutics is Scripture-centered. Besides, the admittance of presuppositions is an honest way of stating that Reformed exegetes do not claim to approach Scriptures with a neutral mind but rather with a set of fundamental beliefs. After all, the hermeneutic journey generally incorporates not only “the ‘how’ and the ‘what’ of sense-making”, but also questions that border on non-objective realities—motivations, interests and implications—in the engagement with texts. In the end, these underlying factors tint the result of interpretation in some ways (Tomkins and Eatough, 2018:19) and obligates interpreters to be conscious of them as no search for the meaning of a biblical text takes place in a void (Vorster, 2020:8). Still, the presuppositions are not arbitrarily selected but are in the first place drawn from Scripture itself, and in turn seek to promote the integrity and authority of Scripture. This goal is key in formulating hermeneutical principles for the Reformed tradition and hence for promoting plausible interpretation of Scripture. The next section examines some of such principles.

4.4.5 Reformed principles for the exposition of Scripture

There are a number of principles that typically guide Reformed exegetes in their biblical interpretation. Below, some of the principles are outlined, selected on the basis of their immediate relevance to the goals of the study.

1. Effort to determine authorial intent. Reformed hermeneutics advocates for an effort at discovering the intent of the author over against the role of the reader or any other post-canonical intervention. The argument is that otherwise there would be too many claims to the meaning of any given text (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:22-23). While this is instructive, van Doleweerd (2016:216-217) realistically warns that the worldview of the reader and the dogmatic influence of the church (the “hermeneutical community”) are factors to consider in addition to the so-called authorial intent. In any case, Coetsee and Goede’s (2022:22-23) idea of authorial intent is “the meaning that has already been placed into the text by the author (both divine and human)”. This creatively limits the search for authorial intent to the meaning synchronically embedded in the (original) text as it presently stands, rather than depending on some historical-critically reconstructed idea of it. That way, the only source for finding authorial intent is the text itself, just as van Doleweerd (2016:222) prefers to talk about “the intention of the text” and satisfactorily states that “[w]hat the message is and what the author has written in form and content is the road towards it”.
2. Acknowledgement of the historical and literary context of Scripture. Texts, authors and interpreters are historically embedded (Tomkins and Eatough, 2018:19). The interpreter is therefore to read and interpret a given passage of Scripture “within its bigger context”, this being both its historical background and its literary and linguistic frameworks: “Being a historical religion, ‘all texts’ of Scripture ‘are historically and culturally embedded’; being a text of literature, ‘the various literary and linguistic aspects’ of Scripture should be taken into account when it is interpreted”. This involves, as much as it is possible, reading the passage against the backdrop of the historical events that surround it, but of course without relying on these as the primary hermeneutic key. In addition, it involves trying to identify the specific place and function of the passage within the literary milieu or even the book where it is found, as well as how it fits with other generically-related books or with the Old or New Testament (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:23-24).
3. Careful investigation of the grammar of the passage. Such grammatical data as syntax, morphology and semantics can prove immensely beneficial to understanding words,

sentences, paragraphs, and their inter-relations, should the interpreter give attention to them. Equally important is “word-study” of certain key words in the passage. This whole process is captured in the notion of grammatical-historical investigation (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:24-25). The grammatical analysis of biblical texts, in addition to textual- and redaction-critical investigations, entails analysing the grammatical structure of the text within the historical context and collating the passage into “the ‘wholeness’ of Scripture”, given that “the universal text” is what connects biblical authors, readers and traditions (Vorster, 2020:9-10).

4. Accounting for the genre of the passage. While the basic hermeneutical rules remain the same for all genres, the Reformed interpreter is expected to pay attention to the discrete nuances associated with different genres of Bible passages (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:25). The principle whereby scriptural texts are interpreted according to the sense in which they are written, refers technically to a search for the literal sense (Lat.: *sensus literalis*) of the Scripture (Sproul, 2018:1). The justification is that “[e]ach literary genre of the biblical text poses its own challenges to the reader”, thus mandating the interpreter to explore such peculiarities in order to be able to excavate the text’s meaning (Vorster, 2020:9). Du Toit (2009a:138) describes this level of respect for genre as “[r]esponsible exegesis”, pointing out that it insures against exegetical mistakes as well as significantly facilitates understanding. Still, he rightly warns against *pressurising* the text to say what one thinks it should say based on one’s knowledge of a specific genre, or excising a specific generic form and treating it independently from its broader literary context (2009a:139).
5. Comparing Scripture with Scripture. One of the basic principles of Reformed interpretation of Scripture is that “holy Scripture is for itself its own interpreter [*sacra Scriptura sui ipsius interpret*]” (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:25-26), or as Luther puts it, Scripture “itself is of itself certain, simple, and intelligible; it is its own interpreter, testing, judging, and illuminating everything” (LW, 1528; Van den Belt, 2018:101). Accordingly, the dependability of Scripture for its own interpretation ranks higher than the inputs of, say, tradition, ecclesiastical authority, or commentaries. Therefore, “Scripture should be read in the light of the whole of Scripture [*tota Scriptura*]”, since any given part of

Scripture is understood in the light of its other parts. This guideline is a necessary safeguard because “Scripture forms a unity” and is “a connected, canonical, theological whole” (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:26). Technically, the foregoing is referred to as “the analogy of faith” (Lat.: *analogia fidei*) (Sproul, 2018:1; Vorster, 2020:10). It presents a demand for the “part” to be illuminated by the “whole” (Vorster, 2020:10).

6. More difficult portions of Scripture should be explained in the light of easier portions. In contrast to *analogia fidei*, this principle is known as “the analogy of the Scriptures” (Lat.: *analogia scripturae*) (Muller, 1985:33). Notwithstanding the doctrine of perspicuity, all passages are *not equally* clear (cf. 2 Pet. 3:16). The need therefore arises to use the clearer passages to explain those not so clear (Kaiser Jr., 2007b:247; Vorster, 2020:10), or according to Coetsee and Goede (2022:27), to read such difficult passages “in the light of easier parts”. In a more or less linear sense, this implies that “[t]he interpretation of Scripture should move ‘from the clear to the less clear’. Doing this prevents rushing into shallowly-grounded dogmatic formulations based on unclear passages (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:27).

7. Attention should be given to “time-directed” and “time-bound” passages. According to Coetsee and Goede (2022:27),

A passage that is time-directed originated in a specific context in terms of space, time and purpose, but the application of the practices it refers to is meant for all ages. A passage that is time-bound, on the other hand, originates in a specific context in terms of space, time and purpose, but the practices referred to are only applicable to that time.

To explain the principle further, based on Reformed understanding of organic inspiration, Coetsee and Goede (2022:28) assert that for Reformed theology, the message of all of Scripture is “time-directed and not time-bound”. Some of the practices specified in the *then* culture may have outlived their relevance and therefore have no valid application for the present time, while the essential message lives on. The Reformed interpreter is therefore under duty to seek to distinguish between “time-directed” and “time-bound” practices (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:28; cf. Kaiser Jr., 2007a:222-240).

8. The need to consult the interpretation of others. This principle proceeds from the understanding that before the current interpreter's effort at interpreting a given passage, others had over the-more-than-two-millennia period done so, and that their findings can aid the current interpreter hone his/her interpretation within appropriate boundaries. More than that, the principle is an implicit acknowledgement that the same way the current interpreter desires the Holy Spirit to illuminate him/her, so the Holy Spirit also illuminated past interpreters (Coetsee and Goede, 2022:29). Other than that, consulting other people's works is hinged on the diversity and interdependence of the body of Christ—just like it is with the human body (cf. 1 Cor. 12). Poythress (2009:183) clearly states that “the principle of diversity in the body of Christ extends to biblical interpretation”. Within such a context, one member supplements and corrects the other's insight and understanding, thus justifying the appropriate use of commentaries, dictionaries and other help tools in the process of Bible interpretation.
9. Accounting for the principle of *Semper Reformanda*. Against the backdrop of the Reformed grand claim to *sola scriptura*, whereunder all of Christian life, faith, worship, theology and institutions are subjected, the saying “*ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* (the reformed church must continue reforming)” holds. Particularly with respect to biblical interpretation, it means that exegetical results are “always provisional”; that is, interpretations are *always* tentative. In acknowledging that there is no finality in any biblical interpretation, this principle calls for “humility and the acknowledgement that all interpretation must always be revisited, reaffirmed and, if necessary, reformed” (Vorster, 2020:11-12). Therefore, Reformed exegetes must continually reflect and improve on their exegetical methods and products. In this connection and based on the emphatic invitation in Isaiah 55:2-3 to *listen*, Bartholomew (2015:15) aptly concludes that “[i]t is as biblical hermeneutics inhabits the trajectory *from listening to listening* that it finds its place and is enabled to flourish”.

In conclusion, Reformed hermeneutics is guided by a combination of synchronic and diachronic principles. It is for the exegete to know when, how and to what extent to apply which principles and methods in order to arrive at a plausible interpretation of a biblical passage. For a study like the one at hand, a fruitful reflection on hermeneutical principles

is important, as it pursues the development of a hermeneutic key for properly interpreting the texts of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.

4.5 The nature of Pentecostal hermeneutics

4.5.1 Meaning of Pentecostal hermeneutics

There is a wide diversity of orientations and emphases within the Pentecostal movement (Philip, 2021:2; Nel, 2022:45). Archer (2015:320-321) correctly observes that Pentecostalism is fluid and dynamic, and its definition ever so elusive and contestable that it might even be better to talk about “Pentecostals” rather than just “Pentecostalism”. Still, he attempts to define Pentecostalism by stating that it is “a diverse group of restoration and renewal movements held together by a common dynamic synergistic soteriology expressed doxologically through the Fivefold or Full Gospel and shared charismatic experiences”. It must however be explained that the *holding together* here does not refer to any arrangement by which certain interests or criteria are formally adopted for all—at least, not yet. It rather signals the proverbial golden thread that runs through all the autonomous subgroups and facilitates unity in diversity. It should logically be expected, therefore, that Pentecostal hermeneutics is anything but homogenous. As such, to make a statement about the hermeneutical preferences of the Pentecostal movement, one has, at every point, to delineate the “actual social and cultural face and identity” of the particular community in question (Philip, 2022:2). This is so because there are differential interests among the existing Pentecostal communities, with their varying cultural constructions influencing their interpretational approaches and results (George, 2023:93).

Against such a complex backdrop, this study adopts a definition of Pentecostal hermeneutics offered elsewhere by this researcher, with the conviction that it captures cardinal attributes of a typical Pentecostal attempt to interpret a text of Scripture:

Pentecostal hermeneutics can be defined as an experience-oriented, narrative-oriented, and praxis-oriented practice of biblical interpretation that pays attention to the active role of the Holy Spirit in generating meaning from the canonical texts as they stand presently, and in such a way that promotes the identity and meets the needs of the Pentecostal community.

(Akpan, 2018:78)

To further explicate this definition, it is noted below that:

1. Pentecostal hermeneutics is largely subjective, although this does not necessarily mean that it is subjectivised (Fogarty, 2012:1). What it means is that Pentecostal hermeneutics depends largely on the experience of the interpreter, which they often read into the text. Defending—or, in fact, promoting—this posture, George (2023:88) unequivocally states that the uniqueness of Pentecostal theology lies in its being “a doctrine to be proclaimed and an experience to be experienced”. In a similar fashion, Archer (2015:321-322) explains that Pentecostalism is characterised by “transformative experiential spirituality”, owing to its theology being “rooted in an experiential, oral, and lived tradition” that is believed to be animated by the Holy Spirit. According to them, “Spirit experience” helps them align with, rather than go against, the Spirit’s inspiration and Spirit-intended meaning of the text (Philip, 2022:4). Also, rather than detract from the grammatical analysis or missing the textual sense of the passage, it helps plumb deeper into the text than only historical-critical methods (wherever they are adopted) could do (George, 2023:88).
2. It depends so much on narrative. Pentecostals read biblical narratives to re-live the same charismatic phenomena being described in the stories. Pentecostalism’s “spirituality is formed *narratively* in worshiping communities in which testimonies, tongues, songs, scriptures, sermons, and dancing serve to motivate the faithful to worship the living God, experience God, and ‘discover their worth before God’” (Archer, 2015:321-322, emphasis mine).
3. It is skewed toward practical intervention. Right from its earliest times, Pentecostalism has always sought to use the Word to practically intervene in the existential conditions of seekers, whether this has to do with their health, social, or any other condition. By this “orthopraxy” approach (that is, the concern to empower believers to “live Christianity”), Pentecostals generally seek to make the message of the Bible and Christian doctrines daily relevant to the *Sitz im Leben* of believers (Nel, 2022:40).
4. Pentecostal hermeneutics stands on a tripod, namely, the text, the community and the Holy Spirit. Pentecostal search for meaning is typically triangulated between (1) the role of the biblical text as the primary source of meaning in an immediate, synchronic and uncritical encounter (Archer, 2009:215-223, 247; Akpan, 2018:80); (2)

their sense of accountability to the believing community, given that a Pentecostal interpreter filters (or, has to filter) meaning through the believing community's⁴⁶ "Central Narrative Convictions"⁴⁷, thus drawing from the community's story as "the primary hermeneutical context for reading of Scripture" (Archer, 2009:134, 268); and (3) the role of the Holy Spirit to open up the wells of understanding of the text in a way that goes beyond just illumination and helps them to "hear" God speak to them (Nel, 2007:535-536).

4.5.2 Background of Pentecostal hermeneutics

The origin of Pentecostal hermeneutics can be discussed from different standpoints that reflect the earliest circumstances, aspirations, and methods of what is now a global Pentecostal community. From a historical perspective, Charles Fox Parham had in late 19th century developed a curriculum in which his students at Bethel Bible College, Topeka, Kansas, were required to study *only* the Bible in the quest to establish evidence for the baptism of the Spirit. By this approach, Parham unwittingly established a pre-critical hermeneutical method at the very point of midwifing Pentecostalism. This was in fact the biblical-epistemological context in which what was understood to be Spirit baptism with the epochal manifestation of speaking in tongues by Agnes Oznam (January 1, 1901) and William Seymour's Azusa Street revival (1906), took place (Nel, 2016a:191-193; 2016b:1-2).

From a doctrinal perspective, the early Pentecostal movement tilted toward a millenarian message, with a general hunger for "religious communions more visibly filled with the supernatural wonders of the New Testament". The first fruit of this doctrinal hunger was Parham's crave for baptism in the Spirit with speaking in tongues as the initial evidence (Mitchell, 2003:22, 25), the horizon of which every believer had the duty to expand (Nel, 2016a:193; 2016b:2; Kinuthia, 2021:62-63).

46 The community can be "a local concrete particularity" that uniquely interprets and is being interpreted by Scripture, or "a trans-historical 'social imaginary' set in memories, habits, and texts" which has over time created a pattern of interpretation that is "both self-reflexive and habituated" (Hill, 2016:29-30).

47 Otherwise called "Pentecostal story" or "Pentecostal narrative tradition", Archer means by "Central Narrative Convictions" everything that constitutes the community's central beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and practices that are coherently bound together, that give identity to the community, and that defines the goal of the community in its interaction with the general society.

In terms of methodology, Pentecostal hermeneutics was birthed by a hermeneutical crisis of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The crisis was a reaction to the paradigm shift from common sense epistemology⁴⁸ to naturalism, due to the influence of the evolutionary scientific theory of Charles Darwin (1800-1882) and the progressive social evolution theory proposed by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). It combined the experience-based epistemological approach of modernist liberalism (exemplified by Schleiermacher) and the common-sense approach of fundamentalism that promoted the authority of the Bible and the factuality of biblical claims (Archer, 2009:53-54; Nel, 2021:69-70). For the early Pentecostals, not only was the Bible inspired by the Spirit; their reading of it was also inspired, and led to encounter and transformation (Nel, 2021:73).

There were also social and intellectual (or actually, anti-intellectual) dimensions to the origin of Pentecostalism. For the social dimension, Vail (2015:3) and Nel (2016a:191; 2016b:1) note that the movement began with unschooled people⁴⁹. There were no professionals among original adherents, but poor, disinherited and socially disadvantaged peasants, artisans and labourers who nevertheless were active in bearing witness to the Pentecostal blessing that they claimed to have received. Early Pentecostal accentuation of the supernatural over against the materialistic, modernistic worldview of the time was perceived to have provided answers to the marginalised who desperately needed various forms of healing (Nel, 2019:2). It is therefore no wonder that Pentecostalism was so quickly and widely embraced, while the demographic composition of the community explains why sociologists usually (but erroneously) see early Pentecostalism as Christianity of the poor (Archer, 2009:28; Melton, 2018:1).

48 Common sense epistemology simply takes things at face value. According to it, because things exist in fact and are just what they appear to be, they can be perceived by human senses. The pioneering modern scientist and intellectual icon that strode between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), promoted a common sense, experimental method of science. Baconian epistemology assumed that scientific theories succeed in predictions because the objects to which they refer are truly in existence; otherwise, scientific successes would have been best described as a miracle. The combined influence of this “realist argument” and “common sense realism” (or, “naïve realism”) was perceivable in a large percentage of 19th-century Western Christianity, where the Bible was read from this perspective, just as scientists relied on it for their studies (Nel, 2021:68-69).

49 This could rather be said to have happened not by design but by coincidence; so that early Pentecostalism does not need to be equated with social deprivation, although the latter had tremendous influence on the former.

An anti-intellectual disposition was bred in favour of supernaturalism. One of the first casualties of this culture was theological education, effectively derogated due to the perceived coldness in the religious activities of learned clergy, exacerbated by the penchant to suspend charismatically-oriented believers from the mainline churches. Moreover, the perceived urgency of the need for world evangelisation in the face of the imminent return of Christ implied that pausing to acquire education amounted to a waste of precious time. In place of formal education, therefore, well-performing elders, deacons, and missionaries were awarded with certificates that acknowledged their gifts, while on the other hand short-term Bible schools were established to inculcate Pentecostal doctrines in new converts and train personnel for field work. The training of ministry leaders was “‘spiritual’, Bible-centred and Bible-oriented”, without the encumbrances of scientific scholarship. To be fair to Pentecostals, however, this disposition changed in the later part of the 20th century, due to the realisation of their need to be relevant in ecumenical affairs, thus leading to their introduction of formal education (Nel, 2016a:191, 193-195; 2016b:2).

All these historical perspectives have weighed and continue to weigh on Pentecostal methods of interpretation of Scripture. For instance, Storbakken (2022:2) frames the legacy belief in the continuation of inspiration well when he says, “Just as the Spirit breathed the messages of truth into the biblical authors, so he breathes the empowerment for accurate interpretation into all believers”. Beyond that, pneumatic epistemology, supernatural encounters and pragmatism continue to be stressed, while interpretation generally continues to be anything but critical.

4.5.3 Distinctives of Pentecostal hermeneutics

4.5.3.1 The question of distinctiveness of Pentecostal hermeneutics

There is the argument whether Pentecostal hermeneutics is distinctive, and if yes, whether such distinctiveness is necessary. Among the earliest voices that did not patronise the idea of distinctiveness was Fee (1976:124). He dismissively opined that Pentecostals approached the Bible as a mere “Promise-Box”. More recent voices with a similar bent include Nel (2017:97-98), who proposes that it is neither possible nor desirable to seek the distinctiveness of Pentecostal hermeneutics, for the fact that

Pentecostal openness to the Spirit in Bible reading is *ideological rather than distinctive*, and to such an extent that there are some common grounds between Pentecostalism and other traditions. For him, too, the heterogeneity of emphases on this and other aspects of hermeneutics within the Pentecostal community does not allow for distinctiveness.

At the same time, there are others who believe in the distinctiveness of Pentecostal hermeneutics. For instance, Anderson (2010:1) opines that “there is an identifiable, unique, and legitimate Pentecostal hermeneutic”. On his part, Archer (2016:316) promotes a view of Pentecostalism as a theological tradition of its own identity—and one should therefore conclude, with a distinctive hermeneutical orientation. Elsewhere, he submits that Pentecostalism is a distinct theological tradition that should be recognised as such—“an authentically new living Christian spirituality with a distinct theological view of reality” (Archer, 2006:302). While its earliest version drew ingredients from other traditions, it nonetheless moulded itself in peculiarity. Archer continues: “Pentecostalism is more than the sum total of all the contributing theological antecedents that it embraced, absorbed or rejected, and then transformed into a distinct tradition which has commonalities with most Christian traditions including evangelicals” (2006:304). It is taken for granted here that a distinctive hermeneutical approach should follow a distinctive theological tradition.

Martins (2018:1) is much more assertive by positing that the Pentecostal revival of the 20th century birthed “a unique interpretive matrix from which emerged fresh interpretive strategies” that, according to him, combined the 19th-century methods of the Holiness Movement and a new approach that accounted for the interpreter’s experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This addition did more than a slight modification of approaches; it also brought into the hermeneutical lexicon the so-called “Full Gospel” or “Five-fold Gospel” terminology, which inevitably constituted the “central defining characteristic” and “theological grid” of Pentecostalism, positioned Jesus centrally in Pentecostal theology, and outlined his role as Saviour, Sanctifier, Spirit Baptizer, Healer, and soon-coming King (Martins, 2018:3).

Therefore, despite the relatively late scholarly engagement with Pentecostal hermeneutical methods (Storbakken, 2022:1), it is clear that Pentecostals have employed

distinctive, fresh, and innovative hermeneutical strategies from the outset. For them, it needed to be so because, in Martins' (2018:1) almost boastful words, "[t]he old hermeneutical wine-skins were incapable of containing the new wine of the Holy Spirit that God was pouring out on all people". This researcher believes that Pentecostal hermeneutics qualifies to be regarded as being distinctive. But whether one believes this or not, there are features in it that if not strictly unique, are typical and emphatic about the way Pentecostals read the Bible. These are highlighted under Pentecostal hermeneutical presuppositions and principles below.

4.5.3.2 Pentecostal presuppositions for Bible reading

The following presuppositions are identified with Pentecostal hermeneutics:

1. Pentecostal spirituality and its influence on Pentecostal hermeneutics. The correlation between the two variables can be explained in multiple ways, including:
 - i. Pentecostal spiritual-experiential emphasis. Pentecostal emphasis is heavy on subjective spiritual experience—one's encounter with "a living God" and the accruing emotional, ecstatic and pragmatic after-effects. Pentecostal spirituality rests heavily on affections, rather than on intellectual ability. They think "at the level of the affective, unconscious, predeliberative" and stay open to "the undeterminative working of the Spirit" before turning to "the cognitive, deliberative world of understanding". Therefore, such affective experiences or expressions as love, emotions, desire, feelings, and passion gain emphasis in the Pentecostal attempt to marry the affective to the intellectual and the practical, while a purely orthodoxy- or intellectually-oriented guidance is rejected. In short, Pentecostal spirituality deliberately involves more of the pursuit of spiritual experience than the pursuit of theological or any other form of intellectual knowledge (Nel, 2016a:201; 2016b:4, 7).
 - ii. Imagination is superior to reason in Pentecostal spirituality. By imagination here is meant unempirical assumptions, expectations, and conclusions, of which Pentecostals have little or no doubt about. Nel puts it well: "It functions on an epistemological level that is aesthetic rather than noetic". As a result, order is surrendered and "improvisation, play, performance, and instrumentality" reign (unlike in other denominations and in academic environments where the first

consideration is order) (Nel, 2016b:4). So, it is common in preaching, for instance, to hear a Pentecostal confidently remark that he/she has got *a word from the Lord* and proceeds to authoritatively deliver that *word* with the congregants chorusing “Amen” every now and then. They are not necessarily concerned whether that *word* was taken from the Bible or from a private charismatic encounter as claimed by the preacher. Indeed, such interjections constitute part of the emotional responses that keeps the service “lively” (Alvarsson, 2014:331-332).

- iii. Pentecostal spirituality is more orally oriented than it depends on written documents, and hence depends on “ongoing, daily revelation of truths in the life of the individual and assembly rather than the revelation of eternal truths”. This explains why Pentecostals have more leaning toward oral communicative events like testimony, song, and preaching, rather than toward scripted, academic and systematised documents and methodologies. It also explains typical Pentecostal penchant for extempore delivery of sermons and their confidence in glossolalia over against intelligible language in the pursuit of spiritual truths (Nel, 2016b:4; 2016a:197).
2. Pentecostal view of the role of the Holy Spirit. For Pentecostals, the Holy Spirit does more than the cognitive phenomenon of illumination as described by the Reformers. He effects “a pneumatic epistemology”; that is, a knowing that is made possible purely by the charismatic influence of the Holy Spirit and that enables believers to phenomenologically “hear the Lord” in the course of reading the Bible. It is equally expected that a preacher “has heard from the Lord” and is bringing that message to the people of God through preaching. The communication gets better and more consistent when one has been baptized in the Spirit. For Pentecostals, until “the light of the Spirit” beams on the biblical text, reason can do little to enhance understanding of it, and until God speaks through the Bible, it is no more than “a dead letter” (Nel, 2007:535-536). As such, they are not simply looking for textual content, but “fresh, new things [that] the Spirit does” (Cartledge, 1996:123). This expectation necessitates the surrendering of one’s mind to God, as well as openness to the eventual sounding of the voice of the Spirit (Nel, 2022:42).

For early Pentecostals, it was a given that the same Spirit by whom the Scriptures were inspired and preserved, was still illuminating, teaching, guiding, convicting, and transforming people through that same Word in their day, “so that Scripture only becomes effective as Spirit-Word”. This means that without the role of the Spirit as outlined above, the Bible is perceived as no more than a piece of literature, but “becomes the Word because of the Spirit’s ministry”. This explains why Pentecostals do not so much differentiate between inspiration of the canonical text and Spirit-illumination of the text they are reading. They in fact allow for the contemporary believer to “experience existentially” the same phenomena as the first apostles did, under the influence of the same Spirit and (expectedly) with the same results as were recorded in the early church (Nel, 2016a:199).

3. Pentecostal view of the Scripture. While an understanding of the Pentecostal movement may vary with culture, the authoritative role of the Bible is consistently significant across fairly all Pentecostal faith communities (Thompson, 2018:3). However, they seek Scripture’s immediate applicability, so that understanding of the text should culminate in application—what Nel (2022:41) calls “the personal involvement of the reader or listener with the text” or “an embodied and involved reading of the Bible”. In other words, the goal of Bible reading is to find meaning for the situation at hand. This is necessary for and in fact integral to worship, and indeed is a guarantee for being transformed and empowered to obey the Scripture (Nel, 2022:42).

Pentecostals want to re-live the stories they read in the Bible, or to use Nel’s words, to “live in the world of the Bible”, because for them, the same God whose work is described in the biblical text is working today, and “the Bible is to be implemented, demonstrated and realised rather than understood” (Nel, 2007:529-532). Biblical stories constitute testimonies of people’s encounters with God, “with the invitation to expect the same experience today” (Ellington, 1996:29). Their interest in narrative is therefore informed by the fact that it sets the context for them to encounter God first-hand and gives them the impetus to seek some kind of continuity between God’s biblical-historical self-disclosures and current ones (Akpan, 2018:65). A fitting final

description of the “encounter” presupposition of Pentecostal hermeneutics is captured by Nel (2021:78): “For Pentecostals, the Bible is not only an explicative textbook or ethical manual; the text becomes a type of altar at which both believers and God show up.... In the process, the Bible interprets believers rather than believers trying to interpret the Bible.”

4. Pentecostals and the “Full Gospel” and restorationist ideals. It is not without consequence that Archer (2009:13-14) describes Pentecostalism as “[a] diffuse group of restorationist revivalistic movements, held together by a common doctrinal commitment to the ‘Full Gospel’ message and a passionate emphasis on the ecstatic religious experiences associated with Spirit baptism”. While there is much more that can be unpacked from this statement, two issues are considered here. One, “restorationist” points to the fact that Pentecostals see their agenda as to recover and continue NT Christianity⁵⁰ and to function within their social networks as true replications of that model of Christianity (Archer, 2009:133; Mitchell, 2003:8). Two, the “Full Gospel” (or “Fivefold Gospel”) pointed early Pentecostals to “the desire to embrace ‘all’ of Christ” and in fact sought to be equated with “the idea of wholeness and completeness” that is conveyed by the ancient understanding of “catholicity” (Kärkkäinen, 2014:35). For them, the “Full Gospel” served as a means of restoration of the NT idea of the gospel of Jesus Christ, “a complete gospel that emphasised the importance of Jesus’s redemptive ministry for humanity” (Nel, 2019:2).

Pentecostals read and preach from especially the NT texts against the backdrop of this ideal, expecting that in their lives and in the lives of their hearers, the works of Jesus Christ as Saviour, Sanctifier, Spirit Baptizer and Healer would be immediately fulfilled, and that believers would be helped to be ready for his imminent second

50 Elsewhere, and for several reasons, Archer criticises early Pentecostals’ claim to have constituted the restoration of New Testament Christianity, as having been naïve. Among other reasons, he notes (1) that “New Testament Christianity” was anything but monolithic; (2) that church history has a testimony of many spiritual renewal movements; (3) that the claim relies mostly on only the book of Acts; (4) that the meaning of “New Testament Christianity” was more akin to a reference to the New Testament, rather than the historical epoch that is called “early Christianity”; and (5) that early Pentecostals were “paramodern” and were actually influenced by modernity (2016:318-319). In fact, such a claim is not new; in its epoch, Protestantism had also claimed to have “recovered the apostolic church of the New Testament that could now be restored, escaping the constraints of tradition, culture and history” (Nel, 2021:71, 74).

coming. For the emphasis on miraculous healing in particular, there is no doubt whatsoever that the Healer would perform it. Nel aptly describes Pentecostals' positive and unencumbered expectancy of the miraculous by stating that "[t]exts [are] read as a model for the believer's life, 'without angst about the miraculous or how it all fits into complex theological systems'" (Nel, 2016a:197).

In summary, Pentecostals take their spirituality seriously, seeking encounter with God and a resultant affective and transformative impact. They have a high view of Scripture as an inspired and authoritative book that they read, themselves supposedly inspired by the same Holy Spirit. They are preoccupied with identifying themselves in the biblical narrative targeted at encounter and transformation. The Holy Spirit is the mediator between God and the Pentecostal reader, and helps the reader to hear the voice of God in the course of reading the biblical text. Pentecostals also believe that they have the mandate to represent and restore early Christianity, particularly with the "Fivefold Gospel" of Jesus as Saviour, Sanctifier, Spirit Baptizer, Healer, and soon coming King. These presuppositions influence the way Pentecostals see themselves, read the Bible, conduct worship, and generally go about life.

4.5.3.3 Principles of Pentecostal hermeneutics

For the sake of emphasis, it is stated here again that the various strands of Pentecostalism have their respective doctrinal and hermeneutical emphases. However, some general guidelines have been identified for the way they interpret Scriptures. The following are considered:

1. The Bible is read as a single narrative. Pentecostals read the Bible as "one grand unified story" in which they must participate (Storbakken, 2022:1), or put differently, as "a single unified narrative of God's redemptive plan". The Fivefold Gospel is at the center of its message, inviting readers and hearers to the understanding of the holistic and renewing salvation of God. The whole of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, is one continuing story of God's rescue, and understanding its message in this way is necessary for realising the full benefits of God's grace (Martins, 2018:4). This view of the Bible is present in other traditions, to be sure (see, for instance, Goheen [2006:2, 4] and Aubert [2022:119] for their respective Evangelical and Calvinistic perspectives).

In effect, some non-Pentecostals also validate reading of the Bible as a single narrative. The only difference, perhaps, is that Pentecostals do not only acknowledge the unity of the biblical narrative, but also want to practically embed their story in the story of the Bible.

A combination of the participatory and redemptive emphases has implications for Pentecostal spirituality and Christian missions. Archer (2015:331) takes it further by stating that

A pentecostal hermeneutic will be concerned with the liberating redemptive message of Jesus Christ and the emancipatory sanctifying working of the Holy Spirit, if it is to remain true to its own spirituality. In this way our communities become living embodied letters and our communities become the sacramental redemptive presence of Christ in the world.

The grand-narrative view of Scripture enhances Pentecostal spirituality and facilitates transformation of the faith community from ordinary messengers into *a message* and from ordinary proclaimers of redemption into *redemption personified*. In this light, Pentecostals are not expected to just encounter any text of Scripture as it were in an isolated context, but always in the redemptive context of the entire canon as well as in the context of the sanctifying, empowering and transforming work of the Spirit. Goheen's (2006:3) statement about the biblical story profoundly fits the Pentecostal context, namely, that "we are to remain in its world, find the meaning of our lives there, and fit our lives into its structure of universal history", because "it claims to be the real world". But not only do Pentecostals want to settle in the grand-narrative world of the Bible; they also find in it a complete and comprehensive message for the outside world in a missionary sense. In Whelchel's (2025:1) words,

Reading the Bible as one comprehensive story enables us to understand our identity as God's people and identify our role in his story. From this perspective, we recognize our call to participate in God's redemptive mission. Our identity as God's people comes from our missional role in the biblical story, which is not merely in the future but also in the here and now. By recovering Scripture's grand narrative, we fully understand how God calls us to steward all he has given us in every relationship and aspect of our lives.

Therefore, when Pentecostals approach the Bible as one story in which their own story is told, they are at the same time mining a redemptive message for the world damaged

by sin and its consequences. In the end, narrative reading of Scripture is also a missional reading of Scripture.

2. Intertextual reading of the Bible. Due to their unitary view of Scripture, Pentecostals read the Bible intertextually. Early Pentecostal intertextuality required that, following a “common sense approach’ that took the Bible at face value”, they go through the whole Bible, identify texts that addressed a subject of interest, and string such texts together to formulate a doctrinal statement on that subject (Martins, 2018:3). This was the so-called “Bible reading method” (BRM) that engaged a pre-critical, proof-text approach and implied that early Pentecostals did not bother about the social, cultural, linguistic, or any other gap between Bible times and the time of the present reader. Martins also demonstrates the way BRM worked with his metaphoric description of the eschatological tension that agitated early Pentecostals for an urgent mission: “Pentecostals believed the end to be near—it was the ‘evening light’ (Zech. 14.6-7), and the ‘night is coming when no one can work’ (Jn. 9.4)” (2018:4, 6-7).

However, the operation of “intertextuality” described above by Martins mismatches the original or standard notion behind the term, namely, the dialogical—not logical—relationship between texts. Generally, intertextuality is claimed when the interpretation of a text gains more value than otherwise as a result of investigating its relationship with (an)other text(s) (Alkier, 2023:1; cf. Alkier, 2009:3). Specifically for biblical hermeneutics, it covers investigations such as “inner-biblical allusions”, “inner-biblical exegesis”, “typology”, “intertextual echo”, “narrative intertextuality”, etc. (Moyise, 2002:418-428; Alkier, 2025:1; Viljoen, 2025:1). In Martin’s rather reductionist explanation and example above, it appears that what he understands to be Pentecostal intertextual reading is, to use Alkier’s (2025:1) words, no more than “the linear, temporal logic of a timeline”. The stringing of the passages in Zechariah and GJohn as well as the linguistic trajectory from “evening light” to “night” betray this shortcoming. Nonetheless, it gives evidence that Pentecostals read one biblical text with at least one other text in mind, more or less in a supplementary fashion.

3. The supernatural-experiential grid of early Pentecostalism. The source of truth was beyond just the Scripture, and included charismatic experiences such as claims of

divine revelation. Beyond illumination, the Holy Spirit was understood to enable the interpretation and appropriation of the biblical text in multiple but valid ways, and hence supposedly to facilitate the recovery of the Western church's "sense of mysticism and the immanence of the transcendent which was diminished by rationalism". The hermeneutical implication was that the meaning of Scripture was discovered relationally, personally, and experientially rather than scientifically. Arising from their subjective involvement with the Bible world, early Pentecostals inevitably normativised biblical narratives. That is, they in their literal interpretation looked to biblical stories—especially those in the book of Acts—as providing examples for the practice of the church in their day⁵¹ (Martins, 2018:5-6). As such, the narratives in Acts were read dogmatically and pragmatically. Thus, the approach adds "charismatic experiential presuppositions" and "experiential verification" to the results of the Protestant scientific approach (Vail, 2015:3-4).

4. Jesus is seen as the beginning, pivot, and goal of the biblical narrative. As should be expected, this disposition caused the early Pentecostals to read the OT Christologically, sometimes approaching the biblical texts allegorically or even typologically (Martins, 2018:6). This principle requires that the earthly life and activities of Jesus and his continuing work as the ascended Lord constitute the hermeneutic key for understanding Scripture.

It reminds this researcher of a series of Christ for all Nations crusade meetings he attended in Port Harcourt, Nigeria in 2018. Every day of the event, the President of the organisation, Evangelist Daniel Kolenda, first focused on evangelistic preaching and leading seekers to Christ, before he would switch to ministering to the sick. But before praying for the sick, he consistently took a brief moment to teach on *Jesus as Healer*. Then after ministering to the sick, he invited people for testimonies, and repeatedly asked the testifiers whom they thought had healed them. Some said it was God, others Jesus, and so on; but he kept emphasising to the testifiers and the audience that *it was Jesus who had healed them*, even demanding that they confess, "Jesus healed me".

51 Cf. Jn. 12:14; 1 Cor. 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:21.

In effect, the “Full Gospel” paradigm places Jesus at its theological center, and may not be any other than a result of Pentecostals’ understanding of the activities of “the Gospels” Jesus, the OT prophetic outlook on the Messiah, and the Lucan explanation of his role in the manifestation of miracles (e.g., Ac. 3:16; 4:30). However, it must also be noted that the centrality of Jesus has been taken too far by particularly the Oneness branch of Pentecostalism, which rejects the Trinitarian doctrine and rather believes that “God is absolutely one with no distinction of persons” and that “Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Godhead incarnate” (Mitchell, 2003:4, 33-37; cf. Archer, 2009:11-13). Apart from this extreme viewpoint, it is reasonable to place Jesus at the center of hermeneutics; after all, there is a considerable measure of the same disposition in other traditions, particularly Evangelical and Reformed.

5. Triadic exegetical method. Pentecostal interpretation of Scripture is negotiated between three hermeneutical elements, namely, Spirit, text, and community, whose respective authorities Pentecostals place together in some balance. Pentecostals regard Scriptures very highly, much as they depend on the Spirit to disclose the voice of God from scriptural texts. In fact, for them, the minimum expectation of Spirit-led reading of Scripture is that it should “be consistent with the apostolic witness because the restorationist motif serves to establish Pentecostal self-identity” (Nel, 2022:41). That is, whereas the reading is Spirit-informed, it has to accord with the meaning of the canonical text. Even so, Bible interpretation is done within the context of the believing community that holds a “Spirit-governed, Spirit-supported and Spirit-propagated essence” (2022:41). This interrelationship of text, Spirit and community underscores the assertions that Pentecostal hermeneutics is basically “participatory and relational” and “a contextualized theological hermeneutical activity” (Archer, 2016:317; 2015:331). Furthermore, it looks beyond a proper interpretation of Scripture and envisions the embodiment of Scripture “in a holy dynamic mode of *relational* existence” (2015:331, emphasis mine).

Pentecostal interpreters never work in isolation; they interpret within community—bound to, listening to, drawing from, and accountable to their immediate and extended faith communities. Such is Storbakken’s (2023:4) invitation to a *reading relationship* that

acknowledges an existing relationship as well as the unique perspective of the believing community:

Join us as we read and receive afresh the biblical story shaped and performed by our Pentecostal foremothers and forefathers. We will retell our story—not only in the manner of church historians—but built upon our collective reading, application, and performance of the biblical text across the Pentecostal stage.

But in all, it appears that among the three hermeneutical elements, Pentecostals almost by default place more weight on the Spirit than on the text or the community. There can hardly be any other reason for this than that they are attuned to playing their part in a Spirit-enabled, trans-generational performance of “the grand symphony of interpretations” of the biblical story (Storbakken, 2022:4). For instance, Archer (2015:332) minces no words in accentuating the hermeneutical role of the Spirit over against other elements:

More important than proper use of methods is the spiritual formation of Jesus-shaped and Spirit-filled Pentecostal virtuous communities. Hermeneutics, then, is “a spiritual, communal, interpretive art. It can be safely, wisely and fruitfully exercised only by those whose minds and hearts have been soaked in and shaped by the Gospel itself—within the Christian community’s reflection, devotion and worship”.

Just to show the emphasis on the “Spirit” element, Archer uses “Spirit”/“spiritual” three times in this relatively short statement. The bent toward a spiritualised interpretive approach is so strong that Philip (2022:1) is caught complaining that in the modern approach to hermeneutics, the technical competence of the interpreter has been elevated above their spiritual life. Granted, this itself is apparently prejudicial; still, it demonstrates the inflamed Pentecostal passion to bring the pneumatic experience full-force into the process of interpretation. This is further revealed by Philip’s statement that “the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of interpreter is more important in interpretation than his/her expertise in critical theories of interpretation”. He calls this direct resort to the Holy Spirit, “spiritual pragmatism”, and by it denotes “a way to decipher the voice of the Spirit from the text” by means of “spiritual experience and spiritual illumination”.

These statements reveal a tension between a believing community's *method* and its *spiritual experience*. If in the statements, *method* is matched with *text*, it becomes clear that *method*—and for that matter, critical methods—trails *the Spirit’s mediation*. To be sure, methods have their place and in fact constitute a criterion for evaluating an

interpretation; still, it is more importantly required that interpretation as “a spiritual, communal, interpretive art” fits into the Spirit-informed theological grid of the Pentecostal community (Archer, 2015:331-332). There is no wonder then that McKay (2013:57-58) confidently describes Pentecostal hermeneutics as “spiritual”, “charismatic”, and “prophetic”, and claims that “it draws us to God and gives life”; whereas, according to him, the “objective and analytic” approach, though “interesting in itself, ... [imparts] little or nothing of the life of God to the student”. McKay’s assertion here implicitly dovetails the weighty influence, and therefore key role, of the Spirit in interpretation. So, in essence, the authority of the Spirit in interpretation is principal in Pentecostal hermeneutics.

Pinnock (2013:237-238) is even more explicit when he calls it “Spirit-hermeneutics” and by that means “a strategy of reading Scripture in such a way that the Spirit has the liberty to speak” (cf. 1 Jn. 2:20; Eph. 1:17). In the immediate sense, this implies a subjective understanding that is attributed to the Spirit (2013:239-240; cf. 2 Cor. 3:6). In essence, the Spirit guarantees effective interpretation, so that one is able to access the “revelatory text” rather than the “dead letter”. More than that, this “revelatory text” is “a power in our lives” and is what opens up the significance of the text, while exegesis “is important, even indispensable, for working on the text-horizon”. To that extent, “[t]he Spirit takes the things of Christ and makes them known to us ... [playing] the pivotal role in making the text God’s revelatory word ... [making] the knowledge of God a possibility in and through an ‘I-Thou’ encounter” (2013:240). Similar to Archer’s opinion above, Pinnock here creates a dialectic between exegetical methods and Spirit-enabled “I-Thou” encounters. Accordingly, exegesis and its result do not go far enough since they of themselves purportedly belong in the horizon of the “dead letter”; what is rather needed is “Spirit hermeneutics” through which the Holy Spirit animates the text to become the “revelatory text” (or “revelatory word”).

For Davies (2013:251), Pentecostal interpreters should “meet God in the text” and in the process the Holy Spirit should speak to their spirits. Here, the text is primarily the turf of an encounter—a means to an end, sort of—while the Spirit’s pneumatic-

epistemological communication is the ultimate goal of interpretation. No statement can be more forthright than when he says:

Our common heritage ... has taught us the miracle and the mystery of personal experience of God's presence, experienced and mediated through the biblical text among other ways, and therefore, the value of knowing by perception over knowing by proof. As a result we prefer to interpret Scripture by encounter more than by exegesis.

(Davies, 2013:254)

Also clearly pneumatically-oriented is George's call:

Pentecostal theology is a narrative theology that requires a conscious shift from the evangelical hermeneutical engagement with the text.... The mediation of the Spirit in the entire process yields a life-transforming engagement.

(2023:96)

George's submission here is essentially not different from those above; the only difference is that the one calls for a complete break with critical methods, while the other invites supplementation of the critical methods with the pneumatic method.

Pentecostal readers may well be regarded as "spiritualising readers", or better, "dialogue partners" in engagement with both the Bible and the inspiring Spirit (Davies, 2013:254). The hope with "Spirit-hermeneutics" is that rather than the fixed meaning of a text based on the traditional doctrine of inspiration, it motivates the "dynamic in the text which promotes endless reflection", so that beyond the text's "definite meanings in the historical situation" the Pentecostal reader can access "the 'total' meaning" of the text that cannot be limited to its historical perspective (Pinnock, 2013:241).

This implies that a text can say more than was originally intended by its human author, eventually reaching the height and depth of meaning that God intended but which was poorly communicated by the human author (Pinnock, 2013:242; Akpan, 2018:71). Therefore, Pinnock is right to talk about a "genuine" meaning rather than a "right" meaning, as there is "no one and only possible meaning" and multiplicity of valid meanings is not just possible but also inevitable in "Spirit hermeneutics" (Pinnock, 2013:244). Even so, the Pentecostal interpreter needs to be wary of the potentiality (and consequences) of surplus meaning—the kind that (not necessarily from a Reformed perspective) Lategan (2009b:66) warns against. They also need to be careful not to entertain excessive ambition in the sense of expecting any *sharper* perspective than the

original author or audience—notwithstanding that they believe strongly in the continuity of inspiration.

To create a balance for the aspirations of Spirit-hermeneutics, therefore, Pentecostal interpreters need to avoid reading their minds into the text, and a sure way to achieve this is to pay attention to “authorial meaning and intention”, that is, “the text’s message based on its merit” (Nel, 2022:42). This must operate with “controlled liberty”: while interpreters exercise freedom, that freedom is anchored in the canon of Scripture, accounts for both the text’s original and present meaning, and thus allows the Spirit to fuse the past and present horizons (Pinnock, 2013:241). So, while at face value the Pentecostal hermeneutical triangle appears to be altogether pneumatic, personalised and indeterminate, there are legitimate concerns from within the community for mindfulness to deal with the text on its merit.

4.6 Summary and conclusion

To summarise, hermeneutics is understood epistemologically or ontologically, but from either perspective the aim is to be able to interpret communication properly. Biblical hermeneutics in particular focuses on theories, tools and methods that are employed for proper and fruitful exegeses of biblical passages, and is justified by a number of factors, including socio-historical gaps, the nature of texts as always inviting careful interpretation, and the natural inhibitions of humanity in its effort to understand divine communication.

Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutics constitute two of many other approaches within Christianity. Reformed hermeneutics emphasises the formal authority of the Scripture as God’s word, and is based on the text and context of the investigated passage, among other things. To interpret Scriptures, Reformed exegetes investigate the historical and literary contexts of the text, pay attention to the grammar and genre of the passage, compare Scripture with Scripture, and so on. On its part, Pentecostal hermeneutics is built around experience, narrative, and praxis. It negotiates the meaning(s) of a biblical text within the triad of the text, the Holy Spirit, and the believing community. Its principles include reading the Bible as a unitary narrative, integration of supernatural-experiential encounter into the reading process, a Christological reading that integrates the

dimensions of the Full Gospel, and especially depending on pneumatic-epistemological intervention.

In conclusion, the perspectives, emphases and methods of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutics respectively present themselves in ways that beg for respectful attention. Irrespective of one's own tradition, one must eschew a feeling of superiority over the other, in the humble realisation that one's method of biblical interpretation is as much dependent on pre-understanding as any other. Respectfulness, charity, willingness to listen to and learn from one another, and humility to hold in tentativeness and strive to improve one's result, should be watchwords for Reformed, Pentecostal and indeed all traditions.

Overall, this chapter provides a conceptual and hermeneutical framework for the subsequent exegetical and analytical discussions in this study. By examining the natures of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutics, it establishes a basis for understanding how the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 might typically be approached and interpreted within each tradition.

CHAPTER FIVE

REFORMED EXEGETICAL ANALYSES OF MARK 3:13-19, MATTHEW 10:1-8 AND LUKE 10:1-9⁵²

5.1 Introduction

Thus far, this study has focused on understanding the concept of miracle in the New Testament and explaining the hermeneutical approaches of the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions. This has helped clarify general Reformed and Pentecostal understandings of NT miracles. Building on this theoretical groundwork, this chapter now investigates the meaning of the miracle imperatives in the commissioning narratives in Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9⁵³. The specific goal of this chapter is therefore to attempt Reformed exegetical analyses of the passages, following Du Toit's (2009a:124-148) methodology as adapted in this study⁵⁴. The chapter begins with the word-study of key concepts in the texts, then an exegetical analysis of each of the texts, and finally a synthesis of the exegetical findings into general applications. The results will in turn be used in the next chapter to evaluate samples of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of these same passages.

5.2 Word-study of key concepts in Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9⁵⁵

5.2.1 Motivation

Because Reformed hermeneutics aims for the *sensus literalis* and this study's methodology is primarily synchronic, a word-study of key concepts in Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9 is essential. This involves nouns/noun phrases (NPs) and verbs/verb phrases (VPs) chosen because they or their allusions are common to the

52 In this chapter, the order of the investigated texts is changed from "Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9" that is in the title of the study to "Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9". This re-ordering is to help move from GMark to the other two, since it is generally believed that GMark was written first and that GMatthew and GLuke relied on it for material.

53 The motivation for choosing these passages was clearly stated in sections 1.2.1.1 and 1.2.2: they, in Synoptic commonality, seemingly incorporate miracle imperatives into the commission to preach the gospel of the kingdom.

54 A description of this methodology was done in section 1.5.3.

55 Word-study of key concepts is treated here first, since the study is based on three different passages across which the concepts intersect. Besides, delaying the treatment would cause a disruption in the exegetical analysis of Mark 3:13-19, as it is important to study all such concepts in the three passages before one would return to the other articles of the exegesis.

three texts, or are repeated in one or the other text, or (particularly for the VPs) are actions directed at the major NPs of interest in this study. Understanding these terms in context will, in turn, enhance the understanding of the passages as discrete semantic units.

5.2.2 Methodology

Three lexicographical authorities underpin the semantic analysis of the selected NPs/VPs: Louw and Nida (1989; LN), Liddell, Scott and Jones (2014; LSJ), and Bauer, Danker, Arndt and Gingrich (2021; BDAG). Though abridged, the procedure bases decisions on the closest contextual agreement between the lexical items and Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9.

5.2.3 Word-study of nouns/noun phrases

5.2.3.1 Word-study of ἐξουσίαν (Mk. 3:15; Matt. 10:1; alluded to in Matt. 10:8b; Lk. 10:9)

LN⁵⁶. ἐξουσία, *ας*. ἐξουσία^f fits the contexts, and means “the power to do something, with or without an added implication of authority—‘power’”. δύναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν (“power and authority”) in Luke 9:1 gives the impression that the giving of ἐξουσία implies the giving of δύναμις as well⁵⁷. The disciples are *authorised* in terms of having the go-ahead, as well as being implicitly empowered, to perform miracles, Mk. 3:15; 6:7; Matt. 10:1; Lk. 10:19 (*vol. 1, pp. 147, 365, 476-477, 681; vol. 2, p. 92*). LSJ. ἐξουσία, *ή*, power, authority to do a thing; permission to do (*p. 599*). BDAG. ἐξουσία, *ας, ή*. potential or resource to command, control, or govern, capability, might, power (Mk. 3:15); the right to control or command, authority, absolute power, warrant (Matt. 10:1). However, the nuances are fluid (*p. 311*).

Decision

In this context, ἐξουσία denotes the *authority* (or *warrant*) and the concomitant power to perform miracles.

56 LN identifies variant meanings of a word with superscripts corresponding to different meaning classes; e.g., ἐξουσία^f indicates that the meaning belongs to category “f.” The study occasionally uses “SD” to denote the “Semantic Domain” of an investigated word or words as specified by Louw and Nida.

57 Jamieson (2002:1902) affirms that the word signifies both “power” and “authority”/“right”, so that δύναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν in Luke 9:1 means that Jesus “both *qualified* and *authorized* them”.

5.2.3.2 Word-study of (τὰ) δαιμόνια (Mk. 3:15; Matt. 10:8; cf. Lk. 10:17, with allusion in v. 19)

LN. *δαιμόνιον, ου n.* δαιμόνια^a fits the contexts the most. It is synonymous with δαίμων and διάβολός^b, and is translated as “demon, evil spirit”, e.g., Matt. 8:16, 31; Mk. 1:34; Jn. 6:70. (*vol. 1, pp. 144, 146; vol. 2, p. 54*). **LSJ.** *δαιμόνιον, τό.* evil spirit, Matt. 7:22 (*p. 365*). **BDAG.** *δαιμόνιον, ου, τό.* A hostile transcendent being with status between humans and deities, spirit, power, hostile divinity, evil spirit; the negative component may be either specific or contextual, and with the sense commonly associated with the loanword ‘demon’ (e.g., Lk. 4:33, 35; 9:42). Hence the healing of a sick person is described as the driving out of malignant forces (Matt. 7:22; 9:34; 10:8; 12:24, 27f.; Mk. 1:34, 39; 3:15, 22; 6:13; 7:26; 9:38; 16:9, 17; Lk. 9:49; 11:14f., 18ff.; 13:32) (*p. 186*).

Decision

(τὰ) δαιμόνια means demons/evil spirits with the character of causing harm to their hosts.

5.2.3.3 Word-study of μαθητὰς (Matt. 10:1, alluded to in vv. 2, 5; Mark 3:14, 16; and Luke 10:1)

LN. *μαθητής, οὔ m.* The fitting entry is μαθητής^a. It is translated as “a person who is a disciple or follower of someone—‘disciple, follower’”, e.g., Jn. 1:35; Ac. 6:1. μαθητής^b (“pupil”) means “a person who learns from another by instruction” in a strict sense (e.g., Lk. 6:40), and belongs to an entirely different semantic domain, SD 27: “Learn”, while μαθητής^a belongs to SD 36: “Follow, Be a Disciple” (*1989b:154; 1989a: 238, 471*). This idea of *following* is implicit in Mark 3:14, where Jesus appoints the Twelve ἵνα ᾤσιν μετ’ αὐτοῦ (“that they might be with him” *NIV*). **LSJ.** *μαθητής, οὔ, ό.* learner, pupil: of the pupils of philosophers and rhetoricians; apprentice (*p. 1072*). **BDAG.** *μαθητής, οὔ, ό.* One who engages in learning through instruction from another, pupil, apprentice; one who is rather constantly associated with someone who has a pedagogical reputation or a particular set of views, disciple, adherent ... often with an indication of the person whose disciple one is, mostly in the generic sense. This especially applies to the disciples of Jesus: (a) the Twelve, Matt. 10:1; 11:1; 28:16; (b) Jesus’ disciples, male and female, generally, Lk. 6:17; 19:37 (cf. Ac. 11:26; see also 6:1f., 7; 9:1, 19; 11: 29; 13:52; 15:10; 21:16). (Yet it is sometimes doubtful whether a particular passage really means the

Twelve and not a larger or smaller circle: Matt. 8:21; 12:1; 15:2; Mk. 5:31; 6:1, 35, 45; 8:27; Lk. 8:9; Jn. 2:2; 3:2) (p. 540).

Decision

From the emphasis in LN and the distinction in BDAG between an apprentice/pupil and a disciple/adherent, it is concluded that μαθητὰς in Matthew 10:1 denotes the idea of persons who consistently *follow* Jesus about (cf. Mk. 3:14).

5.2.3.4 Word-study of πνευμάτων ἀκάθαρτων (Matt. 10:1)

LN. πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον. πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον is a fixed idiomatic expression under the entry πνεῦμα, τος *n*. It means “unclean spirit”; that is, “an evil supernatural spirit which is ritually unclean and which causes persons to be ritually unclean” (vol. 1, p. 147; vol. 2, p. 200). However, “unclean” in the construct does not imply “dirty demons”, but primarily “that the possession of such a spirit makes the individual ritually or ceremonially unclean”, so that one may rather well be talking about “a contaminating spirit”. **LSJ. πνεῦμα, ατος, τό,** spiritual or immaterial being, angel, Ac. 19:12, 15 (p. 1424). **ἀκάθαρτος, ον,** uncleansed, foul, of ceremonial impurity, ceremonially unclean, e.g., ἀκάθαρτον πνεῦμα Matt. 12:43; that is, a ceremonially unclean spirit (p. 46). **BDAG. πνεῦμα, ατος, τό.** an independent noncorporeal being, in contrast to a being that can be perceived with the physical senses; spirit; evil spirits, especially in accounts of healing in the Synoptics: (τό) πνεῦμα (τό) ἀκάθαρτον, Matt. 10:1; 12:43; Mk. 1:23, 26, 27; 3:11, 30; 5:2, 8, 13; 7:25; 9:20, 25a; Lk. 4:13, 36; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2, 29; 9:20, 39, 42; 11:24; see also Ac. 5:16; 8:7; 16:18; 19:12f., 15f.; Rev. 8:2; 16:13 (pp. 739-740). **ἀκάθαρτος, ον.** pertaining to moral impurity, unclean, impure, Eph. 5:5; Rev. 17:4; especially of evil spirits, Matt. 10:1; 12:43; Mk. 1:23, 26f.; 3:11, 30; 5:2, 8, 13; 6:7; 7:25; 9:25; Lk. 4:33, 36; 6:18; 8:29; 9:42; 11:24; Ac. 5:16; 8:7; Rev. 16:13; 18:2 (p. 29). Simply put, ἀκάθαρτον πνεῦμα means a ceremonially unclean spirit.

Decision: The fixed idiomatic expression, πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον, in LN and the combined explanations of πνεῦμα and ἀκάθαρτος in LS and BDAG, all converge in the idea of a ceremonially unclean spirit that makes its host ceremonially unclean. Generally, πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον and (τὰ) δαιμόνια are related concepts, as both refer to harmful spiritual entities (cf. Matt. 10:1, 8; Mk. 3:15; Lk. 10:17).

5.2.3.5 Word-study of νόσος (Matt. 10:1)

LN. νόσος, ου f. Two synonymous entries, νόσος and νόσημα, are translated as “sickness”, “the state of being diseased—‘disease, diseased, sickness’”; e.g., Matt. 4:24; Jn. 5:4. However, the text of Matthew 10:1 features νόσος (*vol. 1, p. 271; vol. 2, p. 169*).

LSJ. νόσος. a. sickness, disease, plague, **b.** generally, distress, anguish **c.** disease of mind, especially caused by madness, passion, vice, etc. (*p. 1181*). **BDAG. νόσος, ου, ή.** physical malady, disease, illness (frequently viewed in Mediterranean society as socially devaluing), Matt. 4:23-24; 9:35; 10:1; Mk. 1:34; Lk. 4:40; 7:21; 9:1; Ac 19:12 (*p. 602*).

Decision

νόσος is taken in Matthew 10:1 to refer to disease/sickness. This understanding is affirmed by Culpepper (2016:4) when he asserts that “νόσος is a general term for sickness, disease or malady”.

5.2.3.6 Word-study of μαλακία (Matt. 10:1)

LN. μαλακία, ας f. a state of weakness resulting from sickness—“disease, sickness”; e.g., Matt. 4:23 (*vol. 1, p. 271; vol. 2, p. 156*). **LSJ. μαλακία.** softness (generally), weakness, sickness; e.g., Matt. 4:23 (*p. 1076*). **BDAG. μαλακία, ας, ή.** condition of bodily weakness, debility, weakness, sickness; used in combination with νόσος, Mt 4:23; 9:35; 10:1 (*p. 543*).

Decision

It is concluded here that μαλακία means not just disease/sickness, but emphasises the weakness/debility of the person (see also Culpepper [2016:4]).

5.2.3.7 Word-study of ἀσθενούντας/ἀσθένεια (Matt. 10:8; Lk. 10:9)

LN. ἀσθένεια ας f. The acceptable entry is ἀσθένεια^b, translated “illness”. It refers to “the state of being ill and thus incapacitated in some manner—‘illness, disability, weakness’”; e.g., Matt. 8:7 (*vol. 1, p. 270; vol. 36*). **LSJ. ἀσθένεια, ή.** want of strength, weakness; especially feebleness, sickness; disease, sickness, Gal. 4:13 (*p. 256*). **BDAG. ἀσθένεια, ας, ή.** a state of debilitating illness, sickness, disease, Ac. 5:15; with νόσος, Matt. 8:17; Ac. 28:9; Lk. 5:15; 13:12 (*p. 124*).

Decision:

Clearly, ἀσθένεια in Luke 10:9 refers to the condition where illness causes incapacitation as well, and ἀσθενοῦντας in Matthew 10:8 are such ill and incapacitated persons. Compared to μαλακία in Matthew 10:1, ἀσθένεια appears to denote a more severe or debilitating condition. However, if one advisedly avoids rigid differentiation and rather focuses on these as mere nuances of the same physiological condition, it would be easy to place them together, at least loosely, as synonyms (see Louw and Nida, 1989a:271). This concession will feature wherever possible in the interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9.

5.2.3.8 Word-study of βασιλεία (Matt. 10:7; Lk. 10:9; alluded to in Mk. 3:14)

LN. βασιλεία, ας f. The acceptable entry is βασιλεία^a (“reign”). It means “to rule as a king, with the implication of complete authority and the possibility of being able to pass on the right to rule to one’s son or near kin—‘to rule, to be a king, to reign, rule, reign’”; e.g., Matt. 2:22; Lk. 1:33. It denotes “the fact of ruling”, so that ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ means the rule of God rather than a particular area or special period over which God rules. Similarly, “to enter the kingdom of God” does not refer to “going to heaven”, but to “accepting God’s rule” or “welcoming God to rule over” (vol. 1, pp. 479-480; vol. 2, p. 44). **LSJ. βασιλείᾱ, ἡ.** kingdom, dominion, βασιλείᾱ τῶν οὐρανῶν, Matt. 3:2; βασιλείᾱ τοῦ θεοῦ, Matt. 6:33, etc.; kingly office; reign (p. 309). **BDAG. βασιλείᾱ, ας, ἡ.** the act of ruling: (a) generally, kingship, royal power, royal rule; (b) especially of God’s rule, the royal reign of God (usually rendered “kingdom of God”, and often understood as royal realm but with dilution to the primary component of reigning activity); a chiefly eschatological concept, beginning to appear in the prophets, elaborated in apocalyptic passages (Mic. 4:7f.; Psa. 102:19; 144:11-13; Dan. 3:54; 4:3). The expressions vary: βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (Matt. 6:33; 12:28; 21:31, 43; Mk. 1:15; 4:11, 26, 30; Lk. 4:43; 6:20; 7:28; 8:1; Ac. 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 28:23, 31) and βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:3, 10:19f.). However, they mean essentially the same thing since the Israelites use οὐρανός and other circumlocutions for θεός (Matt. 19:23f.). Moreover, the later term may also emphasise the heavenly origin and nature of the reign (p. 148).

Decision

In the NT, βασιλεία means God's act of ruling as king in a purely eschatological sense (see also Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia [2023a], where ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν/ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in the NT is understood as “primarily not ... a geographical area or realm nor ... the people inhabiting the realm but, rather ... the activity of the king himself, his exercise of sovereign power”).

5.2.3.9 Word-study of νεκροὺς (Matt. 10:8)

LN. **νεκρός, ἅ, ὄν.** The only acceptable entry is νεκρός^a. It means (in a physiological sense) “pertaining to being dead—‘lifeless, dead’” (*vol. 1, pp. 261-268; vol. 2, p. 167*).

LSJ. **νεκρός, ὁ.** corpse, Rom. 6:11; Lk. 20:35; Jn. 12:1. adj. **νεκρός, ἅ, ὄν,** dead (*pp. 1165-1166*). **BDAG.** **νεκρός, ἅ, ὁ.** As substitute, νεκρός ὁ, v. one who is no longer physically alive, dead person, dead body, a corpse, Lk. 7:15; Heb. 9:17; 11:35; Rev. 20:5; 12:13; 14:13 (*p. 591*).

Decision:

νεκροὺς refers to physiologically dead persons—the dead.

5.2.3.10 Word-study of λεπροὺς (Matt. 10:8)

LN. **λεπρός, οὗ m.** “a person suffering from dread skin disease—‘leper, one having a dread skin disease’”. The example cited from Matthew 10:8 shows that this is the sense of λεπροὺς in view in the text (*vol. 1, pp. 270-274; vol. 2, p. 152*). **LSJ.** **λεπρός, ἅ, ὄν,** scaly, scabby, rough, of places; as substitute, leper, Mk.1.40, etc. (*p. 1039*). **BDAG.** **λεπρός, ἅ, ὄν.** pertaining to having a serious skin disorder, with a bad skin disease, Lk. 17:12; as substitute, ὁ λεπρός, a person with a bad skin disease, Matt. 8:2; 10:8; 11:5; Mk. 1:40; Lk. 4:27; 7:22 (*p. 525*).

Decision

λεπροὺς therefore refers to people who have “a dread skin disease”. However, the most important point to note is that there is heavier biblical emphasis on the ritual uncleanness of the sufferer than on the physical distress itself (Louw and Nida, 1989a:272; cf. Mk. 1:40-45; Matt. 8:2-4, Lk. 5:12-14; Lev. 13-14).

5.2.4 Word-study of verbs/verb phrases

5.2.4.1 Word-study of κηρύσσειν/κηρύσσετε (Mk. 3:14; Matt. 10:7)

LN. κηρύσσω. κηρύσσω^c fits the contexts of Mark 3:14 and Matthew 10:7. Unlike the other senses of κηρύσσω, it goes beyond just communication to cover “an important factor of implied truth and the relationship of the speaker to such truth” (SD 33.156). Specifically, it means “to publicly announce religious truths and principles while urging acceptance and compliance—‘to preach’”; e.g., Rom. 10:14; 1 Pet. 3:19 (*vol. 1, p. 417; vol. 2, p. 142*). This seems to be the case, especially in consideration of the facts (1) that the disciples are not mere bearers/heralds of true information about the kingdom of heaven/God, but are also subjectively involved with the kingdom (cf. Mk. 9:2-13; Matt. 16:19; 17:1-8; Lk. 9:28-36), and (2) that the objective of the mission is to convert their hearers to this kingdom (cf. Mk. 1:15//Matt. 4:17; Mk. 1:17//Matt. 4:19; Lk. 10:9, 11). **LSJ. κηρύσσω.** declare, tell, Matt.10:27; preach, teach publicly, Matt. 3:1 (*p. 949*). **BDAG. κηρύσσω.** of Mosaic tradition and its publication, the preaching of John the Baptist, the propagation of the Christian message in the widest sense ... with an addition that indicates the content of the proclamation, Mk. 1:7, 14; Ac. 9:20; 10:42; 1 Cor. 15:11-12; Matt. 3:1f.; 10:7; Mt 4:17.; cf. Mk. 1:38; 3:14; 16:20; Matt. 11:1; Rom. 10:15 (*p. 481*).

Decision

κηρύσσειν in Mark 3:14 and κηρύσσετε in Matthew 10:7 mean to preach; that is, to publicly announce the truth about the kingdom of God while urging acceptance and compliance.

5.2.4.2 Word-study of ἔχειν (Mk. 3:15)

LN. ἔχω. The likely acceptable choice lies between ἔχω^a (in SD 57.1) and ἔχω^e (in SD 74.12), respectively translated “possess” and “be able to”. However, ἔχω^a has to do with a more formal/legal/exclusive right of possession, which does not fit the ἐξουσία that Jesus gives to his disciples in the Synoptics⁵⁸. On the other hand, ἔχω^e means “to possess the capacity to do something—‘to be able to, to have the capacity to’”; e.g., Eph. 4:28; 2

⁵⁸ Jesus gives same to both the Twelve and other disciples (cf. Matt. 10:1; Lk. 9:1; 10:1, 19) and forbids his disciples from interfering with the activities of a “non-disciple” who drives out demons in his name (cf. Lk. 9:49-50). These examples imply that the ἔχω used in connection with ἐξουσία in the Synoptics has nothing to do with *exclusive* possession.

Pet. 1:15 (*vol. 1, p. 677; vol. 2, p. 111*). **LSJ.** ἔχω. have, hold; keep, have charge of; have means or power to do, to be able (*pp. 749-750*). **BDAG.** be in a position to do something, can, be able (*p. 370*).

Decision

Therefore, ἔχειν in Mark 3:15 means to have the ability or capacity to act.

5.2.4.3 Word-study of ἐκβάλλετε/ἐκβάλλειν (Mk. 3:15; Matt. 10:1, 8)

LN. ἐκβάλλω. ἐκβάλλω^b (in SD 15.44) and ἐκβάλλω^e (in SD 53.102) are the likely meanings of the ἐκβάλλω-conjugals in the contexts. ἐκβάλλω^b means “to cause to go out or leave, often, but not always, involving force—‘to send away,’ ‘to drive out,’ ‘to expel’”, (e.g., Ac. 16:37; Mk. 11:15; Matt. 8:16), and is used figuratively in the same sense as ἐκβάλλω^e (literally, “exorcise”) (e.g., Mk. 3:15; Matt. 10:1, 8; cf. Mk. 1:34 and Matt. 9:34) (*vol. 1, pp. 188, 546; vol. 2, p. 76*). **LSJ.** ἐκβάλλω. throw or cast out of; exorcise, cast out evil spirits, Mk.1.34 (*p. 501*). **BDAG.** ἐκβάλλω. force to leave, drive out, expel, Mk. 1:12; Matt. 7:22; 8:16; 21:12; used especially of the expulsion of evil spirits who have taken possession of a person, Mk. 1:34, 39, 43; 3:15, 23; 6:13; 7:26; 9:18, 28; 16:9; Matt. 8:31; 9:33f.; 10:1, 8; 12:26; 17:19; Lk. 9:40; 11:14; 13:32 (*p. 264-265*).

Decision

Evidence above shows that the figurative sense of ἐκβάλλω, that is, “to drive out”/“to cast out”/“to expel” is the idea in Mark 3:15 and Matthew 10:1, 8.

5.2.4.4 Word-study of ἔδωκεν/δότε (Matt. 10:1, 8; cf. δέδωκα Lk. 10:19⁵⁹)

LN. δίδωμι. ἔδωκεν, δότε and δέδωκα are conjugated forms of δίδωμι, of which δίδωμι^a (“give”) fits the contexts. Other options in SD 57 focus on payment-mediated or obligatory-reciprocal transactions involving things of value, but the syntactic connections of ἔδωκεν to ἐξουσίαν (Matt. 10:1) and δέδωκα to τὴν ἐξουσίαν (Lk. 10:19) do not involve such an exchange—at least not when Matthew 10:8b says, δωρεὰν ἐλάβετε, δωρεὰν δότε (“freely you have received, freely give” *NIV*, emphasizes mine) (*vol. 1, p. 566; vol. 2, p. 71*). **LSJ.** δίδωμι. give freely; to be ready to give (*pp. 422-423*). **BDAG.** δίδωμι. appoint to special

⁵⁹ Luke 10:19 is considered because it refers backward to an episode that Luke 10:1-9 is silent about, and does enhance the understanding of the latter.

responsibility, Eph. 1:22; 4:11; to grant by formal action, grant, allow frequently of God, Matt. 4:9; 9:8; 13:11; 19:11; 28:28; Lk. 9:1; 10:19; Jn. 5:26; 19:11; Ac. 4:29; 2 Cor. 13:10; Rev. 9:3. (Mention of Luke 10:19 here points in the direction of the meaning of δίδωμι as in LN.)

Decision

ἔδωκεν/δότε/δέδωκα in Matthew 10:1, 8 and Luke 10:19 denotes Jesus' *freely and formally giving* ἐξουσία to the Twelve/Seventy.

5.2.4.5 Word-study of θεραπεύειν/θεραπεύετε (Matt. 10:1, 8; Lk. 10:9)

LN. θεραπεύω. The acceptable sense in Matthew 10:1, 8 and Luke 10:9 is θεραπεύω^a, and means “to heal”, “to cure”, Matt. 10:1; Lk. 9:11. Citation of Matthew 10:1 and 8 as an example of its occurrence is sufficient ground to close the argument (*vol. 1, p. 269; vol. 2, p. 119*). **LSJ. θεράπεύω.** take care of one's person, treat medically (*pp. 792-793*). **BDAG. θεράπεύω.** to heal, restore (a ready transference is made to this meaning from the use of θεραπεύω in the variant senses of ‘care for, wait upon, treat medically’, Matt. 4:23-24; 8:7, 16; 9:35; 10:1, 8; 12:10, 15, 22; 14:14; 15:30; 17:16, 18; 19:2; 21:14; Mk. 1:34; 3:2, 10; 6:5, 13; Lk. 4:23, 40; 6:7; 9:6; 10:9; 13:14b; 14:3; Jn. 5:10; Ac. 4:14; 5:16; 8:7; 28:9; heal or cure someone from an illness, Lk. 7:21; 5:15; 6:18; 8:2 (*p. 401*).

Decision

In Matthew 10:1, 8 and Luke 10:9, therefore, θεραπεύειν/θεραπεύετε means to cause sick persons to recover their health in a literal sense.

5.2.4.6 Word-study of λέγοντες/λέγετε (Matt. 10:7; Lk. 10:9)

LN. λέγω. λέγω^a fits into the literary contexts of Matthew 10:7 and Luke 10:7, as it has to do with communication. It means “to speak or talk, with apparent focus upon the content of what is said—‘to say, to talk, to tell, to speak’”; e.g., Matt. 1:20; Lk. 7:40 (*vol. 1, pp. 397, 403, 404; vol. 2, p. 111*). **LSJ. λέγω.** say, speak—of all kinds of oral communications (*pp. 1033-1034*). **BDAG. λέγω.** to express oneself orally or in written form, utter in words, say, tell, give expression to (the general sense). a. With an indication of what is said: Matt. 9:34; 10:27; 12:44; 21:16; Mk. 3:30; Lk. 5:39; 9:21; 13:6; Jn. 1:29, 36; 8:45f.; 19:35; 16:29; Ac. 17:21; Rom. 9:1; 1 Cor. 12:3; 1 Tim. 2:7; Jam. 4:13. b. With an indication of the person

or thing about which something is said, or that is meant by something: Matt. 21:45; Jn. 1:47; 2:21; 11:13; 13:18, 22 (pp. 521-522).

Decision

λέγω means “to say/speak/tell”, with focus on the subject matter of a communication event. However, unlike λέγετε in Luke 10:9, λέγοντες in the compound VP construct κηρύσσετε λέγοντες (Matt. 10:7) exercises an auxiliary function, and intensifies the focus of κηρύσσετε on the content of the communication, namely, Ἡγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (see Du Toit, 2009b:232).

5.2.4.7 Word-study of ἐγείρετε (Matt. 10:8)

LN. ἐγείρω. The most fitting option is ἐγείρω^e. It shares SD 23 with νεκρός^a, and means “to cause someone to live again after having once died—‘to raise to life, to make live again’”, Matt. 28:6; Jn. 6:39; 1 Cor. 6:14 (vol. 1, p. 263; vol. 2, p. 69). **LSJ. ἐγείρω.** awaken, rouse; raise from the dead, Matt. 10:8, cf. 1 Cor. 15:42 (p. 469). **BDAG. ἐγείρω.** to cause to return to life, Matt. 10:8; Jn. 5:21; Ac. 26:8; 2 Cor. 1:9 (pp. 240-241).

Decision

ἐγείρετε in Matthew 10:8 is an imperative that anticipates bringing dead persons back to life.

5.2.4.8 Word-study of καθαρίζετε (Matt. 10:8)

LN. καθαρίζω. καθαρίζω^c fits the context of Matthew 10:1. It means “to heal a person of a disease that has caused ceremonial uncleanness—‘to cleanse and make ritually pure, to heal and make ritually acceptable’”, Matt. 8:2. καθαρίζω^c and λεπρούς share SD 23. It therefore makes sense to think of καθαρίζω^c as being syntactically related to λεπρούς (vol. 1, pp. 535, 699; vol. 2, p. 126). **LSJ. καθαρίζω.** cleanse, Matt. 23:25; Ac. 10:15; of persons, purify, 2 Cor. 7:1; cleanse from leprosy, Matt. 8:2, 3. (p. 850). **BDAG. καθαρίζω.** to heal a person of a disease that makes one ceremonially unclean; make clean, heal, especially leprosy, Matt. 8:2; 10:8; Mk. 1:40; Lk. 5:12 (p. 433).

Decision

καθαρίζετε denotes the physiological healing of persons diseased in the skin and in consequence making them “ritually acceptable” or “ceremonially clean”.

5.2.5 Summary of word-study of concepts in Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9

Below is a table that summarises the understanding gained from the above analyses of key concepts in the texts of Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9:

Concept in the text(s)	Lexicographic item	Meaning of concept in context
Noun/noun phrase		
ἐξουσίαν Mk. 3:15 and Matt. 10:1 (with allusions in Matt. 10:8b; Lk. 10:9)	ἐξουσία	Authority or warrant, together with power to do something (here, to perform miracles).
(τὰ) δαιμόνια Mk. 3:15 and Matt. 10:8 cf. Lk. 10:17, with allusion in v. 19	δαιμόνιον	demons/evil spirits characterised by causing harm to their hosts
πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων Matt. 10:1	πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον	a ceremonially unclean spirit that makes its host ceremonially unclean
μαθητὰς Matt. 10:1 (with allusions in Matt. 10:2, 5; Mk. 3:14, 16; and Lk. 10:1)	μαθητής	disciples in the sense of persons who are following another
νόσον Matt. 10:1	νόσος	physiological sickness/disease
μαλακίαν Matt. 10:1	μαλακία	a state of physical weakness/debility due to physiological disease/sickness
ἀσθενοῦντας/ἀσθενεῖα Matt. 10:8 and Lk. 10:9	ἀσθενεῖα	a condition where physiological sickness/illness causes physical incapacitation
βασίλεια Matt. 10:7 and Lk. 10:9; with allusion in Mk. 3:14	βασίλεια	the fact or activities of ruling as king
νεκροὺς Matt. 10:8	νεκρός	the dead, used as a substitute for physiologically dead persons
λεπροὺς Matt. 10:8	λεπρός	persons with a physiological condition of infectious (or bad) skin disease that makes them ritually unclean

Verb/verb phrase		
κηρύσσετε/κηρύσσειν Mk. 3:14 and Matt. 10:7	κηρύσσω	to publicly announce truth while urging acceptance and compliance
ἔχειν Mk. 3:15	ἔχω	having the ability or capacity to do something
ἐκβάλλειν/ἐκβάλλετε Matt. 10:1, 8 and Mk. 3:15	ἐκβάλλω	to drive out/to cast out/to expel, used figuratively in the same way as to exorcise
ἔδωκεν/δότε, cf. δέδωκα Matt. 10:1, 8; cf. Lk. 10:19	δίδωμι	to freely and formally give
θεραπεύειν/θεραπεύετε Matt. 10:1, 8 and Lk. 10:9	θεραπεύω	to cause a sick person (or sick persons) to recover their physiological health in a literal sense
λέγοντες/λέγετε Matt. 10:7 and Lk. 10:9	λέγω	to say/speak/tell, with focus on the subject matter of the communication event
ἐγείρετε Matt. 10:8	ἐγείρω	to bring dead persons back to life
καθαρίζετε Matt. 10:8	καθαρίζω	the physiological healing of persons who are diseased in the skin and in consequence “ritually acceptable” or “ceremonially clean”

Table 5.1: Summary of word-study of key semantic entities in Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9

5.3 Exegetical analysis of Mark 3:13-19

5.3.1 Demarcation of the text of Mark 3:13-19

The author of GMark consistently uses introductory indicators to frame narrative subunits (Larsen, 2004:143-158; Schupbach, 2013:1-17). In 2:23–3:25 alone, there are as many as six of such switch indicators, namely, Καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς σάββασιν (“And it came to pass that he on the Sabbath”), 2:23; Καὶ εἰσῆλθεν πάλιν εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν (“And he entered again into the synagogue”, 3:1; Καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ἀνεχώρησεν πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν (“And Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea”), 3:7; Καὶ ἀναβαίνει εἰς τὸ ὄρος (“And he goes up to the mountain”), 3:13; Καὶ ἔρχεται εἰς οἶκον (“And he goes into a house”), 3:20; and Καὶ ἔρχεται ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ (“And his mother and brothers arrive”), 3:31. Each of these narrative subunits constitutes a plot.

Other than the criterion of switch indicators, ἐξουσία is prominent and can be regarded as a vertical marker in the long literary stretch between 2:1 and 3:30. It features once in 3:13-19 (v. 14), enjoying cohesion with the other authority discourses in 2:23-3:6, 3:7-12, and 3:20-30 where Jesus wields authority. 3:13-19 however shifts attention from Jesus to the Twelve, who will now exercise authority to cast out demons.

Therefore, 3:13-19 is a discrete pericope, a demarcation supported by the 4th edition of The Greek New Testament (1998).

5.3.2 Socio-historical background⁶⁰ of GMark

Only a cursory look at immediately relevant socio-historical data of GMark is done here. The following issues are raised:

5.3.2.1 Context

Contrary to scholarly claims of a universal intended audience, GMark was most likely written for a specific local community in a peculiar situation (Viljoen, 2002:458; Wilkinson,

60 The Gospels embody the *Sitz im Leben* of their narrators and audiences, given that they functioned as religious material acknowledged to be authoritative for faith and practice in real religious communities. The Gospel narratives around the life of Jesus were used to speak to real issues that confronted specific religious communities, and therefore should be read as “occasional writings”, with keen attention paid to “the world in which a text was produced and read”, although this does not imply “a one-to-one relationship” with the real world (Viljoen, 2018:1-2).

2012:46). This argument relies on internal evidence such as the use of personal names (without introduction or annotation) and a relatively heavy Jewish touch. While this suggests Jewish readership, Gentiles may also have constituted a section of the community, for which reason the author elucidated some Jewish practices and translated some Aramaic words/phrases (cf. 3:17; 5:41; 7:11; 7:34; 15:22, 34) (Wilkinson, 2012:46-47; Lu Vien, 2012:3-6). In consideration of Markan Christology, non-Jewish readership looks likely, based on the author's characteristic use of "Son of God"/"Son of Man" (1:11, 24; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 14:61; 15:39) as a name for Jesus, whereas Jews would typically have considered this to be blasphemous (Viljoen, 2002:460).

Given that the Markan narrative uses Jewish- and Gentile-oriented languages side-by-side, perhaps the best way to identify its audience is to think of a mix of Jews and Gentiles⁶¹.

5.3.2.2 Situation

GMark was most likely composed in Rome by John Mark (Viljoen, 2002:455; Easton-Flake, 2018:93). Among other arguments, one major thesis in favour of this position is the commonality between GMark's incipit (i.e., 1:1) and the first-century Roman culture that regarded emperors as "gods" and their reign as "the beginning of the good news for the world" (Evans, 2000:70). This proposed Roman provenance suggests a possible tension between the royal stool and the faith community, and Mark 13 plays a critical role in understanding the life situation of the Markan audience. References to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and other details apparently point to the imminent Jewish war and the eventual destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E. The prophetic instruction to flee from Judea to the mountains (13:14) may have been *historically* heeded by Christians who fled Jerusalem during its invasion by the armies of Titus in 76 C.E.

Overall, Christians living in Rome, Syria, and Galilee were caught in tension because they were generally regarded by the Romans to be Jews, while at the same time the Jews regarded them as outcasts (Lu Vien, 2012:8-9). Other points of tension to note from internal evidence are "tension or alienation from society as a whole" (cf. Mk. 13.13); "the

⁶¹ Wilkinson (2012:46) is specific about the Gentile component of the audience by proposing Judaistic proselytes or simply "God-fearers" who were converted to "the early Jesus movement".

Gospel's 'secrecy motif' (cf. Mk. 1.24f., 34, 44; 3.11f.; 5.43; 7.24, 36; 8.30; 9.9); the cleavage "between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'" (cf. 4.11, 21-25, 34; 7.17); and "emphasis on pre-destination"⁶² (cf. 4.10-12). Other typical features include frequent invitations to repentance (cf. Mk. 1.4, 15; 6.12) and an eschatological accent (cf. 13.1-37) that favours a heavenly personage rather than a national Messiah (cf. Dan. 7.13) (Wilkinson, 2012:47).

For Viljoen (2002:459), the crisis-oriented apocalyptic eschatology of GMark is a pointer to the precarious situation of the book's audience. He finds a framework for this apocalyptic thought in the opening and concluding verses of the Gospel: Mark states, "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1), whereas, according to Viljoen, the story "ends with a tense description of three fearful women fleeing from the grave" (cf. 16:8). Accordingly, while the opening text points to the good news about Jesus, Viljoen understands the tense ending as directing the reader toward an "apocalyptic world view", challenging them to imagine their own response to such events. There is a crisis to deal with; yet they must place the suffering of the Son of God in front of them as a way of inspiring encouragement while their suffering lasts.

Given the evidence presented above, GMark must have been addressed to a holistically tense situation in and around the believing community.

5.3.2.3 Purpose

Mark wrote to encourage his community, placing Jesus' passion in the fore as motivation (Lu Vien, 2012:8-9). The flare of tension and the urgent need for alleviation dictated "the Gospel's rhetorical nature, the intention of which is to ameliorate the discouragement of an audience suffering through their alignment to the Jesus movement (Mk. 8.34-37; 10.30; 13.9-13), convince them that their faith was not misplaced and move them to action and/or conviction" (Wilkinson, 2012:47). Against the backdrop of a crisis, it makes sense to think that the portrait of Jesus as the "Son of God yet Suffering Servant" was aimed at presenting him as an epitome to the Rome-based Christians who were badly persecuted

⁶² In this context, Wilkinson (2012:47) interprets "pre-destination" as the selective disclosure of knowledge to "the few" and its concealment from "the majority", proposing that such a framework resonated with groups that understood themselves to be under persecution (cf. 4.16-17; 8.34-38; 10.30, 38, 39; 13.9-13).

under Nero. The thematic development up until the centurion's climactic confession of him as "Son of God" (15:39) bares Mark's theological goal, namely, that "Jesus' uniqueness as Messiah and Son of God" is not borne by his teaching or miracles, but by his suffering and death (Lu Vien, 2012:13-14).

What sense would this have made to the fledgling faith community? The Son of God, with all the majestic powers of heaven, submitted himself to suffering as a servant right from his birth (cf. Isa. 53) and thereby became "the glorified Son of Man" (cf. Dan. 7). This emphasis on the suffering of the Son of God apparently targeted people in challenging circumstances, to the effect they should be willing to surrender their lives for the sake of the Gospel and the imminent glorious kingdom (Viljoen, 2002:462). While their suffering lasted, they needed to keep the return of the Son of God in sight (Mk. 13:36-37) and be encouraged that the same Jesus who had suffered so much would return as Son of God" (Viljoen, 2002:460-462).

Moreover, the Markan community is alerted by the emphasis on suffering that discipleship is oriented toward suffering (cf. 4:13, 40-41; 6:50-52; 7:17ff.; 8:16-21; 9:6, 10), just like Jesus himself is presented as "the suffering Son of God" (cf. 8:27-10:45) (Viljoen, 2002:463). However, this way of suffering leads to ultimate victory, just like it was with Jesus. To that extent, Viljoen (2002:467) is right to adopt the formulation, "Ruf in die Nachfolge" ("A call to be a follower"), credited to Eduard Schweizer, as the theme of GMark, arguing that it "gives strong internal evidence as to the situation in which the Gospel was written". However, as shall be seen in a moment, discipleship also entails authoritative service, because twice, Mark's Jesus commissions his select disciples with authority to cast out demons (3:13-19; 6:6-13).

5.3.3 Literary type of Mark 3:13-18

Mark 3:13-19 is a narrative, and this fact will inform the exegetical tools for interpreting it.

5.3.4 The place of Mark 3:13-19 in its literary macro-structure

5.3.4.1 Introduction

The approach adopted here (and in sister sections below) is to examine the relationship of 3:13-19 to the overall message of GMark, by way of connecting its thematic features with their larger portraits in the book. Three motifs call for attention, namely, discipleship

responsibility, ἐξουσία and exorcism. This choice is justified by the textual evidence of Jesus' summoning the twelve disciples to responsibility, which comprises being with him, going out to preach, and authoritatively exorcising demons.

5.3.4.2 Mark 3:13-19 and the motif of discipleship responsibility

As explained above, the Markan motif of discipleship generally calls for commitment to following Jesus through thick and thin. For the Twelve, however, beyond the duty of physically following Jesus or the demand to remain prepared to surrender their lives for the cause of the kingdom⁶³, they are also called to join their Master in active frontline mission. This agrees with Jesus' intention when he called the first set of disciples (1:16-20): Δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου, καὶ ποιήσω ὑμᾶς γενέσθαι ἀλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων ("Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men") (1:17). This original intention is beginning to be transformed into action in 3:13-19: ἵνα ἀποστέλλῃ αὐτοὺς κηρύσσειν ("that he might send them to preach") (3:14). It reaches its zenith in 6:7-13, where Jesus *actually* sends them out with authority to preach repentance and minister healings.

This linear progression shows that 3:13-19 develops the call in 1:16-20 and prepares the ground for the mission in 6:7-13. Cockerill's (2016:28-43) work is in part helpful to the reasoning here. In what he calls "[t]he invitation-structure and discipleship in the Gospel of Mark", he traces four sections of GMark that are structured around the identity of those whom Jesus invites to follow him "on the path of discipleship", with each section foregrounding "a significant interaction between Jesus and his disciples". These are 1:14–3:12, 3:13–6:6, 6:7–8:21, and 8:22–10:52⁶⁴. Each of these sections, as rightly observed by Cockerill, "represents a new phase of discipleship" (2016:28); together, they provide a legitimate perspective for understanding discipleship in GMark. For 3:13-19 in particular, he says,

[T]he naming of the twelve in 3:13-19 introduces the ... section, 3:13-6:6, in which the disciples are "with him" (3:14). It also anticipates the following section, in which he will "send them out" (3:14). In this section two crucial things happen to those who have begun to follow Jesus. First, they are instructed in the eternal importance of "hearing" the word of God, of obedient perseverance

63 Mk. 1:16-20; 2:13-14; 8:34-35; 10:43-45

64 The first section (1:1-13) is the Prologue, while the last two sections respectively focus on Jesus' claim in the Jerusalem Temple (11:1–13:35) and his passion (14:1–16:8) (Cockerill, 2016:30).

in discipleship. Second, they are exposed to greater demonstrations of Jesus' authority not available to the general public.

(Cockerill, 2016:36)

The issue of discipleship perseverance is an aforementioned point revisited here. More crucially, however, 3:13-19 assigns the Twelve an exclusive responsibility, and they "[are] immediately thrown into the dynamic of Jesus' ministry" (Paul, 2021:1) and are instructed to emulate him in authoritatively ministering to needy people (Moore, 2009:1). Therefore, 3:13-19 supplies further information about the idea of discipleship in GMark, namely, that beyond following their Master, the disciples are trusted with the kingdom service of preaching the good news and authoritatively casting out unclean spirits. The discussion on the motifs of authority and exorcism that follows will further elucidate this point.

5.3.4.3 Mark 3:13-19 and the motif of ἐξουσία

There are ten instances where the term, ἐξουσία is explicitly used in GMark: 1:22; 1:27; 3:15; 6:7; 2:10; 13:34; 11:28 (2 times); 11:29; 11:33 (Moore, 2009:1). But, of course, the motif is also alluded to and implied in many other semantic contexts all through the book. The incipit, for instance, is crafted in an ἐξουσία-ascriptive language, and subtly but effectively evokes the reader's consciousness to the authority that the Markan protagonist enters the narrative plot with. The story of Jesus' baptism (1:9-11) and the end-to-end ascription of Mark's Jesus with the title of "Son of God" (1:1; 15:39) allude to his authority (Lu Vien, 2012:13; Whitenton, 2023:9). However, among all the evidence, this study delimits its discussion of authority in GMark to Jesus' (and hence his disciples') authority over demons, since 3:15 speaks of authority only in connection with the exorcism of demons.

At Capernaum, Jesus' superior authority comes to bear when he exorcises a demon that recognises him as "the Holy One of God!"⁶⁵ and the people affirm his authority over evil spirits (1:23-28). This story, the general comment in 1:34b, and all other authority-oriented narratives in the early part of GMark, seem to indicate that the author is in haste to develop the motif of authority in the book. In short, this first exorcism is a Christological

⁶⁵ Newton (2021:1) correctly explains that in the OT (especially in the Psalms and Isaiah), this inscription is almost an exclusive reserve for God—except in Psalm 16:10 and 106:16 where its variant is used for men. The usage in Mark 1:24, therefore, goes far to show the height of authority that the Person in view has.

event; it makes a theological statement about the divinity and authority of Jesus. Similarly, a socio-historical reading of the unclean spirit's mention of Jesus' name (Mk. 5:7) suggests an attempt to undermine Jesus' authority (Paul, 2021:1); but the rest of the pericope lays bare the authority of Jesus in exorcising the legion. Besides the general comments on exorcism (1:39; 3:11-12), there are other exorcism stories in GMark (7:24-30; 9:14-29), including the Beelzebub controversy (3:20-30), which in various ways accentuate the authority of Jesus. In sum, Mark's Jesus is a divinely authoritative figure, and Moore (2009:1) rightly calls him "The Authoritative One".

Particularly for 3:13-19, where the twelve disciples are ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια ("to have authority to cast out demons") (v. 15), it is obvious that, firstly, this idea originates entirely from "The Authoritative One". Secondly, and especially in combination with 6:7, he gives authority to them for exorcism, whereupon they successfully cast out demons and heal many (6:13). This may be understood as Jesus' sharing of a dimension (certainly not the full measure) of his authority with his disciples and an invitation to foretaste their ultimate victory in a manner analogous to his own victory after suffering (i.e., his resurrection, 16:1-8). His exorcisms and other miracles foreshadow this ultimate victory, while 3:13-19 suggests that the Twelve, even amid suffering, are granted a foretaste of it. In conclusion, 3:13-19 aligns with the motif of ἐξουσία as an eschatological phenomenon in GMark. Herein lies the relevance of 3:13-19 to the literary macro-context of GMark.

For the literary meso-context, 3:13-19 clearly falls within a bloc (1:21–3:30) in which the narrator foregrounds ἐξουσία (see section 5.3.1). In this sense, 3:13-19 is partly semantically cognate with other pericopes in which ἐξουσία functions as a vertical motif, and partly structurally cognate with them insofar as it concerns the disciples' (prospective) exercise of ἐξουσία in casting out demons in imitation of their Master. In the words of Lu Vien (2012:28), they are authoritatively "[carrying] on Jesus' own ministry" and "[sharing] in the mission of Jesus in proclaiming the Kingdom/Rule of God consisting of preaching, exorcisms, healings, and call to repentance".

The motif of ἐξουσία in 3:15 therefore makes 3:13-19 a significant contributor to the Markan understanding of the function of ἐξουσία—indeed so significant because it shifts attention from the “Son of Man” to sons of men.

5.3.4.4 Mark 3:13-19 and the motif of exorcism

In virtually every place where Mark reports Jesus’ direct speech or an allusion regarding the imperative to perform miracles, he lays heavy (and sometimes solo) emphasis on exorcism: 3:14-15 and 6:7, 12-13⁶⁶. Out of the 18 miracle stories reported in GMark, four are full exorcism narratives (1:21-28; 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14-29) and three are general comments that include exorcisms (1:32-34; 1:39; 3:11-12). Besides these, there are two imperatives that focus exclusively on exorcism (3:14-15; 6:7-13) (Pero, 2009:4). GMark’s sustained emphasis on exorcism thus raises questions about its significance within the narrative and its implications for the miracle imperative in 3:13-19, as well as the reciprocal influence of that imperative on the portrayal of exorcistic activity in the book.

The first question will be treated from socio-political and theological standpoints. For the socio-political perspective, the Markan incipit is key; it signals much more than just a literary contact (or authority discourse) between GMark and Roman tradition. It is doubtful that GMark could have introduced a “Son of God” other than the emperor with no socio-political or socio-religious consequence (cf. Matt. 2). The introduction of this personage and the various ascriptions of authority to him constitute confrontation and repudiation of the political power of the day, which GMark communicates with a variety of particularly exorcism stories. Perry (2010:7) rightly asserts that the “symbolic overlay to the exorcism stories embedded in Mark” serves a primarily socio-political intent, among other concerns, and that the book puts forward “a political message about the kingdom of God” (2010:12-13).

The exorcism narratives most clearly present a “transcendent meaning” of history, by which is meant “the cosmic aspect” of the stories in which Jesus is pictured to be in conflict with the satanic league: “This aspect is transcendent in the sense that Jesus is not just healing a possessed man, but the possession is symptomatic of a struggle between God

⁶⁶ Even the longer ending of GMark (16:17) equally gives prominence to exorcism before other signs and particularly healing (16:18).

and Satan over Israel, and Jesus, as representative of God, is confronting the enemy.” In fact, the Beelzebub controversy gives this context to the Markan exorcism narratives and makes them “depict a cosmic struggle in history to inaugurate the eschatological reign of God” (Perry, 2010:21). In it, Jesus clearly states that exorcism stretches beyond healing of the afflicted to an attack on the “strong man” (Mk. 3:21-27).

Still, what should ordinarily have been pure cosmic conflict draws public authorities into the fray, and religious leaders (Mk. 3:22; cf. Matt. 9:34; 12:24; Lk. 11:14-18a) as well as Herod Antipas (Lk. 13:31-33) turn out to antagonise Jesus as it were on the side of Satan, thus giving Markan exorcism narratives significant religious and political colouration. Added to this struggle is that already, the Roman government has come to be symbolically associated with satanic forces, making it easy to match Roman occupation with demon-possession. “‘Legion’, a symbol of the occupying power” in the Gaderene exorcism narrative and Jesus’ politically-oriented answer in the Beelzebub debate attest to this claim and prove that this negative symbolism is not merely mythical but is “enacted in the ‘historical process’” (Perry, 2010:38, 41, 43).

A theological agenda is also evident in Markan exorcism narratives. It is within this thought frame that Batluck (2023:39) asserts that:

The exorcism stories are not simply awe-inspiring, isolated events in Mark. Demonic encounters in the Second Gospel are like the bricks of a house: Together, they construct a story grander than any one of these accounts does on its own.

What might that *grander story* be? GMark begins with the accentuation of the divinity of Jesus—“Lord” (1:3), “one more powerful than I” (1:7), and “You are my beloved Son with whom I’m well pleased” (1:11); as well as Jesus’ actions and ministry in the Spirit (1:8, 12, 1:14). Then, right on the heels of this Christologically-oriented prologue comes the Capernaum exorcism narrative (1:21-28) with such prominence in GMark and proximity to the Prologue that indicate a close relationship between the person of Jesus and his battle with the spirit world. The exorcism stories in the Gospels consistently reveal the identity of Jesus (1:24; 3:11) and echo the crucial eschatological claims in 1:11, 9:7, and 15:39. Besides these, John’s pneumatic Christology in 1:8 not only indicates the spiritual nature of Jesus’ ministry but also predefines his whole life and ministry as a confrontation

on satanic powers, which actually begins in the desert temptations (1:12-13) and is manifested in exorcisms (Batluck, 2023:40-41). It should therefore be preeminently borne in mind that the desert temptations are heaven's programme intended not to expose the "Son of God" to a mess but to create a localised encounter episode that, like the subsequent exorcisms, demonstrates the cosmic confrontations that will take place between Jesus and the devil until the ultimate victory.

Furthermore, the exorcisms of Jesus constitute the outworking of the restoration of creation's "original wholeness" and show the impossibility of Satan's sabotage of God's purpose. They demonstrate the closeness of the eschatological kingdom of God and bring individuals and whole communities into the actual experience of God's sovereign reign (Pero, 2009:1, 5). This line of thinking aligns with Matthew 12:28 and Luke 11:20 that establish a direct connection between exorcism and the "already" perspective of the kingdom.

To conclude, exorcisms in GMark are not an end in themselves, but a means to making a theological statement about the divine sonship of Jesus⁶⁷ (1:24; 3:11) and the eschatological victory of God's kingdom (represented by Jesus) over Satan's kingdom (represented by demons) (5:7; cf. Matt. 8:29//Lk. 8:28). They on the one hand free victims of malevolent spirits from their distressing existential circumstances, and also on the other hand reveal the divine sonship of Jesus, whose good news Mark sets out to tell and with whom the eschatological kingdom of God arrives with conquest over all of Satan's dominion and activities. They, on the one hand, free victims of malevolent spirits from their distressing existential circumstances and, on the other hand, reveal the divine sonship of Jesus, whose good news GMark sets out to proclaim, and in whom the eschatological kingdom of God arrives, effecting decisive victory over all Satan's dominion and activity.

How then does 3:13-19 fit into the exorcism gist of GMark?

⁶⁷ According to Batluck (2023:44), "the demonic cry of 'I know who you are—the Holy One of God!' in 1:24 should in fact be seen as a reinforcement of Mark's theme of Jesus's divine sonship, not as an arbitrary detail added to the story".

In answering this question, and without prejudice to other scholarly proposals, this study sees good sense in adopting Batluck's (2023:42-44) literary-structural division, which he in turn credits to Ched Myers. According to it, GMark is organised around three "pillars" (or roughly, "defining events") that Batluck describes as "apocalyptic turning points" and that exhibit fairly similar literary features. These "pillars" are Jesus' baptism (1:8-11), his transfiguration (9:2-13), and his crucifixion (15:21-47) (2023:42). According to this scheme, GMark may be structurally understood as being composed as follows: 1:1–9:1, 9:2–13:37, and 14:1–16:8.

The first "pillar", Jesus' baptism (1:8-11), is closely followed by the Capernaum exorcism narrative (1:21-28). In addition, all the other Markan exorcism stories occur in the first nine chapters (with only one around the second "pillar" [9:14-29] and none around the third "pillar"). This leads to a plausible conclusion that GMark's literary composition is suggestive of the author's use of the encounters to emphasise "the raw authority and power of Jesus as the Beloved Son, a title used during both the baptism and the Transfiguration" (Batluck, 2023:43, 44). Furthermore, the literary concentration of chapters 1–8 on exorcisms is significant to this study because 3:13-19 belongs to that bloc. It is within this first section of GMark, "front-loaded" with exorcism accounts⁶⁸, that Mark records Jesus' two-part commissioning of his disciples (3:13-19; 6:13-17), with particular stress on exorcism (3:14-15; 6:7, 13).

It is not without purpose that this design is set out; indeed, there is hardly any other way of understanding 3:13-19 (and 6:7-13) than as Mark's way of showing that the authority of the kingdom revealed in Jesus is also made available to his disciples. By the authority which Jesus gives to them, they are *extension agents* of the eschatological kingdom of God. They, like Jesus himself does (1:14-15), are to proclaim the good news of the kingdom (3:14) and demonstrate the authority of the Son of God and the power of his kingdom over Satan (1:27-28; 3:22-30) by way of expelling malevolent spirits and restoring humanity (indeed, creation) to its wholeness (3:13-19; 6:7-13). Synchronically,

⁶⁸ Batluck finds good reason in this literary concentration to assert that "[t]he book of Mark is 'front-loaded' with exorcism accounts and 'back-loaded' with teaching pericopae" (2023:48).

therefore, 3:13-19 keeps faith with the theological agenda of the motif of exorcism in GMark (particularly chapters 1–9).

5.3.4.5 Summary and conclusion

Mark 3:13-19 takes discipleship beyond merely following Jesus or enduring hardship; it exposes the Twelve to the responsibility of proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God and authoritatively casting out demons. The gift of this authority predisposes them to the victory that comes with the eschatological kingdom of God over evil. Markan exorcism narratives carry both socio-political and theological undertones, on the one hand casting aspersion on the Roman imperial order as emblematic of Satan's rule, and on the other hand affirming the divinity, authority, and cosmic superiority of Jesus as "Son of God". With 3:13-19 (and 6:6-13), GMark shows that the reality of the eschatological kingdom being revealed in Jesus is available to his disciples, and as *extension agents* of that kingdom, they can effectively proclaim its message of repentance and demonstrate its power by expelling demons from their victims. Mark 3:13-19 is therefore a threshold of the authoritative ministry made available to the Twelve by "the Authoritative One" for manifesting the reality of the eschatological kingdom of God that he is ushering in.

5.3.5 Surface structure analysis⁶⁹ of Mark 3:13-19

5.3.5.1 Scope and terminologies

This section analyses the textual structure of Mark 3:13-19, following Du Toit (2009b:217-265)". It involves identifying discrete thought units of the pericope and grouping them into some larger communicative units. The clusters are used as guides to formulate subthemes, which in turn supply insights for formulating a theme of the pericope. The task here requires the use of some technical jargons, which are briefly explained below.

- i. *Colon*: A syntactic unit on the surface text that (1) is composed of a main verb and sometimes a subject, and (2) constitutes a complete thought unit (Du Toit, 2009b:227);
- ii. *Commata*: These are sensible sub-units of a colon; e.g., participial phrases, accusatives, infinitives, embedded clauses, and so on (2009b:233)

⁶⁹ The analyses in this section and sister sections (under Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9) are based on Du Toit (2009b:217-265).

- iii. *Colon clusters (or paragraphs)*: These are groups of closely related colons (in communicative terms) and on which formulation of subthemes is based (2009b:241)
- iv. *Thematic (or structural) markers*: These are “those surface structure words, phrases, and (occasionally) even sentences, which, as a result of obvious repetition or of prominent positioning (foregrounding), point toward significant semantic slots within the discourse” (2009b:235). These markers can be (1) “participants” or “actants”, namely, animate entities (e.g., persons, animals, etc.), or abstract entities (e.g., grace, authority, mercy, etc.) that function as subjects or objects/indirect objects of a verb; (2) verbs (actions, events, or states); or (3) abstracts, which are qualifiers/modifiers of participants in the form of adjectival or adverbial clauses/phrases (2009b:236). Thematic markers can also be viewed as “local”/“horizontal” or “continuous”/“vertical” markers. “Local”/“horizontal” markers give a clue to the textual structure over “only a segment of a passage”, while “continuous”/“vertical” markers cover the major parts of the text (2009b:237).

5.3.5.2 Identification of colons in Mark 3:13-19⁷⁰

Below is a schematic representation of the surface structure of the pericope:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | ¹³ Καὶ ἀναβαίνει εἰς τὸ ὄρος
¹³ And he went up on the mountain |
| 2 | καὶ προσκαλεῖται οὓς ἠθέλην αὐτός;
and called near [to] himself those whom he wanted |
| 3 | καὶ ἀπῆλθον πρὸς αὐτόν.
and they went to him. |
| 4 | ¹⁴ καὶ ἐποίησεν δώδεκα,
¹⁴ And he appointed twelve |
| 5 | A ἵνα ᾧσιν μετ’ αὐτοῦ,
that they might be with him
B καὶ ἵνα ἀποστέλλῃ αὐτοὺς κηρύσσειν,
and that he might send them to preach
C ¹⁵ καὶ ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια.
¹⁵ and to have authority to cast out demons. |
| 6 | A ¹⁶ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς δώδεκα.
¹⁶ And he appointed the twelve
B καὶ ἐπέθηκεν ὄνομα τῷ Σίμωνι, Πέτρον; |

70 Note: (1) The translation under the Greek text is done, to the best ability of this researcher, to be as close as possible to the original; it is, however, not one-to-one in all cases but adapted to make sense in the English. (2) Major colons are marked by Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.), colon clusters in subordinate positions are marked with upper-case English letters (A, B, C, etc.), while colon clusters are marked with P1, P2, P3, etc. for Mark 3:13-19; Q1, Q2, Q3, etc. for Matthew 10:1-8; and R1, R2, R3, etc. for Luke 10:1-9.

	and he added [the] name, Peter, to Simon
C	¹⁷ καὶ Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου ¹⁷ and James, the [son] of Zebedee
D	καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Ἰακώβου, and John the brother of James
E	καὶ ἐπέθηκεν αὐτοῖς ὀνόματα Βοανηργές, ὃ ἐστίν, Υἱοὶ Βροντῆς; and he added to them [the] name Boanerges, which is, “Sons of Thunder”
F	¹⁸ καὶ Ἀνδρέαν, ¹⁸ And Andrew
G	καὶ Φίλιππον, and Philip
H	καὶ Βαρθολομαῖον, and Bartholomew
I	καὶ Μαθθαῖον and Matthew
J	καὶ Θωμᾶν and Thomas
K	καὶ Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ἀλφαίου, and James the [son] of Alphaeus
L	καὶ Θαδδαῖον, and Thaddaeus
M	καὶ Σίμωνα τὸν Καναναῖον, and Simon, the Zealot
N	¹⁹ καὶ Ἰούδαν Ἰσκαριώθ, ¹⁹ and Judas Iscariot,
N'	ὃς καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτόν. who also betrayed him.

Scheme 5.1: Colons in Mark 3:13-19

5.3.5.3 Colon clusters and subthemes in Mark 3:13-19

Mark 3:13-14a exhibits main/finite verbs (and colons) that are alternate actions of Jesus and his disciples: Jesus – ἀναβαίνει/προσκαλεῖται (v. 13)/ἐποίησεν (v. 14a); Jesus’ disciples – ἀπῆλθον (v. 13). In vv. 14b-15, one finds subordinate/infinite verbs (and commata) that are stringed to the main/finite verb (and colon) in v. 14a: ὥσιν/ἀποστέλλη (v. 14b) and ἔχειν/ἐκβάλλειν (v. 15). Mark 3:16-17 returns to the use of main/finite verbs that describe actions by Jesus: ἐποίησεν (v. 16) and ἐπέθηκεν (v. 17); while v. 19 has a main/finite verb, παρέδωκεν, that describes action by a disciple, Judas Iscariot.

The repetition of ἐποίησεν (vv. 14a, 16) is a notable semantic feature, but it is not structurally determinative, since its first occurrence (v. 14a) is positioned between vv. 13 and 15. Accordingly, the pericope’s structure is better derived from the broader verb distribution, yielding a bipartite division: vv. 13-15 and vv. 16-19.

The following table shows the structure of Mark 3:13-19:

Colon Cluster	Constituent Colons	Subtheme
P1	cols. 1–5 1 ¹³Καὶ ἀναβαίνει εἰς τὸ ὄρος ¹³And he went up on the mountain 2 καὶ προσκαλεῖται οὓς ἠθέλεν αὐτός; and called near [to] himself those whom he wanted 3 καὶ ἀπῆλθον πρὸς αὐτόν. and they went to him. 4 ¹⁴καὶ ἐποίησεν δώδεκα, ¹⁴And he appointed twelve 5 A ἵνα ᾧσιν μετ’ αὐτοῦ, that they might be with him B καὶ ἵνα ἀποστέλλῃ αὐτοὺς κηρῦσσειν, and that he might send them to preach C ¹⁵καὶ ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια. ¹⁵and to have authority to cast out demons.	<i>Jesus appoints twelve persons for mission from among those (disciples) who respond to his summons, that they might be with him and that he might send them to preach and to authoritatively cast out demons</i>
P2	col. 6 6 A ¹⁶καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς δώδεκα. ¹⁶And he appointed the twelve B καὶ ἐπέθηκεν ὄνομα τῷ Σίμωνι, Πέτρον; and he added [the] name, Peter to Simon C ¹⁷καὶ Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου ¹⁷and James, the [son] of Zebedee D καὶ Ἰωάννην τὸν ἀδελφὸν τοῦ Ἰακώβου, and John the brother of James E καὶ ἐπέθηκεν αὐτοῖς ὀνόματα Βοανηργές, ὃ ἐστίν, Υἱοὶ Βροντῆς; and he added to them [the] name Boaneges, which is, “Sons of Thunder” F ¹⁸καὶ Ἀνδρέαν, ¹⁸And Andrew G καὶ Φίλιππον, and Philip H καὶ Βαρθολομαῖον, and Bartholomew I καὶ Μαθθαῖον and Matthew J καὶ Θωμᾶν and Thomas K καὶ Ἰάκωβον τὸν τοῦ Ἀλφαίου, and James the [son] of Alpahaeus M καὶ Σίμωνα τὸν Καναναῖον, and Simon, the Zealot N ¹⁹καὶ Ἰούδαν Ἰσκαριώθ, ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot, N’ ὃς καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτόν. who also betrayed him.	<i>The names of the twelve disciples whom Jesus appoints for the mission are given</i>

Table 5.2 Colon clusters and subthemes of Mark 3:13-19

5.3.5.4 Formulation of a theme of Mark 3:13-19

Based on the subthemes of colon clusters P1 and P2 in Table 5.2 above, a **theme** of Mark 3:13-19 is formulated as follows:

Colon Cluster	Constituent Colons/Verses	Subtheme
P1	Cols. 1–5/vv. 13-15	<i>Jesus appoints twelve persons for mission from among those (disciples) who respond to his summons, that they might be with him and that he might send them to preach and to authoritatively cast out demons</i>
P2	Col. 6/vv. 16-19	<i>The names of the twelve disciples whom Jesus appoints for the mission are given</i>
Theme: Jesus appoints twelve named persons from among those (disciples) who respond to his summons, that they might be with him and that he might send them on a mission to preach and to authoritatively cast out demons		

Table 5.3: Theme of Mark 3:13-19

5.3.6 Formulating the message of Mark 3:13-19 for the first readers

5.3.6.1 Scope

Based on the theme and subthemes proposed above, this section aims to formulate a message that fits the text of Mark 3:13-19 and would have been understood by the first readers. It incorporates insights gained from the word-study of key concepts in Mark 3:13-19 (section 5.2), socio-historical background of GMark (section 5.3.2), and the place of Mark 3:1-13-19 within its literary macro-context (section 5.3.4).

5.3.6.2 Explication of the subthemes of Mark 3:13-19

Only subtheme P1 is relevant to this study and will now be explored; subtheme P2 is omitted as it does not contribute directly to the study's objectives. P1 is formulated as

Jesus appoints twelve persons for mission from among those (disciples) who respond to his summons, that they might be with him and that he might send them to preach and to authoritatively drive out demons (vv. 13-15).

The key elements of this subtheme are:

- (A) Jesus goes up a mountain, summons his disciples, and they come to him (v. 13);
- (B) Jesus appoints twelve out of the disciples who respond to his summons, intending
 - (1) that they might be with him (v. 14a);
 - (2) that he might send them to preach; and
 - (3) that they might authoritatively drive out demons. (vv. 14b-15).

These will now be explicated separately:

P1A: Jesus goes up a mountain, summons his disciples, and they come to him

(v. 13)

Καὶ ἀναβαίνει εἰς τὸ ὄρος καὶ προσκαλεῖται οὓς ἤθελεν αὐτός, καὶ ἀπῆλθον πρὸς αὐτόν.

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called those he wanted, and they came to him. *NIV*

A detailed explanation of this text is not pursued in this study as it does not contribute to the study's primary objective. Suffice it to say that, taken literally and for the intentions of this study, the verse only helps to geographically situate the commissioning of the Twelve according to Mark 3:13-19. ἀναβαίνει εἰς τὸ ὄρος is, in fact, a “stock phrase” used twenty-four times in the LXX and eighteen times in the Pentateuch—predominantly by Moses. With this literary background, the episode in Mark 3:13-19 echoes the divine self-disclosure and establishment of the twelve tribes of Israel at Sinai (Exo. 18–20) (Boring, 2012:100). In other words, unlike in other Markan narratives⁷¹, no technical, theological or mystical experience is attached to the mountain in Mark 3:13; it is only a location in the narrative (Stein, 2008:168).

P1B: Jesus appoints twelve of those who respond to his summons (with three distinctive intentions)

P1B(1): That they might be with him (v. 14a)

καὶ ἐποίησεν δώδεκα, ἵνα ᾧσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ

He appointed twelve that they might be with him

The call of disciples. The idea that these δώδεκα are intended to be his close-knit disciples is supplied by the intention expressed in the phrase ἵνα ᾧσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ (v. 14), which is consistent with the interpretation of μαθητὰς in section 5.2.3.3 above. However, this association with Jesus is not primarily for the ordinary purpose of companionship, whether to alleviate Jesus' loneliness or to provide the disciples with an avenue for “spiritual self-indulgence”. Rather, the Twelve are given the opportunity to learn first-hand

⁷¹ Compare Mark 5:5, 11; 6:46; 9:2, 9; 11:1, 23; 13:3, 14; and 14:26 to, say, Matthew 4:8; 5:1; 17:1; 28:16.

from all that he does in preparation for the time when he will send them out to do likewise. (6:7-13) (Stein, 2008:170; Boring, 2012:101).

The grammar of vv. 14-15 focuses on the intentions behind Jesus' appointment of these twelve, not any frontline assignment for now. One such intention is captured by ἵνα ὦσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ, which indicates that this group of μαθητὰς should be with him and only *later* be sent to preach and to authoritatively exorcise demons (6:7-13). They are first “to be his steady and consistent companions” in contrast to others whose commitment is intermittent or situational (Barclay, 2022:1). In the process, the “future commission” to which they are destined will mature and he will send them to minister (Calvin, 2023b:1). Put differently, it is upon fulfilling the first assignment of *being with him* that he will send them to preach and exorcise demons. Overall, *being with him* impacts their life's pursuits, as they must abandon their homes and endeavours and join him in his itinerant ministry, so that he and they may “function as a unit throughout the remainder of the narrative until 14:50-52” (Boring, 2012:101).

For the original readers, socio-historical evidence suggests that ἵνα ὦσιν μετ' αὐτοῦ also implies that Markan discipleship commitment anticipates *persevering* on the journey with Jesus at whatever cost. No doubt, they were suffering for putting their faith in Jesus Christ; but they must “be with him” whatever the peril, in the hope of an ultimate victory that would mirror that of the suffering “Son of God”/“Son of Man”, whom they had come to put their trust in (see sections 5.3.2.1–5.3.2.3 above).

δώδεκα in Mark 3:14 and 16. δώδεκα is not arbitrary but is symbolically associated with “the twelve-tribe covenant people” (Boring, 2012:100–101), likely establishing a subtle connection between Jesus' earthly mission and the twelve tribes of Israel. However, the mixed Jewish-Gentile composition of the Markan community (see section 5.3.2.1) may account for why this connection remains understated in the narrative.

Different theories exist that support the possibility of a connection. Among the plausible suggestions about the significance of δώδεκα in the text, Tuckett (2007:893) explains that by evoking the number of the tribes of Israel, δώδεκα symbolically shows that “the new body [around] Jesus is the nucleus of a new people of God” and also privileges Jesus as “the creator and inaugurator of the new Israel”. Similarly, Fleming (2005:445) explains

that it signals the arrival of “the era of the Messiah” (which can in this context be equated with the arrival of the eschatological kingdom of God) and demonstrates that the Twelve constitute the basis of the *new* people of God just like the twelve tribes were the basis of the old (cf. Matt. 10:1; Lk. 6:12-13). Finally, Stein (2008:169-170) suggests that the symbolism of δώδεκα presents Mark’s Jesus as announcing that he is bringing the long-expected kingdom of God to Israel, himself not a part of the number but standing in a unique relationship to that kingdom. In sum, δώδεκα has symbolic significance in the text, and conveys Jesus’ eschatological-missionary interest in the national Israel.

In summary, Jesus appoints twelve disciples with the intention that they should consistently be with him, thereby being equipped for a future assignment.

P1B(2): That he might send them to preach (v. 14a-b)

καὶ ἐποίησεν δώδεκα ... ἵνα ἀποστέλλῃ αὐτοὺς κηρύσσειν

Jesus appointed twelve ... that he might send them out to preach *NIV*

A second intention in Mark 3:14 is that Jesus will send these men out to preach. Unlike in Matthew 10:7 and Luke 10:9, the verb κηρύσσειν lacks an explicit object⁷². However, the meaning of this elliptical construction is clarified by the broader literary context: it refers to the same proclamation as that of John the Baptist (1:4) and Jesus himself (1:14-15), and is further anticipated in Jesus’ call of the first four disciples (1:16-20) to become γενέσθαι ἁγίους ἀνθρώπων (1:17). In this sense, they are to proclaim the good news of the dawning kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus Christ, as already signalled in the incipit (1:1).

By κηρύσσειν, they receive the imperative to urge their hearers to embrace this new kingdom like they themselves have embraced it, and when they finally step out, ἐκήρυξαν ἵνα μετανοῶσιν (“[they] preached that people should repent”) (6:12). μετανοέω (“to repent”) means “to change one’s mind” or “to change one’s thinking”, and is so crucial in the preaching of the gospel in the NT that the prospect of experiencing the eschatological reign of God is conditioned upon it (Mk. 1:15; Matt. 3:2; 4:17) (Edwards, 2012:1406;

⁷² Even when one turns to 6:7-12, ἐκήρυξαν (“they preached”) is used in v. 12 with the adverbial phrase, ἵνα μετανοῶσιν (“that people should repent”), still with no object.

BDAG, 2021:576). μετάνοια (repentance, change of mind) from the way of rebellion against God's rule is therefore the expected response of the masses to the persuasive message to be brought to them by the disciples—and must be accompanied by fruit (cf. Matt. 3:8; Lk. 3:8)—otherwise, they face destruction (cf. Matt. 11:20; Mk. 13:3, 5). By repenting, they “enter the kingdom of God” (Louw and Nida, 1989a:480; cf. Jn. 3:3, 5). Thus, the preaching obligation placed on the disciples is grave, and the response of their hearers is critical.

In summary, 3:14 anticipates the preaching of the good news of the dawning of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ by the Twelve, to create an opportunity for their hearers to repent and hence see the reality of that kingdom displayed right before them.

P1B(3): That they may have authority to drive out demons (vv. 14-15)

καὶ ἐποίησεν δώδεκα, ... ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια

He appointed twelve ... to have authority to drive out demons

Mark 3:14-15 NIV

This third intention—ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια—is the second part of the active ministry to which Jesus calls the Twelve, the first part being to preach. It will now be examined, bearing in mind the proposal in section 5.3.4.3 that 3:13-19 (as well as 6:7-13) constitutes a shift in the Markan ἐξουσία motif from Jesus to the Twelve. ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια therefore implies that when the Twelve step out to the field and meet demon-possessed persons, they would have the confidence to exorcise such demons, trusting that the demons would leave in the name of Christ (cf. Lk. 10:17; Phil. 2:10). This is exactly what happens in GMark every time Jesus meets a demon-possessed person: he authoritatively commands such demons to keep quiet and leave, and they do (1:21-28, 32-34, 39; 3:11-12; 5:1-20; 7:24-30; 9:14-29).

The phrase ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια makes it clear that the reality of the eschatological rule of God through Jesus is available to his disciples as well. They can do what he himself is doing. As they spread across the field, “Jesus’ authority to proclaim the kingdom and expel demons continues through his agents who act on his behalf” (Keener, 2014:136). The afflicted will walk away free. Hopeless demoniacs will regain

their sanity. Demon-terrorised communities will once more know tranquillity. The cosmic-level agitations that saw Satan defeated during the desert temptations of Jesus and Jesus' several exorcisms will continue at the hands of his commissioned agents. Demonic forces will be expelled from their helpless hosts and Satan's effort to sabotage God's benevolence with his own malevolence will be crushed everywhere. Indeed, the elimination of Satan's minions by Jesus and now also by the Twelve "[proves] that Satan can never win God's creation over to his purposes" (Pero, 2009:1).

For the original readers of GMark, interpreting the exorcisms as a typology of Roman expulsion, such a story of the direct involvement of the Twelve in casting out demons communicated a comforting message that, under the in-breaking eschatological rule of God, the socio-political disorders they suffered as disciples of Jesus would be ultimately defeated. The Roman emperor's power was being subverted, and the evils of his rule were destined for history. There was good news! The Son of the true King would rule through good works and redemptive activities, and God's *shalom* would replace imperial oppression.

5.3.6.3 Summary and conclusion

According to Mark 3:13-19, the twelve disciples have a threefold intended duty, namely, to be with (and follow) Jesus, to preach the good news of the dawning kingdom of God, and to authoritatively drive out demons. Being with him does not imply merely keeping him company or self-indulgence, but constitutes a period of training whereby they are readied for missions. Jesus' choice of the Twelve in GMark subtly establishes a connection between his earthly mission and the twelve tribes of Israel, symbolising his eschatological-missionary interest in the national Israel. The intended assignment of preaching aligns with Jesus' original purpose of making them "fishers of men". They are to persuade people to repent and embrace the dawning kingdom of God ushered in by Jesus Christ. Lastly, they will have to demonstrate the authority that Jesus gives them as his agents to drive out demons. By so doing, they will on the existential level free the victims of these malevolent spirits. But more so, they will be destroying Satan's rule and demonstrating the reality of the eschatological rule of God through Jesus. Mark 3:13-19 is therefore not merely an invitational text, but a decisive transactional text in which the

Bearer of the eschatological kingdom of God equips and obligates his human agents with the “word” and “works” of that kingdom.

5.3.7 Application of the message of Mark 3:13-19 for today

As a final step in the exegesis of a biblical text, it is necessary to make the message applicable to the present time after formulating it for the first readers. However, given the contextual differences between the times of the first readers and now, and even the contextual variations between one current reader and another, only general applications are formulated here to allow for contextual adaptation (Du Toit, 2009a:147). That is what is attempted in this section and in sections 5.4.7 and 5.5.8 below.

Drawing on Mark 3:13-19,

1. By the very nature of discipleship, the church should be intentional about raising disciples who are committed to abiding with and following Jesus consistently, even under circumstances of suffering and mortal danger (Mk. 3:13-14; cf. 8:34-35//Matt. 16:24-25).
2. Such disciples should be equipped and sent out as “fishers of men”, persuading their hearers to receive the good news of Jesus Christ, repent of their sins, and embrace the kingdom of God that he brings (Mk. 3:14; cf. 1:1; 1:17//Matt. 4:19).
3. In addition to proclamation, disciples within the church today should be taught to exercise the authority received from Christ in confronting Satan through the exorcism of demons wherever such ministry becomes necessary (Mk. 3:15; cf. 6:6b-13).
4. The significance of exorcism as a manifestation of Jesus’ cosmic defeat of Satan, and symbolically as a challenge to oppressive earthly powers such as Rome, should encourage believers today with the assurance of God’s ultimate victory over evil.

5.4 Exegetical analysis of Matthew 10:1-8

5.4.1 Demarcation of the text of Matthew 10:1-8

ὁ Ἰησοῦς is a major actant in Matthew 9:35–10:8, while “he” embedded in ἔδωκεν (“he gave”) is the subject of the sentence in Matthew 10:1. By way of the lexico-grammatical criterion of pronominalisation⁷³, “he” establishes literary cohesion with 9:35-38, where the personal noun, ὁ Ἰησοῦς (v. 35), is used for the last time as the subject of actions in the paragraph and subsequently pronominalised in verses 36 and 37. This makes 9:35 a decisive starting point for a fruitful investigation of 10:1ff. However, 10:5 renominalises ὁ Ἰησοῦς—in one sense linking it with 9:35 and thus reinforcing the cohesion between 10:1-8 and 9:35-38, and in another sense indicating “a textual break” between 10:1-4 (or better, 9:35–10:4) and 10:5ff. (cf. Du Toit, 2009a:129). In 10:7-8 he vocally repeats (with variations and more details) the intention for inviting his disciples to himself and giving them authority in 10:1. Thus, the motifs in 10:8 tie with those in 10:1 to form a complete pericope.

Moreover, in consideration of semantic coherence, it is obvious that 10:1-8 follows from 9:35-38, where Jesus himself “went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness” (v. 35). One could say that the imperatives he gives to his disciples to preach the good news of the kingdom (10:7) and to perform various miracles (10:1, 8a) are intended to be a mirror of his own activity in 9:35-36. Various scholars affirm this perspective: “The works of Jesus in 8:1–9:35 must become those of his disciples in chapter 10. Disciples were typically expected to carry on their teachers’ works” (Keener, 2014:70). 9:35–10:4 “[equates] the work of the disciples with the compassionate work of Jesus (cf. 9:35 with 10:1).... They do what he does and work in the eschatological harvest” (Allison Jr., 2007:858). For Luz (2001:70), “The commands of Jesus recall first of all his own activity. Like Jesus (9:37) the disciples are to care for Israel's sheep (10:6). They are to carry his proclamation (4:17) further (10:7) and perform (10:8) his deeds (8:1-

⁷³ According to Du Toit (2009a:129), pronominalisation is the literary act of using a pronoun to replace and refer back to “a more descriptive previous lexical item”. A related term is renominalisation, which explains that in developing literature, the author can use pronouns of a lexical item to a point and then return to the use of the lexical item itself, thus indicating a break of thought with the preceding textual bloc.

4, 17, 28-34; 9:18-26, 32-35).” For Brown (2012:1354-1355), Turner (2012:7), and Case-Winter (2015:137), 9:35-38 is a transitional bridge between Jesus’ own ministry to Israel and the so-called mission discourse that aims to introduce his disciples (10:1ff.) to a similarly authoritative word-and-deed ministry that he has been doing in chapters 5 through 8.

Matthew 10:1-8 therefore constitutes a continuity with 9:35-38. It coheres with 9:35-38 with respect to preaching the gospel of the kingdom of heaven and conveying the benevolence of that kingdom through intervention in and transformation of the holistically deplorable condition of the crowds. So, while 10:1-8 is complete as a pericope and will be treated as such, it requires threshold insights from 9:35-38, which in turn embeds v. 35 as “a virtual twin” with 4:23. The *inclusio* thus formed features Jesus’ authority as its major theme, expressed in both his teaching (chapters 5–7; especially 7:29) and his nine miracles recorded in chapters 8 and 9. A cursory reading of Matthew 10:1 gives the impression that the verse continues the thought in the *inclusio*, especially given that it contains the same words that conclude 4:23 and 9:35.

5.4.2 Socio-historical background of GMatthew

Only a cursory look at the socio-historical data of GMatthew is done here. The following issues are raised:

5.4.2.1 Context, situation, and purpose

Establishing the audience, life situation, and purpose of GMatthew is challenging. This difficulty stems from the scarcity of external data about the social background of the book; hence one must depend heavily on internal evidence, which risks entrapment in the “hermeneutical circle”⁷⁴ (Viljoen, 2012:256). Notwithstanding this potential problem, GMatthew’s emphasis on the Torah signals the prevalent social conditions in the community at the time of producing and using the document, provided it is read “as a transparent story”. Accordingly, within the second half of the first century C.E., the Jewish community had become fragmented due to arguments surrounding the application of the

⁷⁴ That is, one relies on internal evidence to understand the social realities around the document and yet needs such social realities to properly understand the text. This underlies Viljoen’s recommendation that the text be read cautiously and sensitively, with a willingness “to correct one’s previous judgments.”

Torah, making it necessary to consolidate the Jewish societies (Viljoen, 2012:255). It is also possible that rather than being “a single group of believers or a house church”, the Matthean community, of which Matthew himself was a member, may have been “a loose group or groups that interacted with one another in terms of shared beliefs, concerns and aspirations” (Viljoen, 2012:257; see also Van der Merwe, 2015:4).

Aside from internal evidence, Anslow offers some helpful insights to the background of GMatthew from a socio-historical perspective. The situation was marked by multidimensional tension and Matthew’s communities were “a bitter and twisted group, unable to cope with their own marginality, calling for love of enemy on the one hand while on the other savagely and abusively attacking opponents without much in the way of reasonableness”. Among the Jews in the communities, the religious leaders had failed to fulfil the Torah by not living out or promoting justice, mercy and faithfulness—and this had impacted the interpretation of such themes as divorce, Sabbath, and food laws (2017:68-70). More broadly, community leaders, as agents of the Roman imperial government and beneficiaries of the status quo, dutifully maintained an unsavoury social order, with the result of “condemnation of the majority of the population to an existence of domination and daily struggle for subsistence” (2017:77).

There might also have been a theological perspective to the issues, with GMatthew offering an alternative to Roman persuasion (Anslow, 2017:80). The claim of universality of Roman rule would have been countered by the centrality given the kingdom of heaven by GMatthew. Still, titles such as “‘Emmanuel,’ ‘Christ,’ ‘King’ and ‘Son’” for Matthew’s Jesus constituted “a poignant challenge to imperial theology, particularly the claim that the emperor and empire are the agents of the gods” (2017:74). Then, the exorcism episode in which Jesus sends demons into pigs and they race down a cliff to their perishing, might well have been understood to metaphorically point to the defeat and expulsion of the Roman government. In short, Jesus’ miracles, exorcisms and healings—as emblems of the manifested kingdom of God—probably presented a better alternative of wellbeing and newness of life than any that the emperor could secure for the people (2017:75-76). To that extent, “Jesus’ range of prophetic expression—everything from

parables and social teachings to signs, miracles and healings—provides a critical lens through which to view empire and oppression” (2017:108).

As for the purpose of GMatthew, both internal and external evidence can be probed. Internal evidence gives the lead toward Christology and the way of salvation (Viljoen, 2009:18; 2011b:1). On the one hand, Jesus is the major gist of the document and Christology is central to its narrative (Viljoen, 2011b:1, 15). If therefore one must understand the author’s thought, one should pay attention to Matthew’s portraits⁷⁵ of Jesus in the Gospel’s exordium (the infancy narratives in chapters 1 and 2), which Viljoen (2009:18) adopts as containing thematic pointers to the message of GMatthew. On the other hand, Matthew’s way of crafting the way of salvation was intended to open the new faith to non-Jews. The so-called “Gentile bias” in the exordium and later portions of GMatthew gives good reason to believe that Matthew had in mind to communicate the acceptance of Gentiles in Christianity (Viljoen, 2009:18-24). This point is especially curious, given that Matthew’s Jesus instructs his commissioned disciples to omit non-Jews in the evangelistic activities anticipated in Matthew 10:1-8 (particularly, vv. 5-6). This apparent disparity will be addressed later in the analysis.

Externally, Anslow (2017:71) proposes that GMatthew is a thoroughly political document, building on the fact that GMatthew engages much in issues of interpretation and the view that interpretation of the Torah in the first century “was an articulation of ‘a particular vision of life under God’”, necessarily making interpretation “a political act in which the control of society was at stake”. He says,

Matthew, by entering into a wider debate about interpretation, is a text deeply political in nature. That Matthew is concerned with issues of “justice and mercy and faithfulness” (τὴν κρίσιν καὶ τὸ ἔλεος καὶ τὴν πίστιν) and righteousness (δικαιοσύνην) gives us a sense of both his politics and his social situation. Indeed, the kingdom of heaven is the desire of those who are ultimately dissatisfied with the current order of things, either because of their social vision (stemming from Torah) or their current lot in life—perhaps both.

(Anslow, 2017:71-72)

75 These portraits include honorific titles, fulfilment of OT prophecies of the Servant of God (and other roles), the embodiment of Jewish Wisdom, an object of worship, a type of Moses, and so on (Viljoen, 2011b:2-15).

If this proposal is anything to go by, then Matthew might have intentionally addressed his document to the social and political concerns of his readers, on the one hand criticising the Roman government and its callousness and subversiveness, and on the other presenting the kingdom of God ruled by a compassionate King as a preferred alternative (Anslow, 2017:80). Furthermore, as an ancient biography, GMatthew employs a mixture of “epideictic”, “forensic”, and “deliberative” rhetoric at different stages of the narration. This means that the document aimed to urge its original readers to have a certain view *in the now* of Jesus and the lifestyle he commands, to reflect critically on their preceding decision about the meaning of Jesus’ ministry, death and resurrection, as well as to keep making decisions while suffering persecution. Beyond this, it sought to partly legitimise and partly repudiate particular social standards, and in the process to discredit opponents and contribute meaningfully to the life and experience of the community. It presented to them “a didactic and rhetorical object of crisis—the audience must take a side in the present based on the meaning of the past” (Anslow, 2017:99).

Indeed, “[t]he strong imperatives to and examples of discipleship” so prominent in the document do not only serve didactic purposes but also offer a lens for “looking at the world contra opposing Jewish claims and Roman domination”, thus placing before its readers “a compelling alternative social experience” that helps them reaffirm their identity in and relationship to the God whom Jesus claims to be sovereign. Just like the disciples featured in the narrative, the readers were summoned to integrate the implications of this claim into their own lives, so much so that “Matthew’s story is ... a counternarrative in the form of a biography about an executed prophet from Galilee” (Anslow, 2017:99-100).

5.4.2.2 Summary and conclusion

GMatthew’s emphasis on the Torah suggests that controversies surrounding the Torah’s application existed within Matthew’s Jewish community(ies). These communities also struggled with injustice and other social ills, which were perpetuated by their religious leaders and the Roman Empire. In this context, GMatthew likely aimed to present an alternative to the Roman imperial theological system by portraying a King and Son of God who rules with justice and offers well-being and newness of life. Through this same figure, the power of the kingdom of God is demonstrated in various exorcism episodes that

metaphorically signal the expulsion of the Roman government. From an internal standpoint, the purpose of GMatthew is to disclose the divinity of Jesus, as evidenced by Matthew's portraits of him in the Gospel's exordium, and to outline the way of salvation through him, with a particular interest in Gentile inclusion. Externally, GMatthew functions as a political document because its first-century focus on the Torah articulated a specific vision of life under God, thereby discreetly addressing how society should be governed.

Against this backdrop, GMatthew may be understood as a document with both theological and socio-political dimensions. For this study, GMatthew's theology—centered on revealing the person and work of Jesus as the expected Messiah—creates a context for understanding the miracles he performed and the miracle imperatives he gave to his disciples. These acts serve as revelatory tools, presenting Jesus as the bearer of the kingdom of God and demonstrating the "already" manifestation of that kingdom. The preaching, healings, and exorcisms anticipated in Matthew 10:1-8 all serve a heavenly kingdom that not only antagonises but also decisively overthrows the reign of Satan, in a manner that reflects the Jewish expectation that a national government would overthrow Roman imperial power.

5.4.3 Literary type of Matthew 10:1-8

Matthew 10:1-8 comprises two complementary genres. It begins as a narrative (vv. 1-5a) and concludes as a monologic speech (vv. 5b-8)⁷⁶. The speech in vv. 5b-8 flows syntactically from the narrative in vv. 1-5a and is integral to a larger section that is imperative in nature (vv. 5b-15). Consequently, an exegesis of Matthew 10:1-8 must account for these generic nuances.

5.4.4 The place of Matthew 10:1-8 in its literary macro-structure

5.4.4.1 Introduction

This section investigates the relationship of 10:1-8 to the rest of GMatthew through five key motifs: ἐξουσία, ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, mission, miracle, and compassion. These motifs were selected because Jesus' commissioning of the Twelve is rooted in his compassion for the distressed crowds (9:36) and contains twin imperatives to embark on

⁷⁶ vv. 5b-8 is actually part of a long section of speech: vv. 5b-42. A similar pattern is seen in 9:35-38, where vv. 35-37a is narrative and vv. 37b-38 is speech.

a mission (vv. 5-7) and to perform miracles (v. 8a). In turn, the mission mandate explicitly prescribes the imminence of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν as its communicative content (v. 7), while the text foregrounds the giving of ἐξουσία to the Twelve for the assignment ahead of them (vv. 1, 7-8). Attention now turns to four of the themes themes, while ἐξουσία will be integrated into the interpretation of the text.

5.4.4.2 Matthew 10:1-8 and ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν

Matthew 10:1-8 is directly related to the motif of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν in GMatthew and, by extension, the entire canon. ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν is the subject of John and Jesus' first preaching activities in GMatthew: Μετανοεῖτε, ἥγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ("Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near") (3:2; 4:17). It features repeatedly in different narrative contexts in the text: the Beatitudes (5:3, 10, 19, 19-21), miracle narratives (8:11; 12:28, where its equivalent, ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ["the kingdom of God"], is used), the commissioning (10:7), teaching (11:11-12; 16:19; 18:1, 3-4, 19:12, 14, 23; 23:13), and parables (13:11, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 52; 18:23; 20:1; 22:2; 25:1)⁷⁷. The frequent use of this term in GMatthew highlights its significance for the Gospel as a whole and specifically for its function in Matthew 10:1-8. As established in section 5.2.3.8, ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν refers to God's eschatological rule as king. Its character is spiritual and calls for repentance to gain access (Matt. 3:2, 7-10; 4:17). Its radical lifestyle requirement is enshrined in Matthew 5-7 (see also 6:10, 12; 18:21-35; 18:1-4), and its power is demonstrated in the various miracles performed by Jesus (e.g., chapter 8-9; 12:28).

An understanding of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν in GMatthew is enhanced by examining the relationship between OT expectations and their NT fulfilment. Trout (2015:3) identifies specific narrative occurrences that establish this relationship⁷⁸, and thereby argues for unity and continuity between the OT and the NT. The implication of this insight is that "[i]n each instance the formula indicates that a trajectory set by the original context has reached its culmination in Jesus. What the events in the law and prophets foreshadowed has arrived in Jesus' ministry" (2015:4). The reign of God peripherally captured in the

⁷⁷ Trout (2015:4) observes that βασιλεία occurs 55 times in the document, out of which 32 occur in the construct ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

⁷⁸ See Matthew 1:22-23; 2:15; 2:17-18; 2:23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:4-5; 27:9-10.

OT⁷⁹ is now fully realised in his Son's first advent. Therefore, fulfilment and kingdom should be viewed as being inseparable (2015:7).

Based on internal evidence, it can be concluded that this is how Jesus understands his own work when he tells the people, ἔφθασεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (“[T]he kingdom of God has come upon you”), in connection with his exorcisms (Matt. 12:28; cf. Lk. 11:20). Furthermore, John the Baptist also emphasises this fulfilment before Jesus begins his earthly ministry (cf. Matt. 3:1-3). Other Matthean episodes equally point to fulfilment (cf. Matt. 16:19; 26:63-64; 28:18) (Akpan, 2018:171; Coetzee, 1995:34). Moreover, GMatthew and indeed other NT books adequately account for both the “already” phase of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ realised in Jesus' incarnation through his ascension⁸⁰ and the “not-yet” phase expected in his second advent⁸¹.

In Matthew 10:1-8, it is the imminence of this βασιλεία that the Twelve are to announce (v. 7). Like in 3:2, 7-10 and 4:17, their hearers will need to repent and then receive the right of access into it. Just as Jesus himself had been doing (4:17; 12:28), the Twelve, through the authority granted to them, would likewise demonstrate the power of the kingdom by performing the miracles specified in 10:1 and 8, thereby manifesting the “already” dimension of the kingdom while simultaneously pointing to its “not yet” consummation.

5.4.4.3 Matthew 10:1-8 and mission

Mission, closely related to the motif of the kingdom, features prominently in GMatthew and significantly orients its theology toward salvation history and Christology (Akpan, 2018:171; Combrink, 1988:99; Trout, 2015:1, 4, 5-7). Matthew's Jesus is “both Messiah (cf. 1:1) and Son of God (cf. 3:17; 11:27; 17:5; 27:54)”. On the one hand, he fulfils the messianic expectations of the OT; on the other hand, he brings God's salvation, teaches God's will (cf. 5:17-20), and inaugurates God's kingdom through obedience to the divine will (cf. 3:15; 4:17; 8:16-17; 20:28) (Akpan, 2018:171). Consequently, the mission call to repent and embrace the kingdom at the beginning of GMatthew (3:1-2, 7-8; 4:17, 23) and

79 Cf. 1 Chron. 16:31; Ps. 93:1; 99:1.

80 Cf. Matt. 3:1-2, 11, 16-17; 4:17, 23; 10:7-8; 12:28; 16:27-28; 17:1-8; Lk. 3:5-6, 16-17; 10:11, 21; 11:20; Jn. 1:1-14; Rev. 1:9.

81 Cf. Matt. 22:23-33//Mk. 12:18-27//Lk. 20:27-38; Matt. 24:1-25:46; Lk. 13:28; 17:30-31; 18:8; Rev. 12:10.

the great commission at the end of the book (28:18-20) together constitute the framework for all that transpires in between. The activities, so doubly framed, give flesh to the purpose of GMatthew earlier identified as Christology and the way of salvation (see section 5.4.2.1).

The narrative presents the following picture: Matthew's Jesus calls his first disciples with the purpose of making them ἁγιοὶ ἀνθρώπων (4:19; cf. vv. 18-22). He himself is from the earliest a non-stop, itinerant, crowd-moving missionary⁸² and devotes time to teaching on the demands of the kingdom⁸³. His words and miracles are compelling and sometimes offensive. For this reason, some follow him, committing themselves to the kingdom that he preaches, while others attack him at every available opportunity until they inadvertently help fulfil his redemptive mission by crucifying him on the cross. Thus, Jesus' commissioning of the Twelve to preach the gospel in 10:7 and 28:18-20 constitutes an extension of his own mission and a fulfilment of his original purpose to make them "fishers of men". His time-bound, earthly mission fits into God's agenda for the salvation of mankind, while his own activities and the commissioning of his disciples (Matt. 10:1-42) align with this divine agenda. Matthew 10:1-8, as part of this fit, specifies what activities—and the scope thereof—that the Twelve must undertake to fulfil their "fishers of men" role in promoting and sustaining the mission agenda of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

5.4.4.4 Matthew 10:1-8 and miracles⁸⁴

GMatthew reports a number of specific miracles and also makes general statements about the miracles performed by Jesus. Jesus begins to heal people miraculously (4:23-24) shortly after inaugurating his public ministry (4:17). Matthew records general miracle testimonies in 4:23-24, 8:16-18, 9:35, 14:35-36, and 21:14; but also narrates not less than eighteen specific miracles performed by Jesus⁸⁵. Again, these miraculous activities fulfil prophecy (8:16-18) and display God's kingdom in the midst of the people (12:28). Still,

82 Cf. 4:23-25; 9:1, 9, 27, 35; 11:1; 19:1-2.

83 See the Beatitudes (5-7) and the parables (13:1-52; 18:10-14, 21-35; 20:1-16; 21:33-46; 22:1-14; 25:1-46).

84 The focus here is on the miraculous activities carried out by Jesus, while of course acknowledging that his life story is a summation of several miraculous phenomena (cf. 1:18-23; 3:16-17; 17:1-8; 27:50-54; 28:1-10).

85 Cf. 8:1-4, 5-13, 14-15, 23-27, 28-34; 9:1-8, 18-26, 27-31, 32-34; 12:22-23; 14:13-21, 22-33; 15:21-28, 29-39; 17:14-21; 20:29-34; 21:18-21.

Matthew's Jesus declines every request to perform miracles merely to validate his identity or authority (12:38-45; 16:1-4).

Notably, the distribution of these specific miracle narratives is almost symmetrical around the commissioning in 10:1ff. (with about nine such narratives *before* and eight *after* 10:1ff.). If nothing else, this picture shows that the commission in 10:1-8 to perform miracles is embedded in a literary environment where miracles are already a reality—and continue to be. In effect, 10:1-8 is an invitation from the Messianic Miracle-Worker to his disciples to participate in the same miraculous ministry he himself is conducting.

5.4.4.5 Matthew 10:1-8 and σπλάγχνον

Literally, σπλάγχνον (plural: σπλάγχνα) refers to the internal organs of the human body. σπλάγχνα was figuratively used in the ancient Greek world as referents for psychological aspects (that is, they were regarded as the seat of emotions) covering such “violent passions” as anger and love (BDAG, 2021: 834; Strong, 2021; Thayer, 2011). The Hebrews equivalent, מַחֲשָׁבִים, is more positively oriented, covering kindness, benevolence, compassion, etc. (Thayer, 2011). Idiomatically, therefore, the NT usage of σπλαγχνίζομαι and all its other inflected forms (possibly influenced by the Hebrew perspective) refers to that bowel-like movement inside of a person whereby they *feel* or *are moved with* sympathy for another (or others) facing misfortune or distress, and therefore (want to) do something to bring relief. This is the idea that is evident in GMatthew (9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27; 20:34).

Particularly for Matthew's Jesus, the sight of human suffering figuratively moves his bowels and his compassion consistently leads to intervention (9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34)⁸⁶. As Jamieson (2002:1901) states, Jesus sees in Matthew 9:36 “a vast disorganized mass, being but a faint picture of their wretchedness as the victims of pharisaic guidance; their souls uncared for, yet drawn after and hanging upon Him”. With roots in very critical circumstances in the OT⁸⁷ (Schultz, 2013:93), the symbolism of sheep without a shepherd here calls for nothing less than a quick and compassionate

86 GMark uses the same word three out of four times in miracle stories (Mk. 1:41; 6:34; 8:2; 9:22), and GLuke once out of three times (7:13).

87 Cf. Num. 27:16-17; 1 Kgs. 22:17; 2 Chron. 18:16.

response—and here and everywhere else, Jesus’ compassionate disposition suits the occasion. This consistent compassion lies at the root of the commission in 10:1-8.

In 9:35, Jesus is reported as preaching the gospel of the kingdom and θεραπεύων πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν; in 9:36, he meets crowds and has compassion on them; in 9:37-38, he observes the dearth of labourers who could salvage the situation and asks his disciples to pray for labourers; and then, in 10:1, he gives them authority to relieve suffering people of demonic oppression and all kinds of disease and sickness. It is, in fact, only here that NT miracle imperatives are directly connected to the idiomatic use of σπλάγχνον, so that Jesus’ miracles and those anticipated in his disciples’ activities are depicted as compassion in action. In corroboration of this view, Case-Winter (2015:149) argues that Jesus’ miracle imperatives to his disciples provide a template for the mission of both his past and present disciples: “attentiveness to suffering”. According to him, “the suffering of others should be the heart and center of our work” and “it is by attentiveness to the suffering of others that we discover our mission”.

A number of other scholars equally emphasise the relationship between compassion and rescue: Shin (2023:1) names “compassion and mercy” among other themes that service Matthew’s “larger context and theological perspective” with his stories of Jesus’ healings. On their part, Ukeachusim, Ituma and Uroko (2021:373) assert that GMatthew is “theologically articulated ... from the background of the needs and the conditions of [Matthew’s] Christian community” (2021:377); hence the characterisation of Jesus’ earthly ministry with compassion toward sufferers and actions to practically resolve their crises. Particularly for Matthew 10:1ff., they aver that compassion is needed to fulfil the mission: “In compassion the reality of the kingdom of God is made manifest. Divine compassion gives humanity access to the kingdom of God” (2021:382).

The belief that “Matthew’s underlying emphasis on compassion has a history attached to it” may well be indicative of the author’s intention to compassionately address the various socio-historical issues that were rife in Matthew’s community(ies) (Ukeachusim, Ituma and Uroko, 2021:376). This perspective aligns with Anslow (2017:68-69), who describes Matthew’s communities as “a bitter and twisted group, unable to cope with their own marginality”. For Anslow, Matthew’s emphasis on compassion may have served as an

antidote to the frustration caused by the failure of religious leaders and the oppression of Roman rule (2017:70). Reading about the various miraculous interventions of Jesus in GMatthew, and particularly the miracle imperatives (10:1, 8), as textually connected to Jesus' compassion (9:36), may have given them the sense of hope that they were not alone in their distress. The messianic interventions they read about in GMatthew as past events were linked forward to the ongoing miracle imperatives and backward to the OT characterisation of the God of Israel as one who consistently acts—or promises to act—in compassionate and restorative ways⁸⁸. So, they could trust him to come through for them.

5.4.4.6 Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has shown that the main themes of GMatthew are Christology and the way of salvation. Matthew's Jesus is pictured as both Messiah and Son of God who fulfils OT prophecies and avails God's full salvation to Jews and Gentiles alike. These key themes are elucidated through subthemes, including authority, kingdom, mission, miracle, and compassion. On the whole, Matthew 10:1-8 weaves these motifs together in such a way that a discussion of miracle—or, for that matter, the miracle imperatives in the passage—necessitates reflection on the meaning and import of the other prominent motifs, especially since they are themselves interrelated. All four motifs are significant components for a proper understanding of the passage, and their interrelations will be highlighted wherever necessary in the exegetical analysis.

5.4.5 Surface structure analysis of Matthew 10:1-8

5.4.5.1 Scope

This section focuses on identifying and analysing the colons and colon clusters that constitute the pericope and on using these data to formulate the pericope's subthemes and overall theme.

⁸⁸ e.g., Exo. 22:27; Neh. 9:27; Psa. 102:13; 103:13; 111:4; Isa. 30:18; 49:13; 51:3; Jer. 30:18; Hos. 11:8; Zech. 10:6.

5.4.5.2 Identification of colons in Matthew 10:1-8

Below is a schematic representation of the surface structure of the pericope:

- 1 ¹Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς δώδεκα μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν
πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων,
¹And having summoned his twelve disciples, he gave them authority over unclean
spirits
- 2 A ὥστε ἐκβάλλειν αὐτὰ
so as to cast them out
B καὶ θεραπεύειν πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν.
and to heal every disease and every sickness.
- 3 ²Τῶν δὲ δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τὰ ὀνόματά ἐστιν ταῦτα:
²And the names of the twelve apostles are these:
- 4 A πρῶτος Σίμων, ὁ λεγόμενος Πέτρος,
first Simon, called Peter
B καὶ Ἀνδρέας, ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ;
and Andrew, his brother
C καὶ Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου,
and James, the [son] of Zebedee
D καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ;
and John, his brother
E ³Φίλιππος,
³Philip
F καὶ Βαρθολομαῖος;
and Bartholomew;
G Θωμᾶς
Thomas,
H καὶ Μαθθαῖος ὁ τελώνης;
and Matthew, the tax collector
I Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ἀλφαίου,
James, the [son] of Alphaeus
J καὶ Θαδδαῖος;
and Thaddaeus.
K ⁴Σίμων ὁ Καναναῖος,
⁴Simon, the Zealot
L καὶ Ἰούδας
and Judas
M ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης,
Iscaiot
M' ὁ καὶ παραδοὺς αὐτόν.
[who] also betrayed him
- 5 ⁵Τούτους τοὺς δώδεκα ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς,
⁵Jesus sent forth these twelve
- 6 A παραγγείλας αὐτοῖς, λέγων,
having instructed them, saying,
B Εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθῃτε,
Do not go into [the] way of the Gentiles
C καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθῃτε,
and do not enter into any city of Samaritans
D ⁶πορεύεσθε δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ
⁶Go however rather to those lost sheep of [the] house of Israel
- 7 A ⁷πορευόμενοι δὲ κηρύσσετε, λέγοντες ὅτι,
⁷Going on also proclaim, saying,
B Ἦγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
The kingdom of heaven has drawn near

- C ἄσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε,
⁸Heal [those that are] ailing
- D νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε,
 raise [those that are] dead
- E λεπροὺς καθαρίζετε,
 cleanse [those that are] leprous
- F δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλετε;
 cast out demons
- G δωρεὰν ἐλάβετε,
 Freely you received
- G' δωρεὰν δότε.
 freely give.

Scheme 5.2: Colons in Matthew 10:1-8

5.4.5.3 Colon clusters and subthemes in Matthew 10:1-8

Δώδεκα is prominent in this pericope as a vertical thematic marker. The author uses it in v. 1, v. 2, and v. 5 respectively in the expressions τοὺς δώδεκα, δὲ δώδεκα, and Τούτους τοὺς δώδεκα. This suggests that the text of 10:1-8 can be delineated in three parts, viz.: v. 1, vv. 2-4, and vv. 5-8. Below is a table showing this delineation with a suggested subtheme for each part:

Colon Cluster	Constituent Colons	Subtheme
Q1	cols. 1–2. 1 ¹Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς δώδεκα μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων, ¹And having summoned his twelve disciples, he gave them authority over unclean spirits 2 A ὥστε ἐκβάλλειν αὐτὰ so as to cast them out B καὶ θεραπεύειν πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν. and to heal every disease and every sickness	<i>Jesus gives authority to his twelve disciples to cast out unclean spirits and heal every disease/sickness</i>
Q2	cols. 3–4 3 ²Τῶν δὲ δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τὰ ὀνόματά ἐστὶν ταῦτα: ²And the names of the twelve apostles are these: 4 A πρῶτος Σίμων, ὁ λεγόμενος Πέτρος, first Simon, called Peter B καὶ Ἀνδρέας, ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ; and Andrew, his brother C καὶ Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ζεβεδαίου, and James, the [son] of Zebedee D καὶ Ἰωάννης ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ; and John, his brother E ³Φίλιππος, ³Philip F καὶ Βαρθολομαῖος; and Bartholomew; G Θωμᾶς Thomas, H καὶ Μαθθαῖος ὁ τελώνης; and Matthew, the tax collector I Ἰάκωβος ὁ τοῦ Ἀλφαίου, James, the [son] of Alphaeus J καὶ Θαδδαῖος; and Thaddaeus. K ⁴Σίμων ὁ Καναναῖος, ⁴Simon, the Zealot L καὶ Ἰούδας and Judas M ὁ Ἰσκαριώτης, Iscariot M' ὁ καὶ παραδοὺς αὐτόν. [who] also betrayed him	<i>The names of the twelve disciples/apostles of Jesus are given</i>

Q3	cols. 5–7	5 ⁵Τούτους τοὺς δώδεκα ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, ⁵Jesus sent forth these twelve 6 A παραγγείλας αὐτοῖς, λέγων, having instructed them, saying, B Εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθῃτε, Do not go into [the] way of the Gentiles C καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθῃτε, and do not enter into any city of Samaritans D ⁶πορεύεσθε δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ ⁶Go however rather to those lost sheep of [the] house of Israel 7 A ⁷πορευόμενοι δὲ κηρύσσετε, λέγοντες ὅτι, ⁷Going on also proclaim, saying, B Ἦγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. The kingdom of heaven has drawn near C ⁸ἄσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε, ⁸Heal [those that are] ailing D νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε, raise [those that are] dead E λεπροὺς καθαρίζετε, cleanse [those that are] leprous F δαίμονια ἐκβάλλετε; cast out demons G δωρεὰν ἐλάβετε, Freely you received G' δωρεὰν δότε. freely give.	<i>Jesus sends out his twelve disciples on a mission, with instructions to focus their proclamation of the kingdom of heaven and performance of miracles on the lost sheep of Israel</i>
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Table 5.4: Colon clusters and subthemes of Matthew 10:1-8

5.4.5.4 Formulation of a theme of Matthew 10:1-8

Based on the subthemes of colon clusters Q1, Q2, and Q3 in Table 5.4 above, a **theme** of Matthew 10:1-8 is formulated as follows:

Colon Cluster	Constituent Colons/Verses	Subtheme
Q1	Cols. 1–2/v. 1	<i>Jesus gives authority to his twelve disciples to cast out unclean spirits and heal every disease/sickness</i>
Q2	Cols. 3–4/vv. 2-4	<i>The names of the twelve apostles of Jesus are given</i>
Q3	Cols. 5–7/vv. 5-8	<i>Jesus sends out his twelve disciples on a mission, with instructions to focus their proclamation of the kingdom of heaven and performance of miracles on the lost sheep of Israel</i>
Theme: Jesus gives authority to his twelve, named disciples/apostles for purpose of mission: to proclaim the kingdom of heaven and to perform miracles among the lost sheep of Israel.		

Table 5.5: Theme of Matthew 10:1-8

5.4.6 Formulating the message of Matthew 10:1-8 for the first readers⁸⁹

5.4.6.1 Motivation

This section aims to formulate a message from Matthew 10:1-8 on the basis of insights derived from the word-study of key concepts in the text (section 5.2), the socio-historical background of GMatthew (section 5.4.2), and the place of Matthew 10:1-8 within its literary macro-context (section 5.4.4).

5.4.6.2 Explication of the subthemes of Matthew 10:1-8

5.4.6.2.1 Subtheme Q1: Jesus gives authority to his twelve disciples to cast out unclean spirits and heal every disease/sickness (v. 1)

In relation to 9:35-38, Q1 is an assignment born out of the compassion that Jesus feels for the deplorable condition of the crowds (9:36), which he further elucidates with a harvest language in vv. 37-38. The commissioning of the Twelve makes them an answer, indeed the first-fruit of the answer to the petition that Jesus calls for in view of the urgent situation of “the harvest”. In all, Q1 emphasises two things: that *Jesus gives authority to his twelve disciples* and that the purpose of giving them authority is *to drive out unclean spirits and to heal all kinds of ailment*.

Q1A: Jesus gives authority to his twelve disciples

Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς δώδεκα μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν

And having summoned his twelve disciples, he gave them authority (over)

An explication of the key words/phrases in this statement will enhance understanding:

1. *τοὺς δώδεκα μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ*. It is not just any set of followers, but the twelve whom he has specifically called to be his close companions, which is why, for the assignment at hand, *προσκαλεσάμενος* (he summons—or, invites—they closer to himself apparently away from others). This assertion agrees with the idea of *μαθητής* in section 5.2.3.3 as a disciple, adherent, or companion who is obligated to follow Jesus around⁹⁰. However, as was clarified in the word-study of *ἔχειν* (section 5.2.4.2), they are nothing but privileged to be so called and imbued with

⁸⁹ Concepts that are common to Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9 and that have been sufficiently explicated under Mark 3:13-19 above, will be used here and under Luke 10:1-9, without further details.

⁹⁰ For the intention for these *μαθηται* to literally and dutifully follow him, see Matthew 4:18-22 and 9:9 and how in each instance, *they abandon everything and immediately follow him* (4:20, 22; 9:9).

such heavenly authority as the verse claims. It is nothing of merit, and so they cannot boast (1 Cor. 4:7). The privilege of exercising authority for miracles is also not exclusive; in Luke 10:1, for instance, individuals other than the Twelve are similarly entrusted with it.

2. *ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν*. Matthew 10:1 states that to these twelve disciples, Jesus gives ἐξουσία⁹¹. The specific sense of ἐξουσία means authority or warrant together with the *power* to do something (see section 5.2.2.1 above). Jesus' giving of ἐξουσία to his disciples implies that he has it *sui generis*. In the clash with religious leaders over his authority to forgive sins (Matt. 9:1-8), Jesus' response in v. 6 is clearly of one who is aware of his own authority: ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας ("But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..."). Here is not a man making empty claims; when he turns to the paralysed man and commands him to rise, take his bed, and walk, the result is so astounding that the people praise God for giving such authority to humans (v. 8) (cf. Mk. 2:5-12; Lk. 5:21-26). Jesus' authority is unarguably "his God-given authority as Messianic king" and reaches its climactic confession in Matthew 28:18 where he declares: Ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς ("All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me", NIV) (Viljoen, 2020:9).

The *sui generis* possession of authority by Jesus leads to another conclusion that is significant for understanding Matthew 10:1, namely, that he has the prerogative to delegate it to others. Firstly, ἔδωκεν in 10:1 (also alluded to in 10:8) implies that he exercises this prerogative by volitionally, formally and freely giving ἐξουσία (see section 5.2.4.4). Secondly, it is from his own intrinsic messianic-kingly authority that Jesus grants it to the Twelve (encompassed by τοῖς ἀνθρώποις in 9:8) as "a down payment of faith" (Schultz, 2013:95), enabling them to exercise it effectively. In short, the authority motif in 10:1-8 ties up with the view of authority in the whole of GMatthew as being *of God* and yet *available to humans*. Indeed, like Jesus receives authority from the Father, the Twelve receive authority from the Son. Like he by his authority forgives and heals the paralytic (9:1-8), they will by the delegated authority bring deliverance to those who are bound by Satan. Like his authority often clashes

91 This is alluded to in v. 8b, where Jesus elliptically says, δωρεὰν ἐλάβετε ("Freely you have received" NIV). A fuller version of the statement could have read δωρεὰν ἐλάβετε ἐξουσίαν (Freely you have received [my] authority).

with Satan's, religious and secular authorities (21:23-32; 22:15-22), the disciples' delegated authority will come into conflict with that of Satan and will manifest in successful exorcisms and healings (10:1, 8).

Q1B: To drive out (exorcise) unclean spirits and to heal every disease and every sickness

πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων ὥστε ἐκβάλλειν αὐτὰ καὶ θεραπεύειν πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν

unclean spirits, to drive them out and to heal every disease and every illness

The purposes for which Jesus gives his twelve disciples ἐξουσία in 10:1 are:

1. *πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων ὥστε ἐκβάλλειν αὐτὰ*. Having received authority from Jesus, the Twelve are expected to use it to exorcise πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων from their hosts. As was established in section 5.2.2.4 above, these πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων are generically related to δαιμόνια (malevolent spirits that take possession of and harm their hosts) (cf. 10:1, 8; sections 5.2.3.2 and 5.2.3.4). But unlike the incantational approach of Jewish exorcists (Josephus, *Ant.* 8.45-49), the exorcising of πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων that is anticipated in Matthew 10:1 takes a different path. Although it is not explicitly stated in Matthew 10:1 how the Twelve should drive out the unclean spirits, it is inferred here that they are expected to follow Jesus' pattern of authoritative, word-mediated exorcisms: "and he drove out the spirits with a word" (Matt. 8:16; cf. Matt. 8:32; 17:18; Mk. 1:25-26; 9:22; also see Perry, 2010:26).
2. *καὶ θεραπεύειν πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν*. The healing anticipated here targets two closely-related physiological conditions, namely, πᾶσαν νόσον ("every disease" *NIV*) and πᾶσαν μαλακίαν ("every sickness" *NIV*) (Matt. 10:1). Whether one is ordinarily ill (in the sense of νόσος) or one's illness has degenerated into debilitation (in the sense of μαλακία), the expectation with θεραπεύειν here is to cause one and all to recover from their physiological illnesses. Indeed, the emphasis on πᾶσαν ("every") in either case of νόσος and μαλακία implies that no physiological illness is beyond reversal at the hands of the Twelve. The immediate literary context presents Jesus' activity as a paradigm that should challenge them: Καὶ περιῆγεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς πόλεις πάσας καὶ τὰς κώμας ... θεραπεύων πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν ("Jesus went through all the towns and villages ... healing every disease and sickness" *NIV*)

(9:35)⁹². So, like their Master, the Twelve are to heal πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν (10:1). As Case-Winter (2015:148) puts it, “[h]ere we see authority in the service of compassion (9:36)”.

Recall from Q1A that there is no doubt about the competence of the Twelve or the effectiveness of their ministry. Having been given ἐξουσία, they are extension agents of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν and vice regents of its inaugurator. As they go about healing the sick and exorcising evil spirits, they are exercising the divine authority that Jesus has implicitly set up against the domination of Satan, who presumably works through demons, diseases and sicknesses to afflict people and communities. They are entering into a conflict of authorities that is generally predominant in GMatthew⁹³, for which reason Viljoen (2011a:329) avers that the Matthean text “reveals an underlying conflict and struggle for authority” that apparently leads up to the climactic Christological authority claim in 28:18.

5.4.6.2.2 Subtheme Q2: The names of the twelve apostles of Jesus are given (vv. 2-4)

It is noted that Matthew identifies these twelve as “apostles” in v. 2: δώδεκα ἀποστόλων. Two alternative interpretations are possible: the apostolic office or the ordinary idea of sending. This study however posits that given that the noun, ἀπόστολος, means “apostle, envoy, messenger” and the verb root, ἀποστέλλω, means “I send” (Mounce, 2003:416), Τῶν δὲ δώδεκα ἀποστόλων τὰ ὀνόματά ἐστιν ταῦτα serves *to underscore the fact of being sent* (explicit in v. 5 and implied in vv. 1, 6-7) rather than office⁹⁴ (see Fleming, 2005:445). Going forward, this study will deal with δώδεκα ἀποστόλων in 10:2 as conveying the idea of persons *being sent* on a mission and no more.

92 Other textual witnesses of Jesus’ healing all kinds of ailment are found in Matthew 8:16b; 12:15 (also see 14:14; 19:2; 21:14; Mark 3:10; and Luke 4:40; 6:19).

93 This inference to authority clash coheres with other ἐξουσία-related conflict passages in and around GMatthew, including the socio-historical struggles in Antioch in Syria, where authority tensions may have compelled the Matthean community to adopt defensive measures (Viljoen, 2011a:32–33); the socio-politically motivated attempt to intensify the authority conflict between Jesus and Caesar over taxation, which Jesus neutralises by legitimising Roman taxation (Matt. 22:15-22); and the religious feud initiated by Jewish leaders in response to Jesus’ authoritative activities (Matt. 9:1-8; 21:12-32).

94 At best, reference to office here is an anachronistic insertion by the original author or later editors.

Another curious matter is whether δώδεκα is in any way significant. Notably, it is in 10:2–4, with a further reference in 10:5, that GMatthew provides its first full list of Jesus’ core disciples and refers to them as τοὺς δώδεκα μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ (10:1), Τῶν ... δώδεκα ἀποστόλων (v. 2), and Τούτους τοὺς δώδεκα (10:5). This emphasis is significant. The mission restriction to “the lost sheep of Israel” (10:6) possibly gives internal evidence to this assertion. Many commentators also think along these lines, suggesting a connection to the heritage of the twelve tribes of Israel⁹⁵. “Jesus is reconstituting or redefining Israel around himself and his enactment of God’s kingdom” (Brown, 2012: 1354). Within this unfolding eschatological scheme, the Twelve are to be a replacement of the irresponsible shepherds (9:36) as “Israel’s new leaders” (cf. 19:28; 21:33-44) (Turner, 2012:264). On the part of the nation itself, Calvin (1999, *Commentary on Matthew 10:1*) suggests that the calling of the Twelve signalled the future restoration of the Church: “As the nation was descended from twelve patriarchs, so its scattered remains are now reminded by Christ of their origin, that they may entertain a fixed hope of being restored.” It is therefore concluded that the disciples are *the symbolic twelve* reaching out to *the covenant twelve* with the redemptive (or, restorative) gospel of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. The motive of this restriction will be investigated in the next section.

5.4.6.2.3 Subtheme Q3: Jesus sends his twelve disciples on a mission, with instructions to focus their proclamation of the kingdom of heaven and performance of miracles on the lost sheep of Israel, and to do so without a fee (vv. 5-8)

Under this subtheme, four instructions are noted: to avoid Gentile and Samaritan settlements and rather focus on the Jews, to preach the message of the kingdom of heaven, to perform various miracles, and to offer their services freely. Each of these is explained in what follows:

Q3A: Instruction to avoid Gentile persons and Samaritan towns and rather focus on the Jews (vv. 5-6)

Τούτους τοὺς δώδεκα ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς παραγγείλας αὐτοῖς λέγων, Εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθητε, καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθητε· πορεύεσθε δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ.

95 Cf. Lk. 22:28-30//Ac. 1:11; Matt. 11:20-24//Lk. 10:13-15; Matt. 17:17; Rev. 21:12-14.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: Do not go among the Gentiles or enter into any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.

Matt. 10:5-6 NIV

A restrictive mission? This instruction is striking and naturally raises questions. Who are the Gentiles and the Samaritans, and why must the Twelve not go to them but rather must concentrate on “the lost sheep of Israel”? Who are the lost sheep of Israel, and just why does Matthew address such a sensitive matter to a faith community (Antioch in Syria) that on the one hand is already polarised around the Torah and on the other has a heavy presence of non-Jews? (see section 5.4.2.1). These questions deserve at least cursory answers in order to create a context for understanding what Jesus means by the instructions in 10:5-6 above.

Gentiles are non-Jewish people in a general sense, and are referred to in the Hebrew as גוי (“nation”) [plural: גוים, “nations”] (English, 2023). On their part, Samaritans are a people group that arose from the intermarriage of Jews and non-Jews in the aftermath of the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests of the Jews (Denova, 2022:1; Guzik, 2018:1; Gill, 2023a:1). The mention of the two people groups may have been representative of all non-Jewish people at the time. So, might Jesus want all such people excluded from the benefits of the current mission simply because of their roots? What does it in fact mean in Jesus’ own ministry when he treats a distressed Syrophoenician mother spitefully and goes further to shock her with a “harshly exclusive” formulation of his own mission (Luz, 2001:73): Οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ (“I was sent *only* to the lost sheep of Israel” NIV) (Matt. 15:24, emphasis mine)?

The priority of Israel in GMatthew regarding God’s covenantal activities is not in doubt, and in fact, should be acknowledged by non-Jews (Turner, 2012:269; cf. Matt. 1:1; Gen. 12:2-3). Therefore, even if the only argument in favour of the mission restriction is that it is a matter of priority and nothing more, it would suffice. At the same time, it cannot be argued convincingly that the mission restriction is aimed by Jesus to exclude the Gentiles from the unfolding eschatological-mission programme.

In fact, Gerber (2022:3) creates the impression that the restriction is less severe than a closure against these people groups: it is a geographical restriction from the “way of the Gentiles” and the “town of the Samaritans” (cf. “the towns of Israel”, v. 23) that is

born out of “only prioritizing ‘the lost sheep of the house of Israel’ (v. 6)” and “connects backward to Jesus’ concern about the crowds who were ‘harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd’ from v. 36”. It is not “a total ban on contact with Gentiles and Samaritans as such”. As was established in section 5.4.2.1 above, the motif of Gentile inclusion is cast in positive light in all of GMatthew. In the OT, this is clearly anticipated as the Messiah will be “a light to the Gentiles” (Isa. 49:6), and in the NT has other sheep that he must bring into the fold (Jn. 10:16) (Defending Inerrancy, 2023:1). Even the story of the Syrophoenician mother cited above ultimately serves to teach a deeply theological lesson on faith, namely, that faith will pay off even if it is foreigners (“the dogs”) that demonstrate it (Matt. 15:28), while “the children” of the house will go without their “bread” should they not believe (v. 26) (cf. Matt. 8:10//Lk. 7:9).

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 anticipates Gentile inclusion: πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Matt. 28:19). Matthew 10, in fact, indicates a connection to 28:18-20 in that it contains elements that extend beyond the present restricted mission, particularly references to Jesus’ disciples eventually appearing before Gentile rulers as a witness amid the anticipated persecution, as well as to the need for them to endure until the day of judgment (10:18, 22, 26, 28). Other Matthean passages indicate both inclusion of and opposition by Gentile nationalities (cf. 8:11-12; 23:34-36; 24:9, 14). The author’s vision of mission is indeed broader than this initial circumscription (Turner, 2012:267; Gerber, 2022:3).

Granted, there appears to be no better explanation for the restrictive instruction than that, programmatically, Matthew’s Jesus is here focusing on the Jews as of primary and urgent salvific importance, given that salvation is from the Jews (Jn. 4:22; cf. Rom. 1:16), and yet they are “lost” in unbelief (Matt. 10:6; cf. Matt. 8:10-12; Lk. 4:23-30; Rom. 11:20). Turner (2012:269) affirms this view when he states that this “particularistic phase” of the mission “is necessary for Jesus to be the fulfilment of Israel’s history and hope”. God’s plan is not unfolding in a historical vacuum; rather, it begins in and with Jewish history and will, like yeast in flour (Matt. 13:33; Lk. 13:21), eventually spread out to the farthest reaches of the earth (Matt. 25:18-20). It makes sense, then, that Vanlaningham (2014:1469) proposes that the Twelve are going to people with whom they share a common set of values and beliefs, at least, while waiting for the Jewish national rejection of the Messiah (Matt. 12:14, 24), when time

will have been ripe to evangelise the Gentiles (cf. Matt. 10:18; Rom. 11:11). Therefore, the caveat is “only temporary” (Stewart, 2020:159; see also Scholtz, 2014:1, 3; Gill, 2023a:1) or “temporal and chronological” (Schultz, 2013:96); later, it will be removed and non-Jews will have full inclusion in the message of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (Matt. 28:19; cf. Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-13; Col. 3:11).

The shepherd-sheep symbolism. The instruction to go to the lost sheep of Israel (v. 6) exploits a great deal of shepherd-sheep metaphoric language that is characteristic of the NT⁹⁶, while drawing on the traditional OT depiction of the nation of Israel as τὰ πρόβατα τοῦ θεοῦ⁹⁷. In the immediate literary context, Matthew 10:6 connects with 9:35-36 in its implicit expectations for Israel’s shepherds, namely, to feed (Eze. 34:2-3), heal (v. 4), and restore the lost sheep (vv. 4-6). So, Matthew 9:36 simply signals the failure of Israel’s leaders in discharging these duties (Brown, 2012:1354; Turner, 2012:263; Case-Winter, 2015:138; Keener, 2014:70), whereupon Jesus advises for intercession for labourers in the harvest (that is, shepherds in this context) (9:38) and then instantly appoints and sends some to the lost sheep (10:1, 6). They are expected to be “authentic shepherds of God’s people in contrast to Israel’s current leadership” (Brown, 2012:1354) and to do so after the exemplary care of the Messiah-Shepherd (cf. Jn. 10:11, 14).

However, Matthew 10:6 relates to the OT notion of the Israelites as particularly “lost sheep” (cf. Isa. 53:6; Jer. 50:6; Zech. 10:2), while the mission that Jesus has just inaugurated alludes to God’s rescue of them as their Shepherd⁹⁸. Against the OT background briefly outlined, the instruction for the Twelve to go to τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ (10:6) resounds with a sense of missional urgency because they are spiritually “lost”—a condition even more critical than any existential circumstance that bedevils the harassed and helpless sheep in Matthew 9:36. These sheep have the predilection for going astray (cf. Isa. 53:6), and must be rescued. The Messiah-Shepherd has already begun reaching out to them by himself—preaching

96 GMatthew: literal/illustrative use (12:11-12), parabolic uses (18:12-14; 25:31-46), and figurative uses (7:15; 9:36; 10:6, 16; 15:24; 26:31); GMark: figurative uses (6:34; 14:27); GLuke: figurative use (10:3), parabolic use (15:1ff.), and illustrative use (17:7); GJohn: figurative uses (10:11-27; 21:16-17); Acts: figurative use (8:32); Hebrews: figurative use (13:20); and, 1 Peter: figurative use (2:25).

97 Cf. Psa. 23:1ff.; 74:1; 77:20; 78:52; 79:13; 95:7; 100:3; 119:176; Isa. 40:11; 49:9; 53:6; Jer. 23:1; 33:12; 50:6, 17; Eze. 34:2-31; Mic. 2:12; 5:8; Zech. 9:16; 10:2; 11:8, 16.

98 Cf. Psa. 78:52; 119:176; Isa. 40:11; 49:9; Eze. 34:2-31; Mic. 2:12; Zech. 9:16; see also Calvin (2023a:1) and Gill (2023b:1).

repentance (Matt. 4:17; Lk. 13:3, 5) and teaching them the way of God (Matt. 5:1–7:29). Now in Matthew 10:6, he at this “crisis point” (Schultz, 2013:93; cf. Matt. 9:35–38) directs the mission focus of his messengers to these “lost sheep”, to demonstrate God’s “guardian care of them” (Chrysostom, n.a.) and in the hope that they will pay attention to the message and thus be rescued.

This conclusion has a strong basis in the “Q” harvest logion in Matthew 9:37–38//Luke 10:2, particularly the statement Ὁ μὲν θερισμὸς πολὺς, οἱ δὲ ἐργάται ὀλίγοι (“The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few”, v. 37 *NIV*). Timing was key in Palestinian harvest, since delay could lead to a loss due to animal incursion, natural spoilage of the produce, or harsh weather conditions. Some farmers were so proactive that they ordered harvest earlier than they naturally should, so that ripening rather took place only after the harvest. Another measure was to hire a large number of workers, who generally received different forms of daily or monthly pay, even including lunch (Howes, 2023:58–64, 69–74).

The meaning and import of Matthew 9:37–38 (and Luke 10.2) become clearer against this backdrop. The language of both texts suggests a large (πολύς) farm owned by a “master of the harvest” (κύριος τοῦ θερισμοῦ) and needing hired “workers” (ἐργάται) here described as harvesters. Matthew’s Jesus sees the masses of people as a white harvest in danger if only a few harvesters are deployed; before they can cover the vast field, much of the produce will have been spoilt. The mission field is expansive and requires a large workforce; therefore, he sends the Twelve (Matt. 10:1) sufficiently alerted of the urgency of the situation (9:37–38).

Q3B: Instruction to preach the message of the kingdom of heaven

πορευόμενοι δὲ κηρύσσετε λέγοντες ὅτι Ἦγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν

As you go, preach, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is near”

Matt. 10:7

Here in 10:7, Jesus states the content of the mission following the adverbial phrase, πορευόμενοι δὲ (“As you go” *NIV*): they are first to preach that the kingdom of heaven has drawn near. They are to publicly, vocally and persuasively announce (in the sense of κηρύσσετε, intensified by λέγοντες) that God’s kingly rule has come close to these lost sheep through Jesus Christ (see sections 5.2.4.1 and 5.2.4.6) and that God wants them to accept his rule. Even so, the necessity of the offer does not place the hearers of the message under pressure to receive the kingdom, which is why the disciples are

not communicating a directive but appealing to their hearers. The hearers will have welcomed and embraced the kingdom the moment they welcome the disciple-bearers of its message; otherwise, they will have rejected not just the message but also Jesus and the Father who sends him (cf. Matt. 10:11-15, 40).

This preaching of the kingdom is intended by Christ as an answer to the vast harvest that he previously identified in 9:37, which may refer broadly to the end time or narrowly to the overwhelming needs of the despondent crowds identified in the text (Allison Jr., 2007:858; Keener, 2014:70). Viewed from the broader perspective, it should “arouse the minds of the nation to expect an approaching redemption”, which will bring about a divinely accomplished restoration, not one dependent on human kindness, and which will secure for them a prosperity and happiness that are “heavenly and eternal”, not “earthly and fading” (Calvin, 2023a:1).

Diachronically, the theme of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν was positioned against the dominant Roman Empire, and Jesus, the bearer of the heavenly kingdom, was pitted against the Roman emperor. In contrast to the Roman Empire’s claim to universality, this kingdom was portrayed as being truly universal, and, therefore, Jesus as a greater King than the Roman emperor. Moreover, while the Matthean communities groaned under Roman injustice and other social ills and could hardly identify with the emperor, ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν offered heavenly goodwill and existential relief, while also holding out the hope of a reconfiguration of the social order under a King who is *Immanuel*—“*God with us*”. In short, it was a message of compassion and hope to a distressed and despondent people (see section 5.4.2.1).

However, ἤγγικεν in 10:7 does not necessarily indicate a totally future experience (*contra. Benson Commentary*, 2023)⁹⁹. Luz (2001:75) states the exact truth:

That the message is here described in terms of the nearness of God's rule is not an indication that Matthew reckoned with a distant parousia. The kingdom

⁹⁹ According to Benson, “Properly speaking, the kingdom of heaven, or gospel kingdom, did not begin till the Jewish dispensation was abolished, and therefore the apostles, in our Lord’s time, and even our Lord himself, preached the approach only, and not the actual existence of that kingdom.” Nothing is further from the truth than this. If it were to be like Benson explains, then the mission assignment would be only a verbal announcement, without any miraculous sign to support its reality; and since the kingdom is *only approaching*, Christ or his messengers are not different from the OT prophets, who are characterised as having groped as it were in the dark for insight into the redemptive plan of God and its fulfilment (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-11 *NIV*). No, one greater than Moses, Elijah and Jonah, is here (cf. Matt. 12:41//Lk. 11:31-32), and the kingdom is *already* dawning through him with accompanying signs. As proof, his response to John’s question about his identity is demonstrative (cf. Matt. 11:4-5//Lk. 7:22; cf. Isa. 35:5; 61:1-3), indicating fulfilment *in the now*.

of God is primarily the setting for the ethical proclamation of Jesus.... Healings and proclamation are closely related. With the healings the crowds are made aware that something extraordinary is happening in Israel (9:33).

Therefore, the Twelve should urge their audiences to accept the dawning rule of God and all the long-awaited benefits that the Messiah-King brings *here and now*. The Messiah-King is himself the message—the embodiment—of the dawning kingdom. Although Schultz (2013:96) strangely shies away from the immediate applicability of the miracle imperatives in v. 8 to the Twelve, he holds a view that is helpful for understanding not only the immediacy of the kingdom but also the centrality of Jesus to it in the disciples' proclamation (v. 7). He says, "Jesus stands in the center of the Kingdom and speaks from there. This is obvious from the grandeur and uplifting character of His Word. Where Jesus is, there the Kingdom has come." Therefore, the people of Israel need to turn to, believe in, and embrace him on God's terms.

The Gospel emphasis on repentance in view of this kingdom implies a radical change of attitude and lifestyle¹⁰⁰. Still, it is not a radical change born out of mere human determination; such persons need the new birth made possible only by the Spirit of God (Jn. 3:3, 5-6). The moment they do, the door of the kingdom is open to them as a present, spiritual reality. For the Matthean communities living under Roman imperial domination, the spiritual nature of ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν implied that it had nothing to do with political nationalism or temporal-spatial triumphalism. While God might well have overthrown Rome for their sake, a more important concern was for them to secure their place in the Christocentric kingdom, with implications for both present discipleship and future hope.

Q3C: Instruction to perform various miracles (v. 8a)

Not only does the kingdom to be preached affect lifestyle; it also affects existential conditions. Matthew's Jesus comes with a kingdom programme that is holistic in attending to the predicaments of humanity. He saves the soul; but he also intervenes in deplorable mundane circumstances, thus fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy that "[h]e took up our infirmities and carried our diseases" (Matt. 8:16-17; Isa. 53:4). Schultz (2013:77) insightfully explains that Matthew's use of this prophetic text about the atonement in the context of healing communicates the conviction that more is at stake than sickness alone: "Matthew indicates that Jesus did not heal as an outsider. For

100 Cf. Matt. 3:1-2//Mk. 1:4//Lk. 3:3; Matt. 3:7-10; Matt. 4:17/Mk. 1:14-15; Matt. 5:1-7:29; Lk. 3:7-14.

Him healing was not just a matter of removing sickness, but of taking our sickness into His own body”. Just as Jesus vicariously bore humanity’s sins on the cross, so also he bore the burden of humanity’s sicknesses, thereby securing restoration and wholeness for humanity.

This explanation may sound anachronistic, especially because Matthew 8:16-17 describes a pre-atonement event. However, this poses no problem, since the healing narrative itself clearly belongs to the pre-atonement ministry of Jesus, whereas Matthew’s appropriation of it reflects a later interpretive standpoint shaped by the accomplished atonement. Matthew’s claim here has the benefit of hindsight; writing in the post-Easter context, he is sufficiently convinced that Isaiah’s messianic prophecy is fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus. He “[does] not quote Isaiah without being aware of the fulfilment of his prophecy”, but here “[is] a conscious interpretation of the events of that evening in the light of the ultimate realization” (Schultz, 2013:77). To put it straight, Matthew interprets Jesus’ healings through the lenses of the atonement.

Therefore, it is only logical that, under such a weight of prophetic expectation, Matthew’s Jesus notices the overwhelming existential needs of the entire community, compassionately heals them, and still alerts his followers to pray that God would raise shepherd-labourers to give them the attention God requires (Matt. 9:35-38). As with Jesus, the Twelve are to recognise the gravity of the present need and go to the people of Israel with their Christ-given authority to address human needs. The imperatives in v. 8a are clear on this:

ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε, νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε, λεπροὺς καθαρίζετε, δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλετε

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.

Jesus’ disciples are to compassionately perform various miracles as *salvation-plus* benefits of the kingdom like he does, and by them “to prove to men the certain truth and unspeakable importance of [their] message” (*Benson Commentary*, 2023). The miracles listed in the verse expand the imperatives in v. 1b, covering both physiological and spiritual condition¹⁰¹. They include:

101 In some instances, of course, demon possession causes physiological ailments, e.g., a demon causes a man to be blind and dumb (Matt. 12:22), a demon is responsible for seizures in a boy (Matt. 17:14-18), and a woman is crippled by a demon and cannot straighten up (Lk. 13:10-16).

ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε. The Twelve are to heal (cause to recover) people suffering from physiological diseases/sicknesses that cause debilitation; e.g., lame people (Matt. 11:5; 15:30-31; 21:14; Lk. 7:22; Jn. 5:3), paralytics (Matt. 4:24; 8:6; 9:2, 6//Mk. 2:3, 10//Lk. 5:18, 24), etc. The phrase refers to their ministering total healing and restoration to all such persons, as Jesus himself does in similar cases (see sections 5.2.3.7 and 5.2.4.5). They will, in fact, accomplish this (cf. Mk. 6:12; Ac. 3:1-10; 5:12-16), not by their own ability, but because their Master has empowered them (Matt. 10:1).

νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε. The imperative here is to cause physiologically dead people to come back to life. Here, Jesus is not speaking figuratively, like when the NT authors talk about people being spiritually dead (e.g., Jn. 8:51; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:24), but literally (e.g., Lk. 24:5; Jn. 11:32; Rev. 20:5). Jesus himself has a rich record of causing physiologically dead people to come back to life (cf. Matt. 9:18-26//Mk. 5:22-43; Lk. 7:11-17; Jn. 11:1-44), and his statement, *νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε*, anticipates similar interventions. Having been given authority, they are to confront physiological death and rescue its victims. As evidence of the effectiveness of that authority, Peter raises Dorcas back to life (9:32-43) and Paul, though not one of the Twelve, raises Eutychus back to life (20:7-12).

However, it should be noted that the raising of the dead is temporal in scope; the beneficiaries are not thereby brought into the ultimate resurrection life but remain subject to mortality. Such acts function within the present order of human existence, addressing the reality of death without abolishing its ultimate power. In this sense, they carry proleptic redemptive significance, insofar as they anticipate the definitive victory over death. Thus, while the enemy comes to steal, kill, and destroy, the One who is *life* brings life—and in this text delegates that life-giving power through his disciples.

λεπροὺς καθαρίζετε. The Twelve are also instructed to restore leprous persons to wholeness. Such individuals suffer from infectious skin conditions which not only affect the body but, more significantly, render them ritually unclean (see section 5.2.3.10). The significance of this miracle is therefore best understood against the backdrop of the severe social and religious ostracism faced by such sufferers, particularly within Jewish society. Healing was ordinarily closely tied to ritual processes, requiring priestly examination and certification before reintegration into the community (cf. Lev. 13–14;

Deut. 24:8). Against this background, a miraculous intervention that removes both the physical condition and the need for extended ritual reintegration would have been received as a profound restoration of life-in-community.

Jesus himself effectively attended to such cases and in all of them achieved healing before advising his beneficiaries to go to the priest merely for a testimony to the people (cf. Matt. 8:1-4//Mk. 1:40-45//Lk. 5:12-16; Lk. 17:12-19). καθαρίζετε therefore means that the disciples should accomplish the healing and restoration of leprous people in a new way that imitates Jesus' approach. Just as Jesus' authoritative pronouncement and laying on of hands secure cleansing, the Twelve are expected to approach such cases with confidence in the effectiveness of the authority entrusted to them.

δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλετε. The imperative here is that the Twelve should drive out demons. It anticipates exorcism of *all and any kinds* of demons (see v. 1: πνευμάτα ἀκαθάρτα [unclean spirits]; v. 8: δαιμόνια [demons]; sections 5.2.3.2 and 5.2.3.4). Like Jesus authoritatively “drove out the spirits with a word” (Matt. 8:16), they will also exorcise these evil spirits by a word¹⁰² (e.g., Ac. 16:18).

Conclusion on the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:8

Of the four miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1 and 8, only the cleansing of lepers lacks an explicit NT record of fulfilment. Still, this does not necessarily imply that the disciples never healed leprous persons; it may simply be that no such instance was preserved in the NT record. Indeed, the disciples of Jesus and messengers of the kingdom of heaven—unlike the callous agents of the Roman empire—have been “[invested] ... with the badges of heavenly power” (Calvin, 2023c:1) to compassionately salvage diverse deplorable conditions of “the lost sheep of Israel” (cf. Matt. 9:35-38; 10:6; Lk. 10:1-9), and they effectively do so.

Q3D: Instruction to offer their services freely (v. 8b)

δωρεὰν ἐλάβετε, δωρεὰν δότε

Freely you receive, freely give.

This instruction is best understood in light of the directives in vv. 9-10 that the disciples should neither carry money nor travel with bags and other provisions. Cynic

¹⁰² However, Acts 19:12 indicates an apostolic exorcism event that is mediated by physical materials, while the claim in 8:7 does not indicate how it is done.

philosophers were notorious for carrying such bags and begging for money (Bock, 1996:32). Likewise, Luke's references to itinerant Jewish exorcists (Ac. 19:13-16) and Simon the sorcerer's transactional attitude toward spiritual power (Ac. 8:9-25), together with Paul's criticism of mercenary tendencies among ministers (Phil. 3:17-19; 2 Cor. 2:17), suggest that similar practices existed within the religious sphere. In this context, Case-Winter (2015:151) reasonably argues that the Twelve must avoid creating the impression that their ministry is motivated by financial gain. The warning thus distinguishes them as "authentic witnesses" from those who operate merely as religious "entrepreneurs".

The very nature of the authority they have received, together with the fact that it has been given to them freely, rules out every form of self-aggrandisement. Consequently, they are to render their services without charge. The authority entrusted to them is indeed a free gift intended for the good of others (cf. 1 Cor. 12:7; see also Turner, 2012:269 for a similar viewpoint). Their engagement in the ministry of the Word and miraculous interventions must therefore be governed by integrity and good conscience (cf. Ac. 8:20-23; 1 Cor. 9:18), especially since the notion of compassion discussed in section 5.4.4.5 above leaves no room for the exploitation of vulnerable persons.

5.4.6.3 Summary and conclusion on the message of Matthew 10:1-8

The mission for which Jesus commissions the Twelve in Matthew 10:1-8 is directed specifically to the people of Israel. From a panoramic reading of GMatthew, however, this restriction is temporary; Gentiles and Samaritans will later share in the gospel mission. The Twelve are commissioned to proclaim the dawning of God's kingdom in and through Jesus Christ, the Messiah-King, to the lost sheep of Israel, while calling them to repentance so that they may participate in the kingdom. Alongside this proclamation ministry, Jesus grants them authority (or warrant) to restore life to the physically dead and health to the physically sick. They are also empowered to cleanse leprous persons and expel evil spirits from their victims. However, he warns them to offer these services freely, since they themselves have received the enabling power freely and are expected to mirror his compassion toward distressed people.

It is concluded that Matthew 10:1-8 presents a portrait of the realities and blessings of the kingdom of heaven as conveyed to the people of Israel, harassed and helpless under the unshepherdly disposition of their religious leaders. Both the call to

repentance and the manifestation of miracles function as significant indicators of the dawning of that kingdom.

5.4.7 Application of the message of Matthew 10:1-8 for today

1. The church should recognise that human communities remain in desperate need of rescue from deplorable spiritual and existential conditions. It must therefore cultivate compassion for the lost and the suffering as a way of life, while also prioritising intercession for agents of rescue (Matt. 10:1, 7, 8; cf. 9:36-38).
2. The church should faithfully proclaim the precious message of the kingdom of God—a message of goodwill and a kingdom that offers incomparable hope, relief, and comfort over against every human system and whatever promises such systems may sincerely or insincerely project (10:7-8; cf. 4:13-17; Ac. 9:15).
3. Through its ministers, missionaries, and members, the church should be intentional in exercising the authority granted by Christ to minister healing, confront demonic oppression, and bring deliverance to those under the power of the devil. Such miraculous interventions include exorcism, the healing of diverse diseases and sicknesses, and the raising of the dead (Matt. 10:1, 8).
4. The church and its ministers or missionaries should continually remember that the authority exercised in Christ's name is received freely; consequently, they are duty-bound to minister the mercies of God without exploitation or commercialisation (Matt. 10:1, 8).

5.5 Exegetical analysis of Luke 10:1-9

5.5.1 Demarcation of the text of Luke 10:1-9

The adverbial phrase, Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ("Now after these things", v. 1), is indicative of the beginning of a fresh narrative bloc. Therefore, whereas the preceding chapter narrates a number of Jesus' activities—and ταῦτα is broad enough to cover all such activities—the narrative bloc introduced in 10:1 is a discontinuity from at least the dialogues between Jesus and three prospective disciples (9:57-58, 59-60, 61-62). Perhaps the only possible continuities between 9:1ff. and 10:1ff. are: if ταῦτα in 10:1 is taken to cover the events from 9:1, then (1) one can identify a relationship between the commissioning of τοὺς δώδεκα to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal (9:1-6) and the commissioning of ἑτέροις ἑβδομήκοντα ("seventy others") for a similar purpose (10:1-9); (2) the similarity between Jesus' imperative in 9:59-60, which subordinates competing obligations to following and proclaiming the kingdom of God,

and his command to the Seventy in 10:9¹⁰³; and (3) the comparable sense of urgency in the mission reflected in 9:62 and 10:4¹⁰⁴. More broadly, the imperative to heal the sick in the course of proclaiming the kingdom (10:9) finds parallels in Jesus' own healing and exorcistic activity in 9:37-43 and 11:14.

Based on these data, it is concluded that 10:1-9 presents itself as a discrete unit, in that, while 9:1-6 deals with "the Twelve" (as in Matthew 10:1-8 and Mark 3:13-19), it deals with "seventy others".

5.5.2 Textual criticism of Luke 10:1-9

There is a textual question as to whether the number of disciples sent on mission in Luke 10:1 is ἑβδομήκοντα (seventy) or ἑβδομήκοντα [δύο] (seventy-two), as reflected in different manuscript variants. Interpreters variously favour either reading for different reasons. However, this study adopts the reading ἑβδομήκοντα (seventy) since the variations have no bearing on the argument.

5.5.3 Socio-historical background of GLuke

5.5.3.1 Author

GLuke and Acts exhibit significant similarities in their prologues, style, and theological emphases, such that they are widely regarded as the work of a single author (Bond, 2019:143)¹⁰⁵. Luke–Acts is generally regarded as an anonymous work¹⁰⁶; nonetheless, scholarship frequently associates it with a certain Luke mentioned in the NT (cf. Ac. 13:1ff.; 15:40; 16:11; Rom. 16:21) (Marevesa and Mavengano-Marevesa, 2021:7-9). Church tradition favours the Luke whom Paul mentions in Philemon 24 as

103 It is possible that at least the man in 9:59-60, or even together with the one in 9:61-62, is part of the seventy appointed and sent out in 10:1.

104 9:62: "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom"; 10:4: "Do not take a purse or bag or sandals", but especially "and do not greet anyone on the road". The mission need was all so urgent that the request to go and bury the dead (9:59-60)—at least, a period of one year, assuming his father has recently died (Keener, 2014:205-206)—cannot be granted.

105 While GLuke has from the 2nd century been generally accepted as the first part of the two books (GLuke and Acts), it had to wait till the 20th century—with credit to H. J. Cadbury's *The Making of Luke–Acts* (1927)—before scholars would read Luke and Acts "as one unified work". Cadbury also reportedly initiated reference to the two books as "Luke–Acts" ('Lucanisches Doppelwerk' in German); while "[the] concept of a 'double work' or a 'twofold narrative'" is credited to K. Löning, and "has now become an unquestioned prerequisite for any introductory exegetical knowledge of the Lucan corpus" (Anon., 2019:143). As Rasmaran (2010:179) puts it, "The Acts of the Apostles cannot be disconnected from the Gospel of Luke; Luke presents a continuous story, intertwined by themes and structure." These observations compel taking Luke–Acts together in this study.

106 According to *Encyclopedia of the Bible* (n.a. [a]), about the only personal identification of the authorship of GLuke is "an Armenian reading of Acts 20:13, based on a 'Western' text, which says 'I Luke'".

his travelling companion, as well as in the Pauline letters (cf. Col. 4:14, 19¹⁰⁷; 2 Tim. 4:11) (Anon, 2019:143). Early Christians like Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, Eusebius, and Tertullian variously demonstrated support for this hypothesis (*Encyclopedia of the Bible*, n.a. [a]; Wallace, 2004; Smith, 2018:9-10; Farnes, 2019:297). The support of Luke's authorship is further strengthened by the "we" passages in the second half of Acts (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-37; 28:1-16), where Paul is the major character, perhaps a pointer to Luke's companionship of Paul in the latter's missionary journey (Anon., 2019:144; Marevesa and Mavengano-Marevesa, 2021:8-9).

Although there is no definitive resolution regarding the identity of the Luke who authored the Gospel, there are reasonable grounds for associating the "we" passages in Acts with Luke's companionship with Paul (cf. Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11), and for identifying him with the Luke/Lucius mentioned in Acts 13:1ff., 15:40, 16:11, and possibly also in Romans 16:21. Early external testimony supporting this identification also weighs in favour of such a conclusion. On this basis, this study concludes that the author of Luke–Acts is the Luke referenced in the aforementioned NT passages.

5.5.3.2 Context

It requires virtually no effort to notice that in each instance the author of Luke–Acts foregrounds a certain κράτιστε Θεόφιλε ("most excellent Theophilus") in his prologues (cf. Lk. 1:1-4; Ac. 1:1). This raises curiosity as to who this Theophilus ("friend of God", "lover of God", "loved by God", etc.) was, how he and Luke related, whether Luke actually addressed his writings to him or mentioned him in the prologues as mere acknowledgement while having (an)other reader(s) in view, etc. This study considers it instructive to begin an inquiry into the original audience(s) of Luke–Acts by examining the empirical identity of Theophilus as Luke's narratological addressee. In fact, Creamer, Spencer and Viljoen (2014:1) aver that a search for Luke's audience should rightfully begin with an investigation into the personage of Theophilus¹⁰⁸, whom the opening texts of Luke–Acts identify as the original reader. Also, Creech (1989:1-

107 Whether this Luke was truly a physician as characterised in this verse has been a subject of debate since the ancient church as well as in critical scholarship (e.g., Adolf von Harnack and others like him).

108 Creamer, Spencer and Viljoen (2014:1-2) take particular note of the compliment, "κράτιστε Θεόφιλε [most excellent Theophilus]" in Luke–Acts. They observe that Luke uses *κράτιστε* (most excellent) in Luke 1:3, Acts 23:26, 24:3, 26:25 in such ways that it refers to "an explicit identification of the person's official status as a Roman governor", and can be used in or outside the context of a court.

3) instructively states that although the identity of Theophilus in early church history is fluid, yet, as the “original reader” of Luke–Acts, he must be rescued from the status of “a mere formal element” that is found relevant in socio-historical research but irrelevant in the actual interpretation of Luke–Acts.

Among competing theories, historical data suggest that Theophilus was a common proper name before and during this time, leading to the proposal that this Theophilus was a real person. Another pointer to the possibility of a real person is Luke’s use of the honorific title, κράτιστε, together with the name Theophilus, a rank or official title used repeatedly by Luke for Felix (Ac. 23:26; 24:3) and Festus (Ac. 26:25), both of whom were Roman governors of Judea (*Encyclopedia of the Bible*, n.a. [b]; *The Compass News*, 2010). This conclusion is significant because κράτιστος (a superlative form of ἀγαθός, *good*) is most often used closely with proper names.

Taken together, Theophilus might have been a Roman government official with some authority, possibly even one who funded Luke’s research¹⁰⁹ (Creamer, Spencer and Viljoen, 2014:1-3; cf. *Encyclopedia of the Bible*, n.a. [b]). Based on κατηχήθης (“you were instructed”, Lk. 1:4), Theophilus may additionally have been marginally (or better put, foundationally) informed about the Christian faith (*Encyclopedia of the Bible*, n.a. [b]; Creamer, Spencer and Viljoen, 2014:3), and as Keener (2014:179) suggests, may have been perceived to be in danger of losing the “little” truth he already possessed to the mesh of “competing claims to religious truth in the Roman Empire”. It then may have been that Luke was trying to deepen and/or expand his knowledge about Christ, like Apollos did for Priscilla and Aquila (cf. Ac 18:26).

Theophilus’ apparent Gentile identity immediately orientates the text toward Gentile inclusion, which Luke accordingly accentuates in Luke–Acts. But whether or not (or however) Theophilus understood the subject of Gentile inclusion in Christianity, it is clear from Luke–Acts that the door of faith had under the new covenant been opened wide for Gentiles—including Theophilus—to come in and to participate in the kingdom of God (Creamer, Spencer and Viljoen, 2014:3). This makes it important to consider the insightful suggestion by Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia (2023b) that the

109 Swamidass (2021) similarly holds the opinion that Luke’s indebtedness to Theophilus may have been because as a well-placed, wealthy and/or influential Gentile, the latter may have provided financial sponsorship for Luke’s research as well as his extended travels with Paul (cf. Col. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 4: 11; Philm. 1: 24).

original audience of GLuke were Gentile converts, based on Luke's tracing of the genealogy of Christ, for example, back to Adam, "the 'father' of the human race", rather than to Abraham, "the father of the Jewish people".

In the likely event of a wider readership beyond Theophilus alone, ἵνα ἐπιγνῶς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν ("so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught") (Lk. 1:4) appears to provide relevant evidence, especially when read in connection with closely related concepts in Luke–Acts. Looking more broadly across Luke–Acts, a considerable number of other persons fit a similar description. These are commonly called "the God-fearers", with the term and related ones used 11 times in Acts¹¹⁰ (Fox, 2019:87-89) and implied in several other NT passages. Specifically, they are οἱ φοβούμενοι τὸν Θεόν ("those who fear God") (Ac. 13:16, 26), σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων ("worshipping Greeks") (17:4), and τοῖς σεβομένοις [τὸν Θεόν] ("those worshipping [God]") (17:17), etc. Marevesa and Mavengano-Marevesa (2021:15) refer to them as "Pious Gentiles" who were marginally different from proselytes, having not fully converted to Judaism¹¹¹.

The sheer attention given to this set of Lucan narrative actants points in the direction of their significance in the author's agenda. Fox (2019:85) asserts, "My key claim is that God-fearers are the ideal audience for Luke–Acts, as they are the primary target of the author's transformative illocutionary intent of identity formation." Not only so; he further motivates this claim by arguing that accepting "a God-fearer readership" gives additional strength to the assumption that the first readers were Gentiles. It also apologetically informs one on why Luke uses so many Jewish features: "Christianity would need to defend itself as faithful to Judaism, as much to the God-fearer as to the Jew" (2019:86). Thus, while Theophilus is a given, God-fearing Gentiles are at least a substantial part of the audience of Luke–Acts. This claim at least allows for admission of other components of the Lucan community, even as Marevesa and Mavengano-Marevesa (2021:1-2) submit that "the social identities of the members of the Lucan community were fluid, nuanced, and troubled", and that, in fact, ambiguity surrounds many of the community's social indices; e.g., location, composition, and identity

110 Cf. 10:2, 22a, 34b-35; 13:16, 26, 43, 50a; 16:14; 17:4; 17:17; 18:7.

111 Among the "God-fearers" in Luke–Acts were Theophilus (cf. Lk. 1:3; Ac. 1:1), the Centurion of Luke 7, the Centurion of Luke 23:47, the Ethiopian eunuch (Ac. 8:27-39), Cornelius (Ac. 10:1–11:18), Lydia (Ac. 16:14), the jailer (Ac. 16: 25-34), and so on. Their spread also covers a wide geographical range—Caesarea, Pisidian Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, and Corinth (Fox, 2019:85, 89).

dichotomies. In the end, it may be, as they propose, that the Lucan audience cannot be precisely located; that is, it may have consisted of not just one but several communities.

5.5.3.3 Situation

The Lucan community appears to have experienced religious tension. The peripheral involvement of the “God-fearers” in Judaism may have made them more receptive to Christianity, thereby generating tension with the Jewish religious system on one hand and the Graeco-Roman culture on the other. On the part of the Jewish system, whereas the early church treated the “God-fearers” with some level of freedom by admitting them into Jewish Christianity without appending Torah requirements, “the circumcision party” insisted on them meeting Torah demands, especially circumcision (cf. Ac. 11:2; Gal. 2:12). Regarding the Graeco-Roman culture, their commitment to Christianity might have created suspicion and reinforced any prior Roman efforts to suppress the Christian movement (Fox, 2019:85).

Diversity also characterises Luke–Acts. Fox (2019:85) emphasises the significant presence of “the concepts of diversity and decentralization” in the corpus. This claim is backed by the geo-cultural diversity of narrative participants in Acts 2:9-11, which “sets the stage for the inclusion of outsiders, which will be a major part of Acts”. Not only is there generally a diversity on a global scale; Luke–Acts also features a diversity of Jewish groups whose responses to Jesus and Christianity reflect either acceptance or rejection (Fox, 2019:90). Overall, Luke may have undertaken the project with a determination to balance these various polarities.

5.5.3.4 Purpose

This study proceeds from the premise that the purpose of GLuke is articulated in Luke 1:4: ἵνα ἐπιγνῶς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν. The same purpose is pursued in Acts in consideration of the connection that Acts 1:1 establishes with GLuke. Consequently, everything Luke includes in the two volumes serves this overarching purpose. Given the earlier conclusion that Luke focused on “God-fearers”, it is reasonable to argue here that the document aimed to persuade them to embrace the Christian faith (Marevesa and Mavengano-Marevesa, 2021:17).

Focusing on Theophilus, Reinstorf (2002:1294-1295) likewise postulates that Luke intended to prompt Theophilus to compare the portraits of God presented by Jesus

and his opponents, respectively. Accordingly, Luke would achieve his aim should Theophilus “recognise that Jesus truly mirrors the God of the Old Testament, leave the synagogue and convert to the Christian faith”. In light of this, Reinstorf rightly concludes that GLuke functions evangelistically. In a similar vein, Fox (2019:16) argues that Luke aimed to create “a social identity for a God-fearing readership”, while also asserting that the process encompasses evangelism, implying that Luke’s ultimate aim was the conversion of the “God-fearers”.

Leveraging Luke’s overarching attention to the poor and socially disadvantaged, Rogers (2019:25) endorses Philip Esler’s statement that “[Luke] is especially concerned with describing a ‘material’ salvation for the poor in addition to a future eschatological salvation”. In connection with this assertion, one recalls that, quite early in the Gospel, Luke portrays the ministry of Christ as one that brings good news to the poor (4:18). Hope for the poor is also expressed in the parable of the unnamed rich man and the sore-covered Lazarus (16:19-31). Jesus’ commendation of the poor widow’s offering is equally indicative of the significance that GLuke accords to the poor and marginalised (21:1-4). To that extent, and as shall be seen below, GLuke seeks to communicate the availability of immediate salvation to members of its audience, whatever their social status may have been.

5.5.3.5 Summary and conclusion

GLuke is addressed to Theophilus and, together with Acts, mentions a number of Gentile God-fearers, indicating their inclusion in the Christian faith. Against a historical background likely marked by religious and political tensions, Luke may have written the document partly to ease such tensions. Internal evidence further suggests that Luke seeks to persuade God-fearers to embrace the Christian faith, particularly upon recognising that Jesus truly mirrors the God of the OT. Furthermore, while GLuke is concerned with the spiritual well-being of its readers, it also contains significant material relating to the material dimension of salvation, encompassing the rehabilitation of the poor, the blurring of social and national boundaries, and other interventions touching the vicissitudes of earthly life. For the present study, this inclusivity provides an important context for understanding why Jesus sends out seventy others in Luke 10:1ff., in addition to the Twelve commissioned in 9:1ff. In GLuke, the gospel is for all, and indeed all may bear it forth.

5.5.4 Literary type of Luke 10:1-9

Luke 10:1-9 comprises both narrative and speech. The narrative section is brief, serving as an introduction (vv. 1-2a), while the speech section extends from v. 2b through v. 9 and beyond. Furthermore, the speech subgenre is of imperative type that runs up to v. 12 and is succeeded by a pronouncement subgenre (vv. 13-16). These generic identities will be helpful in exegeting the passage.

5.5.5 The place of Luke 10:1-9 in its literary macro-structure

This section examines the manner in which Luke 10:1-9 fits into the metanarrative of GLuke. The discussion proceeds with focus on four themes emerging from the pericope itself: existential concerns, inclusivity, kingdom, and authority.

5.5.5.1 Luke 10:1-9 and the existential concerns of GLuke

Discussing the existential concerns of GLuke necessitates paying attention to Luke's concept of salvation, itself largely informed by the socio-historical situation he addresses. The socio-political and religious tensions, together with the socio-historical realities previously noted, suggest that GLuke was crafted as a pragmatic document intended to alleviate tensions and reassure the faith community. Beyond communal concerns, the needs of individuals within the Lucan community also appear to have engaged the author's attention, beginning with Theophilus' need—whether as an individual or representative of a group—to become grounded in the Christian faith (cf. Lk. 1:4; Ac. 1:1). Luke's concern also extends to economically poor and persecuted Christians, particularly their need to experience an immediate "material" salvation (cf. Lk. 4:18) while awaiting future eschatological salvation.

In connection with this idea of immediate salvation, Troftgruben (2018:9) presents a useful thesis:

For Luke, salvation is a multi-dimensional reality that entails healing, forgiveness, life, restoration, redemption, and social reversal, among other things. This dynamic reality hinges less on a particular event of "ransom" (i.e., the cross) and more on the whole of Jesus' ministry: from his birth (2:11) to his death (23:43), from the start of his public ministry (4:21; cf. 5:26; 13:16) to his arrival among tax collectors and "sinners" (19:9).

Since the salvific activities of Luke's Jesus span his entire ministry, it follows that he would address not only the spiritual needs of his audience but also their existential needs. Arguing from Luke 4:16-30, Aryeh and Anum (2021:26-27) confidently affirm

this expectation by stating that whereas salvation is pivotal in GLuke (cf. 2:11; 4:21; 19:10; 23:43), it holds more benefit than just forgiveness of sin or the afterlife; it is also a “solution to existential needs such as health, and knowledge for effective lifestyle (4:38-41; 5:12-16; 7:1-17; 8:26-56)”. This point is explicated below.

First, GLuke pays attention to the kind gestures of God toward the needy. The orientation of the Lucan parables and other narrative portions suggests that Luke aims to communicate God’s immediate salvation through themes such as “the poor and the marginalised” (cf. 14:15-24; 16:19-31; 18:9-14); “wealth and possession” (cf. 12:13-21; 14:15-23; 16:1-13; 16:19-31); “conflict and rejection” (interrelated with the aforementioned two); “prayer” (cf. 18:1-8); “repentance” (cf. 13:6-9; 14:15-24; 15:1ff.); “reversal” (cf. 10:25-37; 14:15-24; 16:27-31; 18:9-14) (Reinstorf, 2002:1288-1289). These themes constitute the means by which the theological emphases of GLuke are unified. Unlike GMatthew’s more eschatological portrayal of God as judge, the Lucan *Sondergut* parables¹¹² “[stress] the universal concern of God, His mercy for all (his focus being more on the present)” (Reinstorf, 2002:1289).

Going further, it should be noted that several sub-motifs relating to God’s care for the poor are prominent in the parables¹¹³ and indeed support Scheffler’s opinion that GLuke pays serious attention to caring for the poor¹¹⁴, suggesting that Luke’s community likely comprised both rich and poor, elite and marginalised persons¹¹⁵. Moreover, the motif of poverty in Luke’s community is linked with other existential concerns, including human dignity, human suffering (e.g., physical or mental illness and social discrimination against women, children, and despised professions), and political hostility (Scheffler, 2011:117).

Scheffler’s assertion above is, however, balanced by Rogers’ (2019:24) study of the socio-economic condition of women in Luke–Acts and Philipians, which argues that

112 The debtors (7:41-43), good Samaritan (10:30-36), friend in the night (11:5-8), fig tree (13:6-9), place of honour (14:7-11), tower builder (14:28-30), warring king (14:31-33), lost coin (15:8-10), lost son (15:11-32), shrewd manager (16:1-8), the rich man and Lazarus (16:9-31), the unworthy servants (17:7-10), a judge and a widow (18:1-8), and the Pharisee and a tax collector (18:9-14)

113 These include “the care and love of God” (e.g., friend in the night, 11:5-8; lost coin, 15:8-10; lost son, 15:11-32; a judge and a widow, 18:1-8), “God’s mercy and grace” (e.g., the debtors, 7:41-43; good Samaritan, 10:30-36;), and “God as sovereign judge” (e.g., fig tree, 13:6-9; the rich man and Lazarus, 16:9-31) (2002:1290).

114 According to Scheffler (2011:123), “the poor” in Luke are “the literal, materialistically poor”.

115 Cf. inter alia Lk. 4:18-19; 6:20; 7:22; 11:39; 12:33; 14:13,21; 16:20,22; 18:22; 21:3.

Luke gives comparatively little attention to the elite class¹¹⁶ while placing considerable emphasis on lower-class women. Rogers also concludes that Luke is deliberate in accentuating the “more modest social positions” within “the Christ-movement”, without ignoring social stratification¹¹⁷ among them. A key takeaway is that, on the basis of this analysis, he describes Luke’s work as a “social message”; that is, GLuke is concerned with addressing the socio-existential concerns of its audience.

What then is the nexus between Luke 10:1-9 (and similar Lucan passages) and the caring attribute of God or the proposed social focus of GLuke as a whole? First, Jesus announces early in GLuke that he is anointed “to proclaim good news to the poor ... to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovering of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free” (4:18). These categories denote oppressed, afflicted, downtrodden, and helpless persons in concrete historical situations, and they correspond to their narrative counterparts in Lucan parables that disclose the care of God. Moreover, the ministry of Jesus anticipated in the text has immediate consequences for the present (people are instantly healed and set free) and thus reveals the in-breaking, “already” dimension of the kingdom of God (11:20).

In light of this, it should be observed that the miracle imperative that Jesus gives to his disciples is to be implemented immediately (10:1, 9; cf. 9:1-2, 6), and indeed the Seventy return with a testimony of immediate results (10:17-19). As such, God’s attributes of love, care, grace, mercy and justice theoretically disclosed in Lucan parables, are empirically manifested in Lucan miracle narratives. This nexus in fact corresponds with Viljoen’s (2014:4) citation of Walter Grundmann’s summary of Jesus’ activities in GMatthew, namely, that Jesus’ teaching (Matt. 5–7) and deeds (Matt. 8–9) are respectively “‘*das Wirken des Christus Jesus durch das Wort*’ [the work of Christ Jesus through the word]” and “‘*das Wirken des Christus Jesus durch die Tat*’ [the work of Christ Jesus through the deed]”.

Troftgruben (2018:6-11) further underscores the immediacy of Lucan salvation theology by examining the motif of σήμερον (“today”) in Luke–Acts, which he says

116 e.g., Herodias wife (Luke 3:19), Queen Candace (Acts 8:27), Drusilla (Acts 24:24), and Bernice (Acts 25:23) (Rogers, 2019:24).

117 Among others, it can be noticed that GLuke identifies female “landowners” (e.g., Sapphira), “artisans” (e.g., Priscilla), “business women” (e.g., Lydia), “independent women with some means” (e.g., Dorcas, Lydia), “maidservants” (e.g., Rhoda, Mary), and “pitiable’ women” (e.g., “poor widows, prostitutes”) (Rogers, 2019:24).

distinguishes the corpus and counts as much in frequency as in all the other NT documents combined. Luke also uses a close equivalent, καθ' ἡμέραν (“every day”/“daily”), quite frequently “to characterise the ongoing condition of individual disciples and the Jesus-following community (Luke 9:23; 11:3; 16:19; 19:47; 22:53; Acts 2:46-47; 3:2; 16:5; 19:9)”. There is equally an idea of a *new day* in the clause, οἷς ἡμᾶς ἀνατολὴ ἐξ ὕψους (“the dawn from on high will break upon us”) (1:78), plus a *now* flare in GLuke: 19:44, cf. 1:68, 78; 7:16; and 12:56. Overall, Troftgruben (2018:6) states,

Indeed, interpreters have noticed how Luke’s narratives reflect a shift in orientation from an imminent eschatology to a focus on present realities.... This shift gives the day at hand (“today”) a natural emphasis. Whatever Luke’s eschatology timeline, his narratives certainly draw attention to the here and now of faithful living.

There is apparently no postponement of the benefits of Jesus’ salvific activities in Luke–Acts as far as existential issues are concerned; he and those he sends on mission act *here and now*, and the beneficiaries receive the favours and mercies of God *here and now*. This description unarguably ties with the language of Isaiah 49:8 and 61:2: “in a time of favor”, “on a day of salvation”, and “the day of vengeance of our God”, which Troftgruben artfully judges as describing salvation “as a sudden turn of events—sudden and succinct enough to be bottled into the time frame of a single day”. Not only is the Lord acting *today*; those whom he targets with his salvific activities must respond *immediately* (cf. Isa. 55:6; cf. 42:9). There is everything in Luke–Acts to describe God’s work as with “newfound immediacy” and “a grand work of salvation transpiring *here and now*” (Troftgruben, 2018:7, emphasis mine).

Luke 10:1-9 connects with the spirit of σήμερον in the entire corpus. Firstly, Jesus has mapped out an itinerary for his mission; but as if there is something urgent in the communities that he will be visiting, he sends an advance mission team πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν καὶ τόπον οὗ ἡμελλεν αὐτὸς ἔρχεσθαι (“ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go”) (10:1). Equally, the motivation, Ὁ μὲν θερισμὸς πολὺς, οἱ δὲ ἐργάται ὀλίγοι (“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few”) (v. 2), indicates an emergency situation. Then, he commands them, Ὑπάγετε• (“Go!”) (v. 3)—which by its force requires immediate response. Finally, he states what they are to do as they *go*: καὶ θεραπεύετε τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀσθενεῖς, καὶ λέγετε αὐτοῖς, Ἠγγικεν ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (“Heal the sick who are there and tell

them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you’”) (v. 9). In short, a sense of urgency pervades these directives. The momentum here in 10:1-9 matches that in 4:16-21, where Jesus not only reveals his messianic-eschatological mission (vv. 18-19) by appropriating the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2 to himself, but also declares—one could say, *audaciously*—Σήμερον πεπλήρωται ἡ γραφή αὕτη ἐν τοῖς ὠσὶν ὑμῶν (“Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing”) (v. 21).

Finally, the post-mission report supports the claim of immediacy: Ὑπέστρεψαν δὲ οἱ ἑβδομήκοντα μετὰ χαρᾶς λέγοντες, Κύριε, καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια ὑποτάσσεται ἡμῖν ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου (“The seventy returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name’”) (10:17). One might simplistically assume that the team’s departure and return occur on the same day (σήμερον!); but even if it is not so¹¹⁸, the narrative momentum of vv. 3-17 suggests immediacy¹¹⁹. The implication, therefore, is that Luke 10:1-9 coheres with Luke–Acts in realising God’s salvation *σήμερον!*

5.5.5.2 Luke 10:1-9 and the motif of inclusivity

Marevesa and Mavengano-Marevesa (2021:7) explicitly suggest that Luke was a Greek physician who resided in Antioch in ancient Syria (cf. Col. 4:14). The interest here is in Luke’s apparent Gentile nationality—*Greek!* Also, in section 5.5.3.2, where an attempt was made to locate the context of GLuke, particular note was taken of Theophilus and the “God-fearers”, who, by any stretch of imagination, were Gentiles. It is therefore logical that Creamer, Spencer and Viljoen (2014:3) infer that a Gentile narratee like Theophilus signals Gentile inclusion in Luke–Acts. The choice of seventy (Lk. 10:1) not only symbolises the seventy nations of Jewish tradition but also signals the mission to the Gentiles (Keener, 2014:205). The notion of inclusivity is also supported by *Encyclopedia of the Bible* (n.a.:[b]) but with a Pauline orientation: “Luke may be called a Paulinist in the sense that he shares with great conviction Paul’s position as the great apologist for the Gentile mission. Everything points to the fact that the Gospel is for all”. It may therefore be the case that, in Luke–Acts, a *Gentile* author intentionally writes with an eye to the *Gentile* component of his audience, if not to a predominantly *Gentile* audience.

118 Like Fleming (2005:460) suggests, they may have been months apart.

119 Carroll (2012:238) supports this view when he observes that there is no narrative break between Jesus’ discourse and the disciples’ return.

Further internal evidence includes Luke 4:24-30, where, against the backdrop of his natives' unbelief (4:23-24), Luke's Jesus articulates startling Gentile sentiments just after acclaiming his Messiahship in Nazareth (4:16-21). In response to the people's mixed reactions concerning his person and mission (4:22), Jesus commends Gentile faith by citing God's choice to send Elijah to "the widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon" during the famine (4:26), whereas there were many widows in Israel (4:25; cf. 1 Kgs. 17-18), as well as to heal "only Naaman the Syrian" of his leprosy in the days of Elisha, whereas there were many leprous people in Israel (4:27; cf. 2 Kgs. 5:1-14). In 7:1-10, a Roman centurion so believes in the authority of Jesus to heal that he begs Jesus not to bother coming to his house, but rather to simply "say the word, and my servant will be healed" (v. 7). Luke's Jesus declares his commendation of this Gentile to the surrounding crowd (apparently Israelites): "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel" (v. 9; cf. Matt. 8:10).

This survey of data establishes the theme of inclusivity in Luke–Acts. However, it will be shown shortly that Lucan openness is not only a matter of nationality but also of what may be called "class" in modern parlance. For instance, in Luke 18:1-17, two parables and a narrative account concerning children underscore the acceptance of social "nobodies" within God's salvific order. In the parable of the persistent widow, a *widow* is granted justice (vv. 1-8). In the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, the *tax collector* returns home justified (vv. 9-14). Against the backdrop of his disciples' rejection of children, Jesus not only welcomes *the children* but also uses them to illustrate the credentials of those who are received into the kingdom of God (vv. 15-17). In Acts 6, deacons are appointed to assume welfare-related duties, while the apostles are to concentrate on "spiritual" responsibilities (vv. 1-7); yet, like the apostles themselves, Stephen does "great wonders and miraculous signs among the people" (v. 8).

In this researcher's view, the Lucan collapse of class boundaries, parallel to the collapse of national boundaries, demonstrates the inclusivity with which Luke–Acts treats all persons. This is particularly displayed in Luke 10:1-9, where Jesus appoints ἐτέρους ἐβδομήκοντα and sends them out as his mission advance team (vv. 1, 9). The phrase, ἐτέρους ἐβδομήκοντα, is most probably so used here because already in 9:1-6, Jesus has commissioned and sent out τοὺς δώδεκα, and they have ministered effectively (vv. 1-2, 6). Signals of inclusivity in Luke 10 are therefore identified as

follows: (1) ἐτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα (10:1; compare with the Twelve in Matthew 10:1-8 and Mark 3:13-19//6:7-13); (2) their positive report of an effective mission (10:17); (3) Jesus' claim of giving them authority ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ ("over all the power of the enemy") (10:19); and (4) Jesus' praise of the Father ὅτι ἀπέκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν, καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις ("because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, *and revealed them to little children*") (10:21, emphasis mine). Moreover, unlike in Matthew 10:1-8, there is no discriminatory instruction in Luke 10:1-9 against non-Jewish populations. In Paul's words, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Therefore, Luke 10:1-9 explicitly and implicitly pushes the motif of inclusivity across both national and class boundary lines—an incontrovertible attribute of GLuke as a whole.

5.5.5.3 Luke 10:1-9 and the motif of kingdom

Drawing on Luke 17:20-37, Faraoanu (2015:86, emphasis mine) affirms that "the Kingdom is already in the midst of the people, *through Jesus's salvific actions*". The kingdom therefore has nothing to do with a political struggle for national self-realisation; yet, just here lies the difference between Lucan and typical Jewish understandings of the expected kingdom. While Jewish characters in Luke–Acts have nationalist-political expectations of the kingdom (cf. Lk. 1:68-75; 7:16; 24:21; Ac. 1:6), Luke's Jesus primarily focuses on a spiritual kingdom (cf. Lk. 11:20; 23:38; also see Matt. 27:37; Mk. 15:36; Jn. 19:19), and at one point even treats the nationalist-political expectations as irrelevant (cf. Ac. 1:6). Rasmaran (2010:181) similarly emphasises this point, particularly with reference to the role of the Holy Spirit: "If there is a political edge to the question, Jesus sidesteps it and answers with a resounding 'yes.' This kingdom is restored with power by the coming of 'the Holy Spirit' (Acts 1.7-8)." In fact, he earlier explained:

So to hear Luke is to hear the long-standing tension between prophets and kings anew and to see that Luke stands firmly with the prophets. The kingdom of God will be established by Spirit-led prophetic rule, not the coercive rule of "empire" or the "failed nationalist expectations of Israelite/Judean rule." So simply put, God is at work anew to fashion God's kingdom rule on a basis far different than the power expectations of the world. The Spirit of God will shape God's rule and the kingdom of God that it brings.

(Rasmaran, 2010:179)

Again, this means that the eschatological kingdom that is in view in Luke–Acts is fundamentally spiritual and Spirit-driven, as reflected in Jesus's association of his exorcisms with the arrival of the kingdom (Lk. 11:20). Indeed, when Jesus announces his Spirit-anointed messianic ministry in Nazareth (Lk. 4:16-21), he already signals the nature of the kingdom he brings: it is spiritual and benevolent, and its reality is evidenced in acts such as those described in 7:22. His ethical teaching (e.g., Lk. 6:17-42) and his parables (e.g., 10:25-37; 14:15-24; 16:19-31) also indicate the character of the kingdom in question: it calls for repentance, a recurring theme in Luke–Acts that, though not explicitly linked to the Lucan motif of the kingdom, clearly reflects to its character¹²⁰.

The kingdom's call to repentance necessitates its proclamation. To that extent, Cho (2003:182, 184) is right to observe that "kingdom of God" refers to "a present reality" in Luke–Acts and is distinguished from other NT usages by frequently embedding it in the phrase, "to proclaim the kingdom of God" (expressed with its various verbs)¹²¹. Together with "the person of Jesus as the object of witness", it is closely linked with the terms, εὐαγγελίζομαι and κηρύσσω¹²². These two terms also have bearing on "the kingdom of God" in Luke 4:18-19, where Jesus is sent εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς ("to preach good news to the poor"), κηρύξαι αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν ("to proclaim deliverance to the captives"), [κηρύξαι] τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν ("[to proclaim] recovery of sight to the blind") (v. 18), and κηρύξαι ἐνιαυτὸν κυρίου δεκτόν ("to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour") (v. 19) (Cho, 2003:185).

However, the imperative in Luke 10:9 does not employ εὐαγγελίζομαι or κηρύσσω; rather, it reads: καὶ λέγετε αὐτοῖς, Ἦγγικεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ("and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you'") (v. 9). Although a lexical distinction exists between λέγετε αὐτοῖς in 10:9 and εὐαγγελίζομαι/κηρύσσω elsewhere, there is no substantial semantic difference. Indeed, both εὐαγγελίζομαι and κηρύσσω involve λέγειν ("to tell")¹²³. By implication, when Luke's Jesus says to the Seventy, καὶ λέγετε αὐτοῖς, Ἦγγικεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, it is effectively equivalent to saying

120 Cf. Lk. 3:3, 8; 5:32; 10:13; 11:32; 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 16:30; 17:3-4; 24:47; Ac. 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 13:24; 17:30; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20.

121 Cf. Lk. 4:43; 8:1; 9:2, 60; 16:16; Ac. 8:12; 20:25; 28:31.

122 For εὐαγγελίζομαι, see Luke 4:18, 43; 8:1; 9:6; 16:16; Acts 8:12; 11:20. For κηρύσσω, see Luke 3:3; 4:18, 19, 44; 8:1, 39; 24:47; Ac. 8:5; 9:20; 10:37, 42; 15:21; 19:13; 20:25; 28:31.

123 See, for example, Matthew 10:7: πορευόμενοι δὲ κηρύσσετε λέγοντες ("And as you go, preach saying").

εὐαγγελίζομαι/κηρύσσειν, Ἦγγικεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (as in 9:1, 6). Against the backdrop of this equivalence, 10:1-9 (particularly v. 9) adequately sustains the formula of proclaiming ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ that is so preponderant in GLuke.

5.5.5.4 Luke 10:1-9 and extension of Christ's authority

The author of GLuke signals the motif of ἐξουσία quite early in the book, both in his introduction of John the Baptist and in his narrative of the early stages of Jesus' earthly life and ministry¹²⁴. In GLuke, the motif of ἐξουσία primarily centers on confrontations between Christ and Satan, framed on both sides by the temptation narrative (4:1-13) and the passion narrative (22:53). The temptation narrative "both establishes Satan as Jesus's primary antagonist and the structure of the plot as a conflict between his authority and God's power" (Monnig, 2019:2, 58). Textual evidence for this claim may be seen in Luke's insertion of ἐξουσία into the devil's statement in the second temptation, unlike Matthew (4:9): Σοὶ δώσω τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἅπασαν καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν ὅτι ἐμοὶ παραδέδοται, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν θέλω δίδωμι αὐτήν ("I will give you *all their authority* and splendour, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone that I want to") (Lk. 4:6, emphasis mine). In other words, the threefold temptation targets Jesus' authority, as the devil seeks to undermine it in much the same way that he undermined Adam's in Eden (cf. Gen. 3:1-19; ref. 1:26-28).

Jesus himself affirms his authority when, in the synagogue at Nazareth, he identifies himself with Isaiah's prophecy (Lk. 4:16-21; cf. Isa. 61:1-2), the climax being his statement that "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk. 4:21). While Monnig (2019:114) rightly describes this passage as Jesus' "inaugural discourse", Aryeh and Anum (2021:1-2) likewise correctly recognise that this Christological confession not only points to the fulfilment of OT prophecy but also convincingly functions as a map and manifesto of Jesus' ministry. Indeed, a careful listener in Nazareth can already anticipate the authoritative character of his ensuing ministry.

It is therefore expected that, in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, Luke's Jesus will display authority in both word and action. He teaches in the synagogue at Capernaum to the amazement of the people, "because his words had authority" (4:31-32). With authority, he drives out demons from their victims (4:31-37, 41; 7:21; 8:26-39; 9:37-45; 11:14; 13:10-17), some of whom acknowledge him as "the Holy One of God" (4:34, 41). On

124 John the Baptist (cf. 1:11, 64); Jesus (cf. 1:26-31; 2:21-38, 46-47; 3:16-17, 3:21-22; 4:1-13).

one such occasion, the source of his authority is attributed by his religious antagonists to “Beelzebub, the prince of demons” (11:15-28). While this allegation reflects unbelief and seeks to undermine Jesus’ authority, it inadvertently underscores the superiority of God’s power over Satan’s and the climactic authority manifested in Christ’s exorcisms (v. 19). In this connection, Monnig (2019:111-112) correctly argues that Luke’s exorcism narratives function in continuity with the “thread of confrontation between the authority of Jesus and Satan”, as well as “manifest the destruction of the authority and rule of Satan by the power of God”. Indeed, “the stronger one” (Jesus) defeats and plunders “[t]he strong man” (Satan) in these encounters (Lk. 11:21-22; cf. Ac. 10:38) (2019:95).

By that same authority, Jesus heals diverse sicknesses¹²⁵, raises the dead¹²⁶, and miraculously transforms other distressing existential conditions¹²⁷. His pronouncement of forgiveness (5:17-26), the Sabbath controversies (6:1-5, 6-11), his transfiguration (9:28-36), and his magnificent entry into Jerusalem and audacious activities in the Temple (19:28-40; cf. Zech. 9:9; Psa. 118:26; 19:41-48) all manifest his authority. His granting of salvation to the thief on the cross (22:42-43), his resurrection (24:1-12; cf. Ac. 2:24; 1 Cor. 15:55-57), his post-resurrection enactment of the authority of his name (Lk. 24:47; cf. Matt. 28:18-20), his commitment to sending the Father’s promise (Lk. 24:49; cf. Ac. 1:4-5, 8; 2:1-13, 33), and his ascension (Lk. 24:50-51; Ac. 1:9-11; cf. Ac. 2:33-36; 7:56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3, 13; 10:12; 12:2; Rev. 5:7) function as displays of his authority. By the authority of his name (cf. Phil. 2:9-11), sinners are saved (Ac. 2:38; 8:12), sick people are healed (Ac. 3:6, 16; 4:10, 30), and demons are exorcised (Lk. 10:17; Ac. 16:18).

How then does Luke 10:1-9 cohere with the rest of GLuke with respect to the motif of ἐξουσία? In answering this question, it must be noted that 10:1-9 is the second of two episodes in which Luke’s Jesus explicitly commissions people to perform miracles, the first being 9:1-6. However, 9:1-6 involves τοὺς δώδεκα, to whom ἔδωκεν (“he gave”) δύναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ δαιμόνια καὶ νόσους θεραπεύειν (“power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases”) (v. 1) and ἀπέστειλεν ...

125 Cf. 4:38-40; 5:12-16, 17-26; 6:6-11; 7:1-10; 8:42b-48; 17:11-19; 18:35-43.

126 Cf. 7:11-17; 8:40-42a, 49-56.

127 e.g., the miraculous catch of fish, 5:1-11; the calming of the storm, 8:22-25; and feeding of the 5,000, 9:10-17.

κηρύσσειν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἰᾶσθαι¹²⁸ (“sent ... out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal”) (v. 2). In 10:1-9, ὁ κύριος (“The Lord”) is commissioning ἑτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα (v. 1) and sending them out with the instructions: θεραπεύετε τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀσθενεῖς (“Heal the sick in them”) and λέγετε αὐτοῖς, Ἡγγικεν ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (“say to them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you’”) (v. 9). The meanings of 9:1-2 and 10:1, 9 are similar, despite differences in verbal construction. This means that “the Twelve” and the “seventy others” are essentially empowered and authorised in the same way and assigned comparable tasks. It is also evident that, in both instances, the missions are successful, implying that the authority granted in each case proves effective (9:6, 10; 10:17).

In conclusion, Luke 10:1-9 generally coheres with the rest of Luke–Acts in relation to the motif of authority. Together with vv. 17-21, the passage presents heavenly authority as available to the broader body of Jesus’ followers, by which they may heal the sick, exorcise demons (vv. 9, 17), and overcome all the power of the enemy (v. 19).

5.5.5.5 Summary and conclusion

GLuke demonstrates concern for existential situations, presenting salvation as a holistic and immediate reality. It also dismantles discriminatory barriers, opening both salvation and service to all. Regarding the motif of the kingdom of God, GLuke exploits miracle narratives, in addition to Jesus’ teaching, to show that the kingdom is spiritual and Spirit-driven, already manifesting, and requiring proclamation. Finally, GLuke gives prominence to the motif of authority and develops it largely within the framework of the temptation and passion narratives.

Luke 10:1-9 shows evidence of connecting with and advancing all four motifs above. It conveys an unmistakable sense of urgency in proclaiming the message of the kingdom and bringing relief to the sick (vv. 2-4). It extends ministry participation beyond the Twelve to a broader group of Jesus’ followers (v. 1) and, unlike Matthew 10:5-6, leaves the mission field fully open. On the issue of the kingdom, the pericope explicitly mandates its proclamation by the Seventy (v. 9). Regarding authority, it is evident that, through Jesus’ selection of the Seventy and his imperative to heal the

128 The critical text tradition (e.g., Nestle-Aland) reads “καὶ ἰᾶσθαι” with the object understood from the context, while some editions supply the object and read “καὶ ἰᾶσθαι τοὺς ἀσθενοῦντας” or “καὶ ἰᾶσθαι τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς”.

sick (vv. 1, 9), he shares his authority with them. This becomes especially clear in their report of a successful mission (v. 17) and in Jesus' explanation of the basis of that success (vv. 18-21).

Therefore, Luke 10:1-9 coheres with the overarching narrative and theological commitments that characterise GLuke and the wider Luke–Acts corpus.

5.5.6 Surface structure analysis of Luke 10:1-9

5.5.6.1 Identification of colons in Luke 10:1-9

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | | ¹ Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, ἀνέδειξεν ὁ κύριος ἑτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα |
| | | ¹ Now after these things, the Lord appointed seventy others |
| 2 | | καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς ἀνὰ δύο [δύο] πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν καὶ τόπον οὗ ἤμελλεν αὐτὸς ἔρχεσθαι. |
| | | and sent them two [by] two ahead of him into every city and place where he himself was about to go |
| 3 | A | ² Ἐλεγεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς, |
| | | ² Then he said to them |
| | B | Ὁ μὲν θερισμὸς πολὺς, |
| | | The harvest [is] indeed plentiful |
| | C | οἱ δὲ ἐργάται ὀλίγοι. |
| | | but [the] workmen [are] few. |
| | D | δεήθητε οὖν τοῦ κυρίου τοῦ θερισμοῦ, |
| | | Pray earnestly therefore to the Lord of the harvest |
| | E | ὥπως ἐργάτας ἐκβάλῃ εἰς τὸν θερισμὸν αὐτοῦ. |
| | | that he may send out workmen into his harvest. |
| 4 | | ³ Ὑπάγετε• |
| | | ³ Go! |
| 5 | | ἰδοὺ, ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς ὡς ἄρνας ἐν μέσῳ λύκων. |
| | | Behold, I send you forth as lambs in [the] midst of wolves. |
| 6 | | ⁴ Μὴ βαστάζετε βαλλάντιον, |
| | | ⁴ Neither carry purse |
| 7 | | μηὲρ πήραν, |
| | | nor bag |
| 8 | | μηὲρ ὑποδήματα; |
| | | nor sandals |
| 9 | | καὶ μηδὲνα κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἀσπάσθησθε. |
| | | and greet no one on the road |
| 10 | A | ⁵ Εἰς ἣν δ' ἂν εἰσέλθῃτε οἰκίαν, πρῶτον λέγετε, |
| | | ⁵ Now whatever house you might enter into, first say, |
| | B | Εἰρήνη τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ. |
| | | Peace [be] to this house |
| 11 | A | ⁶ Καὶ ἐὰν ἐκεῖ ᾗ υἱὸς εἰρήνης, ἐπαναπαύσεται ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἡ εἰρήνη ὑμῶν• |
| | | ⁶ And if there is a son of peace, your peace will rest upon him |
| | B | εἰ δὲ μή γε, ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀνακάμψει. |
| | | If however not so, it will return to you |
| 12 | | ⁷ Ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ οἰκίᾳ μένετε, ἐσθiónτες καὶ πίνοντες τὰ παρ' αὐτῶν; |
| | | ⁷ Now remain in the same house, eating and drinking the things [supplied] by them |
| 13 | | ἄξιός γάρ ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ. |
| | | Worthy [is] the workman for his wages |
| 14 | | Μὴ μεταβαίνετε ἐξ οἰκίας εἰς οἰκίαν. |
| | | Do not move from house to house. |
| 15 | | ⁸ Καὶ εἰς ἣν ἂν πόλιν εἰσέρχησθε, καὶ δέχωνται ὑμᾶς, ἐσθίετε τὰ παρατιθέμενα ὑμῖν, |

- ⁸And whatever city you might enter into, and they receive you, eat the things set before you.
- 16 ⁹καὶ θεραπεύετε τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀσθενεῖς,
⁹And heal [the] sick in it
- 17 A καὶ λέγετε αὐτοῖς,
and say to them
- B Ἦγγικεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.
The kingdom of God has drawn near to you.

Scheme 5.3: Colons in Luke 10:1-9

5.5.6.2 Colon clusters and subthemes in Luke 10:1-9

Luke 10:1-9 exhibits two substructures, namely vv. 1-2 (cols. 1–3) and vv. 3-9 (cols. 4–15). This subdivision is justified by the unmistakable semantic connections within each colon cluster. Verse 1 (cols. 1–2) presents the initiating action of ὁ κύριος (the NP/subject), consisting of two semantically coordinated components: he ἀνέδειξεν ... ἐτέρους ἐβδομήκοντα (“appointed ... seventy others”) and ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς (“sent them”) ahead of himself into settlements that he himself would later visit. ἐτέρους ἐβδομήκοντα (“seventy others”) in colon 1 is a noun phrase (NP) functioning as the object of the verb ἀνέδειξεν, while αὐτοὺς (“them”) in colon 2 is a pronominalisation of ἐτέρους ἐβδομήκοντα and functions as the object of ἀπέστειλεν.

The sentence constituted by colons 1–2 (v. 1) is complete in itself; however, it raises the question why Jesus takes this action in the first place. The answer is supplied by commata 3A–C (v. 2a): Ἐλεγεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς, Ὁ μὲν θερισμὸς πολὺς, οἱ δὲ ἔργатаὶ ὀλίγοι (“Then he said to them, ‘The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the workers are few’”). In this relationship, commata 3A–C function semantically as modifiers of Jesus’ action in colons 1–2. Indeed, given the construction of commata 3A–C, Ἐλεγεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς may practically be replaced with Γὰρ (“because”, “for”, etc.) as a causal conjunction, yielding: Γὰρ ὁ μὲν θερισμὸς πολὺς, οἱ δὲ ἔργатаὶ ὀλίγοι. Commata 3A–C therefore provide the rationale for colons 1–2 and should semantically belong to the same cluster.

Δεήθητε οὖν τοῦ κυρίου τοῦ θερισμοῦ, ὅπως ἐργάτας ἐκβάλῃ εἰς τὸν θερισμὸν αὐτοῦ (“Pray earnestly therefore to the Lord of the harvest that he may send out workers into his harvest”) in commata 3D–E (v. 2b) follows from the missionary “state of emergency” declared by Jesus. οὖν (“therefore”) in this instruction semantically connects the latter to commata 3A–C. ἐτέρους ἐβδομήκοντα are urged to δεήθητε οὖν τοῦ κυρίου τοῦ θερισμοῦ, ὅπως ἐργάτας ἐκβάλῃ εἰς τὸν θερισμὸν αὐτοῦ as a means of addressing the problem presented in commata 3A–C. In this light, the imperative

links directly with the crisis in commata 3A–C, which in turn connects with the assignment in colons 1–2. Accordingly, colons 1–3 form a cluster and constitute the first surface substructure of Luke 10:1-9.

The second surface substructure begins with another imperative, Ὑπάγετε• (“Go!”) (col. 4, v. 3a). This instruction links back to colons 1–2 (v. 1) and resumes the thought concerning Jesus sending out the ἐτέρους ἐβδομήκοντα, temporarily suspended by the motivation in commata 3A–C and the corollary imperative in commata 3D–E. Whereas colon 2 reports that Jesus ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς [ἐτέρους ἐβδομήκοντα] into communities that he himself would later visit, Ὑπάγετε• now activates that commission, because the mission can only be fulfilled through their actual departure.

Therefore, colon 4 forms a cognate cluster with colons 5–17, which contain:

1. a warning concerning the dangers attending the mission: ἰδοὺ, ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς ὡς ἄρνες ἐν μέσῳ λύκων (“Behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves”) (col. 5, v. 3b); and
2. specific missionary instructions relating to:
 - i. welfare—Μὴ βαστάζετε βαλλάντιον (col. 6), μὴ πήραν (col. 7), μὴ ὑποδήματα (col. 8) (“Carry neither purse, bag, nor sandals”) (v. 4a-c);
 - ii. focus—καὶ μηδὲνα κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἀσπάζησθε (“Greet no one on the road”) (col. 9, v. 4d); and
 - iii. approach—first, they are to pronounce peace upon houses they enter and, where welcomed, remain there, eat what is provided, and avoid moving about (comm. 10A–B; cols. 11–14, vv. 5-7); second, they are to accept hospitality from receptive cities, heal the sick there, and proclaim the nearness of the kingdom of God (cols. 15–17, vv. 8-9).

The foregoing surface substructures and their respective subthemes are represented below:

Colon Cluster	Constituent Colons	Subtheme
R1	cols. 1–3 1 ¹Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, ἀνέδειξεν ὁ κύριος ἑτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα ¹Now after these things, the Lord appointed seventy others 2 καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς ἀνὰ δύο [δύο] πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν καὶ τόπον οὗ ἤμελλεν αὐτὸς ἔρχεσθαι. and sent them two [by] two ahead of him into every city and place where he himself was about to go 3 A ²Ἐλεγεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς, ²Then he said to them B Ὁ μὲν θερισμὸς πολὺς, The harvest [is] indeed plentiful C οἱ δὲ ἐργάται ὀλίγοι. but [the] workmen [are] few. D δεήθητε οὖν τοῦ κυρίου τοῦ θερισμοῦ, Pray earnestly therefore to the Lord of the harvest E ὅπως ἐργάτας ἐκβάλῃ εἰς τὸν θερισμὸν αὐτοῦ. that he may send out workmen into his harvest.	<i>Jesus appoints and sends seventy of his disciples as advance messengers, urging them to pray for more labourers in Gods harvest</i>

R2	cols. 4–15 4 ³Υπάγετε*. ³Go! 5 ἰδοὺ, ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς ὡς ἄρνας ἐν μέσῳ λύκων. Behold, I send you forth as lambs in [the] midst of wolves. 6 ⁴Μὴ βαστάζετε βαλλάντιον, ⁴Neither carry purse 7 μὴ πήραν, nor bag 8 μὴ ὑποδήματα; nor sandals 9 καὶ μηδὲνα κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἀσπάσησθε. and greet no one on the road 10 A ⁵Εἰς ἣν ὃ ἂν εἰσέλθῃτε οἰκίαν, πρῶτον λέγετε, ⁵Now whatever house you might enter into, first say, B Εἰρήνη τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ. Peace [be] to this house 11 A ⁶Καὶ ἐὰν ἐκεῖ ᾗ υἱὸς εἰρήνης, ἐπαναπαύσεται ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἡ εἰρήνη ὑμῶν ⁶And if there is a son of peace, your peace will rest upon him B εἰ δὲ μὴ γε, ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀνακάμψει. If however not so, it will return to you 12 ⁷Ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ οἰκίᾳ μένετε, ἐσθίοντες καὶ πίνοντες τὰ παρ' αὐτῶν; ⁷Now remain in the same house, eating and drinking the things [supplied] by them 13 ἄξιός γάρ ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ. Worthy [is] the workman for his wages 14 Μὴ μεταβαίνετε ἐξ οἰκίας εἰς οἰκίαν. Do not move from house to house. 15 ⁸Καὶ εἰς ἣν ἂν πόλιν εἰσέρχησθε, καὶ δέχωνται ὑμᾶς, ἐσθίετε τὰ παρατιθέμενα ὑμῖν, ⁸And whatever city you might enter into, and they receive you, eat the things set before you. 16 ⁹καὶ θεραπεύετε τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀσθενεῖς, ⁹And heal [the] sick in it 17 A καὶ λέγετε αὐτοῖς, and say to them B Ἦγγικεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. The kingdom of God has dawn near to you.	<i>Jesus instructs the Seventy to depend on God's protection and provision, avoid distractions, extend peace, heal the sick, and proclaim the nearness of God's kingdom</i>
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Table 5.6: Colon clusters and subthemes of Luke 10:1-9

5.5.6.3 Formulation of a theme of Luke 10:1-9

Based on the subthemes of colon clusters R1 and R2 in Table 5.6 above, a **theme** of Luke 10:1-9 is formulated as follows:

Colon Cluster	Constituent Colons/Verses	Subtheme
R1	Cols. 1–3/vv. 1-2	<i>Jesus appoints and sends seventy of his disciples as advance messengers, urging them to pray for more labourers in God's harvest</i>
R2	Cols. 4–17/ vv. 3-9	<i>Jesus instructs the Seventy to depend on God's protection and provision, avoid distractions, extend peace, heal the sick, and proclaim the nearness of God's kingdom</i>
Theme: Jesus appoints and sends seventy disciples as advance agents of his mission, instructing them to pray for more labourers, depend on God's protection and provision, extend peace, heal the sick, and proclaim the nearness of God's kingdom		

Table 5.7: Theme of Luke 10:1-9

5.5.7 Formulating the message of Luke 10:1-9 for the first readers

5.5.7.1 Motivation

This section aims to formulate a message from Luke 10:1-9 based on insights derived from the word-study of key concepts in the text (section 5.2), the socio-historical background of GLuke (section 5.5.3), and the place of Luke 10:1-9 within its literary macro-context (section 5.5.5).

5.5.7.2 Explication of the subthemes of Luke 10:1-9

5.5.7.2.1 Subtheme R1: Jesus appoints and sends seventy of his disciples as advance messengers, urging them to pray for more labourers in God's harvest (vv. 1-2)

Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ἀνέδειξεν ὁ κύριος ἑτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα, καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς ἀνὰ δύο πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν καὶ τόπον οὗ ἤμελλεν αὐτὸς ἔρχεσθαι. Ἔλεγεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς, Ὁ μὲν θερισμὸς πολὺς, οἱ δὲ ἔργатаὶ ὀλίγοι• δεήθητε οὖν τοῦ κυρίου τοῦ θερισμοῦ, ὅπως ἔργατας ἐκβάλῃ εἰς τὸν θερισμὸν αὐτοῦ.

After this the Lord appointed [seventy] others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.

Luke 10:1-2 NIV

ἐτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα. The appointment of ἐτέρους ἑβδομήκοντα ("seventy others") to Jesus' advance mission signals the openness of service in the dawning kingdom to a wider body of disciples¹²⁹ (see section 5.5.5.2). By this time, Luke's Jesus has already recruited and commissioned twelve core disciples for the mission (6:12-16; 9:1-2). The

¹²⁹ This contrasts with the commissioning of τοὺς δώδεκα ("the Twelve") in Luke 9:1-6, Matthew 10:1-8 and Mark 3:13-19.

involvement of the Seventy therefore most plausibly demonstrates that participation in kingdom ministry is not restricted to the Twelve alone¹³⁰ (cf. 9:59-60). Moreover, their report at the end of the mission is one of success (10:17), implying that the trust invested in them in 10:1 is not a misplaced one. Indeed, as ὁ κύριος (10:1), Jesus has the prerogative to commission whomever he chooses.

καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς ἀνὰ δύο. The decision to send them in pairs (ἀνὰ δύο) likely reflects the Jewish tradition of sending messengers in twos (Keener, 2014:206). This detail is noted but will not be explored further as it lies outside the scope of this study.

καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς ... πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν καὶ τόπον οὗ ἤμελλεν αὐτὸς ἔρχεσθαι. Jesus sends the seventy ahead of himself as his “harbingers” (Henry, n.a.) and “secondary heralds”, in distinction from the Twelve (Calvin, 1857). In this role, they function as an advance delegation, preparing the way for Jesus’ own subsequent arrival in these locations. As proper “harbingers”, their activities signal what is to be expected at Jesus’ own arrival. Their post-mission report is accordingly one of successful exorcisms (v. 17). Indeed, if such results are achieved through his envoys, greater manifestations may be expected from Christ himself. Their missional activity thus provides a foretaste of the dawning of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in and through Christ: “They must heal the sick ... in the name of Jesus, which would make people long to see this Jesus, and ready to entertain him whose name was so powerful” (Henry, n.a.).

Ὁ μὲν θερισμὸς πολὺς. Beyond maintaining a narrative pattern between 9:52 and 10:1, the sense of urgency in GLuke discussed in section 5.5.1 plausibly explains why Jesus sends an advance team ahead of himself rather than having them wait until he is ready to travel with them. Luke’s Jesus wants things done σήμερον (Troftgruben, 2018:6-11). More specifically, as argued under subtheme Q3A (section 5.4.6.2.3), the harvest logion in 10:2 conveys the urgency with which the mission must be pursued. Therefore, the extensive need, contrasted with the small number of workers, motivates Jesus to enlist additional labourers beyond the Twelve previously sent out (Lk. 9:1). Consequently, he commissions seventy others whose awareness of the urgency of the moment should move them to plead with ὁ κύριος τοῦ θερισμοῦ to send out labourers (preachers and miracle workers) without delay for the harvest. Similar to Matthew 9:37–10:1, they simultaneously petition ὁ κύριος τοῦ θερισμοῦ while

130 This is not to say that it was only seventy persons that constituted his wider circle of disciples.

themselves going as answers to that petition. Omolade (2024:77) captures this tone by observing that there is “a feeling of urgency” that requires them to “be single-minded in their disposition to the task entrusted to them”. The instruction to carry no provisions (Lk. 10:4; Matt. 10:9–10) further reinforces this demand for focus.

The question of authority for the task. Unlike Matthew 10:1, Mark 3:13-15, 6:7, and Luke 9:1-2, Luke 10:1-2 does not explicitly mention Jesus’ granting authority to the Seventy; yet he commands them to go (v. 3), heal the sick, and announce the dawning of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 9). The question therefore arises whether they are sent out unequipped. The narrative, however, resolves this tension in their post-mission report that even demons submit to them in Jesus’ name (v. 17), indicating that, if nothing else, they are equipped with the authority resident in Jesus’ name. Indeed, unlike contemporary exorcists with their incantatory formulas, the Seventy simply invoke the name of Jesus and witness its immediate efficacy (Keener, 2014:206).

Nonetheless, Jesus offers an insightful explanation in his response to their report that further clarifies the issue. For the sake of argumentative cohesion and theological climax, v. 19 is explicated first, and then v. 18. Jesus explains:

Ἴδού, δέδωκα ὑμῖν τὴν ἐξουσίαν τοῦ πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄφεων καὶ σκορπίων, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ• καὶ οὐδὲν ὑμᾶς οὐ μὴ ἀδικήσῃ.

Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will by any means harm you.

Luke 10:19 NIV

As was noted earlier, there is no explicit reference to Jesus’ granting the Seventy authority before the mission. However, Jesus’ statement here clarifies that he has done so: δέδωκα is the perfect active indicative, first person singular of δίδωμι (“to give”), denoting a completed act with continuing implications or enduring results. Therefore, if the earlier reference to the invocation of Jesus’ name (v. 17) does not sufficiently answer the question of when and how Jesus granted them authority—especially because he does not explicitly integrate it into the formulation of the imperatives in vv. 3 and 9—it may be that the authority impartation is simply embedded in their appointment to the task (vv. 1, 3, 9). In any case, Jesus’ claim to have given them authority leads to the conclusion that the authority in question is not tied to a special office, as it were exclusive to the Twelve, but is generally available to his

disciples, or more narrowly, those whom he sends out on mission¹³¹. Perhaps this inclusivity is what “[fills] them with more astonishment and joy than all else” (Jamieson, 2002:2079).

Further in v. 19, Jesus explains that, by the authority, the Seventy are enabled πατεῖν ἐπάνω ὄφεων καὶ σκορπίων (“to tread upon snakes and scorpions”) and ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ (“[to be] over all the power of the enemy”), and therefore that οὐδὲν ὑμᾶς οὐ μὴ ἀδικήσῃ (“nothing will injure [them]”). In Jewish literature, “snakes and scorpions” idiomatically represents peril in a general sense, whether constituted by the environment or by people (cf. Deut. 8:15; Eze. 2:6). Syntactically, the phrase indirectly recalls the hazard of “wolves” of which Jesus warns the Seventy (as “lambs”) in v. 2, and may represent threats to their *own* shalom, whereas they are themselves agents of shalom to receptive households and cities (v. 5-8).

On its part, πᾶσαν τὴν δύναμιν τοῦ ἐχθροῦ seems to incorporate all the overt and insidious attacks of Satan (“the enemy”, in singular form) (cf. Jn. 10:10a), he being “the architect of evil” (Carroll, 2012:239). Drawing on the context, the assurance and triumph conveyed in v. 19 seem to extend beyond physical dangers, as in the OT passages above, and to include protection against evil human and spiritual activities alike, even demonic powers (contra. Schreiner, 2012:1500). As such, although real danger attends the mission, the Seventy may rest assured that their delegated authority overcomes it.

Finally, v. 18 provides a climactic eschatological insight into the Seventy’s successful exorcisms. Responding to their astonishment (v. 17), Jesus tell them:

Ἔθεώρουν τὸν Σατανᾶν ὡς ἀστραπὴν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεσόντα.

I was watching as Satan fell¹³² from heaven like lightning.

Luke 10:18

The disciples’ exorcisms involve more than the mere expulsion of demons from their hosts; there is a clash of kingdoms with cosmic significance. Through these acts, Satan, the principal antagonist in Luke’s conflict narrative, is being defeated and his

131 This understanding draws from the explanation of ἔχειν (Mk. 3:15), where generality, not exclusivity, is the idea behind the possession of authority, as in ἔχω^e (Louw and Nida, 1989a:558; cf. Lk. 9:49-50) (see section 5.2.4.2).

132 It should be noted that the notion of “falling from heaven” is usually used in a symbolic rather than literal sense, e.g., Lam 2:1; Lk. 10:15 (Keener, 2014:206). One might compare, e.g., the Jewish tradition that the guardian angel of Egypt fell into the sea when God smote the Egyptians for Israel.

work in the world is being undone (Carroll, 2012:239). The imperfect verb form, Ἐθεώρουν (“I was watching”), suggests an ongoing process of conflict in which Satan’s domain is being overrun. Indeed, “[t]he kingdom of God is making inroads on Satan’s domain” (Schreiner, 2012:1500) and “the self-proclaimed ruler of this age (Lk. 4:6) [is] retreating from his position before Jesus’ representatives” (Keener, 2014:206). Shortly after this, Luke’s Jesus equates his own exorcisms with the eschatological arrival of ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (11:20). In effect, the exorcism miracles reported in 10:17 manifest the conquering power of the dawning eschatological kingdom of God over Satan’s rule.

5.5.7.2.2 Subtheme R2: Jesus instructs the Seventy to depend on God’s protection and provision, avoid distractions, extend peace, heal the sick, and proclaim the nearness of God’s kingdom

This subtheme is explicated as follows:

R2A: The warning about potential hazards in the field

Ὑπάγετε• ἰδοῦ, ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς ὡς ἄρνας ἐν μέσῳ λύκων¹³³.

Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

Luke 10:3 NIV

Ὑπάγετε• (“Go!”) here in 10:3 is a second-person reformulation of the third-person ἀπέστειλεν αὐτοὺς (“[he] sent them”) in 10:1. Whereas 10:1 narrates Jesus’ sending of the disciples, 10:3, as part of direct speech, presents the imperative directly from Jesus’ lips: Ὑπάγετε•, reinforced by ἰδοῦ, ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς (“Behold, I am sending you”). The combined force of Ὑπάγετε• and ἰδοῦ, ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς underscores the urgency of the command: they are to depart without delay.

The statement, ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς ὡς ἄρνας ἐν μέσῳ λύκων, reflects typical Jewish self-consciousness of themselves as sheep among wolves (the Gentiles), proverbially indicating defenselessness (Keener, 2014:206). In the context of Luke 10, this metaphor indicates the perilous nature of the mission. As Spurgeon (1877) emphasises, this is “THEIR IMMINENT PERIL”, a gravely dangerous task that would

133 This verse has an expanded parallel in Matthew 10:16-28, where the sheep-wolves simile is similarly worded (v. 16) and the Twelve are instructed on what to do and what not to do in the face of such a hazard (vv. 17-28). Mark 6:11 and Luke 9:5 (although not using the sheep-wolves simile) also add that they should shake the dust off their feet as a witness against people who resist them.

expose them to hostile people. Still, having been sent by the Lord (10:1), they can trust him to be with and protect them; but whether safe or endangered, the command is “Go!”

R2B: The instruction to depend on God’s provision

Μὴ βαστάζετε βαλλάντιον, μὴ πήραν, μὴ ὑποδήματα.... Ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ τῇ οἰκίᾳ μένετε, ἐσθίοντες καὶ πίνοντες τὰ παρ’ αὐτῶν• ἄξιός γάρ ὁ ἐργάτης τοῦ μισθοῦ αὐτοῦ. Μὴ μεταβαίνετε ἐξ οἰκίας εἰς οἰκίαν. Καὶ εἰς ἣν ἂν πόλιν εἰσέρχησθε, καὶ δέχωνται ὑμᾶς, ἐσθίετε τὰ παρατιθέμενα ὑμῖν.

Do not take a purse or bag or sandals.... Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house. When you enter a town and are welcome, eat what is set before you.

Luke 10:4a, 7-8 NIV

Μὴ βαστάζετε βαλλάντιον, μὴ πήραν, μὴ ὑποδήματα. Only two issues are briefly discussed here: First, the instruction to provide nothing for themselves (v. 4) is in a way intended to cure the problem of distraction and help them “keep on a straight furrow” (Clarke, 1832:1; cf. Lk. 9:59-62). This is crucial given the urgency of the assignment (v. 2) and the expectation that they will be provided for by those who welcome them (vv. 5-8). However, the benefaction anticipated from such persons (as patrons) does not obligate the disciples (as clients) to them; rather, they are implicitly paying the disciples their wages as it were on God’s behalf (Carroll, 2012:236). Second, this prohibition prevents any appearance of merchandising or exploitation (cf. Matt. 10:8b), ensuring the mission’s integrity is above suspicion¹³⁴.

R2C: The instruction to greet no-one on the way

καὶ μηδένα κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἀσπάζεσθε.

And do not greet anyone on the road.

Luke 10:4b NIV

This is another critical instruction given to the Seventy (v. 4). Although failure to greet was socially offensive, Jewish tradition discouraged interrupting religious duties for greetings (cf. 1 Kgs. 13:9-10; 2 Kgs. 4:29; 9:3) (Keener, 2014:206). While the

¹³⁴ To contextualise this instruction, Got Questions Ministries (2023) notes that Jewish magicians and physicians commonly exploited their clients financially, as reflected in the experience of the woman with the issue of blood (Mk. 5:25-26). In contrast, Jesus instructs his harbingers to receive only ordinary labourers’ provision in the form of food and accommodation from their hosts (Lk. 10:7; cf. Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14–15). This coheres with Matthew 10:8-10, where the disciples are to minister freely, even though they may receive sustenance from those to whom they minister.

instruction may therefore carry a traditional dimension, within the immediate context it primarily reflects the urgency of the mission, leaving the heralds with no time for the prolonged greetings characteristic of oriental culture (Schreiner, 2012:1499; Henry, n.a.). The demand for such focus reinforces the theme of urgency introduced in 9:59 and further developed in the harvest metaphor of 10:2.

More fundamentally, however, this urgency derives from what Franklin (2007:941) describes as the “Eschatological Urgency” of 9:51, which Carroll (2012:228) correspondingly characterises as a “moment of completion or fulfilment”:

Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήψεως αὐτοῦ, καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήρισεν τοῦ πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ.

Moreover, it came to pass in the days completing his ascension, that he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

And it came about that the days leading to his being taken up were running out, and he set his face to head toward Jerusalem.

Here, Luke portrays Jesus as having very limited time left, thus focusing squarely on activities that lead to fulfilment. This sense of urgency in his own activities may therefore have formed the basis for his demanding immediate and focused action from the Seventy, to such an extent that they do not devote any portion of what remains to time-consuming oriental greetings¹³⁵ while on the assigned mission. Everything must be done quickly because “[t]he wheel is turning full circle and coming to its appointed fulfilment”, with all elements of his “being ‘taken up’”—the movement to Jerusalem, the passion, the resurrection, and ultimately the ascension—bracketed by this eschatological perspective (Franklin, 2007:941). In this sense, the urgency permeating the latter part of Luke 9 naturally flows into the mission of the Seventy in 10:1ff.

R2D: The instruction to offer the blessing of peace

Εἰς ἣν δ' ἂν εἰσέλθητε οἰκίαν, πρῶτον λέγετε, Εἰρήνη τῷ οἴκῳ τούτῳ. Καὶ ἐὰν ἐκεῖ ᾗ υἱὸς εἰρήνης, ἐπαναπαύσεται ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἡ εἰρήνη ὑμῶν• εἰ δὲ μή γε, ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἀνακάμψει.

When you enter a house, first say, “Peace to this house.” If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you.

Luke 10:5-6 *NIV*

135 The argument for urgency seems to be stronger than Carroll's (2012:235) suggestion that the no-greeting instruction is a way of reserving the greeting of peace for persons to whom the message is proclaimed.

This greeting is traditional among the Jews, but it is more than a mere social courtesy. It functions as a “prayer-wish” (Carroll, 2012:235) or a “performative speech” that actually confers God’s peace—his blessing and favour—upon those who receive it (Profsloan, 2019:1). Within this missionary context, Buchanan (2022:1) convincingly argues that “[t]he first priority of evangelism is to impart peace, shalom, blessing on the entire household”. This is precisely what Jesus instructs the Seventy to do upon entering homes and cities. Such “peace of salvation” (Schreiner, 2012:1500) apparently echoes Isaiah 52:7: “How beautiful on the mountain are the feet of those who bring the good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’”

Peace, salvation, and other blessings of God’s reign therefore converge upon individuals, households, and cities that welcome Christ’s messengers. The “sons of peace”¹³⁶ who receive the heralds and assent to their blessing inseparably receive both the pronounced peace and the spiritual and physical benefits of the kingdom of God that the heralds proclaim. Conversely, those who reject the offer and turn the messengers away not only forfeit the blessing but also expose themselves to judgment (Lk. 10:10–12; cf. Matt. 10:14–15).

R2E: The command to heal the sick and proclaim the nearness of God’s kingdom

καὶ θεραπεύετε τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀσθενεῖς, καὶ λέγετε αὐτοῖς, Ἥγγικεν ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς
ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ.

Heal the sick who are there and tell them, “The kingdom of God is near you.”

Luke 10:9 *NIV*

In the words of Carroll (2012:235), “hospitality and proclamation [are] bound tightly together”. Therefore, *where* they are welcome, *and only there*¹³⁷, Jesus instructs them:

136 i.e., people who are “inwardly prepared to embrace [their] message of peace” (Jamieson, 2002:2075); people who are “willing to receive the saving message” (Schreiner, 2012:1500); peaceful people “whose identity is shaped by the experience of God’s shalom and a commitment to embody it in peaceful relationships, even toward strangers” (Carroll, 2012:235).

137 Jesus himself leaves individuals and towns free to welcome or reject him and his activities (cf. Matt. 13:54-58; Mk. 6:1-6). Thus, in response to Zacchaeus’ desperation, Jesus visits his home and brings salvation to his household (Lk. 19:1-10). Conversely, after exorcising the legion of demons in the region of the Gerasenes, he simply departs when the people urge him to leave their town (Mk. 5:1-17; Lk. 8:27-37).

καὶ θεραπεύετε τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀσθενεῖς. This imperative anticipates the miraculous restoration of sick and incapacitated persons (see sections 5.2.3.7 and 5.2.4.5 above). Whether through prayer, the laying on of hands, or the rebuking of afflicting demons, the Seventy are commissioned to bring relief and reversal to morbid conditions¹³⁸.

καὶ λέγετε αὐτοῖς, Ἥγγικεν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ. The dawning kingdom of God in Christ is already a present reality, manifest in and through Christ's presence and activities (11:20), as well as through the activities of his core disciples (9:1-6). The Seventy are mandated to proclaim this reality to their audiences. Here, λέγετε ("tell") functions equivalently to κηρύσσετε ("preach"), which Matthew 10:7 in fact combines with λέγοντες in the expression κηρύσσετε λέγοντες ("preach, saying"). Thus, by λέγετε in Luke 10:9 is meant that the Seventy are to announce the dawning rule of God and call their hearers to repentance and acceptance of it (see section 5.2.4.6). Textually combined with the imperative to heal in the same verse, it further means that, while they verbally bear witness to the kingdom, they are also to perform miracles as tangible expressions of the kingdom's benefits among the people.

5.5.7.2.3 Summary and conclusion of the message of Luke 10:1-9

In Luke 10:1-9, Jesus commissions seventy disciples and sends them ahead of himself as an advance team to towns he intends to visit later. This group is distinct from the Twelve, whom he had earlier engaged in a similar mission in 9:1-6, and the commissioning of the Seventy apparently reflects the urgency of the missionary task. Although the text of 10:1-9 does not explicitly state that authority is granted to them, Jesus' response to their report in 10:17-19 confirms that they operate with his authority. He commands them to proceed with the mission despite the hazards and rejection they may encounter. They are to avoid distractions, including concerns for welfare and social formalities, and devote themselves fully to the task. Upon entering homes and cities, they are first to pronounce peace. Where they are welcomed, their peace will rest upon the people; there they are to accept sustenance, proclaim the kingdom, and heal the sick. Conversely, where they are rejected, they are to depart, leaving even the dust of such places as a testimony against them (9:4-5; 10:5-8, 10-12). Thus, in GLuke, witness and miraculous activities are conditioned upon the reception of the

¹³⁸ These are some aspects of existential challenges of which it was established in section 5.5.5.1 to preoccupy GLuke, and interestingly, Jesus' own ministry in GLuke begins with an attention on a variety of existential issues (4:18).

messengers. Whereas God sends his mercies to all, only those who receive them benefit from them.

5.5.8 Application of the message of Luke 10:1-9 for today

1. The church should involve the laity—including professionals, businesspeople, youth, and students—in active mission work, recognising their potential for effective service, as demonstrated by the Seventy (Lk. 10:1, 17; cf. Ac. 1:15; 2:1-12).
2. The church and its leaders should recognise the urgency and magnitude of the world's need for the good news of the kingdom of God and its spiritual and existential benefits, while also prioritising prayer for more labourers and the deliberate engagement of ministers and missionaries for the task (Lk. 10:2; cf. Matt. 9:36-38).
3. Those engaged in mission should be adequately prepared to expect hazards, opposition, and rejection, yet remain committed to the task notwithstanding such challenges (Lk. 10:3; cf. Matt. 10:16-25).
4. Those sent out for ministry should understand and practise the dual dimensions of the mission, namely, the authoritative proclamation of the kingdom of God with a view to persuading hearers to repent and embrace it, and ministry to the sick in demonstration of the kingdom's benefits among the people (Lk. 10:9; cf. 9:1-2).
5. While Jesus directly conferred authority for particular missions in the Gospel narratives (Lk. 9:1-2; 10:19), his messengers today minister under the authority of his name (cf. Lk. 10:17; Jn. 14:12-14; Ac. 3:16; Phil. 2:9-11) and through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit (cf. Ac. 1:8), by which they effectively bear witness and minister to human needs.
6. Jesus' messengers should be people whose words and actions communicate heavenly goodwill and peace. At the same time, the mission of the kingdom is not coercive in nature: those who welcome the messengers should be ministered to, whereas those who reject the messengers are to be left to themselves under the prospect of divine judgment (Lk. 10:5-6, 8-9, 10-15).

5.6 Synthesis of the applications of the messages of Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9

This section synthesises and consolidates, as far as possible, the applications drawn from the messages of Mark 3:13-19 (section 5.3.7), Matthew 10:1-8 (section 5.4.7) and Luke 10:1-9 (section 5.5.8). Such a synthesis is necessary because the message of Scripture is fundamentally coherent, and these three Synoptic passages are understood to contribute, in complementary ways, to that unified message. The following applications are therefore adopted from a synthesis of the messages formulated from the three texts:

1. The church should cultivate disciples who are wholly committed to following Jesus, regardless of the cost (Mk. 3:14; cf. 8:34-35). This includes adequately preparing them for the hazards of mission while encouraging perseverance notwithstanding opposition and suffering (Lk. 10:3; cf. Matt. 10:16-25).
2. The church and its leaders should recognise that the world remains in a deplorable spiritual and existential condition and therefore stands in urgent need of the good news of the kingdom of God and its benefits. Consequently, the church should prioritise intercession for a commensurate workforce (Lk. 10:2; cf. Matt. 9:36-38), while also recruiting and engaging ministers and missionaries to authoritatively communicate the message and mercies of God to the people (Mk. 3:14-15; Matt. 10:1, 7-8).
3. Besides persons called to specific ministry offices (cf. Eph. 4:11), the church may also involve and encourage other believers, including the laity, in missionary activities, as the mission of the Seventy demonstrates their potential usefulness (Lk. 10:1, 17; cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Ac. 1:15; 2:1-12). Furthermore, the NT associates Christian witness and ministry with the authority of Jesus' name and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk. 10:19; Jn. 14:12-14; Ac. 3:16; Phil. 2:9-11). Since these divine resources are not portrayed as exclusive to a select ministerial class, the church may therefore intentionally train, encourage, and engage believers in proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God and ministering to those under diverse forms of satanic oppression (Mk. 3:14-15; cf. Lk. 10:17; Ac. 6:8).
4. Those sent out should be people whose words and actions communicate heavenly goodwill and peace. At the same time, the mission of the kingdom is

not coercive in nature: those who welcome the messengers should be ministered to, whereas those who reject them are to be left to themselves under the prospect of divine judgment (Lk. 10:5-15; cf. Matt. 10:11-15).

5. The church and its ministers or missionaries should continually remember that the authority they exercise in Christ's name is received freely (Matt. 10:1; cf. Mk. 6:7; Lk. 10:19). Consequently, they are duty-bound to minister the mercies of God without exploitation or commercialisation (Matt. 10:8). In keeping with Jesus' instructions, they may receive sustenance from receptive people, households, and communities, but should not impose material demands on them (Lk. 10:4-8). At the same time, sending authorities such as the church should make adequate provision for their welfare.

Besides these general principles, some distinctive emphases of the individual texts may also be noted:

6. Mark's emphasis on exorcism (3:15; 6:7), understood as a symbolic repudiation of systemic evil, may challenge the church to confront social and spiritual forms of oppression with confidence in God's ultimate victory over evil as foreshadowed in the narrative.
7. Matthew's characteristic connection of the miracle imperatives (10:1, 8) with the theme of compassion (9:36) underscores the importance of cultivating genuine compassion in ministers and missionaries toward lost, sick, and oppressed people. Such compassion may encourage more deliberate and sacrificial responses to human suffering through ministries of presence, care, healing, and deliverance, even in difficult contexts such as slums, hospitals, internally displaced persons camps, and prisons.
8. Luke's emphasis on the marginalised and the urgency of mission (10:1-3) may challenge the church to integrate diverse members more intentionally into its mission and to respond promptly to the spiritual and existential needs within its communities.

5.7 Summary and conclusion

This chapter presented exegetical analyses of Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9 through the combined use of synchronic and diachronic methods. The analysis identified significant parallels between Jesus' commissioning of the Twelve (Mk. 3:14; Matt. 10:1) and that of the Seventy (Lk. 10:1), particularly with respect to their

missionary mandates. Both groups were commissioned to proclaim the good news of the dawning kingdom of God (Mk. 3:14; Matt. 10:7; Lk. 10:9) and to perform miracles (Mk. 3:15; Matt. 10:1, 8; Lk. 10:9). For these tasks, Jesus granted them authority, though the presentation differs across the Gospels: in Mark 3, the intention to grant authority is announced in 3:14 and later actualised in 6:7; in Matthew 10, authority is conferred upon the summoning of the Twelve (v. 1); whereas in Luke 10, Jesus only later explicitly refers to the authority already given to the Seventy (v. 19).

Among the miracles they were specifically commissioned to perform were exorcisms (Mk. 3:15; Matt. 10:1, 8; cf. Lk. 10:17), healing of the sick and diseased (Matt. 10:1, 8; Lk. 10:9), raising of the dead (Matt. 10:8), and cleansing of lepers (Matt. 10:8). These miracle imperatives were interpreted in a literal sense. Accordingly, the miracles were understood not only as signs of the dawning rule of God in and through Christ, but also as acts expected to bring immediate transformation to existential conditions.

This study concludes that the dual tasks of proclaiming the kingdom of God and performing miracles, as reflected in Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9, remain relevant for the contemporary church, just as communities today continue to experience spiritual and existential needs comparable to those addressed by the Evangelists. With particular regard to miracles, the study suggests that divine miracles may still be expected in and through the church, and that both clergy and laity remain empowered by the Holy Spirit to function as agents through whom such miracles are authoritatively performed (Ac. 1:8, 15; 2:1-4, 16-18; 1 Cor. 12:7). The church should therefore intentionally create opportunities for such ministry to take place.

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSES OF SAMPLES OF REFORMED AND PENTECOSTAL INTERPRETATIONS OF MATTHEW 10:1-8, MARK 3:13-19 AND LUKE 10:1-9

6.1 Scope

This chapter undertakes a thematic analysis of sampled Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, with particular attention to their treatment of the miracle imperatives in the passages. On the basis of the findings, the chapter formulates a hermeneutic key that can demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal approaches to the miracle imperatives in the passages.

6.2 Methodology

6.2.1 Sampling

6.2.1.1 Sample stratification and sizes

The general population of interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 is vast and diverse. For the purpose of this study, the researcher identified six distinct strata within this population, broadly classified into Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations. These comprised Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8 (two distinct strata), Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of Mark 3:13-19 (two distinct strata), and Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of Luke 10:1-9 (two distinct strata). Following a quota sampling approach, samples were drawn from each stratum for investigation. The sample size for each category of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations was ten (10), yielding an overall total of sixty (60) samples.

6.2.1.2 Sampling method

The study collected units of analysis¹³⁹ through a non-probabilistic search procedure, meaning that the chances of identifying or including any particular unit of analysis were neither predictable nor subject to researcher control. In turn, the respective samples were drawn using a convenience sampling method, whereby units of analysis were consecutively selected according to their order of appearance until the sample saturation of ten (10) was attained.

¹³⁹ The units of analysis in this study are the individual Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 drawn into the respective sample categories.

6.2.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Units of analysis were drawn from online sources. This allowed for a wide range of contexts of interpretation beyond strictly academic discourse, including public sermons to which wider audiences are exposed. The units of analysis comprised textual, audio and video source materials. Audio and video materials were transcribed using “Audio-Text Converter” and “Video-Text Converter” applications respectively. One unit of analysis (PMat10), originally produced in Romanian, was first translated into English using Google Translate and subsequently transcribed using “Audio-Text Converter”.

Only interpretations produced between 2000 A.D. and the present were included in the study. Consequently, the date of the source constituted a major criterion for eligibility. Interpretations bearing explicit dates (day/month/year, month/year, or year of publication) within the specified range were included, whereas those without explicit dates or dated earlier than 2000 A.D. were excluded.

Furthermore, units of analysis were admitted only after the researcher had ascertained their origin from either Reformed or Pentecostal sources. In some cases, the theological identity of the source was expressly stated. For example, references to traditions such as Baptist or Foursquare enabled the researcher to identify the material immediately as respectively Reformed or Pentecostal in orientation (see item 1 in Appendix 1A and item 1 in Appendix 2B). Where such identity markers were absent, a further search was conducted to determine the theological tradition and/or denominational affiliation of the author or organisation concerned. Materials confirmed to originate from Reformed or Pentecostal backgrounds were admitted, whereas those lacking such explicit or traceable identities were excluded.

Appendices 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A and 3B further concretise this process by identifying the “source address” and “confirmation of Reformed (or Pentecostal) background” for each unit of analysis. These consist of the web addresses from which both the units of analysis and their theological identities were retrieved. Where only “source address” appears against an item, it indicates that the Reformed or Pentecostal identity of the author was explicitly stated in the source itself (e.g., items 1–6 in Appendix 1A). Conversely, “confirmation of Reformed (or Pentecostal) background” was added where such identity information was not expressly stated in the original source (e.g.,

items 7 and 10 in Appendix 1A). In addition, the specific sectors of the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions represented by the authors of the units of analysis are identified under “Denomination/Tradition”.

6.2.3 Coding technique

As summarised in Tables 1.2 and 1.3, the populations, samples, data and findings were manually coded as follows:

6.2.3.1 Coding of sample groups

The respective sample groups were coded by prefixing “R” and “P” to “Mat”, “Mrk” and “Luk”, representing samples of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 respectively. These are outlined as follows:

***RMat** for the sample group comprising Reformed interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8;*

***PMat** for the sample group comprising Pentecostal interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8;*

***RMrk** for the sample group comprising Reformed interpretations of Mark 3:13-19;*

***PMrk** for the sample group comprising Pentecostal interpretations of Mark 3:13-19;*

***RLuk** for the sample group comprising Reformed interpretations of Luke 10:1-9; and*

***PLuk** for the sample group comprising Pentecostal interpretations of Luke 10:1-9.*

6.2.3.2 Coding of units of analysis

The *n*th admitted unit of analysis within a sample group—where “n” denotes any position number in the sequence 01, 02, ..., 10—was identified by suffixing the relevant sample code with the corresponding value of *n*. This is illustrated below:

***RMat01, RMat02, ..., RMat10** for units of analysis drawn into RMat;*

***PMat01, PMat02, ..., PMat10** for units of analysis drawn into PMat;*

***RMrk01, RMrk02, ..., RMrk10** for units of analysis drawn into RMrk;*

***PMrk01, PMrk02, ..., PMrk10** for units of analysis drawn into PMrk;*

***RLuk01, RLuk02, ..., RLuk10** for units of analysis drawn into RLuk; and*

***PLuk01, PLuk02, ..., PLuk10** for units of analysis drawn into PLuk.*

6.2.3.3 Coding of themes

Some of the themes investigated in the exegeses of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 in chapter five formed the basis of investigation of assertions in the units of analysis. These were:

Kingdom	<i>(used as an umbrella term for kingdom, rule, and reign),</i>
Authority	<i>(used as an umbrella term for authority, warrant, authorise, and power)</i>
Disciple	<i>(used as an umbrella term for disciple and apostle),</i>
Demon	<i>(used as an umbrella term for demon, impure spirit, unclean spirit, evil spirit, devils, etc.),</i>
Exorcism	<i>(used as an umbrella term for exorcism, exorcise, drive out demons, cast out demons, deliver, and deliverance),</i>
Leprosy	<i>(used as an umbrella term for leprosy, leprous, and those who have leprosy),</i>
Cleanse	<i>(used as an umbrella term for cleanse and cleansing),</i>
Preach	<i>(used as an umbrella term for preach, proclaim, and announce),</i>
Dead	<i>(used as an umbrella term for dead, the dead, death),</i>
Raise	<i>(used as an umbrella word for raise or raising the dead),</i>
Sick	<i>(used as an umbrella term for sick, sickness, disease, ill, illness, ail, ailing, ailment), and</i>
Heal	<i>(used as an umbrella term for heal, healing, health and cure).</i>

The following terms were not directly analysed in chapter five, but were considered relevant to the present task:

Miracle	<i>(used as an umbrella term for miracle, miraculous, sign, wonder, etc.)</i>
Mission	<i>(used as an umbrella term for the entire exercise of going out to preach and perform miracles); and</i>
“We”	<i>(introduced to account for transitions in the sampled interpretations of the passages from the Twelve/Seventy disciples and their audiences to contemporary preachers and believers. This transition was anticipated in chapter one and proved integral to the exegeses in chapter five. Accordingly, “we” was created as a convenience theme representing personal pronouns and possessive adjectives such as I/me/my, we/us/our and you/your in relation to the application of the motifs and imperatives embedded in the passages).</i>

For example, the theme “heal” for RMat01 was coded as RMat01-heal. Where the author made three (3) relevant assertions concerning “heal”, these were coded as RMat01-heal-01, RMat01-heal-02 and RMat01-heal-03 respectively. In this way, individual assertions relating to a given theme were identified within their original contexts. It also means that the theme-codes comprise identifiable assertions within the units of analysis.

6.2.4 Thematic analysis of the sampled interpretations

6.2.4.1 Scope

The above-listed themes, together with their synonyms and inflected forms, were investigated across all six sample groups: RMat, PMat, RMrk, PMrk, RLuk, and PLuk. The goal was to determine how the interpreters understood, explained and/or applied them within their respective contexts.

6.2.4.2 Analysis tool

Each coded unit of analysis was subjected to content analysis using ATLAS.ti 24¹⁴⁰. The software facilitated the rapid identification of relevant themes, including their synonyms and inflected forms, within the units of analysis. It also enabled the accurate grouping, quantification and storage of the quotations¹⁴¹ and theme-codes¹⁴² generated for each sample group, while ensuring the ease of retrieving such items whenever required.

6.2.4.3 Analysis of theme-codes

An identified theme (word or phrase) was highlighted together with a quotation of the paragraph in which it occurred, after which the researcher studied the paragraph to determine how the theme was used in context. Themes mentioned only in passing

140 ATLAS.ti 24 is an analytical software package designed primarily for qualitative research. It assists researchers “to manage, extract, compare, explore, and reassemble meaningful pieces from large amounts of data in creative, flexible, yet systematic ways.” Its VISE principle—namely, visualisation, immersion, serendipity, and exploration—constitutes a major justification for its use in the present study. Visualisation implies that the software helps maintain focus on the data while facilitating the use of navigational functions with relative ease. The immersion component allows interaction with source data from multiple standpoints, including note-taking, review of analytical procedures, and the generation of creative insights. Serendipity refers to the software’s support for intuitive browsing of data in search of useful information and patterns; e.g., through the use of the Search and Code tools to locate, evaluate, code and admit assertions in the present study. Exploration implies that the use of ATLAS.ti 24 does not depend on a rigid, linear or “bureaucratic” methodology, but is instead adaptable to “an exploratory, discovery-oriented approach” in which even a first-time user can progressively develop competence in the course of the research process for improved analytical output. Overall, ATLAS.ti 24 saves time, enhances precision, strengthens reliability and auditability, and provides visual tools that simplify movement from raw data to interpretation with a reasonable degree of analytical transparency. Above all, rather than automate the research process, it functions as a facilitating workbench, assisting with a wide range of activities involved in qualitative data analysis and interpretation while leaving the researcher to make judgments consistent with the objectives of the study (ATLAS.ti, 2025:10-13).

141 In the present study, a quotation refers to a segment of a unit of analysis which the researcher considered relevant to the investigation and therefore marked and coded (ATLAS.ti, 2025:18).

142 A code is a short textual label that references another piece of text (or quotation), usually a phrase, sentence, or group of sentences (ATLAS.ti, 2025:20). A theme-code in the present study therefore refers to a textual label used to identify a relevant quotation associated with any of the themes outlined in section 6.2.3.3 above. Theme-codes constitute the raw data drawn from the units of analysis.

were omitted, whereas those explicated or applied by the author were coded and investigated in order to determine the author's usage of them. Similarities and dissimilarities in the interpretation of themes were identified and accordingly grouped across all the sample groups.

The theme-codes were analysed by weighing their claims against the exegetical conclusions in chapter five¹⁴³ and/or the theoretical foundations established in earlier chapters. Against the backdrop of these exegetical conclusions and theoretical foundations, the theme-codes were adjudged either "strong" or "weak". A theme-code was categorised as "strong" where its claim aligned with the study's exegetical or theoretical conclusions, and as "weak" where it did not. These are presented in Table 6.4 below, while a cursory statistical analysis of the findings is provided in Appendix 4.

In line with the study's underlying objective of fostering cooperation between Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches, all "strong" and "weak" assertions under each theme were collected and synthesised irrespective of their specific sample groups. Patterns subsequently emerged, and summaries of the collective claims of both the "strong" and "weak" assertions were evaluated with a view to identifying apparent hermeneutical principles or issues associated with them and, on that basis, formulating hermeneutic hints for a plausible interpretation of such themes.

6.2.4.4 Development of a hermeneutic key

The hermeneutic hints formulated from the analysis of theme-codes were in turn synthesised to provide a basis for developing a hermeneutic key that could demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of the Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical understandings of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. The developed hermeneutic key was however intended to be used as a soft guideline for evaluating the plausibility or implausibility of sampled Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the passages, rather than being used as a strict or general criterion for inclusion/exclusion or correctness/incorrectness of interpretations, or for any other thorough-going evaluative function. Furthermore, it was not conceived as a final or universal tool for

¹⁴³ The conclusions of chapter five were used in this manner not because they were regarded as final, but because, to the best of the researcher's ability, the exegeses reflect the *sensus literalis* of the existential conditions and associated miracle imperatives, drawing on and integrating insights from a wide range of scholarly commentaries and lexicons.

evaluating all Reformed or Pentecostal interpretations of NT miracle material, but was limited to the samples analysed in this study.

6.3 Groundedness¹⁴⁴ of quotations and theme-codes

The study recorded a total of 397 quotations and analysed 434 theme-codes generated from them. These were formulated from the following themes: *kingdom, authority, disciple, mission, preach, dead, demon, exorcism, heal, leprosy, miracle*, and “*we*”. The remaining themes on the list in section 6.2.3.3 above either did not appear in the units of analysis or appeared in forms considered not useful for the study. They included: *cleanse, raise, and sick*.

Tables 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 in Appendix 4 provide details of the groundedness of quotations and theme-codes.

6.4 Hierarchies¹⁴⁵ of theme-codes within samples

Based on the criterion set out in section 6.2.4.3 above, individual theme-codes were examined and classified into two broad categories: “strong” and “weak”. These categories constituted the top level of the hierarchy, under which the 434 theme-codes were arranged according to whether they were adjudged “strong” or “weak”.

The table below shows the distribution of the “strong” and “weak” theme-codes:

144 Groundedness of quotations refers to the number of quotations admitted for investigation from a unit of analysis, a sample, or the entire study. The groundedness of theme-codes refers to the number of codes generated per quotation, theme, unit of analysis, sample, or the entire project (ATLAS.ti, 2025:88). In this kind of research, codes usually outnumber quotations because some quotations receive multiple codes, as is the case in the present study.

145 A hierarchy is a structure whereby lower-order codes are placed under-higher order codes based on specified criteria (ATLAS.ti, 2025:216).

Theme	Sample	Unit of analysis	Evaluation of nth theme-code (Hierarchical structure)	
			“Strong”	“Weak”
Kingdom	RMat	01	RMat01-kingdom-01	
		02	RMat02-kingdom-01, -02, -03, 04	
		03		RMat03-kingdom-01, -03, -04
		05	RMat05-kingdom-01, -02, -03	
		06	RMat06-kingdom-01, -02, -03	
		07	RMat07-kingdom-01, -02, -03	
		08	RMat08-kingdom-01, -02, -03, -04	
		10	RMat10-kingdom-01	
	PMat	01	PMat01-kingdom-01, -02, -03	
		03	PMat03-kingdom-01, -02	
		07	PMat07-kingdom-01	
		08	PMat08-kingdom-01	
		09	PMat09-kingdom-01, -02, -03, -04	
		10	PMat10-kingdom-02, -04, -05, -06, -07, -08, -09, -10, -14, -15, -16	PMat10-kingdom-01, -11, -13, -17, -18
	RMrk	01	RMrk01-kingdom-01, -02	
		03	RMrk03-kingdom-01	
		04	RMrk04-kingdom-02	RMrk04-kingdom-01
		07	RMrk07-kingdom-01, -02	
		09	RMrk09-kingdom-01	
		10	RMrk10-kingdom-01	
	PMrk	07	PMrk07-kingdom-01	
	RLuk	01	RLuk01-kingdom-01	
		04	RLuk04-kingdom-01, -04	
		05	RLuk05-kingdom-01, -02, -03	
		08	RLuk08-kingdom-01	
		10	RLuk10-kingdom-01	
	Pluk	03	PLuk03-kingdom-01	
		07	PLuk07-kingdom-01, -02	
Authority	RMat	01		RMat01-authority-01, -02
		02	RMat02-authority-01	RMat02-authority-04
		03		RMat03-authority-01
		04	RMat04-authority-01	
		05	RMat05-authority-01, -02	RMat05-authority-03
		06		RMat06-authority-01
		07		RMat07-authority-01, -02
		08		RMat08-authority-01
		10		RMat10-authority-01, -02, -03, -04, -05, -06
	PMat	01	PMat01-authority-01, -03	PMat01-authority-02, -04
		03	PMat03-authority-01, -02, -03, -04	
		04	PMat04-authority-01, -02, -03, -04, -05, -06, -07, -08, -09	
		05	PMat05-authority-01, -02, -03, -04, -05, -06, -07, -08	
		08	PMat08-authority-01, -02, -03, -04	
		09	PMat09-authority-01, -02, -03	
		10		PMat10-authority-01, -02, -03
	RMrk	01	RMrk01-authority-01	RMrk01-authority-04
		02	RMrk02-authority-01, -02, -03, -04	
		03	RMrk03-authority-05	02, 03
		04		RMrk04-authority-01
		06	RMrk06-authority-01	
	PMrk	01	PMrk01-authority-01, -03, -06, -07	PMrk01-authority-05
		06	PMrk06-authority-01, -02, -03	
		10	PMrk10-authority-01	
	RLuk	01	RLuk01-authority-01	
		04	RLuk04-authority-01	
	PLuk	07	PLuk07-authority-01	
		10	PLuk10-authority-01	
Disciple	RMat	01	RMat01-disciple-01	

		02		RMat02-disciple-01
		03		RMat03-disciple-01, -02, -03
		05	RMat05-disciple-01, -02	
		06	RMat06-disciple-01, 02, -03	
		07		RMat07-disciple-01, -02
		08	RMat08-disciple-01	
		09	RMat09-disciple-01	
		10	RMat10-disciple-01, -02, -04, -06, -07	RMat10-disciple-03, -05
	PMat	01	PMat01-disciple-01, -02, -03	PMat01-disciple-04
		02	PMat02-disciple-01	
		05	PMat05-disciple-01	
		06		PMat06-disciple-01
		08	PMat08-disciple-01, -02	
		09	PMat09-disciple-01	PMat01-disciple-02, -03, -04
		10	PMat10-disciple-01	
	RMrk	09		RMrk09-disciple-01
	PMrk	01	PMrk01-disciple-02	PMrk01-disciple-01
		04	PMrk04-disciple-01	
		06	PMrk06-disciple-01	
		07	PMrk07-disciple-01, -02, -3, -04	PMrk07-disciple-05, -06, -07
	RLuk	05	RLuk05-disciple-01	
		08	RLuk08-disciple-01	
	PLuk	01	PLuk01-disciple-01	
		03		PLuk03-disciple-02
		04	PLuk04-disciple-01	
		05	PLuk05-disciple-01, -02, -03, -04, -05, -06	
		06	PLuk06-disciple-01	
		08		PLuk08-disciple-01
Mission	RMat	01	RMat01-mission-01, -02	
		02	RMat02-mission-01, -02	
		06	RMat06-mission-01	
		09	RMat09-mission-01, -03, -04	RMat09-mission-05
	PMat	01	PMat01-mission-01	
		04	PMat04-mission-01	
		08	PMat08-mission-01	
	RMrk	10	RMrk10-mission-01	
	RLuk	04	RLuk04-mission-01, -02	
	PLuk	01		PLuk01-mission-01
		03	PLuk03-mission-01, -02	
		05	PLuk05-mission-0101	
Preach	RMat	02	RMat02-preach-01, -02	
		05	RMat05-preach-01	
		06	RMat06-preach-01	
		07	RMat07-preach-01, -02	
		08	RMat08-preach-01, -02	
		10	RMat10-preach-01	
	PMat	03	PMat03-preach-01, -02	
		08	PMat08-preach-01	
		10	PMat10-preach-01	
	RMrk	01	RMrk01-preach-01	RMrk01-preach-02
		02	RMrk02-preach-01	
		03	RMrk03-preach-01	
		04	RMrk04-preach-02	RMrk04-preach-03
		05	RMrk05-preach-01	
		07	RMrk07-preach-01, -02	
		09	RMrk09-preach-01, -02	
		10	RMrk10-preach-01	
	PMrk	01	PMrk01-preach-01, -02, -03	
		07	PMrk07-preach-02	PMrk07-preach-01
	RLuk	05	RLuk05-preach-01	
		08	RLuk08-preach-01	

	PLuk	03	PLuk03-preach-01, -02	
		05	PLuk05-preach-01	
		09	PLuk09-preach-01	
Heal	RMat	08		RMat08-heal-01
	PMat	03	PMat03-heal-01	
		08	PMat08-heal-01, -02, -03, -04, -05	
		09	PMat09-heal-01, -02, -03, -04, -05, -06	
	PMrk	01	PMrk01-heal-01	
	RLuk	08	RLuk08-heal-01	
Dead	PLuk	03	PLuk03-heal-01	
		02		RMat02-dead-01
		03	RMat03-dead-01	
	PMat	10		RMat10-dead-01, -02
Leprosy	PMat	08		PMat08-dead-01
		08		PMat08-leprosy-01
Demon	RMat	07	RMat07-demon-01	
		08		RMat08-demon-01, -02
	PMat	08	PMat08-demon-01	
	RMrk	01	RMrk01-demon-01	
	PMrk	01	PMrk08-demon-01	
	RLuk	01		RLuk01-demon-01, -02, -03
		04		RLuk04-demon-01
Exorcism	RMrk	05	RLuk05-demon-01	
		03	RMrk03-exorcism-01	
		04	RMrk04-exorcism-02	RMrk04-exorcism-01
		05	RMrk05-exorcism-01	
Miracle	RMat	07	RMrk07-exorcism-01	
		01		
		02		
		03	RMat03-miracle-01	
		05	RMat05-miracle-01	RMat05-miracle-02
		07	RMat07-miracle-02	RMat07-miracle-01
		08	RMat08-miracle-01	
		09	RMat09-miracle-01, -03	RMat09-miracle-02
		10		RMat10-miracle-01, -02, -03, -04, -05, -06
	PMat	01	PMat01-miracle-01	
		03	PMat03-miracle-01, -02, -04, -05, -06, -08	
		04	PMat04-miracle-01	
		06	PMat06-miracle-01	
		07	PMat07-miracle-01	
		08	PMat08-miracle-01, -02	PMat08-miracle-03
		09	PMat09-miracle-01, -02, -03, -04	
		10	PMat10-miracle-01	
	RMrk	01		RMrk01-miracle-02
		10		RMrk10-miracle-01, -04
	PMrk	01	PMrk01-miracle-01, -02	
		04	PMrk04-miracle-01	
		07		PMrk07-miracle-01
		08	PMrk08-miracle-01	
	PLuk	05	PMrk05-miracle-01, -03, -04	
		07	PMrk07-miracle-01, -02, -05	03
"We"	RMat	02	RMat02-we-01, -03	RMat02-we-02
		05	RMat05-we-01, -02, -03	
		06	RMat06-we-01	
		09	RMat09-we-01, -02, -03	
		10	RMat10-we-01, -02, -03	
	PMat	01	PMat01-we-01, -02, -03, -04, -06, -07	

		03	PMat03-we-01, -05	
		04	PMat04-we-01	
		06	PMat06-we-01	
		09	PMat09-we-01, -02, -03, -04, -05, -06, -07, -08, -09, -10, -11	
	RMrk	01	RMrk01-we-01	RMrk01-we-02
		02	RMrk02-we-02, -03	RMrk02-we-01
		03	RMrk03-we-01	
		04	RMrk04-we-01, -02, -03, -04	
		05	RMrk05-we-01	
		06	RMrk06-we-01	
		07	RMrk07-we-01, -02	
		10	RMrk10-we-01, -02, -03	RMrk10-we-04
	PMrk	01	PMrk01-we-01, -02, -03, -04, -06, -07, -08, -09	
	RLuk	01	RLuk01-we-02	RLuk01-we-01
		04	RLuk04-we-01, -02	
		05	RLuk05-we-01	
		08	RLuk08-we-01	
		09	RLuk09-we-01, 02, 03, -04	
		10	RLuk10-we-01	
	PLuk	03	PLuk03-01, -02, -03	
		05	PLuk05-we-01, -02, -03	
		07	PLuk07-we-01, -02, -03	

Table 6.4: Hierarchies of theme-codes within samples

6.5 Summary/synthesis of claims in samples

6.5.1 Scope

This section analyses the respective claims of the ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ theme-codes delineated above. The process involves summarising and synthesising similar assertions; evaluating them for “strength” or “weakness”; drawing inferences regarding the positive or negative hermeneutical issues apparently involved; formulating hermeneutic hints for each theme on the basis of the hermeneutical issues identified; and, ultimately, developing a hermeneutic key that can demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of each theme’s interpretations among Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters.

The analysis proceeds according to the following strategy:

- i. Related themes (noun–noun or noun–verb relationships) are taken successively wherever necessary and/or possible; e.g., “demon” and “exorcism”. This is intended to maintain literary connectivity between such themes.
- ii. Observation and evaluation are carried out on cognate theme-codes. Observation involves summarising and synthesising similar assertions while highlighting select individual emphases wherever necessary. Evaluation states

the acceptability or otherwise of the assertions and identifies their specific “strength(s)” or “weakness(s)”.

- iii. Inference depends on the evaluation, and entails collectively situating the assertions within a hermeneutical perspective; e.g., identifying them as genre-sensitive, biblically or traditionally informed, arising from a hermeneutic of faith, tending toward eisegesis, and so forth.
- iv. The inferences in turn guide the formulation of hints toward a hermeneutic key for the plausible interpretation of each theme.

6.5.2 Analysis of theme-codes

6.5.2.1 Theme: kingdom

Texts: “the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 10:7), “the kingdom of God” (Lk. 10:9)

Qualitative interpretation of data

The tables below quote or paraphrase the assertions constituting the “strong” and “weak” theme-codes under “kingdom”¹⁴⁶:

Strong

RMat01-kingdom-01

“They were told specifically what to Preach: the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.

RMat02-kingdom-01

“So the second aspect of this Commission is a Simple Message. The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.”

RMat02-kingdom-02

“After Jesus tells them where to go He tells them what to Say. He says go preach saying The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. So the second aspect of this Commission is a Simple Message. The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand. ... The Jews would for the most part have understood exactly what they meant however, so there may not have been much need for them to explain.”

RMat02-kingdom-03

“The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand means ... that the reign or the rule ... of Heaven which is God has come near. So then it means that God’s rule has come close. Or is close to you. This would mean to the Jews that the Messiah has come. This would also lead them to repent and believe or reject and turn way.”

RMat02-kingdom-04

“Folks we need to go out armed with this simple message. A simple message that The Messiah has come.”

RMat05-kingdom-01

“So also, the apostles are an extension of Jesus. They will be extending the kingdom of heaven to people by proclaiming it declaring it to them and also by teaching.”

RMat05-kingdom-02

“Looking forward to the end of the world and the total recreation of the heavens and the earth and resurrection and restoring of our body or to our soul and all those, are the whole extent of the kingdom of heaven and all it means to you and me.”

RMat05-kingdom-03

“Just as others have brought us into the kingdom of heaven so it’s our work to extend that kingdom of heaven to others.”

RMat06-kingdom-01

“The kingdom of God came first to the chosen people of God. However, thank God that He expanded His family to include more people, even among the Gentiles! Thank God that He also chose us! The Gospel went first to the people of Israel and the people of Israel would take it to the world.”

146 Direct quotations are enclosed in quotation marks, whereas paraphrases are not.

RMat06-kingdom-02

Matthew 10:7: "Jesus is telling the disciples to continue to proclaim that the kingdom of God has come and to continue to do the work that He has done, including healing, cleansing, raising the dead, and casting out demons. This message that the kingdom has come near is evidenced by the fact that the King is in their midst! Jesus is Messiah, He is King, He is God!"

RMat06-kingdom-03

"The message of the kingdom of God is the most important message there is to hear! That why Jesus sent out His apostles."

RMat07-kingdom-01

"The kingdom of heaven in Matthew is the same as the kingdom of God in mark and Luke."

RMat07-kingdom-02

"Not a certain location; it's the idea of the reign of God and men's hearts."

RMat07-kingdom-03

"In Matthew 6:12 where Jesus prays thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, he's praying for the kingdom of God to become the kingdom of God present now in Jesus Christ; it is not consummated, it will be one day."

RMat08-kingdom-01

"And just what is the gospel, anyway? It is the good and wondrous message that God's kingdom has come down to you."

RMat08-kingdom-02

"But something's very different about this man from all the other rabbis and priests and Pharisees and Sadducees you've ever heard. He not only tells you about God, he tells you that he is God! He says the kingdom of heaven has now come down to you."

RMat08-kingdom-03

"The Gospel of the kingdom is that God has come to our town in Jesus Christ. Right here today, Christ is making his appearance. We have gathered in this house of worship this morning, like those people in ancient times. They gathered to read from God's Word, and they were surprised to see God Himself—the Word made flesh—come into their midst."

RMat08-kingdom-04

"This is the Gospel of the kingdom of God—Christ having come to us and given us His righteousness."

RMat10-kingdom-01

The apostles' preaching that the kingdom of God is at hand means that "the kingdom has come, that your king has arrived, the Messiah is here, and bow before him for he will come again to judge the wicked and the righteous, separate the sheep and goats"

PMat01-kingdom-01

The message that the kingdom of heaven was near meant "that the long-awaited kingdom, being ushered in by the Messiah was coming. The Messiah would soon bring redemption to his people, and bring a spiritual kingdom that would someday find fulfilment in both heaven and earth."

PMat01-kingdom-02

"... What is the message God has given us to speak? The same one: "The kingdom of heaven is near."

PMat01-kingdom-03

"The kingdom of heaven is near. In fact, it's here and available to all who will take it. You want to be part of the kingdom of God? Then come to the one who brought it: Jesus. Put your faith in him, and let him be the boss, living for him instead of yourself. Do that, and you're part of the kingdom."

PMat03-kingdom-01

"The Gospel of the Kingdom is a total package of liberation and freedom from the hold and bondage of Sin, Sickness and Satan, so as we preach for the people to receive Salvation from sin, they must also be receiving Healing from all manner of Sicknesses, and Deliverance from all manner of Satanic Afflictions and Oppressions."

PMat03-kingdom-02

"Jesus sent forth His disciples to go out and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. His heart desire and the purpose for which He came was to reach everyone with the Gospel of Peace, so that they can be reconciled with God."

PMat07-kingdom-01

"The disciples were to declare that God's Kingdom was near. While the Jews were anticipating that their Messiah would come and set up an earthly kingdom that would overthrow their Roman captors, Jesus was referring to His spiritual Kingdom that would take root in the hearts of men."

PMat08-kingdom-01

Lives on earth change and the earth becomes a much better place whenever the kingdom of heaven is here.

PMat09-kingdom-01

"What is the message? The message is the kingdom of God has come near. And then who is the person to transmit that message? We are."

PMat09-kingdom-02

"It's not just a message that you hear with your ear; this is a message you see with your eyes. It is accompanied with miracles, signs and wonders. Matthew 10:8 specifies the evidence: heal the sick raise the dead cleanse those of leprosy drive out the demons."

PMat09-kingdom-03

"Perhaps the world does not believe today because they need more evidence the evidence is based on the commission that Jesus gives to us and I believe we have stopped proclaiming God's kingdom and we have started building our own kingdoms."

PMat09-kingdom-04

"Healing is a foretaste that the kingdom of heaven is near. It confirms the rule of the reign of Jesus Christ. It means that there's hope for those who are troubled, for those who are sick, for those who are heavily burdened in our world. And that's why Jesus taught his disciples to pray in Matthew 6:10, your kingdom come."

PMat10-kingdom-02

"And in this morning's passage we are shown that this kingdom is characterized by power.... The evangelist actually says here about the Lord Jesus that he called them and gave them strength."

PMat10-kingdom-04

"And thus the kingdom is manifested through fruition and through gifts, gifts of power, gifts of inspiration, gifts of revelation, of discovery."

PMat10-kingdom-05

"But by His coming, the Lord Jesus in a sense establishes a new kingdom, and He declares Himself to be the King of this new kingdom."

PMat10-kingdom-06

"He says Yes, for this I was born—to be king.... He is thus the beginning of this new kingdom, a kingdom called here, as verse 7 says, And on the way preach and say, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. It is also called the Kingdom of God, especially in the Gospel of Luke, and it is also called the Kingdom of the Son of His love."

PMat10-kingdom-07

"This kingdom of heaven or the Kingdom of God, is first preached in the New Testament by John the Baptist and then the beginning of the preaching of the Lord Jesus is in this direction."

PMat10-kingdom-08

"The kingdom of heaven is near is the same message, then taken over by the disciples."

PMat10-kingdom-09

"And the Apostle Paul also shows us the nature of this kingdom, saying that it is not food, it is not drink. Romans 14:17. But righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Thus we, as Christians, ... called to salvation, called to discipleship, are in this relationship with the Kingdom of God."

PMat10-kingdom-10

"Here it says to preach the kingdom of heaven, to preach, to announce that it is almost here"

PMat10-kingdom-14

The manifestation of the Kingdom of God is both now and in the future.

PMat10-kingdom-15

"Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ said Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. They are connected together. There can be no kingdom without righteousness, because the Kingdom is righteousness and all other things will be given to you on top of that."

PMat10-kingdom-16

"If I care if the kingdom is a priority, I can only proclaim it. Then it says, Go and preach or proclaim the kingdom."

Weak

RMat03-kingdom-01

"The legitimate offer of the kingdom of Israel was being made by the rightful King Jesus, had Israel accepted her King, she would have had her long-awaited kingdom."

RMat03-kingdom-03

"If the Jews had received Jesus as their King, He would have set up His Kingdom at that time; and He would still have saved the gentiles."

RMat03-kingdom-04

"The church was never called to build the Kingdom. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself will establish the Kingdom when He returns to the earth. The church is a called-out body from the world to manifest Christ and to preach His gospel throughout the world. Kingdom business is none of our business."

PMat10-kingdom-01

"We understand that it is a geographic domain. Obviously, this is the meaning that belongs to someone, who is the leader of that domain, that kingdom and is called a king, he is called an emperor. ... spiritually, the Lord Jesus Christ is the King, is the owner, and basileia is the domain in which He exercises ... His authority ..."

PMat10-kingdom-11

As Christian believers and disciples of Jesus, we find ourselves in a somewhat mixed field, because in this world we are in the territory of the enemy; yet the kingdom penetrates or invades enemy territory even today. This results in conflicts, losses, sufferings, etc.

PMat10-kingdom-13

"The Lord Jesus says he finds nothing in Me. He has nothing in me that belongs to Him. All that is in Me belongs to the Kingdom of God. It is in God's domain, in the divine domain. In the sacred domain we could say. He has nothing."

PMat10-kingdom-17

"The kingdom of God ... is in conflict with the kingdom of this age. Peace cannot be made." The truce that is presently witnessed is because those in the Kingdom of Heaven have compromised.

PMat10-kingdom-18

"... The domain of what is called the Kingdom of Heaven."

Table 6.6(2): Theme-codes of "kingdom" in Matthew 10:1-8

Strong

RMrk01-kingdom-01

"When Jesus calls you, He is calling you to a purpose that involves His kingdom and that has eternal ramifications. He is calling you into a spiritual war that you cannot fight in your own strength and win. You must fight in His power, His strength, and in His way. Victory is guaranteed if you do it His way."

RMrk01-kingdom-02

"God has called you, equipped you, and is sending you to accomplish important missions for Him and His kingdom."

RMrk03-kingdom-01

"The message of the disciples: 'The King of God's kingdom had come and men were sinners who needed to repent, especially in the light of his presence. His signs confirmed that he was the Holy One of God.'"

RMrk04-kingdom-02

"Simply put, we are called to be able to explain the Kingdom perspective on life in its simplest and most basic terms. The Kingdom perspective says, 'Jesus is Lord'.... To proclaim Christ as Lord means that he rules over your life and that you see this world and your life from that perspective."

RMrk07-kingdom-01

"... Jesus came to proclaim the good news of His arriving kingdom, a holy and mighty nation; therefore, He establishes His own patriarchs through whom the mustard seed would become a tree."

RMrk07-kingdom-02

"While before the crowds, Jesus' ministry was distributed widely but shallowly, so He knew that the kingdom would be better served by deeply focusing upon a select few."

RMrk09-kingdom-01

"The Twelve are appointed, first, to 'be with him' (3:14a), that is to watch him and learn from him, and second, to extend his ministry to all of Israel by preaching the kingdom of God and casting out demons (3:14b-15)."

RMrk10-kingdom-01

"What was the message they were to preach? It was the same message that Jesus Himself had been preaching. It was the 'Gospel of the Kingdom.'"

PMrk07-kingdom-01

As "representative leaders of the 'new' people of God and 'insiders to whom the mystery of the Kingdom is communicated' ... the 12 disciples are the ones Jesus wanted to hand over His mission on earth to."

RLuk01-kingdom-01

The seventy folks were sent out to announce the good news of the kingdom.

RLuk04-kingdom-01

"... The disciples are instructed to convey the message that 'the kingdom of God has come near to you.' The message then and now, is of God's kingdom, which is 'His right to rule our lives.' Jesus the King is coming! God's kingdom is very near. The kingdom of God is to be understood to be as near as the daybreak is looming at the close of the night."

RLuk04-kingdom-02

"Those who accept Christ not only become a part of the kingdom of God but the kingdom of God becomes part of them. They not only enter the Kingdom of God but the Kingdom of God enters them."

RLuk05-kingdom-01

"These seventy though, were sent out to preach on His behalf. That indicates that the twelve were not the only ones with a responsibility to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom in Jesus Christ."

RLuk05-kingdom-02

"Wherever they were accepted, they were to minister to the people there with words and deeds. They were to 'heal the sick' and proclaim the coming of God's kingdom in Jesus Christ."

RLuk05-kingdom-03

"Those who refuse the Gospel are shutting themselves out of God's kingdom and ultimately out of heaven."

RLuk08-kingdom-01

"Jesus told his followers that they were to bring peace to the households, cast out demons and heal the sick, and proclaim that the kingdom of God had come near. These instructions of Jesus may need to be expressed in a more modern manner."

RLuk10-kingdom-01

"Notice in our gospel lesson, that Jesus sends out 70 people to heal, to preach by saying, 'the kingdom of God has come near to you'. Jesus sent out these 70 because he knew that everyone in the kingdom of God has the responsibility to witness to him."

PLuk03-kingdom-01

"... They were supposed to announce that the kingdom of God was coming; in fact, Jesus was just down the road and he was coming to that city".

PLuk07-kingdom-01

"In the present the harvest of the kingdom of God is a partnership with the generations that went before us and with a generation that comes after us."

PLuk07-kingdom-02

"So what is the gospel? It is that the kingdom of God has come near, Jesus has come to you."

Weak

RMrk04-kingdom-01

The Fall into sin caused “a Great Divorce between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. These two domains antagonize each other, and education is at the center of the struggle.

Table 6.6(3): Theme-codes of “kingdom” in Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9

Observations, evaluations, and inferences

Strong

1. **Observation:** RMat07-kingdom-01 explains that the “kingdom of heaven” is the same as the “kingdom of God”.

Evaluation: The veracity of this assertion is evident in the synonymous usage of both forms of the term in the NT, a point that also underlies the conclusion reached in section 5.2.3.8.

Inference: This assertion is grounded in biblical evidence.

2. **Observation:** PMat10-kingdom-02, PMat10-kingdom-09 and PMat10-kingdom-15 assert that the kingdom of God is characterised by power and righteousness.

Evaluation: This assertion is scripturally supported and therefore acceptable (cf. Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20).

Inference: The assertion is biblically grounded.

3. **Observation:** RMat01-kingdom-01, RMat02-kingdom-01, RMat02-kingdom-02, RMat02-kingdom-04, RMat08-kingdom-01, PMat01-kingdom-01, PMat01-kingdom-02, PMat09-kingdom-01, PMat10-kingdom-08, PMat10-kingdom-10, RMrk10-kingdom-01, RLuk01-kingdom-01, RLuk04-kingdom-01 and PLuk07-kingdom-02 assert that the nearness of the kingdom of God is the content of the disciples’ message. RMat02-kingdom-04 and PMat01-kingdom-01 elucidate this to mean the coming of the Messiah. PMat09-kingdom-01 emphasises that “we” (that is, present-day believers) are those to transmit the message of the kingdom, and by this statement extends the mission to all believers today.

Evaluation: These claims are plausible, as they align in part with the texts of Matthew 10:7 and Luke 10:9 and with the exposition of the kingdom motif in section 5.2.3.8, while also appropriately extending missionary responsibility to present-day believers (e.g., Matt. 28:18–20).

Inference: These assertions are directly grounded in the text of Matthew 10:8.

4. **Observation:** RMat05-kingdom-02, RMat07-kingdom-03, PMat01-kingdom-01 and PMat10-kingdom-14 view the kingdom of God as a two-dimensional reality: the “already” and the “not yet”.

Evaluation: This dualistic understanding of the kingdom of God is acceptable, as it accords with the exposition in section 5.2.3.8 regarding the nature of the kingdom, namely, that it is both already present in part and still awaited in its fullness.

Inference: The interpretation is biblically informed.

5. **Observation:** RMat02-kingdom-03, RMat07-kingdom-02, PMat01-kingdom-01, PMat07-kingdom-01, RLuk04-kingdom-01 view “kingdom” in spiritual terms as the rule (or reign) of God. In particular, PMat01-kingdom-01 and PMat07-kingdom-01 both explain that reference here is to “a spiritual kingdom”, and PMat07-kingdom-01 situates it “in the hearts of men”. PMat01-kingdom-01 also adds insight to the study in terms of emphasising redemption as a benefit of the dawning kingdom (cf. Matt. 1:21; Lk. 1:68).

Evaluation: These views concerning the nature of the kingdom are acceptable, as the claims align with the word-study conclusion that the kingdom of God denotes the rule of God as King (see section 5.2.3.8).

Inference: These interpretations reflect sensitivity to genre and context.

6. **Observation:** RMat06-kingdom-02, RMat08-kingdom-02, RMat08-kingdom-03, RMat08-kingdom-04, RMat10-kingdom-01, PMat01-kingdom-01, PMat01-kingdom-03, PMat10-kingdom-05, PMat10-kingdom-06, RMrk03-kingdom-01, RMrk07-kingdom-01, PLuk03-kingdom-01 and PLuk07-kingdom-02 assert that the presence and work of the Messiah-King is evidence of the kingdom of God. In other words, he is at the center of the kingdom. RMat08-kingdom-04 further underscores the righteousness granted to believers through Christ.

Evaluation: The study strongly affirms that Christ stands at the center of the dawning kingdom of God, as reflected in P1B(2) of section 5.3.6.4 and Q3B of section 5.4.6.2.3, where he is presented as the embodiment of the kingdom.

Inference: The assertion that the presence and work of the Messiah-King constitute evidence of the kingdom of God represents NT thought.

7. **Observation:** PMat09-kingdom-03, RMrk01-kingdom-01, RMrk01-kingdom-02, RMrk04-kingdom-02, RMrk07-kingdom-02, PMrk07-kingdom-01, RLuk05-kingdom-01 and RLuk10-kingdom-01 associate the calling of the disciples with kingdom purposes. RMrk04-kingdom-02 particularly emphasises that this calling equips believers to effectively communicate the lordship of Christ over human lives. The call is presented as open to all disciples of Christ (RLuk05-kingdom-01), since

“everyone in the kingdom of God has the responsibility to witness to him” (RLuk10-kingdom-01).

Evaluation: These claims are coherent with the explanations in sections 5.3.4.2 and 5.4.4.3 that the calling of the disciples as “fishers of men” serves the purpose of proclaiming the message of repentance, through which responsive hearers come under the kingdom-rule of Christ.

Inference: These assertions recognise and utilise the literary connection between the motifs of “discipleship” and “kingdom”. In other words, they interpret the kingdom within the context of discipleship (cf. Matt. 4:19; Mk. 1:17).

8. **Observation:** RMat05-kingdom-01, RMat05-kingdom-03, RMat06-kingdom-01, RMrk09-kingdom-01 and PLuk07-kingdom-01 view proclamation of the message of the kingdom by the disciples of Christ as an act that extends the kingdom to others. For RMrk09-kingdom-01, healing and exorcism form part of kingdom extension.

Evaluation: These assertions are reasonable in view of the essence of the mission entrusted to the disciples, namely, to extend the rule of Christ to their audiences through preaching and miraculous works (cf. Matt. 10:7//Lk. 10:9; Matt. 11:4–5//Lk. 7:22 [Isa. 35:5; 61:1–3]).

Inference: These interpretations are seemingly grounded in the texts of Matthew 10:7 and Luke 10:9.

9. **Observations:** RLuk05-kingdom-02, PMat03-kingdom-01, PMat09-kingdom-02 and RLuk08-kingdom-01 assert that the gospel of the kingdom includes miracles. For RLuk05-kingdom-02, the disciples are to minister to the people “with words and deeds” wherever they are accepted. PMat03-kingdom-01 anticipates “Healing from all manner of Sicknesses” and “Deliverance from all manner of Satanic Afflictions and Oppressions” in the course of preaching repentance. Citing Matthew 10:8, PMat09-kingdom-02 categorically states that the message of the kingdom is demonstrative.

Evaluation: These points are plausible, as they are supported by the manner in which Matthew 10:7-8, Mark 3:14-15, and Luke 10:9 integrate the imperatives of preaching and miraculous ministry.

Inference: These interpretations are apparently grounded in the texts of these passages.

10. **Observation:** For PMat08-kingdom-01, PMat09-kingdom-04 and PMat10-kingdom-04, manifestation of the kingdom is synonymous with positive change,

healing, and diverse miracles. For PMat08-kingdom-01, lives are changed and the earth itself becomes better. For PMat09-kingdom-04, healing “[is] a foretaste that the kingdom of heaven is near”, “confirms the rule or the reign of Jesus Christ”, and communicates hope to sick and troubled people. For PMat10-kingdom-04, manifestation of miraculous gifts is a sign of the kingdom.

Evaluation: These assertions are plausible, since the close relationship between miracles and the manifestation of the kingdom is explicitly established in Matthew 12:28 and Luke 11:20 (cf. Lk. 4:16ff.; see sections 5.4.4.2 and 5.4.4.4).

Inference: These assertions apparently derive from the text of Matthew 10:1ff., alongside similar passages elsewhere in the NT.

11. **Observation:** RMat06-kingdom-03, PMat10-kingdom-07 and PMat10-kingdom-16 assert that the message of the kingdom is of supreme importance. Accordingly, both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ commence their ministries with its proclamation (PMat10-kingdom-07), and Jesus commissions his disciples to preach it (RMat06-kingdom-03).

Evaluation: The priority accorded here to the message of the kingdom is plausible; both the sense of the kingdom’s imminence and the prominence of its proclamation are unmistakable in GMatthew (see sections 5.4.4.2 and 5.4.4.3).

Inference: The assertions apparently presuppose a holistic reading of GMatthew.

12. **Observation:** PMat03-kingdom-02, RLuk04-kingdom-04 and RLuk05-kingdom-03 present the gospel of the kingdom as the gospel of reconciliation. Consequently, those who reject it exclude themselves from the kingdom and, ultimately, from heaven (RLuk05-kingdom-03). Conversely, those who accept Christ (and the gospel) become part of the kingdom, just as the kingdom becomes part of them.

Evaluation: These assertions are plausible; they are apparently derived from the texts of Matthew 10:12-15 and Luke 10:5-6, where Jesus instructs his disciples on how to respond to differing reactions to their mission.

Inference: The assertions are text-based.

Weak:

13. **Observation:** RMat03-kingdom-01, RMat03-kingdom-03, PMat10-kingdom-01, PMat10-kingdom-11, PMat10-kingdom-13, PMat10-kingdom-18 and RMrk04-kingdom-01 cast the kingdom of God in spatial terms. The suggestion that the nation of Israel, because of her unbelief, missed the opportunity to realise “her long-

awaited kingdom” (RMat03-kingdom-01), or for Jesus to have “set up His Kingdom at that time”, reflects this spatial portrayal. The same tendency is evident in the use of terms such as “domain” (PMat10-kingdom-01, PMat10-kingdom-13, PMat10-kingdom-18, and RMrk04-kingdom-01) and “territory” (PMat10-kingdom-11).

Evaluation: It should rather be borne in mind that the kingdom in question is spiritual in nature and is constituted by the fact of divine rule, not a physical, temporal or spatial territory (see sections 5.2.3.8 and 5.4.6.2.3 [Q3B]).

Inference: The assertions above do not adequately reflect the insights obtainable from word-study and literary context.

14. **Observation:** Observation: RMat03-kingdom-04 appears convincing until one notices that its assertion concerning the kingdom accommodates only the “not yet” dimension while leaving no room for the “already”. Hence, “The Lord Jesus Christ Himself will establish the Kingdom when He returns to the earth” affirms the “not yet”, whereas “[k]ingdom business is none of our business” effectively denies the “already”.

Evaluation: The reasoning here is questionable, since the NT concept of the kingdom of God encompasses both the “already” and the “not yet” dimensions (see section 5.4.4.2).

Inference: The assertion here apparently lacks the balance of perspective warranted by NT evidence and may also reflect the absence of a hermeneutic of faith.

15. **Observation:** PMat10-kingdom-17 alleges the existence of a truce between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan at the present time due to a certain compromise among believers, even though it had earlier acknowledged an irreconcilable conflict between the two.

Evaluation: This claim of a truce is indeed unusual and also internally inconsistent, given the prior assertion that the kingdom of God “is in conflict with the kingdom of this age”. There appears to be no compelling basis for positing such a truce (cf. Matt. 11:12; Eph. 6:10ff.; Isa. 14:12–15; Ezek. 28:11–17; see also section 5.3.4.4).

Inference: The interpretation advanced here appears to be eisegetical.

Hints at a hermeneutic key for interpreting ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν/ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ

1. On the basis of textual evidence, the expressions “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 10:7; Lk. 10:9) should be understood as synonymous.
2. The dawning of the kingdom of God constitutes the central content of the anticipated proclamation in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.
3. Interpretation of the “kingdom of God” must account for its dual aspect, so that at each point it is clear whether the “already” or the “not yet” dimension is in view.
4. It should likewise be maintained that the kingdom is spiritual in nature, referring to God’s rule exercised through Christ, rather than to a political, territorial, or temporal sphere of influence.
5. The disciples’ preaching mediates entry into the kingdom for others, and miracles are integral to the gospel of the kingdom of God.

6.5.2.2 Theme: authority

Texts: “he gave them authority” (Matt. 10:1), “to have authority” (Mk. 3:15), “Behold, I have given you authority” (Lk. 10:17)

Strong

RMat02-authority-01

“Now this word power carries with it the idea of power in the sense we think of it but also Authority. He was in effect giving the very power and authority that He had to His disciples also. Look at what He allows them to do. The very same things that He has been doing up to this point.”

RMat04-authority-01

Jesus gave *the same* authority that he had to his disciples

RMat05-authority-01

The authority/power/ability Jesus gave to his disciples was the same as his own.

RMat05-authority-02

“Jesus shares his abilities with his apostles because they’re going to be an extension of his ministry”.

PMat01-authority-01

“Take the authority Jesus has given you”.

PMat01-authority-03

“If you are a follower of Christ, you have the authority of Christ”.

PMat03-authority-01

Jesus’ vision of the Gospel is one that carries power; hence he equipped those he commissioned with “power and authority over sicknesses and the powers of darkness”.

PMat03-authority-02

“Jesus called His disciples and commission them for the preaching of the Gospel. He empowered them for the great assignment because the Gospel is not expected to be preached in words only, but in the demonstration of the power of God for the blessings of mankind and to the glory of His name alone.”

PMat03-authority-03

Just the same way Jesus sent out his first disciples, equipped with power, so he sends out his disciples today to manifest his power alongside preaching the gospel for the blessing of the people.

PMat03-authority-04

“This power and the Holy Spirit Anointing [sic] must follow us if we are truly His disciples and are willing to obey His commands and be available for Him to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom. We must believe Him for His words, and ensure that we carry out this ministry of Healing, Deliverance and Restoration in every where [sic] and at every time we have the opportunity to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom.”

PMat04-authority-01

The authority that Jesus exhibited in his teaching and healings and over Satan, he delegated same to “all who believe in Him”.

PMat04-authority-02

"You too can exercise your power in serving the Lord, demonstrate your faith power to heal the sick, raise the dead and perform miracles. You can do it, the power is in you."

PMat04-authority-03

"Jesus our master has released to us the Power we need to serve Him in any capacity or wherever we might be. These Power are here enumerated and is for everyone "

PMat04-authority-04

"And when He had called unto His disciples, he gave them power... the word signifies both 'Power' and 'Authority' or 'Right'" (cf. Lk. 9:1).

PMat04-authority-05

"The appointments and titles we hold in the church means [sic] nothing, if we are not mission minded. Power given to us can only manifest if we carry on the mission mandate both of the master Jesus and that of the church."

PMat04-authority-06

"... The word power means 'authority', the right to use power."

PMat04-authority-07

"The entire Gospel of Mathew stresses the authority of Jesus Christ and that which He gave unto those who believe on Him, to function and display through service."

PMat04-authority-08

"His power is in you, renew your strength through the Holy Spirit of God and begin to function wherever you find yourself."

PMat04-authority-09

The obedience of Jesus' disciples to go for the mission and exercise the authority given them by Jesus led them to realising the power of God at work. The same will be true if today's believers believe and act on the impulse of Jesus' word.

PMat05-authority-01

"AUTHORITY IS GIVEN TO THOSE CALLED UNTO JESUS AND WHO OBEY HIM."

PMat05-authority-02

"ANY BORN-AGAIN BELIEVER HAS AUTHORITY GIVEN TO HIM FROM GOD, WHETHER HE/SHE KNOWS IT OR NOT."

PMat05-authority-03

"AUTHORITY IS GIVEN TO DISCIPLES ... NOTICE THAT HE GIVES AUTHORITY TO DISCIPLES, NOT APOSTLES."

PMat05-authority-04

"AUTHORITY IS GIVEN FROM GOD AND IS OVER: a. UNCLEAN SPIRITS (TO CAST THEM OUT) b. ALL MANNER OF SICKNESS AND DISEASE (TO HEAL)"

PMat05-authority-05

"HOW IS AUTHORITY RECEIVED? A. IN Matthew 10:1a IT SAY'S THAT JESUS CALLED (Summoned) HIS DISCIPLES UNTO HIMSELF. 1. WHAT IS SEEN HERE IS THAT AUTHORITY WAS GIVEN ON THE BASIS OF RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AS TEACHER/ DISCIPLE, OR WHAT WE COULD TERM MASTER/ SERVANT. 2. AUTHORITY IS DERIVED FROM RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD."

PMat05-authority-06

"Lester Summerall DEFINED FAITH AS SIMPLY KNOWING GOD. SO WE COULD SAY THAT TO RECEIVE AUTHORITY FROM GOD WE MUST KNOW GOD AND HAVE FAITH IN HIM."

PMat05-authority-07

"RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS HOW AUTHORITY IS RECEIVED AND IN NO OTHER WAY CAN IT BE RECEIVED."

PMat05-authority-08

"HOW IS AUTHORITY TO BE USED? ... VERSES 5-8. 1. GO TO THE LOST (Their specific direction was the house of Israel; Get God's specific direction...). 2. HEAL THE SICK 3. RAISE THE DEAD 4. CLEANSE THE LEPERS 5. CAST OUT DEMONS 6. FREELY YOU HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE"

PMat08-authority-01

The power that Jesus gives us is different from is different from what an individual can generate, and assures us that we can "rest and trust in his power and his ability".

PMat08-authority-02

"God gives us that authority to be able to take charge over the enemy".

PMat08-authority-03

We have authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out

PMat08-authority-04

God gives us the power to both exorcise demons and heal all kinds of sicknesses and diseases

PMat09-authority-01

All God's children have the authority to walk in the miraculous.

PMat09-authority-02

"The first thing he did was to give them the authority to heal as part of the ministry"

PMat09-authority-03

"Like a good leader, Jesus expects all of us to do what he does. But here's the problem: we're seeing less healings today because many of us have been waiting on Jesus to heal when he has already delegated the power and the authority to us to heal"

Weak**RMat01-authority-01**

"According to verse 1 of chapter 10, subsequent to His Call to Internship, Jesus then temporarily Apostolized or Deputized them; in that, 'He gave them power (temporarily) against unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease'".

RMat01-authority-02

"For when Jesus gave His 12 Interns Power against Unclean Spirits in verse 1, in that very act, He Exposed the Hidden Presence and Protestation of Satan."

RMat02-authority-04

"Remember in verse one we saw that Christ had given them His authority and power. This was the mark of an apostle. There had to be some kind of authority to show that they were from God."

RMat03-authority-01

"The power He gave to these 12 was their credentials as they went to the nation Israel. The prophets of the Old Testament had said that this would be the credentials of the Messiah. -- Having given them this power, they are no longer just disciples but apostles."

RMat05-authority-03

"... Like Jesus identifying himself and authenticating his identity by the miracles he did, so also the apostles are an extension of Jesus. They will be extending the kingdom of heaven to people by proclaiming it, declaring it to them, and also by teaching....as an extension of his ministry it's important that they are identified as apostles of the living God ..."

RMat06-authority-01

"In fact, we see in verse 1 these four keywords, '...he gave them authority...'. Jesus gave unique authority to these specific men to go out and do a specific work in order to advance the kingdom of God. What a miracle!"

RMat07-authority-01

Authority is here equated with "right", "legal authority" in John 1:12

RMat07-authority-02

The "right" or "legal authority" given to the disciples was so they could exercise it over and exorcise "foul spirits" and cure "all disease and ailments".

RMat08-authority-01

"We may have been set aside by our Savior and given His authority to drive out the demons of your sin and heal the illness of your spiritual death".

RMat10-authority-01

There is a difference between the authority that Jesus gives to those whom he has called to speak God's word and the authority he gave to the apostles.

RMat10-authority-02

By the authority Jesus gave them, the apostles spoke words that were very well the words of Jesus.

RMat10-authority-03

Power and authority are the same.

RMat10-authority-04

The authority given them is comparable to the one a king gives to his ambassadors, whereby their words are the words of the king.

RMat10-authority-05

The authority given to the disciples was special and for "this apostolic time", so that he signs that followed their words could authenticate them as coming from God.

RMat10-authority-06

By giving them power to accompany their preaching with signs, "he's validating their ministry".

PMat01-authority-02

The authority that believers have from Christ is "another authority", and is "Authority to take the message".

PMat01-authority-04

"Authority" and "the ability to fulfill that authority" are placed side-by-side as being different.

PMat10-authority-01

The authority given to the disciples is described as "strength".

PMat10-authority-02

Authentic disciples of Jesus receive "strength", "power" and "dynamism" to perform various miracles.

PMat10-authority-03

Authority in the text is a process that begins with authority over sin and then authority/power to perform "the signs of the Kingdom" described in the text.

Table 6.7(2): Theme-codes of "authority" in Matthew 10:1-8

Strong

RMrk01-authority-01

Today Jesus empowers believers to bless and minister to others, "and help see lives transformed by the power of His gospel".

RMrk02-authority-01

"We are appointed to receive power."

RMrk02-authority-02

"The word here is not dunamis, which is the supernatural power of God. The word here is exousia a delegated power or authority, to minister and to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons".

RMrk02-authority-03

Present believers have been called to receive the same power as the disciples of old.

RMrk02-authority-04

Power is available to those who are saved.

RMrk03-authority-05

By the given authority to cast out demons, "Christ declared war on the kingdom of darkness" and enabled his disciples to "overthrow the reign of the god of this world".

RMrk06-authority-01

The disciples were sent out "with the message and the authority of Jesus".

PMrk01-authority-01

Access to power and authority is tied to consistency in responding to Jesus' call each day, like the disciples went up the mountainside with him in response to his call.

PMrk01-authority-03

"Jesus gives them power to go out and help others have an exodus out of bondage; in the same way God commissioned Moses to go help the children of Israel gain freedom, Jesus commissions us, His disciples, to help others find freedom from demonic, worldly, and fleshly oppression."

PMrk01-authority-06

"Having power to move in signs, wonders, and miracles is helpful, needed, and is a major part of it, but it's a byproduct of a close walk with Jesus."

PMrk01-authority-07

One called by Jesus to the mountain is metaphorically "His hands and feet down in the valley ... [having] been given His power and His promises to share with others in need".

PMrk06-authority-01

"Intimacy with Jesus brings about spiritual power"

PMrk06-authority-02

Like Jesus delegated his disciples with authority, he still does the same today to believers to accomplish his mission.

PMrk06-authority-03

Spiritual power flows out of closeness to Jesus.

PMrk10-authority-01

Jesus delegates authority to his disciples and empowers them to join him to set captives free.

RLuk01-authority-01

"Their kind of joy was spiritual authority ... that comes from just taking the risk and doing God's will.... Even the things we are so afraid of yield, when we just take the risk and do what is right, do what Christ commands."

RLuk04-authority-01

"...Jesus in figurative language tells the seventy that they had authority over spiritual enemies; which He called, 'serpents and scorpions.'"

PLuk07-authority-01

"... As they exercised that delegated authority, their service was accompanied with a manifestation of power".

PLuk10-authority-01

"The authority in the name above all names was what these faithful followers called upon to solve the puzzles."

Weak

RMrk01-authority-04

"In order to authenticate their position as His apostles, Jesus gave them authority"

RMrk03-authority-02

The authority given to the 12 is tied to the idea of them being called and designated as "apostles" and constituted into "a definite unit".

RMrk03-authority-03

"... The Twelve were uniquely empowered to represent Christ.... here Jesus is establishing the formal authority for the church, that what was done and said might be transmitted and communicated to the whole world. That was too important a task to be left to some callow volunteers."

RMrk04-authority-01

"Jesus designated them apostles'. To be an 'apostle' as Jesus speaks of it here is to be a person who is 'sent out' with 'authority to represent Christ and his mission in the world'".

PMrk01-authority-05

The power that Jesus gave to his disciples to heal and exorcise demons in his name was not an end in itself; it was rather a means for drawing people to Jesus.

Table 6.7(3): Theme-codes of “authority” in Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, 17

Observations, evaluations, and inferences

Strong

1. **Observation:** RMat02-authority-01, PMat03-authority-01, PMat04-authority-04, PMat04-authority-06, RMrk02-authority-02 and RLuk04-authority-01 describe “authority” in close association with “power”. Jesus “equipped those he commissioned with ‘power and authority over sicknesses and the powers of darkness’” (PMat03-authority-01). RMrk02-authority-02 notes that the term used is not *dunamis* (the supernatural power of God) but *exousia*, understood as delegated authority to minister, heal sicknesses, and cast out demons. RLuk04-authority-01 interprets Jesus’ figurative reference in Luke 10:19 to authority over “serpents and scorpions” as authority over spiritual enemies.

Evaluation: These descriptions correspond with the usage of ἐξουσία in Matthew 10:1, Mark 3:15, and Luke 10:19 (cf. Matt. 10:8b; Lk. 10:9). On the basis of the conclusion in section 5.2.3.1, the granting of ἐξουσία entails the concomitant bestowal of δύνάμις, so that, in effect, ἐξουσία carries a dual sense of authorisation and empowerment.

Inference: The interpretations presented here presuppose a word-study of the term ἐξουσία as used in Matthew 10:1, Mark 3:15, and Luke 10:19.

2. **Observation:** RMat04-authority-01, RMat05-authority-01 and PMat04-authority-01 assert that the authority given to the disciples is the same authority possessed by Jesus himself.

Evaluation: This reading is reasonable, given that Jesus anticipates comparable miraculous works in his disciples’ mission to those he performs himself (Matt. 9:35–10:1) (see sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.6.2.1 [Q1A]).

Inference: These assertions appear to take account of the broader literary context of Matthew 10:1-8.

3. **Observation:** RMat05-authority-02, PMrk01-authority-07 and PMrk10-authority-01 explain Jesus’ rationale for sharing his authority with his disciples; namely, that they are to function as “an extension of his ministry” (RMat05-authority-02) and to join him in liberating captives (PMrk10-authority-01). They are metaphorically described as “His hands and feet down in the valley” (PMrk01-authority-07).

Evaluation: This line of reasoning is supported by the expectation that the disciples will perform works similar to those of Jesus, an expectation that is at several points realised in the Gospel narratives (cf. Mk. 6:13; Lk. 10:17).

Inference: These assertions appear to be guided by the syntactic and narrative flow of Matthew 9:35–10:8, Mark 3:13-19, and related texts.

4. **Observation:** PMat01-authority-01, PMat01-authority-03, PMat03-authority-03 and PMrk06-authority-02 assert that Christ's authority is available to contemporary believers. PMat01-authority-03 states categorically, "If you are a follower of Christ, you have the authority of Christ", while PMrk06-authority-02 maintains that, as Jesus delegated authority to his disciples, he continues to do so today for believers to enable them to accomplish his mission.

Evaluation: These claims reflect a continualist understanding of the motif of authority, insofar as they assume the ongoing applicability of Christ's delegated authority to present-day believers.

Inference: Broadly speaking, the submissions align with a continualist rather than a cessationist framework.

5. **Observation:** PMat03-authority-01, PMat03-authority-02 and RMrk06-authority-01 explicitly present Jesus' view of mission as a venture of both proclamation and demonstration of power, requiring corresponding empowerment of those sent. The gospel is described as carrying power, and the disciples are equipped with "power and authority over sicknesses and the powers of darkness" (PMat03-authority-01), enabling them to preach not only in word but also "in the demonstration of the power of God for the blessings of mankind and to the glory of His name alone" (PMat03-authority-02). Accordingly, the disciples are sent out "with the message and the authority of Jesus" (RMrk06-authority-01).

Evaluation: These assertions are plausible, as they correspond with the depiction of Jesus' ministry in GMatthew as both "the work of Christ Jesus through the word" and "the work of Christ Jesus through the deed" (see section 5.5.5.1). His earthly mission is consistently characterised by this word–deed unity (cf. Matt. 11:5; Mk. 1:22, 27; Lk. 24:19) and is similarly reflected in the apostolic era and beyond (1 Cor. 2:4; 1 Thes. 1:5).

Inference: The assertions are consistent with the broader witness of the NT canon; in effect, they are grounded in the analogy of faith.

6. **Observation**: PMat03-authority-04 and RLuk01-authority-01 condition the manifestation of authority for healing, deliverance, and restoration on faith, willingness, and obedience.

Evaluation: These assertions are acceptable, and the conditions they identify are germane to the narrative. For instance, on certain occasions Jesus rebuked his disciples for their lack of faith, which resulted in their inability to effect miraculous transformation in concrete situations (cf. Matt. 8:23-27; Matt. 17:14-20//Mk. 9:14-29//Lk. 9:37-56).

Inference: These interpretations implicitly reflect a hermeneutic shaped by faith.

7. **Observation**: PMat03-authority-05, PMat04-authority-02, PMat04-authority-03, PMat04-authority-08, RMrk01-authority-01, RMrk02-authority-01, RMrk02-authority-03, RMrk02-authority-04, PMrk01-authority-03 and PMrk01-authority-04 affirm the ongoing availability of authority for miracles. The repeated use of first- and second-person pronouns (“we”, “us”, “you”, “your”) suggests a direct application to contemporary believers. PMat04-authority-02, for example, encourages believers to exercise their God-given power to heal the sick, raise the dead, and perform miracles, asserting that this power resides within them. Similarly, RMrk01-authority-01 states that Jesus today empowers believers to “help see lives transformed by the power of His gospel”.

Evaluation: These claims are acceptable as contextual applications of the texts of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 to contemporary believers.

Inference: The interpretations apparently arise from a hermeneutic of faith-oriented appropriation of the biblical text.

8. **Observation**: PMat04-authority-05, PMat04-authority-07, PMat04-authority-09 and PMrk01-authority-01 link the manifestation of authority to mission-mindedness and service delivery. PMat04-authority-05 asserts that “Power given to us can only manifest if we carry on the mission mandate”. PMat04-authority-07 emphasises that believers function in and display authority “through service”. For PMrk01-authority-01, responding to Jesus’ call daily guarantees access to power and authority.

Evaluation: This line of reasoning is coherent, given that Jesus imparts authority to his disciples within a defined context of mission and service (cf. Matt. 9:37–10:1; Mk. 3:14-15; Lk. 10:1-3).

Inference: These assertions appear to have been derived from the literary context of the relevant texts.

9. **Observation:** RMrk03-authority-05 asserts that, through the authority given to drive out demons, “Christ declared war on the kingdom of darkness” and empowered his disciples to “overthrow the reign of the god of this world”.

Evaluation: This interpretation is plausible, being consistent with the conclusion in section 5.3.4.4. The Markan exorcism narratives function theologically to disclose the divinity of Christ and the supremacy of the authority of his kingdom over that of Satan. Accordingly, Jesus’ delegation of authority to his disciples for exorcism advances the same theological trajectory.

Inference: The interpretation is shaped primarily by a theological reading of the text.

10. **Observation:** PMrk01-authority-06, PMrk06-authority-01 and PMrk06-authority-03 assert that the ability to perform miracles flows from a close walk with Jesus.

Evaluation: These assertions are acceptable, as they apparently draw on the language of Mark 3:13-19, where μαθητής is employed in connection with Jesus’ intention that the disciples be with him (see sections 5.2.3.3 and 5.3.6.4 [P1B(1)]).

Inference: The assertions appear to depend on the literal sense and implication of the term μαθητής.

11. **Observation:** PLuk07-authority-01 asserts that the manifestation of power depends on the exercise of delegated authority. In other words, unless one exercises one’s delegated authority in faith, no change of circumstance can be accomplished; but once this authority is exercised, power is released to bring about the desired change.

Evaluation: This assertion is plausible on the basis that, having received authority prior to the mission (as implied in Luke 10:17), the Seventy apparently step out in faith, exercise that authority, and witness the expulsion of demons. A similar pattern is evident in the mission of the Twelve in Mark 6:12-13.

Inference: The interpretation appears to draw on the broader literary context surrounding the commissioning narratives.

12. **Observation:** PLuk10-authority-01 observes that the disciples’ success in the mission results from invoking the authority inherent in the name of Jesus.

Evaluation: This interpretation is plausible and accords with the report in Luke 10:17.

Inference: The assertion is text-based.

Weak

13. **Observation**: RMat01-authority-01 emphasises that the mission assignment and the accompanying authority for miracles were temporary in nature.

Evaluation: This interpretation is questionable, since there is no clear indication that Jesus subsequently revoked the commission or withdrew the authority granted to his disciples in Matthew 10:1-8 (or in Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9).

Inference: This appears to involve the reading of an unwarranted limitation into Matthew 10:1-8, possibly under the influence of a cessationist perspective.

14. **Observation**: RMat01-authority-02 asserts that the giving of authority to the disciples exposes “the Hidden Presence and Protestation of Satan”.

Evaluation: As shown in sections 5.3.4.4 and Q1B of section 5.4.6.2, the conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan is portrayed in the NT not as covert but as open and active. Consequently, the notion of a hidden satanic scheme being automatically exposed through delegated authority lacks textual foundation. The claim is therefore untenable.

Inference: The assertion finds no support in either the text or the literary context of Matthew 10:1-8.

15. **Observation**: RMat02-authority-04, RMat03-authority-01, RMat05-authority-03, RMat10-authority-05, RMrk01-authority-04, RMrk03-authority-02 and RMrk04-authority-01 assert that the delegated authority functions as a mark of apostleship. According to RMat03-authority-01, “Having given them this power, they are no longer just disciples but apostles”. Similarly, RMrk01-authority-04 states, “In order to authenticate their position as His apostles, Jesus gave them authority”. RMrk03-authority-02 further claims that “[t]he authority given to the 12 is tied to the idea of them being called and designated as ‘apostles’ and constituted into ‘a definite unit’”.

Evaluation: These assertions appear anachronistic and ultimately cessationist in orientation. In Matthew 10:2, the designation “apostles” primarily underscores the fact of being sent rather than a formal ecclesiastical office, while in Mark 3:14 there is no compelling manuscript evidence that the phrase καὶ ἵνα ἀποστέλλῃ αὐτοὺς κηρύσσειν (“and designated them apostles”) is original (see section 5.4.6.2.2).

Inference: These assertions appear to proceed from a cessationist hermeneutical framework.

16. **Observation**: RMat07-authority-01 and RMat07-authority-02 describe authority as a “right” or “legal authority”.

Evaluation: This interpretation is not persuasive. In Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, ἐξουσία does not primarily denote a legal right or juridical authority; rather, it refers to authorisation or warrant together with the power to act—in this context, to perform miracles. When this understanding is read alongside the use of ἔχω in the texts, which ordinarily conveys the possession of ability or capacity to act, any specifically legal nuance is considerably weakened (see sections 5.2.3.1 and 5.2.4.2).

Inference: The interpretation of “authority” here appears not to take sufficient account of the semantic and lexical contexts of the term.

17. **Observation:** RMat06-authority-01, RMat10-authority-01 and RMrk03-authority-03 describe the authority given to the disciples as unique. RMat06-authority-01 states that “Jesus gave unique authority to these specific men”, while RMrk03-authority-03 claims that “the Twelve were uniquely empowered to represent Christ.... here Jesus is establishing the formal authority for the church”.

Evaluation: These assertions are difficult to sustain for at least two reasons. First, if the authority were unique in an exclusive sense, Jesus would not have granted comparable authority to the Seventy in addition to the Twelve (cf. Matt. 10:1; Mk. 3:15; Lk. 9:1; 10:1, 19). Second, Jesus would not have defended the unnamed exorcist acting in his name whom the disciples attempted to restrain (cf. Lk. 9:49-50). As established in section 5.2.4.2, “authority” in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:19 is not exclusive to the disciples in the sense of a unique right of possession; rather, it denotes the possession of divinely granted capacity to act.

Inference: The assertions do not appear to take sufficient account of the broader literary context surrounding the motif of authority.

18. **Observation:** RMat08-authority-01 applies the delegated authority metaphorically, speaking of authority “to drive out the demons of your sin and heal the illness of your spiritual death”.

Evaluation: This application appears misdirected, or at least hesitant to engage the textually intended referents of authority, namely, real demons, physical illnesses, and even death itself (Matt. 10:1, 7; cf. Mk. 3:15; Lk. 10:9, 17, 19). In addition to overlooking the literary genre and narrative presentation of these phenomena, the interpretation reflects reluctance to anticipate miraculous realities.

Inference: The assertion appears both to disregard genre considerations and to lack a hermeneutic of faith.

19. **Observation**: RMat10-authority-02 and RMat10-authority-04 conclude that the delegated authority makes the words of the apostles equivalent to the very words of Jesus.

Evaluation: These conclusions appear overstated and are therefore unpersuasive. Even in Matthew 10:40, where Jesus states that those who receive the disciples receive him, the representative function accorded to the disciples does not necessarily amount to a literal identification of their words with those of Jesus himself. To argue otherwise risks introducing a validation framework that is foreign to the immediate context of Matthew 10:1–8.

Inference: The interpretation appears to involve an element of eisegesis.

20. **Observation**: RMat10-authority-03, PMat10-authority-01 and PMat10-authority-02 conflate the meanings of “authority”, “power”, “strength”, and “dynamism”, treating them as interchangeable concepts required for the performance of miracles.

Evaluation: These assertions are not entirely accurate. In the case of RMat10-authority-03, the granting of ἐξουσία (authority) may indeed imply the granting of δύναμις (power), but this does not mean that the two terms are semantically identical (see section 5.2.3.1; cf. section 2.2.4). It may nevertheless be conceded that some Bible translations, as well as portions of the data examined in this study, do not consistently preserve the distinction between the two concepts. With respect to PMat10-authority-01 and PMat10-authority-02, the proposed equivalents of “authority” appear instead to refer to δύναμις, against which the preceding argument sufficiently applies.

Inference: The interpretive difficulty here appears to arise from insufficient attention to word-study and lexical distinction.

21. **Observation**: RMat10-authority-06 claims that, by giving the disciples power to accompany their preaching with signs, “he’s validating their ministry”.

Evaluation: This assertion is unpersuasive, since the notion of ministry validation does not appear to be the immediate concern of the text. In Matthew 9:36–10:8, for example, the primary motivation is the pitiable existential condition of the crowds (9:36), which leads Jesus to call for labourers (9:37-38) and subsequently commission the Twelve to address the situation (10:1, 7-8). Nothing in the broader textual context explicitly suggests that the signs function primarily as validation of ministry.

Inference: The claim appears to be based on eisegetical reasoning.

22. **Observation**: PMat01-authority-02 compartmentalises “authority” into categories such as “Authority over spiritual enemies” and “Authority over illness”, and further describes contemporary believers as possessing “another authority from Christ”, namely, “Authority to take the message”.

Evaluation: Whatever these categories are intended to precisely convey, such differentiation appears foreign to Matthew 10:1ff., where Jesus does not distinguish between different kinds of “authority” corresponding to different dimensions of the assignment. Furthermore, the notion of “another authority ... to take the message” for present-day believers suggests a cessationist tendency, since it appears to exclude the miraculous dimension of the commission.

Inference: The interpretation reflects, in part, a “surplus of meaning” and, in part, a cessationist reading of the text (see section 4.3.2).

23. **Observation**: PMat01-authority-04 distinguishes between “authority” and “the ability to fulfill that authority”, treating them as separate gifts. Accordingly, it is asserted that God gives “authority” and also grants “the ability to fulfill that authority”.

Evaluation: This distinction is problematic, as it appears to distort the semantic force of “authority”. As noted in section 5.2.3.1, the notion of ability is already implicit within the meaning of “authority”, and therefore does not require a separate bestowal.

Inference: The interpretation appears to involve an element of eisegesis.

24. **Observation**: PMat10-authority-03 describes “authority” as a step-by-step process beginning with authority over sin and extending to “authority” or “power” to perform “the signs of the Kingdom” described in the text.

Evaluation: This reading appears implausible within the immediate scope of Matthew 10:1ff. While broader soteriological categories such as salvation and sanctification may be theologically coherent in other contexts, they are not explicitly developed in this passage, nor is there evidence of a sequential “process” of authority within the text itself.

Inference: The interpretation appears to be eisegetical.

Hints at a hermeneutic key for interpreting ἐξουσία

1. In interpreting ἐξουσία in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:19, it should be recognised that it is not equivalent to δύναμις (power), nor to legal

authority or juridical right. Rather, it denotes a freely bestowed authority or warrant, together with power to perform miracles.

2. It should be made clear that the motif of authority in Matthew 10 and Mark 3 is not concerned with the inauguration or validation of an apostolic office or the authentication of ministry. Readings that move in that direction risk eisegesis and should be avoided.
3. The authority described in these texts should be understood in a literal sense as empowerment for miracles, rather than as a metaphorical reference to spiritual or moral conditions.
4. Interpretation of these passages should clarify that the exercise of this miracle-working authority is activated through faith in Jesus as its giver and is available to disciples or believers today.
5. Authority to perform miracles should be read as closely connected to both communion with Jesus (“being with him”) and the mission mandate entrusted to the disciples.

6.5.2.3 Theme: disciple

Texts: “Jesus calls his twelve disciples to him” (Matt. 10:1; alluded to in Matt. 10:2, 5; Mk. 3:14, 16; Lk. 10:1)

Strong

RMat01-disciple-01

“According to verse 1 of chapter 10, subsequent to His Call to Internship, Jesus then temporarily Apostolized or Deputized them; in that, ‘He gave them power (temporarily) against unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease,’ and then in verse 5, ‘Jesus sent these twelve forth’”.

RMat05-disciple-01

“... Just as Jesus was doing so now his apostles—that’s a Greek word that means to send, but it’s more important than that because an apostle is one who was sent on behalf of an authority and carries the authority of the one who sent him.”

RMat05-disciple-02

“... The apostles are an extension of Jesus. They will be extending the kingdom of heaven to people by proclaiming it, declaring it to them, and also by teaching.

RMat06-disciple-01

“As we’ve heard many times, disciple simply means, ‘follower’”.

RMat06-disciple-02

“However, today we’re going to learn about some special disciples. These disciples are different than the other disciples.”

RMat06-disciple-03

These are those whom we also refer to as the apostles. Apostle refers to someone who is sent as a representative of someone ... sort of like an ambassador. Apostle can also refer to someone who is sent. These twelve men were called, taught, equipped, and sent as representatives of Jesus.

RMat08-disciple-01

The gospel of the kingdom needs to be sent to people who have not heard or believed in Jesus’ work. “All it takes is for a disciple to go.”

RMat09-disciple-01

“But if you look carefully at those three elements of their ministry you will see that it mirrors perfectly the ministry of Christ Himself.... It is being described really as an extension of the ministry given to Jesus Himself. The apostles are extending the work Jesus has been engaged in.”

RMat10-disciple-01

"Jesus here all day instructs these twelve men to expand his mission of preaching the kingdom."

RMat10-disciple-02

"They've seen all these miracles, they've gone with him, they've walked with the Lord and so there's the discipleship before he calls them to a special service."

RMat10-disciple-04

"So we see, all believers are made to be disciples but here in this particular passage we see that the Lord has picked an inner circle."

RMat10-disciple-06

"We see that this twelve is a vivid reminder to the Jewish people who the apostles were told to go to first; the twelve tribes."

RMat10-disciple-07

"When we think about apostle, it is that word apostela and the word means one who is sent. So, it means one who is sent but not only that, it means sent with the authority of the sender."

PMat01-disciple-01

"The word 'apostle' means, 'sent one,' and not just in the sense of going on behalf of someone, but actually in the sense of acting on the full authority of the one doing the sending. The disciples were sent out on the full authority of Jesus himself."

PMat01-disciple-02

"Jesus tells His disciples to pray for workers, then he makes them the answer to their prayers. The key to harvest begins with faithful workers who will commit themselves to go and compassionately serve those who need Jesus."

PMat01-disciple-03

"This should encourage each of us. None of us are what we would describe as superstars. Nevertheless, as Jesus sent His disciples, He also sends you and I."

PMat02-disciple-01

"As believers, ministers and workers for God what is the highest level of growth you can attain in your walk with God? ... The highest, simplest and best level you can get to is to be a DISCIPLE. To be a person that follows Christ closely and models Christ in everything you do and say (Philippians 2:5, 1 John 2:6, Ephesians 4:15). This is what Christianity is all about."

PMat05-disciple-01

The apostolic call is an area of ministry, while being a disciple is a calling to follow Jesus and learn from him.

PMat08-disciple-01

"Jesus gives us this record right here of what he's telling his disciples because he is really telling us the same thing."

PMat08-disciple-02

"Discipleship is really ... something that we see and experience in terms of the Lord calling us to him and then carrying out his command. And so we should know the voice of the Lord. Just as Jesus called his disciples, so we should hear the Lord when he is calling."

PMat09-disciple-01

"Jesus is passing to you today a torch of healing from himself to you. Whatever his disciples did in his name bore the same results as if he did it himself. In other words, Jesus has given the disciples ... license to heal. We call this the authority of the believer."

PMat10-disciple-01

"But the Word of God teaches us that we, as believers ... are called to be followers of the Lord Jesus or disciples of the Lord Jesus, His disciples ... I might say [apply] both to a specific group of people who are close to Him, as is the case this morning, but also to wider groups of people."

Weak

RMat02-disciple-01

"These eleven men were used to turn this world upside down and spread a message that has impacted every level of society in this world today."

RMat03-disciple-01

"An apostle of the Lord was a divinely commissioned messenger of the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, and sent by Jesus Christ."

RMat03-disciple-02

"Notice, in these verses we see '12', three times, so this leaves everybody else out."

RMat03-disciple-03

"Listen as I read Matt. 10:1-8, and notice that His 12 is mentioned 3 times, indicating that only these 12 would be given these powers, listen."

RMat07-disciple-01

"Then he called the twelve disciples ... that means learners."

RMat07-disciple-02

"Then he called the twelve disciples ... that means learners. Then in verse two, they are going to be called apostles; this is the first time in Matthew they are called that, and it's from the verb apostello ... with a view of official authority they're going to be Christ representatives."

RMat10-disciple-03

"What is a disciple? The word is *mathetase*. Disciple means a learner, one who sits under another in teaching. So, we see all believers are made to be disciples."

RMat10-disciple-05

"So we see, all believers are made to be disciples but here in this particular passage we see that the Lord has picked an inner circle.... Here they're called twelve disciples but then he transitions to another word. It says the twelve apostles; he's commissioning these twelve."

PMat01-disciple-04

"Two types of authority are in view here: Authority over spiritual enemies. Authority over illness."

PMat06-disciple-01

"Well, the word disciple means learner and they're going to be learning. In fact, in this chapter they're going to learn how it is to be a laborer in the harvest field"

PMat09-disciple-02

"Matthew's use of the title apostle indicates that the moment has come, the moment has arrived for Jesus' disciples to step into a new office ... a demonstrative phase of life and as ministry apprentices they are to stop following and start doing."

PMat09-disciple-03

"it's time to get to work, friends. Discipleship is the "watch me stage" but apostolic ministry is the "now you try ... you can do it."

PMat09-disciple-04

"It appears that all of a sudden there is a radical shift that has taken place in Matthew 10, where the scripture uniquely lists the twelve disciples; but not just as disciples in this moment, they are depicted as twelve apostles."

Table 6.8(2): Theme-codes of "disciple" in Matthew 10:1-8

Strong**PMrk01-disciple-02**

"Now apostles literally means, 'sent out ones; special messengers, or commissioned ones.'"

PMrk04-disciple-01

Our focus verse talks about Jesus choosing twelve followers to be his disciples. These men were not chosen because of their amazing abilities or potential; they were ordinary people. The attributes that caused them to be called were willingness and obedience. Their association with Jesus, His instruction, and God's power were what qualified them."

PMrk06-disciple-01

"... He keeps delegating. Yes, these were the direct apostles of Jesus and there will be no other direct apostles of Jesus, but that apostolic call is still on the church today. It's still here that we would be special messengers, ... that we would be those he delegates his authority and his mission."

PMrk07-disciple-01

"The Gospel also signifies the disciples as his continuous companions from the first calling of some of them."

PMrk07-disciple-02

"Adverse conditions seem to be an experience that can assist to test one who has the be-with-me-followership skill. In the case of the 12 disciples, while Jesus taught on kingdom issues, which were regarded by some disciples as hard teachings, and for which reasons they left, the 12 disciples in their case chose to stay."

PMrk07-disciple-03

"There is an important point to note in Mark 3:3-19, namely, that the 12 constitute a special group within the broader community of disciples."

PMrk07-disciple-04

"The 12 disciples are the ones Jesus wanted to hand over His mission on earth to."

Weak**RMrk09-disciple-01**

"By choosing twelve apostles he essentially reconstitutes Israel, suggesting the illegitimacy of the present leadership. The battle lines are being drawn and the key question is 'Whose side are you on?'"

PMrk01-disciple-01

"You see, when Jesus goes up on the mountain, He calls you and me (His disciples) unto Himself. He calls for us to come and join Him there."

PMrk07-disciple-05

"The term disciple suggests they are students of His "way": faithful or hungry enough to stay for some time, to accept whatever it is Jesus was teaching. These 12 disciples were told they needed to stay with Him and learn."

PMrk07-disciple-06

"In addition to the accounts of the calling of specific disciples, there is also the account of the appointing of the apostles."

PMrk07-disciple-07

"The uniqueness of their apostolic office is important. They are called to a distinctive form of service, one that may depart significantly from the experience most of us will have."

Table 6.8(3): Theme-codes of "disciple" in Mark 3:13-19

Strong

RLuk08-disciple-01

Disciples of Jesus Christ who are sent out are challenged to share the message of God's love and to demonstrate that love to the people "in word and deed", inclusive of healing the sick and providing for the people's needs.

PLuk01-disciple-01

"... A follower ... is a person who imitates or copies someone else ... a server or an attendant".

PLuk04-disciple-01

"In sending out the 70, Jesus apparently wished He could have sent out more because He says we are to pray that the Lord would send laborers, because they are few in number."

PLuk04-disciple-02

"In verse 4 the disciples are instructed to take no provisions with them."

PLuk05-disciple-01

Luke 10:5, 7: "Now the mission of these 72 was to go to people they did not know. They would bless the families that showed them hospitality."

PLuk05-disciple-03

The 72 disciples were to do the same three things that Jesus did: preach the kingdom, heal the sick, and cast out demons.

PLuk05-disciple-04

"A true disciple, a true Christian puts following Jesus first."

PLuk05-disciple-05

What is a disciple's mission? It is to go. To go is to go from where you are at to where the harvest is. The harvest is not going to come to you, you must go to it.

PLuk05-disciple-06

"Let's think about how Jesus' instructions to the 72 apply to us. First of all, Jesus' instructions to any of His disciples directly do apply to us as disciples today. Each believer is called to pray for God to send more workers into the harvest. And each Jesus' follower is to be an answer to their own prayer."

PLuk06-disciple-01

More than with the group of 12, "which is a very restricted group and with a ... special calling, with a special role, which the Lord Jesus ordained for them"; we can easily identify with this group of 70: "there are some things that are characteristic of this group and especially of this sending that the Lord makes regarding them and that are somewhat close to us as well".

Weak

PLuk03-disciple-02

"... To be a follower of Jesus is to simultaneously prepare the way for Jesus and the lives of others. In fact, that's what he called his apostles to do in this passage".

PLuk08-disciple-01

"Jewish tradition also held that there were seventy peoples or nations other than the Jews, so possibly the number of disciples sent out was symbolic of an effort to reach all of those nations."

Table 6.8(4): Theme-codes of "disciple" in Luke 10:1-9

Observations, evaluations, and inferences

1. Observation:

RMat06-disciple-01, PMat02-disciple-01, PMat05-disciple-01, PMrk07-disciple-01, PMrk07-disciple-02, PLuk01-disciple-01 and PLuk05-disciple-04 interpret a "disciple" as a follower. PMat02-disciple-01 further concludes that the highest level of Christian growth, walk with God, and service to him is discipleship, in which the individual "follows Christ closely and models Christ in everything". PMrk07-disciple-01 emphasises that GMark portrays the Twelve as Christ's "continuous companions from the first calling of some of them". They prioritise following Jesus (PLuk05-disciple-04), and their commitment to discipleship is demonstrated by their decision to remain with him in the face of adversity (PMrk07-disciple-02).

Evaluation: These submissions are plausible. They correspond with the sense of μαθητής as a disciple in the context of following, which is evident in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 (see section 5.2.3.3).

Inference: The assertions appear to consider both word-study and the literary context in which the term μαθητής is used.

2. **Observation:** RMat10-disciple-02 and PMat08-disciple-02 assert that discipleship precedes service and that its journey begins with the capacity to hear Jesus' call.

Evaluation: This claim is supported by the narrative pattern in all three texts, where Jesus commissions and sends only those already identified as disciples (Matt. 10:1; Mk. 3:13; Lk. 10:1).

Inference: The assertion is grounded in the textual presentation of the commissioning narratives.

3. **Observation:** PMat10-disciple-01 and PMrk07-disciple-03 highlight the fact that discipleship may legitimately be understood in both narrow and broad senses.

Evaluation: This assertion is acceptable, since both perspectives are reflected in the texts of Matthew 10:1, Mark 3:13-14, and Luke 10:1.

Inference: The interpretation is grounded in the textual data.

4. **Observation:** RMat06-disciple-02, RMat10-disciple-04, and PMrk04-disciple-01 portray the Twelve as ordinary individuals (PMrk04-disciple-01) who are distinguished only in the sense of being drawn into Jesus' inner circle (RMat06-disciple-02; RMat10-disciple-04).

Evaluation: This assertion is acceptable, since the word-studies of ἔχειν in section 5.2.4.2 and ἔδωκεν/δότε in section 5.2.4.4, together with the inclusion of the Seventy in Luke 10:1, do not suggest any intrinsic uniqueness about the Twelve.

Inference: The interpretation appears to pay attention to both the semantic force and the literary context of the term "disciple".

5. **Observation:** PLuk04-disciple-01 and PLuk06-disciple-01 interpret the involvement of the Seventy in Luke 10:1ff., as distinct from that of the Twelve in Luke 9:1ff., as indicative of the openness of the mission to all, as well as Jesus' intention to send out more labourers. PLuk06-disciple-01 further emphasises that there are points of continuity between this group and present-day believers.

Evaluation: This submission is acceptable. On the basis of Luke 10:1 and the broader thrust of GLuke, the participation of the Seventy is best understood as reflecting openness and expansion of mission (see sections 5.5.5.2 and 5.5.7.2.1).

Inference: The interpretation is text-based and appears to take account of GLuke’s narratological emphasis on openness.

6. **Observation:** PMat01-disciple-03 and PMat08-disciple-01 infer that, just as Jesus sent the first disciples without regard to merit, so he continues to send his disciples today, and that what he said to the original disciples likewise applies to present-day followers.

Evaluation: These assertions are acceptable. At the conclusion of GMatthew, Jesus commissions his followers to take the gospel to all nations (Matt. 28:18–20), and the church understands this commission as remaining valid for the present age.

Inference: This interpretation appears to take account of GMatthew’s overarching missionary framework and its enduring ecclesiological implication for post-resurrection discipleship.

7. **Observation:** RMat05-disciple-01, RMat06-disciple-03, RMat10-disciple-07, PMat01-disciple-01, PMrk01-disciple-02 and PMrk06-disciple-01 understand the “apostles” in Matthew 10:1-8 and Mark 3:13-19 primarily in functional terms, namely as those sent with the authority of Jesus, without implying a formalised apostolic office. PMrk06-disciple-01 further maintains that this delegated commission continues in the present, while formal apostolic designation has ceased.

Evaluation: This construal is acceptable. As noted in section 5.4.6.2.2, the term “apostles” in Matthew 10:2 functions primarily to denote being sent, rather than to establish an ecclesial office.

Inference: The interpretation appears to be grounded in the lexical and contextual force of ἀπόστολοι within the relevant narrative settings.

8. **Observation:** RMat10-disciple-06 asserts that the explicit selection of twelve disciples in Matthew 10:1-8 and Mark 3:13-19 reflects the twelve tribes of Israel as the initial horizon of the mission at this stage.

Evaluation: This is logical and therefore acceptable (see P1B[1] of section 5.3.6.4 as well as section 5.4.6.2.2).

Inference: The assertion appears to recognise the typological significance of the number “twelve” in relation to Israel within the broader biblical narrative.

9. **Observation:** From the mission contexts of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, RMat08-disciple-01, PMat01-disciple-02, RLuk05-disciple-01, RLuk08-disciple-01, PLuk05-disciple-05 and PLuk05-disciple-06 understand the disciples as mandated to go forth and proclaim the gospel of the kingdom. Indeed,

they are themselves the answer to the prayer for labourers that Jesus calls for (PMat01-disciple-02; PLuk05-disciple-06) and are commissioned with authority to minister “in word and deed” (RLuk05-disciple-01; RLuk08-disciple-01).

Evaluation: These claims are well supported by the textual data themselves (see section 5.5.7.2.1).

Inference: The interpretations appear to arise from an integrated reading of both the text and its immediate narrative context.

10. **Observation:** PLuk04-disciple-02 and PLuk05-disciple-01 note that those sent by Jesus are instructed to carry no personal provisions (PLuk04-disciple-02). The emphasis is placed on undistracted commitment to the mission, while their material needs are expected to be met by those who receive the gospel. They are also commissioned to pronounce blessing upon receptive households and cities (PLuk05-disciple-01).

Evaluation: The emphasis on focused mission engagement is well grounded in the text, as Luke 10:4 explicitly reflects this instruction (cf. Matt. 10:9-10; see also sections 5.5.6.3 and 5.5.7.2.2 [R2C]).

Inference: The interpretation aligns closely with the textual directives of Luke 10:1ff.

Weak

11. **Observation:** RMat07-disciple-01, RMat10-disciple-03, PMat06-disciple-01 and PMrk07-disciple-05 interpret “disciple” in the sense of a pupil or learner.

Evaluation: This interpretation is not fully persuasive, since the contexts of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 do not foreground μαθητής primarily in pedagogical terms. Mark 3:14, in particular, emphasises Jesus’ initial purpose for the Twelve—“that they might be with him”—which highlights relationship and participation in his mission, though an instructional dimension is not entirely absent.

Inference: The interpretations appear to reflect limited attention to lexical nuance and immediate narrative context.

12. **Observation:** PMrk01-disciple-01 introduces an allegorical interpretation of the disciples’ coming to Jesus on the mountain in Mark 3:13.

Evaluation: This interpretation lacks textual support. Nothing in the immediate context suggests that either the mountain or the disciples’ response to Jesus’ summons is intended figuratively (see P1A in section 5.3.6.4).

Inference: The interpretation appears not to take sufficient account of the genre or narrative presentation of the text.

13. **Observation:** RMat03-disciple-02, RMat03-disciple-03 and PMrk07-disciple-07 emphasise the uniqueness of the Twelve.

Evaluation: This assertion is unpersuasive. The word-studies of ἔχειν in section 5.2.4.2 and ἔδωκεν/δότε in section 5.2.4.4 do not support the notion of intrinsic uniqueness attached to the Twelve.

Inference: The interpretation appears not to take sufficient account of the semantic force and literary context of the term “disciple”.

14. **Observation:** RMat01-disciple-01, RMat03-disciple-01, RMat07-disciple-02, RMat10-disciple-05, PMat09-disciple-02, PMat09-disciple-03, PMat09-disciple-04 and PMrk07-disciple-05 place considerable emphasis on the apostolic office. RMat01-disciple-01 advances the notion of a temporary apostolisation or deputisation of the Twelve, while PMat09-disciple-02 stresses a transition from discipleship to apostleship, and PMat09-disciple-03 describes a movement from a “watch me” stage to a “do it” stage.

Evaluation: These assertions are difficult to sustain on the basis of Matthew 10:1ff. and Mark 3:13ff. As argued in section 5.4.6.2.2, the texts do not foreground the idea of a formal apostolic office or a pedagogical perspective of discipleship.

Inference: The assertions appear not to take sufficient account of the lexical and contextual senses of the term “apostles”.

15. **Observation:** RMat02-disciple-01 excludes Judas Iscariot from the mission and consequently counts only the remaining eleven disciples.

Evaluation: This exclusion is anachronistic and does not fit the narrative setting of Matthew 10:1-8, since the text recounts a pre-Easter event. Judas Iscariot remains among the Twelve at this stage and only later departs from their company following the events surrounding Jesus’ arrest and death (cf. Matt. 27:3–5; Jn. 13:30; Acts 1:15–20).

Inference: The interpretation appears to be eisegetical.

16. **Observation:** RMrk09-disciple-01 asserts that Jesus’ choice of the Twelve serves to “essentially [reconstitute] Israel”, thereby implying the illegitimacy of the existing leadership.

Evaluation: This interpretation is difficult to sustain. Admittedly, the number “twelve” bears an evident connection to the twelve tribes of Israel, and the Twelve

may be viewed as envisaged replacements for the nation's irresponsible shepherds (see P1B[1] of section 5.3.6.4 and section 5.4.6.2.2). Nevertheless, ineffective or failed leadership (cf. Matt. 9:36) should not automatically be equated with illegitimate leadership.

Inference: The interpretation appears to go beyond what the text itself warrants and is therefore eisegetical.

17. **Observation**: PLuk08-disciple-01 claims that the Seventy in Luke 10:1ff. are intended to represent seventy nations distinct from the Jews.

Evaluation: This claim is unpersuasive. Although the number seventy carries notable OT associations (cf. Gen. 46:27; Exod. 15:27; 24:9; Num. 11:16, 24-26), Luke 10:1ff. does not provide sufficient textual basis for linking the Seventy specifically to any of these traditions, much less to seventy Gentile nations. It is more prudent to understand the passage in broader terms of openness and inclusiveness toward the Gentiles generally.

Inference: The interpretation appears to be eisegetical.

18. **Observation**: PLuk03-disciple-02 claims that Jesus sends the disciples merely to prepare the way.

Evaluation: This claim appears inconsistent with the evidence in Luke 10:1ff. In view of the urgency surrounding the mission (cf. Lk. 9:59–10:2) and the subsequent report of effective ministry (cf. Lk. 10:17), it is difficult to reduce the role of the mission team to mere logistical preparation.

Inference: The interpretation appears not to take adequate account of the literary context of the text.

19. **Observation**: PMat01-disciple-04 differentiates between two forms of authority borne by Christ's disciples—"Authority over spiritual enemies" and "Authority over illness".

Evaluation: This claim is unpersuasive, since Matthew 10:1ff. gives no indication of such differentiation. Rather, the texts present Jesus as conferring the same authority for the various miraculous acts expected of the disciples (cf. Matt. 10:1; Mk. 3:15; Lk. 10:19).

Inference: The interpretation appears to be eisegetical.

Hints at a hermeneutic key for interpreting μαθητής

1. In Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, μαθητής should be interpreted primarily in the sense of a follower—one expected to remain with Jesus continually and sacrificially—rather than merely as a pupil or learner.
2. The term “disciple” should be understood in both narrow and broad senses, and interpretation should carefully determine which perspective is in view in each context.
3. In Matthew 10:1-8 and Mark 3:13-19, the disciples should be understood as “apostles” only in the functional sense of being sent out with Jesus’ authority, not in the sense of holding a formal office.
4. The sending of the Seventy in Luke 10:1-9 should be understood in terms of active participation in mission, including the exercise of delegated authority to perform miracles, rather than for mere logistical purposes (cf. Lk. 10:17).
5. Within the socio-religious context of the period, Jesus’ appointment of twelve disciples in Matthew 10:1-8 and Mark 3:13-19 should be interpreted as reflecting his mission focus on Israel, represented by the twelve tribes, rather than as implying the intrinsic uniqueness of the Twelve.

6.5.2.4 Theme: mission

Texts: Implied in Matthew 10:1, 8; Mark 3:15, and Luke 10:9

Strong

RMat01-mission-01

The restriction of the mission team to the Jews only (vv. 5-6) was a short-term limitation.

RMat01-mission-02

The mission was built on specifics: their message, the kingdom of heaven is at hand; the scope of their ministry, to perform specified miracles; etc.

RMat02-mission-01

The mission restriction to only Jews “confirms that this commission of the twelve was a temporary assignment”, given that he later opens the horizon to the ends of the earth cf. Ac. 1:8).

RMat02-mission-02

A principle is laid out by the instructions that Jesus gives to the Twelve: “We see that we are not to wonder about aimlessly but that there should be order to our ministry.”

RMat06-mission-01

Jesus’ sending out of the Twelve to the people of Israel was only the starting point, because the kingdom of God first came to them. This later changed and Gentile nations were accommodated.

RMat09-mission-01

“The scope of the mission. The apostles were to go only to the Jews in verses 5 and 6. That will change, of course, after the resurrection when the church will go into all the world and make disciples.”

RMat09-mission-03

“The mission of the church is an extension of the mission of Christ. That was true not just for the apostles here in Matthew 10 but continues to be the case as you will see if you read the opening words of the book of Acts. ... He continues to work ... through the ministry of the church. That is the scope of the mission. We extend the work and ministry of Christ.”

RMat09-mission-04

The instructions given in the passage would go on to serve them long after Jesus has left the scene. The chapter is about ministry.

PMat01-mission-01

"It's important to understand that this command to the apostles here was only for this time of missionary work. A little bit ago we looked at Matthew 28:18-20, where Jesus tells them to go to the ends of the earth, to take the good news to every people group."

PMat04-mission-01

"In our own case, every believer is an officer sent by our Lord Jesus Christ, and our mandate is to use the power given to us to bring sinners to Jesus, heal the sick, set the captive free, loose the bound and heal the broken heart. The Holy Spirit empowers us to serve when we yield to Him."

PMat08-mission-01

The mission began in Israel among God's people. This implies that the call of Jesus always has a starting point and from there spreads out.

RMrk10-mission-01

The men sent on mission were ordinary men; there was nothing special about them.

RLuk04-mission-01

"Luke's Gospel account is the only one that tells of the sending out of the seventy.... These seventy men are not called apostles but they are still sent with a commission to represent the Lord.... Jesus did not leave the ministry to just the twelve. Neither does he today leave the ministry only to those who are pastors or staff members."

RLuk04-mission-02

"He also conveys a sense of urgency to the mission by telling them to travel light (v. 4); ... When he says, 'greet no one along the road,' Jesus is not telling the disciples to be rude to people, he is warning them against engaging in the Jewish custom of long and elaborate time-consuming greetings when meeting people on the road. He is telling them to get on with what they have been called to do and not let anything turn them aside."

PLuk03-mission-01

"Jesus tells them to ask him to send laborers and then when they do, he sends them. And when you pray for laborers, you're not just praying for others, you're praying for you."

PLuk03-mission-02

"To determine who was going to be open and who wasn't, they were just to make that offer of peace and a sign of peace was someone who was open to hearing that gospel."

PLuk05-mission-01

"What is the plentiful harvest? The harvest is people who need to become followers of Jesus, to be saved. Jesus is telling these disciples and us that there are many people ready to believe."

Weak**RMat09-mission-05**

"And then He says, 'You received without paying; give without pay.' He's using money and giving there as a metaphor for the whole work of Gospel service. All of it, from the giving to the going, is an act of sacrificial generosity motivated by gratitude for the free gift of grace we have already received from Jesus Christ."

PLuk01-mission-01

"Jesus says, 'I'm choosing you seventy-two to ... go ahead of me. Take care of business. Go ahead of me, prepare for my arrival'. Jesus said. 'Prepare everything for when I get there.'"

Table 6.9(2): Theme-codes of "mission" in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9

Observations, evaluations, and inferences

Strong

1. **Observation:** RMat01-mission-01, RMat02-mission-01, RMat06-mission-01, RMat09-mission-01, PMat01-mission-01 and PMat08-mission-01 state that the restriction of the mission to Israel in Matthew 10:5-6 is temporary in scope.

Evaluation: This understanding is consistent with the conclusions in section 5.4.4.3 and the wider exegesis of Matthew 10:1-8. The restriction is subsequently lifted, with the mission extending to the Gentiles as well (cf. Matt. 28:18-20).

Inference: The interpretation appears to arise from a canonical reading that situates Matthew 10:5-6 within the broader literary context of GMatthew and the wider trajectory of salvation history.

2. **Observation**: RMat01-mission-02, RMat02-mission-02 and RMat09-mission-04 focus on the specific instructions given for the mission: the content of their proclamation (“the kingdom of heaven is at hand”), the scope of their ministry (including the miracles listed in Matthew 10:8), and their material provisions (no fee, no self-supplied support, etc.) (RMat01-mission-02). These instructions are further taken to establish a principle of orderliness for both the Twelve and present-day ministers, with enduring relevance beyond Jesus’ earthly ministry (RMat02-mission-02; RMat09-mission-04).

Evaluation: These assertions are plausible. In Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9, the instructions function as concrete directives shaping the mission practice of the sent ones. The submissions are text-based and also extend the significance of the instructions to contemporary application, consistent with the methodological orientation outlined in section 1.5.3.

Inference: A largely literal reading of Matthew 10:1ff. appears to underlie these insights, together with an awareness of the need to apply the meaning of the text to the present.

3. **Observation**: For RMat09-mission-03, the mission of the disciples—and subsequently that of the church—is understood as an extension of Christ’s own mission: “He continues to work ... through the ministry of the church.... We extend the work and ministry of Christ”.

Evaluation: Section 5.4.1 clearly establishes the literary and thematic continuity between Matthew 9:35-39, where Jesus himself ministers, and Matthew 10:1-8, where he sends out his disciples to continue that ministry. This extension is further reflected in the church’s enduring understanding of her mission mandate in Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8.

Inference: The interpretation apparently takes account of the broad literary context of Matthew 10:1ff.

4. **Observation**: PMat04-mission-01, RMrk10-mission-01 and RLuk04-mission-01 understand mission as a responsibility belonging to all believers, both in the past and in the present. RLuk04-mission-01 appeals to Jesus’ sending of the Seventy to argue that, just as the commission was not restricted to the Twelve, so ministry today is not limited to “pastors or staff members”. PMat04-mission-01 states categorically: “Every believer is an officer sent by our Lord Jesus Christ”, and

proceeds to include among the expected outcomes the conversion of sinners, healing of the sick and broken-hearted, and deliverance for captives.

Evaluation: The claim that mission belongs to all believers is acceptable, especially in light of Matthew 28:18-20 and the comparable effectiveness of the Seventy in Luke 10:1ff. and the Twelve in Luke 9:1ff. (cf. Matt. 10:1ff.; Mk. 3:13ff.; 6:7ff.). In this regard, it is significant that RMrk10-mission-01 characterises those sent by Jesus as ordinary individuals, thereby implying that the mission was not restricted to specially gifted or professionally trained persons (see section 5.5.7.2.1).

Inference: The interpreters apparently arrived at these conclusions by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

5. **Observation:** RLuk04-mission-02 emphasises the urgency of the mission and identifies elements of urgency in Luke 10, such as the instruction to travel light and to avoid being distracted by greetings on the way (v. 4).

Evaluation: This assertion is acceptable. The urgency of mission is clearly underscored in Luke 10:1ff. as well as Matthew 10:1ff. (see Q3A of section 5.4.6.2.3 and section 5.5.5.1 for discussion of the urgency motifs in both passages).

Inference: The interpretation appears to reflect sensitivity to both the genre and the socio-historical setting of the text.

6. **Observation:** PLuk03-mission-01 observes that the very disciples whom Jesus instructs to pray for labourers ultimately become the answer to that prayer.

Evaluation: This appears to be the most natural reading of Luke 10:1ff. Furthermore, the conclusions reached in sections 5.4.6.2.1, 5.5.5.1, and 5.5.7.2.1 support this understanding.

Inference: The assertion most likely arises from attention to the grammatical and narrative flow of Luke 10:1-4 in particular (see section 4.4.5 on the significance of grammatical analysis as a hermeneutical principle).

7. **Observation:** PLuk03-mission-02 interprets the offer of peace as indicative of a target's openness—or otherwise—to the gospel.

Evaluation: This understanding was sufficiently established in R2D of section 5.5.7.2.2 as a factor that determines whether the disciples should remain and proclaim the kingdom message or depart, shaking the dust off their feet against unreceptive homes or cities (cf. Lk. 10:5-6; Matt. 10:12-14).

Inference: The assertion most likely depends on the grammatical structure and flow of Luke 10:5-6.

8. **Observation:** PLuk05-mission-01 defines “the harvest” as people in need of salvation. Accordingly, the expression “plentiful harvest” is understood to mean that many people are ready to believe.

Evaluation: This is an appropriate understanding of the figurative expressions, consistent with the conclusions reached in section 5.5.7.2.1.

Inference: Attention to the figurative subgenre within Luke 10:1ff. appears to have enabled the identification and proper interpretation of these metaphors.

Weak

9. **Observation:** RMat09-mission-05 interprets the concept of merchandise in Matthew 10:8 metaphorically, stating: “He’s using money and giving there as a metaphor for the whole work of Gospel service”. The rest of the statement is also loaded with other metaphors.

Evaluation: This interpretation is unconvincing for two reasons: (i) in Matthew 10:8, Jesus addresses the issue of merchandise in straightforward language that does not suggest figurative intent, and (ii) the warning is contextually tied to the handling of the miraculous capacities entrusted to the disciples (see Q3D of section 5.4.6.2.3), rather than functioning as an open-ended metaphor capable of accommodating the range of meanings proposed in RMat09-mission-05.

Inference: The interpretation clearly does not take sufficient account of the genre and contextual scope of the injunction.

10. **Observation:** PLuk01-mission-01 portrays Jesus’ disciples as going ahead of him merely for logistical preparation, without actively engaging in direct mission activity.

Evaluation: This assertion is unpersuasive. The commission in Luke 10:1ff. clearly extends beyond logistical preparation, as Jesus expressly instructs the disciples to heal the sick and proclaim the kingdom of God (v. 9).

Inference: The reasoning here appears to reflect eisegesis.

Hints at a hermeneutic key for understanding “mission”

1. In interpreting Matthew 10:5-6, it should be recognised that the restriction of the mission to Israel was temporary and was subsequently expanded into a universal mandate.
2. The mission mandate should be understood as involving both the proclamation of the nearness of the kingdom of heaven and the performance of miracles, and as intended to be carried out without financial exploitation of the beneficiaries.

3. It should be maintained that both the first disciples and the contemporary church participate in the extension of Christ's mission through proclamation of the kingdom of God and the performance of miracles.
4. The mission mandate should be applied to all believers today, following not only the example of the Twelve in Matthew 10:1ff., Mark 3:13ff., 6:6b-13, and Luke 9:1ff., but also that of the Seventy in Luke 10:1ff.
5. The mission call in the church should be presented as urgent, as reflected in Matthew 9:35–10:8 and Luke 10:1-9. This urgency rests on the need for people to repent, embrace the kingdom of God, and experience its redemptive benefits, including salvation, healing, deliverance, and other miracles.
6. The mission instructions in the texts should ordinarily be interpreted literally, except where the context clearly indicates figurative intent.
7. The mission of the Seventy in Luke 10:1ff. should be interpreted as involving active proclamation and miracle-working, rather than being reduced to a merely logistical assignment.

6.5.2.5 Theme: preach

Texts: “As you go, proclaim this message ...” (Matt. 10:7); “that he might send them out to preach” (Mk. 3:14); (alluded to in Luke 10:9)

Strong

RMat02-preach-01

“He says go preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. So, the second aspect of this Commission is a Simple Message. The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.”

RMat02-preach-02

“The reason that Christ sends them to the Jews ... is that the gospel was to come through them to the rest of the world” (cf. Rom. 1:16).

RMat05-preach-01

“... The apostles are an extension of Jesus. They will be extending the kingdom of heaven to people by proclaiming it, declaring it to them, and also by teaching eventually after Pentecost”.

RMat06-preach-01

“Jesus said that God has freely blessed the apostles, so they must also go and proclaim the kingdom of God freely.”

RMat07-preach-01

“As you go preach this the ideal of making proclamation is not someone in a suit behind the pulpit it's God's people sharing who they are.”

RMat07-preach-02

The instruction to go and preach is “a present imperative” that is both a special mission in the passage but also implies a regular part of life.

RMat08-preach-01

“That was how Jesus loved people—He had the saving Gospel proclaimed to them, both from His own lips, and from the mouths of His chosen apostles. He told them to go first to the people of Israel and proclaim that the kingdom of God was at hand.”

RMat08-preach-02

“They didn't have to take money, for the people they preached to would supply all their needs.... The good news was free, and it was for all people, even those who might reject it.”

RMat10-preach-01

"What we do: 'preach, proclaim, testify, witness' means 'be a herald'. Preach saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand'".

PMat03-preach-01

"If we are willing to live a life pleasing to the Lord, and be willing to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom faithfully, we will always witness His power confirming our words for the blessings and total liberation of the people under Satanic bondage."

PMat03-preach-02

"As Jesus disciples, we have been called and commissioned to go out and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to every nation. God has empowered us for the great assignment and will work miracles, signs and wonders to confirm our messages in the lives of the people."

PMat08-preach-01

"He says, 'As you go, preach. That means, proclaim the will of God.... Make an announcement of it. Tell everybody about it, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"

PMat10-preach-01

"Here it says to preach the kingdom of heaven; to preach; to announce"

RMrk01-preach-01

"... Jesus sent 'them out to preach.' These twelve men were entrusted with the essential responsibility of preaching the gospel to others. They would be the first generation of gospel preachers, following in the footsteps of their Lord, who Himself proclaimed the gospel of God (1:14)."

RMrk02-preach-01

"He has a message for the world, and you and I are to proclaim His message to the world."

RMrk03-preach-01

"He chose them to 'send them out to preach.' ... Their mission was to take the growingly familiar themes which they had heard from him and preach them to people all over Galilee. The King of God's kingdom had come and men were sinners who needed to repent, especially in the light of his presence. His signs confirmed that he was the Holy One of God. They stated these truths as he did. They illustrated them, as he did, and then they applied them to their hearers."

RMrk04-preach-02

These are the three tasks given to the ones whom Christ calls: to be with him, to preach, and to drive out demons. In the light of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ we hear the call of Christ to proclaim the New Creation where he is the Ruler over everything. Jesus Christ claims your life and the life of your family. At its best, Christian education is about casting the vision of this Kingdom and instilling its values within those who are learning. It's about love and grace and truth and bringing these into every area of life. This is impossible apart from being with and in Jesus Christ and learning about the world from God's revelation in him.

RMrk05-preach-01

"I love the twofold description of the ministry that the Lord entrusted to the apostles: to preach the good news of the gospel, and to go to war against the demonic in the world. We have the privilege of announcing the gospel — the good news of what Jesus has done — and, in his power, to oppose the work of Satan."

RMrk07-preach-01

"Indeed, notice His purpose in selecting the twelve: so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. They were to be near Christ, while also going out as ambassadors of Christ. While the twelve certainly had a special office as Apostles in forming the very beginning of the church, they are also a pattern for each of us still as disciples of Christ."

RMrk07-preach-02

"Also like the apostles, we too are called by Christ to be sent out to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God."

RMrk09-preach-01

"The summary in 3:7-12 brings the first part of Jesus's Galilean ministry to a close. The new phase that follows demonstrates increased division between those for Jesus and those against him. This section is framed at the beginning and end with key accounts related to the disciples. At the beginning (3:13-19), Jesus appoints the Twelve to be his apostles. At the end, Jesus sends the Twelve out to preach and heal (6:6-13). In contrast to the apostles stand the religious leaders, Jesus's own family (who think he is crazy), and his own hometown, which rejects him. Ironically, those who should be his chief supporters—his own people (cf. John 1:11)—oppose him."

RMrk09-preach-02

"3:12-15 Jesus goes into the hills of Galilee and summons 'those he wanted,' and from this larger group appointed twelve to be his closest followers. The phrase, 'whom he also named apostles' is absent from some manuscripts and may be a copyist addition drawn from Luke 6:13. While Luke commonly refers to the twelve as 'apostles,' Mark does so only here and at 6:30. The word 'apostle' means a messenger, or one sent out with a commission. The Twelve are appointed, first, to 'be with him' (3:14a), that is to watch him and learn from him, and second, to extend his ministry to all of Israel by preaching the kingdom of God and casting out demons (3:14b-15)."

RMrk10-preach-01

"Then, He came calling me to preach His Word. Again, His call came and it would not go away! What an honor it is to be called to handle the Word of God! It is a privilege to be one of His preachers!"

RMrk10-preach-02

"Involved Declaration – Jesus called these men to go 'forth to preach'. The word 'preach' means 'to act as a herald; to sound forth the message of the King.' ... It was the same message that Jesus Himself had been preaching. It was the 'Gospel of the Kingdom.'"

PMrk01-preach-01

"How do we help people get free? By preaching the gospel, the good news Then along with the good news, we pray for people so Jesus can heal them of their sicknesses and diseases, and we cast out demons when we encounter them. As we interact with others, we show them the love of Jesus by giving people what they need practically, both on a spiritual level and a physical level."

PMrk01-preach-02

"... He then sends them out to start preaching. Now, He was probably sending them out with a similar message Jesus had, which was to repent of sins and turn to God. That's what Jesus was preaching before His death and resurrection. They weren't preaching the cross yet because Jesus hadn't gone there yet."

PMrk01-preach-03

"'Appointed' here is also translated 'ordained,' but it really means to make something, or to do something. Why does it matter? Because it means that Jesus is the One making you and me into His sent-out ones."

PMrk07-preach-02

Mark 3:13-19 exemplifies Jesus' identifying, inviting, selecting, and sending an unlikely and underqualified group of ordinary men to seek the lost as they were going to proclaim and demonstrate the good news and good works, respectively.

RLuk05-preach-01

"The twelve held a unique place in the early church and they were certainly blessed to see the miracles and receive the personal teaching by Jesus. These seventy though, were sent out to preach on His behalf. That indicates that the twelve were not the only ones with a responsibility to proclaim the coming of God's kingdom in Jesus Christ."

RLuk08-preach-01

"Jesus told his followers that they were to bring peace to the households, cast out demons and heal the sick, and proclaim that the kingdom of God had come near. These instructions of Jesus may need to be expressed in a more modern manner."

PLuk03-preach-01

"Part of preaching the gospel, part of being a high harvester is challenging people to think about the implications of their belief in God.... We need to let people know of the gravity of rejecting Jesus."

PLuk03-preach-02

"The harvest is plentiful and God has called us to prepare the way for Jesus by proclaiming the good news."

PLuk05-preach-01

"Now the mission of these 72 was to go to people they did not know. They would bless the families that showed them hospitality. Jesus said that the laborer or worker deserves his wages. That means that those who are working in the harvest deserve to be paid a living wage. How are they to be paid? They are to be paid by the people whom they are ministering to."

PLuk09-preach-01

"Anytime you go out there preaching you will return with joy. There is joy when souls are won. I cannot explain it. When you bring people to the Lord, you will discover what it means to have the joy of the Lord."

Weak**RMrk01-preach-02**

"After the resurrection of Jesus their preaching ministry would take off. On the day of Pentecost when Peter stood up to preach, three thousand people came to saving faith in Jesus (Acts 2:41). In the weeks and months to follow, under their preaching tens of thousands more embraced the Savior."

RMrk04-preach-03

These twelve disciples are a sign of the "New Israel" that will go out in order to proclaim the New Creation which will embrace every nation of people on earth

PMrk07-preach-01

The implication of the pericope Mark 3:13-19 is that anyone who wants to lead people for a task can get them together, train them with a detailed job description. So, one can see that the content or course curriculum was built on their job description. It meant that the course content was on:

1. Sending them to preach
2. Having power to heal sicknesses
3. Casting out devils

Table 6.10(2): Theme-codes of "preach" in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9

Observations, evaluations, and inferences

Strong

1. **Observation**: RMat10-preach-01, PMat08-preach-01, PMat10-preach-01, RMrk10-preach-02 and PLuk03-preach-01 explain "preaching" as proclaiming,

announcing, testifying, witnessing, or acting as a herald, with its central content identified as the nearness of the kingdom of God (RMat10-preach-01, PMat08-preach-01, PMat10-preach-01, RMrk10-preach-02). PLuk03-preach-01 further stresses that preaching includes making clear the implications of accepting or rejecting the message.

Evaluation: These claims are plausible and consistent with the conclusions in sections 5.2.4.1 and 5.2.4.6, as well as subsections P1B(2) of 5.3.6.4 and R2E of 5.5.7.2.2.

Inference: The claims reflect careful attention to the lexical meaning and semantic range of the term “preaching”.

2. **Observation:** RMat02-preach-01, RMrk04-preach-01, RMrk04-preach-02, RMrk05-preach-01, RMrk07-preach-01, RMrk09-preach-01 and PMrk01-preach-01 emphasise the central role of preaching in relation to the other elements of the commission. In particular, RMrk04-preach-02 describes preaching as functioning to “[cast] the vision of this Kingdom and [instill] its values within those who are learning”.

Evaluation: These assertions are plausible and reflect the narrative emphasis found in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, where the mandate to preach consistently occupies a prominent position. They also align with the exegetical analyses in sections 5.2.3.8, 5.2.4.1, and 5.2.4.6, as well as subsections P1B(2) of 5.3.6.4 and R2E of 5.5.7.2.2.

Inference: The interpretation is grounded in the text and its immediate literary context.

3. **Observation:** RMat02-preach-02 asserts that Christ sent the disciples to preach primarily to Jews because the gospel was to come through them to other peoples.

Evaluation: This claim is plausible and finds support in John 4:22 and Romans 1:16, as well as in the exegetical conclusion in Q3A of section 5.4.6.2.3.

Inference: The claim appears to be informed by the hermeneutical principle of the analogy of Scripture (see section 4.4.5).

4. **Observation:** RMrk01-preach-01 and RLuk05-preach-01 regard the call to preach as extending both to the Twelve and to others. While both maintain a degree of distinctiveness for the Twelve, RLuk05-preach-01 further acknowledges that the sending of the Seventy indicates that the responsibility of proclamation was not confined to the Twelve.

Evaluation: This position is plausible, given Luke 10:1, 9, where the “seventy others” are likewise instructed to proclaim the message. As concluded in section 5.2.4.6, καὶ λέγετε αὐτοῖς (“and tell them”) in Luke 10:9 functions semantically in a manner comparable to κηρύσσετε λέγοντες (“preach, saying”) in Matthew 10:7 and κηρύσσειν (“to preach”) in Mark 3:14.

Inference: The interpretation appears to be informed by the principle of analogy of Scripture.

5. **Observation:** RMat05-preach-01, RMrk03-preach-01, RMrk03-preach-02, RMrk09-preach-02 and PMrk01-preach-02 describe proclamation as an activity aimed at extending the kingdom of God.

Evaluation: This idea is coherent, particularly in light of the persuasive function of preaching/proclamation and its objective of enabling hearers to respond positively to the message and enter the kingdom (see section 5.2.4.1).

Inference: The assertion appears to draw on the lexical force of κηρύσσω, understood as a public announcement oriented toward eliciting a response of compliance to its content.

6. **Observation:** RMat08-preach-01 and PMat03-preach-01 understand proclamation as a means of expressing Jesus’ love for people and as a channel for the release of divine power for blessing and the liberation of those bound by Satan.

Evaluation: This claim is coherent with Matthew 9:35–10:8, where Jesus’ compassion for the crowds leads to instruction for prayer for labourers and the commissioning of disciples to enter the harvest field. In addition, both Jesus’ ministry and the disciples’ mission are associated with acts of deliverance and healing (cf. Lk. 5:17; Acts 10:44-48).

Inference: The assertions appear to be informed by a reading of Matthew 10:1ff. within its broader literary and thematic context.

7. **Observation:** RMat07-preach-02, PMat03-preach-02, RMrk02-preach-01, RMrk07-preach-02 and PLuk03-preach-02 regard preaching as an ongoing imperative for Jesus’ disciples. RMat07-preach-02 describes it as a regular feature of Christian life. PMat03-preach-02 adds that while disciples preach, God confirms the message through miracles, signs, and wonders in the lives of hearers. PLuk03-preach-02 further grounds the imperative in the magnitude of the harvest.

Evaluation: These claims are acceptable and align with the exegetical conclusions in sections 5.4.4.1 and 5.6.

Inference: The interpretations appear to reflect a synchronic reading of the texts alongside the assumption of the continuing validity of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

8. **Observation:** RMat06-preach-01, RMat08-preach-02 and PLuk05-preach-01 understand the proclamation of the kingdom of God as a ministry carried out at no cost on the hearers. At the same time, they note that the messengers are to be voluntarily supported by those they serve, on the basis that the labourer deserves remuneration (PLuk05-preach-01; cf. Matt. 10:10; Lk. 10:7).

Evaluation: This is consistent with Matthew 10:8ff. and Luke 10:7, and aligns with the exegetical conclusion reached in Q3D of section 5.4.6.2.3.

Inference: The submission appears to arise from a straightforward, literal reading of Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9.

9. **Observation:** PMrk01-preach-03 and PMrk07-preach-02 understand the qualification of the preachers as deriving solely from the One who calls them. He identifies, invites, selects, and sends ordinary people to proclaim and demonstrate the message of the kingdom (PMrk07-preach-02). He is further described as the one who “appointed”, “ordained”, or “made” them preachers (PMrk01-preach-03).

Evaluation: These assertions align with the exegetical conclusions in sections 5.2.3.1 and 5.2.4.2. A combined reading of these sections indicates that the ἐξουσία conferred by Jesus constitutes the decisive factor distinguishing the disciples’ commission (cf. Matt. 10:1; Mk. 3:15; and the allusions in Matt. 10:8b; Lk. 10:9).

Inference: The assertions appear to result from a broader canonical reflection on the backgrounds and narratives of the disciples as presented across the wider scriptural corpus.

10. **Observation:** RMat07-preach-01 emphasises the personal experience and testimony of the preacher, stating that “the ideal of making proclamation is ... God’s people sharing who they are”.

Evaluation: This emphasis is significant. It aligns with section 5.2.4.1, which stresses that, ideally, preachers are not detached conveyors of a message, but individuals who have personally embraced and embodied its content and demands.

Inference: The assertion appears to be grounded in the semantic force of κηρύσσω, understood as proclamation that carries both content and the lived witness of the proclaimer.

11. **Observation**: RLuk08-preach-01 advocates that the instruction to preach should be expressed in contemporary language.

Evaluation: This proposal is appropriate and appears to draw on the Reformed hermeneutical principle that seeks to bridge socio-historical and sociolinguistic gaps between the biblical context and the present setting (see section 4.4.3).

Inference: The assertion promotes the contextualisation of the biblical message for contemporary communication.

12. **Observation**: PLuk09-preach-01 observes that effective preaching brings joy to the preacher, particularly when converts are gained.

Evaluation: This statement is reasonable, as Luke 15:7 and 10 indicate that there is joy in heaven over the repentance of a sinner. It may therefore be inferred that the preacher, in participating in the mission, shares in or resonates with this joy when souls are won.

Inference: The assertion appears to draw upon intertextual engagement with other relevant scriptural passages.

Weak

13. **Observation**: RMrk01-preach-02 postpones the disciples' ministry, stating that "after the resurrection of Jesus their preaching ministry would take off". This formulation gives the impression that the preaching commanded in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 is not fully operative prior to the resurrection, requiring a later commencement for its "real" effectiveness.

Evaluation: This claim is difficult to sustain. While Acts does indeed record a significant expansion of missionary success following Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:41; 4:4), it does not follow that the disciples' preaching ministry is inactive or suspended prior to this. The Gospels themselves attest to the execution of the commission within the narrative (cf. Mk. 6:12; Lk. 10:17). Thus, preaching in the Gospels and Acts should be viewed as continuous in nature, albeit with differing stages of intensification.

Inference: The interpretation appears to rest on an unwarranted temporal bifurcation of the mission, underestimating the effectiveness of the pre-Easter commission within the Gospel narratives.

14. **Observation**: RMrk04-preach-03 claims that the twelve disciples function as a sign of a “New Israel” commissioned to proclaim “the New Creation”, which is envisaged as embracing all nations of the earth.

Evaluation: This interpretation is unconvincing. A dispensational framework cannot be securely derived from Mark 3:13-19. Moreover, given the close synoptic correspondence between Mark 6:7-13 and Matthew 10:1-8—where the mission is initially restricted to Israel—it is more consistent to reason that Mark 3:13-19 has not yet assumed a transnational or global missionary scope.

Inference: The interpretation appears to be eisegetical.

15. **Observation**: PMrk07-preach-01 emphasises curricular or instructional training as the primary focus of the imperative to preach in Mark 3:13-19.

Evaluation: This claim lacks textual grounding in Mark 3:13-19 and may stem from an unwarranted reading of μαθητής in a strictly pupil–trainee sense, rather than as “follower”, which has been established in section 5.2.3.3 as the dominant sense in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.

Inference: The assertion appears to overlook the literary context and its influence on lexical usage and meaning.

Hints at a hermeneutic key for interpreting κηρύσσετε/κηρύσσειν

1. In interpreting Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, the imperative to preach (κηρύσσειν/κηρύσσετε) the message of the kingdom should be taken with full seriousness since the miracle imperatives are integral with it within the same commission.
2. The responsibility of proclaiming the kingdom should be understood as extending to all contemporary believers, as typified by the Seventy, rather than being restricted to clerical or specially designated ministerial groups, as typified by the Twelve.
3. Given the emphasis inherent in κηρύσσω on public proclamation rooted in lived experience, the imperative should also be interpreted as requiring that proclaimers of the kingdom are those who have personally embraced and embodied its message.

6.5.2.6 Theme: heal

Texts: “to heal every disease and sickness”/“Heal the sick” (Matt. 10:1, 8); “Heal the sick who are there” (Lk. 10:9)

Strong

RLuk08-heal-01:

“Disciples of Jesus Christ who are sent in [sic] mission and ministry ... demonstrate God’s love by healing the sick”

PMat03-heal-01:

“We must believe Him for His words, and ensure that we carry out this ministry of Healing, Deliverance and Restoration in everywhere and at every time we have the opportunity to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom

PMat08-heal-01:

“So God gives us the power to be able ... to heal all kinds of sicknesses and all kinds of diseases

PMat08-heal-02:

“... The Lord gives us the power to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of diseases ... We can heal all kinds, and ‘all kinds’ means ‘all kinds’”

PMat08-heal-03:

If we are in the right relationship with Jesus, “the only one who has the handle on healing”, He will heal through us when we step out

PMat08-heal-04:

“He says ‘and to heal all kinds of sicknesses and all kinds of disease’. Now this is really awesome because God isn’t intimidated by anybody’s particular condition”

PMat08-heal-05:

“... The Lord gives us the power to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of diseases ... We can heal all kinds, and all kinds means all kinds”

PMat09-heal-01:

“Healing is a foretaste that the kingdom of heaven is near. It confirms the rule or the reign of Jesus Christ. It means that there’s hope for those who are troubled, for those who are sick, for those who are heavy burdened in our world”

PMat09-heal-02:

“I promise you, you will experience healing in heaven ... any healing that occurs in this life is merely a temporary fix; there’s more to come. It’s a foretaste of the whole; this we will one day enjoy in heaven”

PMat09-heal-03:

I believe that today as we’ve gathered in this place ... God can break through any sickness, any disease ... There is evidence of the healing power of God already here right now in this place.... How many people are going through something that’s painful and difficult—maybe it’s physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, no matter what the issue is. If that’s you today, would you raise your hand? ... How many people know somebody who needs to be healed a friend or family member maybe they’re in the hospital ... I want you to know the healing is here. Jesus the great Physician is in our midst today; he is among us, and he can heal any disease

PMat09-heal-04:

“Like a good leader Jesus expects all of us to do what he does. But here’s the problem: we’re seeing less healings today because many of us have been waiting on Jesus to heal when he’s already delegated the power and the authority to us to heal”

PMat09-heal-05:

“After modeling ministry, which includes the healing of multitudes of people, Jesus commissioned and empowered his disciples to do likewise”

PMat09-heal-06:

Preaching about healing is a risk worth taking ... we need to know what God’s word says about healing. I would rather be misunderstood by the world and be healed by God rather than be understood by the world and remain in my sickness

PMrk01-heal-01

“How do we help people get free? By preaching the gospel Then along with the good news, we pray for people so Jesus can heal them of their sicknesses and diseases, and we cast out demons when we encounter them.”

PLuk03-heal-01:

“I think we over think this; we are afraid that, well, what if I pray for someone and God doesn’t heal them? Well, of course healing is in God’s hands; he is the healer. But the Scripture says that he wants to heal. Now, we can’t guarantee that God heals everyone, but we can pray and we know this, if we don’t pray for people God’s not going to work through us to heal them unless we’re willing vessels. And so we can pray for them and then announce to them: God’s kingdom is near, his peace is available to you, you can be healed by the stripes of Jesus Christ”

Weak

RMat08-heal-01:

“We may have been set aside by our Savior and given His authority to heal the illness of your spiritual death”

Table 6.11(2): Theme-codes of “heal” in Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9

Observations, evaluations, and inferences

Strong

1. **Observation**: RLuk08-heal-01 affirms healing of the sick by Jesus' disciples as a demonstration of God's love.

Evaluation: This is defensible on logical and theological grounds: love is a driving force in God's salvific activity (cf. Jn. 3:16), and salvation in GLuke is presented holistically, encompassing spiritual restoration, physical healing, and other redemptive acts (see section 5.5.5.1). It therefore follows that healing functions as an expression of divine love.

Inference: The assertion appears to be shaped by a broader biblical-redemptive narrative framework.

2. **Observation**: PMat03-heal-01 emphasises the necessity of faith for the "ministry of healing, deliverance and restoration", and anticipates healings wherever the "Gospel of the Kingdom" is proclaimed.

Evaluation: This assertion is plausible. On the one hand, it foregrounds faith as a key condition for the performance of miraculous healings (cf. Matt. 17:14-21//Mk. 9:14-29//Lk. 9:37-43). On the other hand, it integrates healing with proclamation in a manner consistent with Matthew 10:8 and Luke 10:9 (see sections 5.2.3.8; 5.4.6.2.3 [Q3B]; 5.4.6.2.1).

Inference: The interpretation reflects a hermeneutic of faith and is attentive to lexical and syntactic correspondences within Matthew 10:1ff.

3. **Observation**: PMat08-heal-01–PMat08-heal-05 interpret Matthew 10:1 and 8 in a consistently literal manner: God grants believers "power" (= authority) to heal "all kinds of sicknesses and all kinds of diseases" (PMat08-heal-01), with emphasis that "all kinds" should be taken comprehensively (PMat08-heal-02; PMat08-heal-05; cf. section 4.4.5). PMat08-heal-03 identifies Jesus as the source of healing, while PMat08-heal-04 stresses that no condition is beyond divine capacity or should intimidate the minister acting under Christ's authority.

Evaluation: These assertions are acceptable and reflect a consistent *sensus literalis* reading of Matthew 10:1 and 8, particularly regarding the comprehensive scope of "all kinds of sicknesses and diseases" (cf. v. 1; sections 4.4.5; 5.4.6.2.3 [P3C]; cf. 5.2.3.7; 5.2.4.5). They also apparently emerge from a hermeneutic of faith.

Inference: The interpretations seemingly follow a literal-grammatical reading of the text and are reinforced by a hermeneutic of faith.

4. **Observation:** PMat09-heal-01–PMat09-heal-06 provide a range of perspectives on healing. PMat09-heal-01 links healing with the imminence of God’s kingdom and as confirmation of Christ’s reign, as well as a means of giving hope of relief to the distressed. PMat09-heal-02 frames healing as a foretaste of eschatological fulfilment. PMat09-heal-03 presents healing as a present and comprehensive reality. PMat09-heal-04 and PMat09-heal-05 describe healing as an extension of Jesus’ ministry contingent upon the disposition of believers. PMat09-heal-06 identifies healing proclamation as “a risk worth taking”, encouraging faith-driven ministry under Christ’s authority.

Evaluation: These assertions are plausible. PMat09-heal-01 and PMat09-heal-02 appropriately relate healing to the “‘already’–‘not yet’” dimensions of the kingdom (cf. Matt. 9:35–38; Isa. 35:10; 51:11; Rev. 21:4; see sections 3.2.5; 4.4.5; 5.4.1; 5.4.5.4). PMat09-heal-03 aligns with NT portrayals of present healing activity (cf. Ac. 10:38; 19:11-12). PMat09-heal-04 and PMat09-heal-05 coherently extend Jesus’ healing ministry to discipleship praxis (see sections 5.4.1, 5.4.4.2, 5.4.6.2.1 [Q1B], and 5.4.6.2.3 [Q3C]), while PMat09-heal-06 reinforces a faith-based missional posture grounded in Christ’s authority (cf. Exo. 15:26; Psa. 103:3; Isa. 53:5 [Matt. 8:17; 1 Pet. 2:24]).

Inference: The interpretations are textually grounded, reflect a literal reading of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, and are framed within a hermeneutic of faith.

5. **Observation:** PMrk01-heal-01 and PLuk03-heal-01 emphasise prayer for the sick as the means of healing. PLuk03-heal-01 further cautions against fear of failure in such ministry, grounding this in God’s identity as Healer, his willingness to heal, and his responsiveness to prayer. While praying for such persons, they are to proclaim the nearness of God’s kingdom and the availability of divine peace to the sufferers.

Evaluation: These assertions are acceptable as they reinforce faith-based ministry and, particularly in PLuk03-heal-01, maintain a coherent link between healing and the in-breaking kingdom of God (see sections 5.2.3.8; 5.4.6.2.3 [Q3B]; 5.3.6.4; 5.5.5.3).

Inference: The interpretations appear to be textually informed. They also reflect a hermeneutic of faith consistent with the mission narratives.

Weak

6. **Observation:** RMat08-heal-01 spiritualises the imperative to heal in Luke 10:9.

Evaluation: This interpretation is implausible, as the imperative in its immediate and broader literary context refers to physiological healing of the sick and does not support a metaphorical reading such as “healing the illness of spiritual death” (see section 5.2.3.7; cf. sections 5.2.3.5/5.2.3.6 and 3.2.3).

Inference: The interpretation departs from the literal sense of the imperative “heal the sick” and introduces an unwarranted spiritualisation of the text.

Hints at a hermeneutic key for interpreting ἀσθενούντας θεραπεύετε and θεραπεύετε τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀσθενεῖς

1. The authority to heal should be understood as extending to all categories of disease conditions mentioned in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.
2. The imperative to heal in these passages should be interpreted in a literal sense, referring primarily to physiological conditions of illness, rather than to metaphorical, moral or spiritual states of “healing”.
3. Miraculous healings should be construed as manifestations of the “already” dimension of the kingdom of God, evidencing its present in-breaking activity within the narrative world of the texts.
4. Disciples of Jesus are to exercise faith rather than fear in the ministry of healing, engaging in acts such as laying on of hands and/or prayer, while relying on the divine Healer as the effective source of restoration.

6.5.2.7 Theme: dead

Text: “raise the dead” (Matt. 10:8)

Strong

RMat03-dead-01:

“[the 12 apostles] ... even raised the dead”

Weak

RMat02-dead-01:

“... We know we can't ... raise people from the dead but we can tell them about Jesus who can ... raise them from the dead spiritually”

RMat10-dead-01:

Any call for miraculous raising of the dead today is an attempt “to tear down the foundations that have already been laid by the apostles and to say ... I will rebuild them”

RMat10-dead-02:

“I can't raise the dead ... neither can you”

PMat08-dead-01:

“How many dead people do we have around? Probably quite a bit, and God wants them to be raised; yeah, I mean it's a beautiful thing when someone who has been spiritually dead comes to life”

Table 6.12(2): Theme-codes of “dead” in Matthew 10:1-8

Observations, evaluations, and inferences

Strong

1. **Observation**: RMat03-dead-01 affirms that the Twelve actually fulfilled the imperative, νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε.

Evaluation: This is acceptable, as it affirms the anticipated result of the imperative in a literal sense.

Inference: The interpretation follows the literal sense of the imperative.

Weak

2. **Observation**: RMat02-dead-01 and RMat10-dead-02 deny the possibility of contemporary believers raising the dead.

Evaluation: This position is open to question because it reflects a cessationist understanding of miraculous gifts (see section 3.2.3).

Inference: The assertion is apparently due to the lack of a hermeneutic of faith.

3. **Observation**: RMat10-dead-01 further argues that attempts to raise physically dead persons would undermine the apostolic foundation.

Evaluation: This interpretation is difficult to sustain. The appeal to the preservation of an apostolic foundation has no evident basis in Matthew 10:1ff. (see section 5.4.6.2.2).

Inference: This interpretation is eisegetical in approach.

Hints at a hermeneutic key for interpreting νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε

1. The imperative νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε in Matthew 10:8 should be interpreted literally.
2. The raising of the dead should be regarded as a miracle that remains possible in the contemporary church.

6.5.2.8 Theme: leprosy

Text: “cleanse those who have leprosy” (Matt. 10:8)

Weak

PMat08-leprosy-01

“... Leprosy ... we saw that was a terrible, terrible disease... and people would not go anywhere near lepers. And Jesus is saying, Get near the people whom no one else will go around. Get near the people who are ... just looked at as the very lowest of society, because I told you sometimes people look at homeless people, ... people [with] ... certain sins ... and Jesus said, Get near them and cleanse them, ... throw some Holy Ghost water on them. They might not get all the way clean, but you can give them a cleansing through your salt, through your life. You could love them, you can let them know that Jesus cares about them.”

Table 6.13(2): Theme-codes of “leprosy” in Matthew 10:1-8

Observation, evaluation, and inference

1. **Observation**: PMat08-leprosy-01 treats the motif of “leprosy” metaphorically, making it represent various negative social conditions of rejected and ostracised people. It similarly proceeds to interpret the imperative to cleanse the lepers metaphorically, namely, to “throw some Holy Ghost water on them”, to “[cleanse them] through your salt, through your life”, etc.

Evaluation: This interpretation is implausible; these metaphorical categories find little support in Matthew 10:8, where reference is to actual dermatological diseases that cause sufferers to be ritually unacceptable or ceremonially unclean, and the imperative to cure such persons (and thereby restore their social and religious acceptability) is in a strictly physiological sense (see sections 5.2.4.8 and 5.4.6.2.3).

Inference: The interpretation deviates from the literal sense of the imperative, λεπρούς καθαρίζετε.

A hint at a hermeneutic key for interpreting λεπρούς καθαρίζετε

1. Interpretation of λεπρούς καθαρίζετε in Matthew 10:8 should focus literally on the miraculous cleansing of physiologically leprous people, while avoiding any metaphorical interpretation.

6.5.2.9 Theme: demon/unclean spirit

Texts: “and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits”/“drive out demons” (Matt. 10:1, 8); “and to have authority to drive out demons” (Mk. 3:15)

Strong

RMat07-demon-01

Demon possession is different from physical disease. However, demons sometimes cause physical diseases.

PMat08-demon-01

“An unclean spirit is a demon ...”

RMrk01-demon-01

“Look carefully at the language Mark uses to describe their calling: Jesus ‘called out’ these men, Jesus ‘appointed’ these men, Jesus gives them the title of ‘apostles,’ Jesus would ‘send’ them out to preach, and Jesus would give them “authority to cast out demons.”

PMrk01-demon-01

“How do we help people get free? By preaching the gospel Then along with the good news, ... we cast out demons when we encounter them.”

RLuk05-demon-01

Jesus sees the disciples’ successful preaching, healing and exorcisms as a preview of the complete defeat of Satan. The cross would signal Satan’s final downfall (Jn 12:31) and his being cast into the lake of fire would mark his end for all time (Rev 20:10).

Weak

RMat08-demon-01

“We may have been set aside by our Savior and given His authority to drive out the demons of your sin and heal the illness of your spiritual death.”

RMat08-demon-02

You cast out demons by entering into and occupying their territory and sometimes we have areas where the enemy has this hold in the sense that he is occupying a place illegally but he's there we need to move into that place and drive him out in Jesus' name and that's what God is calling us to do."

RLuk01-demon-01

When we are afraid of doing something new or risky or that can possibly fail, when we play safe, "That's our demon". When we postpone our discipleship actions, "Those are our demons, our weaknesses. And those demons have control of us".

RLuk01-demon-02

"I told her that the only way she was really going to get satisfaction was to face the demon of her shyness ... and you would have to know this person as I do to know that she is one of the most withdrawn, totally introverted people you will ever find ... she was to face the demon of her shyness and talk out the offense with her sister."

RLuk01-demon-03

"The seventy Jesus sent out came back with joy, because they faced down their demons If you want joy, wonderful joy, real joy, then take the risk of doing what Christ asks. You will find those personal demons will submit."

PLuk04-demon-01

"Jesus in v. 19 extends the call of the 70, telling them they have power over serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy ..."

Table 6.14(2): Theme-codes of "demon"/"unclean spirit" in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, 17

Observations, evaluations, and inferences

Strong

1. **Observation:** PMat08-demon-01 identifies an unclean spirit as a demon.
Evaluation: This interpretation is acceptable, since the two expressions substantially overlap in meaning and function within the Gospel narratives. As argued in sections 5.2.3.2 and 5.2.3.4, they may generally be treated together unless attention is being paid to a specific contextual nuance.
Inference: This interpretation apparently builds on the semantic proximity of the two terms.
2. **Observation:** RMat07-demon-01 distinguishes demon possession from physical disease while acknowledging that, in some instances, demonic activity may result in physical affliction.
Evaluation: This assertion is acceptable. The NT consistently distinguishes demon possession from physical disease, although in certain passages physical ailments are associated with demonic activity (cf. Matt. 12:22; 17:14-18; Lk. 13:10-16; see also Q3C of section 5.4.6.2.3).
Inference: The assertion appears to recognise the distinction between the two concepts while also acknowledging their occasional relationship within particular literary contexts.
3. **Observation:** RMrk01-demon-01 and PMrk01-demon-01 anticipate exorcism of demons both by the first disciples and by contemporary believers. While RMrk01-demon-01 particularly emphasises the authority that Jesus gives to his disciples as

a tool for exorcism of demons, both assertions emphasise the fact of a close relationship of exorcism to the preaching of the gospel.

Evaluation: These assertions are plausible. With respect to the Twelve, Mark leaves little doubt that exorcism formed part of their commission (Mk. 3:15; 6:12-13). With respect to contemporary believers, the authors reason that the authority granted by Christ remains operative and therefore continues to support the practice of exorcism. Moreover, the close literary association between preaching and exorcism in Mark 3:14-15 (cf. Matt. 10:7-8) provides a basis for treating both activities as integral components of the commission.

Inference: These assertions are grounded in the text and informed by a hermeneutic of faith.

4. **Observation:** RLuk05-demon-01 highlights exorcism of demons, together with effective preaching and healing, as “a preview of the complete defeat of Satan” pointing to his ultimate downfall.

Evaluation: This assertion is acceptable. Section 5.3.4.4 similarly presents Markan exorcisms as manifestations of the conflict between Jesus and Satan that anticipates the latter’s ultimate defeat (see also Lk. 10:17-18).

Inference: The assertion appears to draw on the literary and theological significance of exorcism within GMark.

Weak

5. **Observation:** RMat08-demon-01, RLuk01-demon-01 and RLuk01-demon-03 interpret “demon” figuratively. RMat08-demon-01 interprets it in terms of “the demons of your sin”, RLuk01-demon-01 and RLuk01-demon-03 in terms of fear and shyness.

Evaluation: These interpretations are difficult to sustain from the literary evidence. In Matthew 10:1, 8, Mark 3:15, and Luke 10:17, references to demons appear to concern actual demonic beings rather than figurative representations of fear, shyness, or personal sin (see sections 5.2.3.2 and 5.4.6.2.3 [Q3C]).

Inference: The interpretations appear to arise from a figurative reading that gives insufficient attention to the literary presentation of demons in Matthew 10:1 and 8 and Luke 10:17.

6. **Observation:** RMat08-demon-02 casts the idea of demons as territorial beings, for which reason it further claims that one can exorcise them by merely entering into and occupying such territories.

Evaluation: This assertion finds little support in Matthew 10:1 and 8. The verses focus on demonic oppression of individuals and do not explicitly address territorial spirits or the occupation of geographical spaces.

Inference: The interpretation appears to extend beyond what can be established from the immediate literary context. It therefore tends toward eisegesis.

7. **Observation:** PLuk04-demon-01 sees Jesus' statement that the Seventy have power over serpents, scorpions and all the power of the enemy as an extension of their call.

Evaluation: This interpretation is difficult to establish from the literary flow of Luke 10. The successful exorcisms reported in Luke 10:17 are presented as outcomes of the commission itself rather than as privileges subsequently added to it.

Inference: The interpretation appears to read a distinction into the text that is not explicitly present. It therefore tends toward eisegesis.

Hints at a hermeneutic key for interpreting δαιμόνια and πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον

1. Unless a particular exegetical question requires attention to their distinct nuances, "demon" and "unclean spirit" may generally be interpreted as closely related concepts (cf. Matt. 10:1, 8; Mk. 3:15; Lk. 10:17).
2. On the basis of textual and lexical evidence, both concepts should ordinarily be interpreted as referring to malevolent, personal spiritual beings rather than as figurative descriptions of abstract conditions.
3. Interpreters should avoid attributing all instances of sickness to demonic activity, since the Gospel narratives distinguish between demonic oppression and physical illness, even where the two occasionally overlap.
4. Given the close literary relationship between preaching and exorcism in Mark 3:14-15 and 6:12-13, interpreters who regard the preaching imperative as continuing today should carefully consider the implications of that continuity for the exorcism imperative as well.
5. As an integral component of the commission, exorcism should be interpreted within the broader eschatological framework of the kingdom of God, where it

functions as a sign of Satan's defeat and God's advancing reign (cf. Matt. 12:28; Lk. 10:17–19; 11:20).

6.5.2.10 Theme: exorcism

Texts: “and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits”/“drive out demons” (Matt. 10:1, 8); “and to have authority to drive out demons” (Mk. 3:15).

Strong

RMrk03-exorcism-01

“He gave them authority to drive out demons. Christ declared war on the kingdom of darkness.... Until the end of the age there was going to be a state of warfare between the seed of the woman and the serpent. The Saviour had come to destroy the works of the devil, and he gave to these men authority to cast our demons and to overthrow the reign of the god of this world.”

RMrk04-exorcism-02

“These are the three tasks given to the ones whom Christ calls: to be with him, to preach, and to drive out demons. In the light of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ we hear the call of Christ to proclaim the New Creation where he is the Ruler over everything.”

RMrk05-exorcism-01

“I love the twofold description of the ministry that is entrusted to the apostles: to preach the good news of the gospel, and to go to war against the demonic in the world. We have the privilege of announcing the gospel — the good news of what Jesus has done — and, in his power, to oppose the work of Satan.”

RMrk07-exorcism-01

“Indeed, notice His purpose in selecting the twelve: so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons. They were to be near Christ, while also going out as ambassadors of Christ. While the twelve certainly had a special office as Apostles in forming the very beginning of the church, they are also a pattern for each of us still as disciples of Christ.”

Weak

RMrk04-exorcism-01

The authority given to the disciples to drive out demons is beyond “sending demonic spirits out of possessed individuals”. However, it goes beyond that to include “setting the world of institutions and structures free also, from injustice, cruelty and neglect; from extortion, corruption and greed, from lesser gods of profit at all cost, and beating down the rest whatever it takes.”

Table 6.15(2): Theme-codes of “exorcism” in Mark 3:13-19

Observations, evaluations, and inferences

Strong

1. **Observation:** RMrk03-exorcism-01 and RMrk05-exorcism-01 interpret exorcism within a framework of spiritual conflict between Christ (the seed of the woman) and Satan (the serpent), in which demonic authority is decisively confronted and overturned.

Evaluation: These interpretations are exegetically plausible. They cohere with Markan exorcism, which functions as a sign of the in-breaking reign of God and the subversion of Satanic authority (cf. Mk. 1:24-27; 3:27; see section 5.3.4.4).

Inference: The claims appear to appropriately integrate the Markan motif of conflict Christology and reflect a text-sensitive theological reading of exorcism as eschatological confrontation.

2. **Observation:** RMrk04-exorcism-02 and RMrk05-exorcism-01 understand exorcism as one element of a triadic commission involving communion with Jesus, proclamation of the gospel, and authority over demons.

Evaluation: This reading is acceptable. Mark 3:14-15 presents these elements as a single integrated commission: the disciples are appointed to be with Jesus, to preach, and to cast out demons.

Inference: The interpretation reflects syntactic and structural sensitivity to the integrated nature of the Markan commissioning text.

3. **Observation:** RMrk07-exorcism-01 understands the Twelve as a foundational apostolic group, but also as a continuing pattern for Christian discipleship, in which closeness to Christ and commission to preach include delegated authority to cast out demons.

Evaluation: This is a theologically coherent application within a continuity-oriented hermeneutic, grounded in a typological extension of apostolic discipleship to contemporary Christian participation.

Inference: The claim reflects analogical continuity between apostolic function and present discipleship. It apparently relies in part on the text of Mark 3:14-15 and in part on the faith that present-day believers may function in the same way as the Twelve did.

Weak

4. **Observation:** RMrk04-exorcism-01 reinterprets exorcism as the removal of systemic social evils (e.g., corruption, injustice, greed).

Evaluation: This reading exceeds the semantic and referential boundaries of δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλειν in the Markan context, which consistently denotes the expulsion of personal, spiritual entities rather than the purging of abstract moral anomalies.

Inference: The interpretation tends toward eisegesis.

Hints at a hermeneutic key for interpreting δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλετε

1. Exorcism in Mark 3:13-15 should be interpreted within its eschatological conflict framework, where it signifies the manifestation of Jesus' authority over demonic forces.
2. The authority to exorcise is structurally embedded in a tripartite discipleship commission that encompasses consistent companionship with Christ,

proclamation and exorcism. It should therefore be interpreted within this framework.

3. The references to demons in Matthew 10:1, 8 and Mark 3:15 should be understood literally as personal spiritual beings, since the literary contexts provide no basis for metaphorical reinterpretations.

6.5.2.11 Theme: miracle

Texts: Implied in Matthew 10:1, 8; Mark 3:15, and Luke 10:9¹⁴⁷

Strong

RMat01-miracle-02

The disciples received clear-cut instructions: "They were told Specifically What To Preach: the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. Told Specifically the Scope of their Ministry: to Heal the Sick, Cleanse the Lepers, Raise the Dead and Cast Out Demons."

RMat03-miracle-01

The Twelve "were to preach His gospel, they also received power to heal all manner of diseases and afflictions, they even raised the dead."

RMat05-miracle-01

The miracles of healing and exorcism are evidence of God's love, care and his "work to restore us to his image for eternity".

RMat07-miracle-02

The miracles of healing and raising the dead are messianic signs.

RMat08-miracle-01

Jesus's healing of various kinds of sickness and restoration of people back to wholeness manifested the truth that "He was the Son of God, that is, he was God himself".

RMat09-miracle-01

"The signs of the breaking in of the kingdom of God in verse 8. Miracles to perform – heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons."

RMat09-miracle-03

The miracles of diverse healings that Jesus performed were authenticating signs—"signs that the kingdom of God has finally come in the appearing of Jesus Christ".

PMat01-miracle-01

"And Jesus says that their preaching would be 'backed up,' if you will, by such things as the signs and miracles listed here: healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing lepers, and driving out demons."

PMat03-miracle-01

"This power comes to us through the Holy Spirit, and by His Anointing, we receive the boldness to preach and the power for signs and wonders."

PMat03-miracle-02

"Also, in our own days, several testimonies abound to His faithfulness in manifesting His power for signs and wonders and confirming the preaching of His word."

PMat03-miracle-04

Whereas there are fake Ministers with lying wonders used to deceive people, "the truth is the power of God is still in action today, backing up the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, and this will continue to be until Jesus come".

PMat03-miracle-05

Every form of financial gratification through the performance of miracles is condemned. These include:

1. Selling material things to people with the claim that they will receive special miracles by buying them.
2. Raising a special offering after witnessing the power of God in action and making people to give more than they have planned.
3. Associating God's miracles with the money people can give or contribute to a course.
4. Organizing special miracle prayer for specific individual or group with the hope of receiving financial gain.
5. Bargaining for how much to be paid before honouring an invitation for true spiritual activity based on the grace of God upon your life.
6. Demanding or receiving financial gain with the view of being paid for the spiritual activity through the grace of God upon your life.

147 Recall that in section 2.2.3.1, it was stated that the word "miracle" is not found in the Greek NT; hence the claim here of it being *implied* in these texts.

PMat03-miracle-06

"As Jesus' disciples, we have been called and commissioned to go out and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to every nation. God has empowered us for the great assignment and will work miracles, signs and wonders to confirm our messages in the lives of the people."

PMat03-miracle-08

"He however warns them not to make merchandise of the grace and gifts of God given to them. This is because they received them freely and they must bless the people and profit the Kingdom of God with it freely."

PMat04-miracle-01

"In our own case, every believer is an officer sent by our Lord Jesus Christ, and our mandate is to use the power given to us to bring sinners to Jesus, heal the sick, set the captive free, loose the bound and heal the broken heart."

PMat06-miracle-01

The miracle imperatives in v. 8 both mirror what Jesus himself has been doing and are a continuation of his own work.

PMat07-miracle-01

"Jesus went on to commission the disciples to heal people and cast out devils just as He had been doing."

PMat08-miracle-01

Healing by Peter's shadow here acknowledged.

PMat08-miracle-02

The "good news" is constituted by the message of Jesus Christ, exorcism and healings.

PMat09-miracle-01

"... Jesus performed countless miracle, signs and wonders, and all of these things are things that should accompany those who believe today."

PMat09-miracle-02

Jesus gave authority to perform miracles to the 12, 70, and then 120 disciples. This progression points to the fact that "we have literally millions of people around the world absolutely totally capable of taking on the same mandate".

PMat09-miracle-03

The miracles anticipated in Matthew 10:8 are evidence that the message of the kingdom is not just for the ears to hear but also for the eyes to see.

PMat09-miracle-04

There is no formula for the miracles of Jesus; he approached every situation uniquely.

PMat10-miracle-01

Prioritising the interests of God's kingdom enhances the manifestation of "the signs of the power of the Kingdom"

Weak**RMat02-miracle-01**

"These powers that these men were given were the credentials needed to prove that they came in the name of Jesus. This is why Christ preformed them as well. To prove that He is the messiah. All of these miracles we see were performed for a specific purpose and that was to show that Messiah had come."

RMat02-miracle-02

"As you look through the New Testament ... you will see that the only time someone performs an amazing miracle is when God wants to show that His stamp of approval is on that individual. God never performs a miracle without a purpose. And as you read the New Testament you see these miracles begin to fade out as the word of God begins to be completed. Take for example the book of Philippians. We are told of Epaphroditus's and how he almost died when he came to Paul. Notice that Paul didn't heal him. Why not? Because by this time the whole point of the miracles had been accomplished. So, these supernatural methods were first off for giving authority to the apostles. They were like the certificate that hangs on a doctor's wall that gives him license to perform medicine."

RMat02-miracle-03

"... We can't heal anyone or raise people from the dead, but we can tell them about Jesus who can heal their broken spirit and raise them from the dead spiritually."

RMat05-miracle-02

"So like Jesus identifying himself and authenticating his identity by the miracles he did, so also the apostles are an extension of Jesus."

RMat07-miracle-01

The intensification of miracles is witnessed at the first advent and will repeat shortly before the second advent.

RMat09-miracle-02

Miraculous works are miracles seen as tools of authentication of the apostles' words.

RMat10-miracle-01

"Because God gave them authority and power, the miracles and signs and wonders that followed were a testimony that this is from God. So, he just bestows this divine power to the sent ones. ... Well, these miracles and signs were like badges upon these men."

RMat10-miracle-02

To seek miraculous signs of healing and raising the dead today is to attempt to tear down the foundations that have already been laid by the apostles and to attempt to rebuild them.

RMat10-miracle-03

By the power that Jesus gives to his disciples to perform signs mentioned in 10:8 as accompaniments to preaching, “he’s validating their ministry”.

RMat10-miracle-04

“... I can’t raise the dead, okay, neither can you; but I can preach the message of Christ.”

RMat10-miracle-05

The disciples were mandated to heal the sick soul by the preaching of the gospel, raise the dead soul to life by their message, cleanse the sinfulness of the soul, and to dispel the wicked forces and the satanic work that had invaded the heart.

RMat10-miracle-06

“... We see the wonder of grace in healing the soul and raising to life one who is dead in trespasses and sins and now made alive in Christ.”

PMat08-miracle-03

“Raise the dead: How many dead people do we have around? Probably quite a bit, and God wants them to be raised. Yeah, I mean it’s a beautiful thing when someone who has been spiritually dead comes to life. Believers’ loving and caring functioning as salt and light towards spiritually dead people helps them to catch a glimpse of a better life and that they have value and worth—as it were, their graves are opened and they realise that there is a way of escape and they do not need to remain bound.”

Table 6.16(2): Theme-codes of “miracle” in Matthew 10:1-8

Strong

PMrk01-miracle-01

“How do we help people get free? By preaching the gospel, the good news Then along with the good news, we pray for people so Jesus can heal them of their sicknesses and diseases, and we cast out demons when we encounter them.”

PMrk01-miracle-02

“God calls, God equips, and God brings the increase and does the healing, casting out of demons - all of the hard work. It’s simply ours to obey, to come at His calling, to surrender to His leading and His promptings, to look into His face day by day and follow His example of love and service.”

PMrk04-miracle-01

“He commissioned them to preach and gave them the power to heal sickness and cast out devils.”

RLuk08-miracle-01

“Jesus told his followers that they were to bring peace to the households, cast out demons and heal the sick, and proclaim that the kingdom of God had come near. These instructions of Jesus may need to be expressed in a more modern manner.”

PLuk05-miracle-01

“Pray for the needs of those around you and believe God to heal, deliver and do miracles. Those are a sign that the kingdom is near.”

PLuk05-miracle-03

“You might ask, where is the harvest field? The harvest field for us is the people around us. Our friends, our relatives, our co-workers is our immediate harvest field. How do we go into that harvest field? We go by intentionally doing what Jesus and His disciples did for our unique harvest field. We share the good news of the kingdom, we heal the sick and we free people from demonic oppression.”

PLuk05-miracle-04

“What were they to do in the towns that received them? They were to bring healing to those who were sick. And where did that healing power come from? They were to tell people that the healing power came from God’s kingdom coming near.... [T]he disciples were also casting demons out, as part of their kingdom healing.”

PLuk07-miracle-01

“... True biblical evangelism is often accompanied by signs miracles and wonders.”

PLuk07-miracle-02

“Believe that God can do the same signs, miracles and wonders in our day. What we read in Scripture, we can experience in the here and now.”

PLuk07-miracle-05

As the disciples exercised their delegated authority, their service was accompanied by a manifestation of power; which is why the 70 returned in Luke 10:17 with the report that the demons submitted to them in Christ’s name.

Weak

RMrk01-miracle-02

“In keeping with their roles as apostles, in verse 15 Jesus gave “them authority to cast out demons.” Matthew 10:1 adds that they were also given power “to heal every kind of disease and illness” (NLT). In order to authenticate their position as His apostles, Jesus gave them authority in both the physical realm (over disease) and the spiritual realm (over demons). Like Jesus Himself, their message was confirmed by the supernatural signs that they performed by His power (cf. John 3:2; 2 Cor. 12:11-12).”

RMrk10-miracle-01

"I am saying that we are seeing greater miracles today than the disciples were able to perform! Every time these doors open; every morning when we rise; every day that we live is a powerful demonstration of the power and presence of our God!"

RMrk10-miracle-04

"Involved Demonstration – The preaching ministry of these men was to be accompanied by miracles. They were given the power to heal the sick and to cast out devils. These were "sign gifts". They were given this power to validate their ministry to the people they preached to. The people knew that Jesus was a Healer and that He had power over demonic spirits. When the disciples came preaching and demonstrating that same power, the people knew that their message was real and that they were truly the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ."

PMrk07-miracle-01

"The implication of the pericope Mark 3:13-19 is that anyone who wants to lead people for a task can get them together, train them with a detailed job description. So, one can see that the content or course curriculum was built on their job description. It meant that the course content was on: 1. Sending them to preach 2. Having power to heal sicknesses 3. Casting out devils."

PLuk07-miracle-03

"In verse 9, Jesus shared a clue about something that we should be sensitive about before preaching the gospel: If there is someone sick among the unbelievers you evangelize, and you should take the opportunity to proclaim healing over them in prayer.... God still uses signs and wonders as a catalyst for conversion; he will heal in those moments in order to draw people back to himself."

Table 6.16(3): Theme-codes of "miracle" in Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9

Observations, evaluations, and inferences

Strong

1. **Observation:** RMat01-miracle-02, RMat03-miracle-01, PMat08-miracle-02, PMrk01-miracle-01, PMrk04-miracle-01 and PLuk07-miracle-01 understand miracles to be incorporated into the commission and to accompany and complement the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom. PMat08-miracle-02 asserts that "exorcism and healings" constitute the "good news" together with "the message of Jesus Christ" (i.e., preaching); PMrk01-miracle-01, that to set people free, prayer for miraculous intervention is offered "along with the good news" (i.e., preaching); and PLuk07-miracle-01, that "[t]rue biblical evangelism is often accompanied by signs miracles and wonders".

Evaluation: This interpretation is plausible. Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 present proclamation and miraculous ministry as integrated dimensions of the disciples' commission. The exegetical conclusions in sections 5.3.6.4 (P1B[2] and P1B[3]), 5.4.6.2.3 (Q3B–Q3C), and 5.5.7.2.2 (R2E) likewise support this relationship.

Inference: The interpretation is apparently grounded in the textual structures of the passages, as well as reflects an integrated reading of mission praxis.

2. **Observation:** PMat01-miracle-01 and PMat03-miracle-06 assert that miracles are confirmatory acts that accompany preaching. PMat01-miracle-01 argues this relying on the explicit imperatives in text of Matthew 10:1-8, while PMat03-miracle-06 advances the claim within a concrete proclamation framework.

Evaluation: This position is acceptable. The arrangement of the imperatives in Matthew 10:7-8 presents miraculous ministry alongside proclamation and therefore permits understanding miracles as accompanying the preached message (see section 5.4.6.2.3 [Q3B and Q3C]).

Inference: The assertions are grounded in the text of the passage.

3. **Observation:** RMat05-miracle-01 sees miracles as evidence of God's love and care, as well as his "work to restore us to his image for eternity".

Evaluation: This interpretation is plausible. The literary context of Matthew 9:35-38 portrays Jesus' ministry as arising from compassion toward distressed and helpless people, thereby providing a theological basis for understanding miracles as expressions of divine care (see sections 5.4.1, 5.4.4.1 and 5.4.5.4).

Inference: The interpretation appears to draw on the broader literary context of Matthew 10:1-8.

4. **Observation:** RMat07-miracle-02 and RMat09-miracle-03 see miracles as messianic signs.

Evaluation: This interpretation is acceptable. Matthew 11:4-5//Luke 7:22, together with Isaiah 35:5 and 61:1-3, associates Jesus' miraculous works with messianic expectation and fulfilment (see sections 2.3.3, 5.4.4.4 and 5.4.6.2.3 [Q3B]).

Inference: The interpretation appears to arise from intertextual engagement with broader biblical themes concerning the Messiah.

5. **Observation:** RMat08-miracle-01 sees Jesus' miracles as pointers to his divinity.

Evaluation: This position is plausible. Within the wider NT witness, Jesus' miraculous authority is closely related to claims concerning his divine identity and prerogatives (cf. Matt. 9:6//Mk. 2:10//Lk. 5:24; cf. Jn. 1:1//Heb. 1:2-4; see section 3.2.6).

Inference: The interpretation appears to be informed by broader NT Christology.

6. **Observation:** RMat09-miracle-01, RMat09-miracle-03, PLuk05-miracle-01 and PLuk05-miracle-04 understand miracles as signs of the in-breaking kingdom of God.

Evaluation: This interpretation is well grounded. Matthew 10:7-8 and Luke 10:9 place miraculous ministry in direct association with proclamation of the kingdom, while Matthew 12:28 and Luke 11:20 explicitly connect miraculous activity with the arrival of God's reign (see sections 5.4.4.2 and 5.4.4.4).

Inference: The interpretation appears to arise from the literary and theological relationship between miracle and kingdom in the Matthean and Lucan witness.

7. **Observation**: PMat03-miracle-01 sees the Holy Spirit as the source of power to preach and do miracles.

Evaluation: This interpretation is plausible. Luke 4:18-21 associates Jesus' ministry with the Spirit, while Acts 1:8 presents Spirit-empowerment as foundational to post-Pentecost witness and ministry (see section 5.5.8).

Inference: The interpretation appears to draw on the progressive unfolding of empowerment themes across the NT (cf. Matt. 10:1; Mk. 3:15; 6:7; Lk. 9:1; 10:19; Ac. 2:1-4 [Lk. 24:49//Ac. 1:8]).

8. **Observation**: PMat03-miracle-02, PMat03-miracle-04 and PLuk07-miracle-02 maintain that miracles continue in the contemporary church. For PMat03-miracle-04, the presence of counterfeit is not enough to deny the real. In fact, "the power of God is still in action today, backing up the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, and this will continue to be until Jesus come". For PLuk07-miracle-02, "What we read in Scripture, we can experience in the here and now."

Evaluation: This position is coherent within a continuity-oriented reading of the NT. It reflects the conviction that the commissioning patterns evident in the Gospel narratives remain relevant beyond the apostolic period.

Inference: The interpretation appears to rely on a hermeneutic of faith and continuity.

9. **Observation**: PMat03-miracle-05 and PMat03-miracle-08 condemn the commercialisation of miraculous ministry.

Evaluation: This position is textually grounded. Matthew 10:8 explicitly links the free reception of divine gifts with their free exercise in ministry (see section 5.4.6.2.3 [Q3D]).

Inference: The interpretation appears to arise from a straightforward reading of Matthew 10:8.

10. **Observation**: PMat04-miracle-01, PMat09-miracle-01 and PMat09-miracle-02 understand miraculous ministry as extending beyond the Twelve to believers more generally.

Evaluation: This interpretation is plausible. The participation of both the Twelve and the Seventy in similar ministries suggests that miraculous activity was not restricted to a single group of disciples (cf. Lk. 10:1; Ac. 2:1-4; section 5.5.5.2).

Inference: The interpretation appears to be informed by the broader distribution of ministry roles among disciples within the Gospel narratives.

11. **Observation**: PMat06-miracle-01, PMat07-miracle-01 and PLuk05-miracle-03 understand the miracles performed by the disciples as a continuation of Jesus' own ministry.

Evaluation: This interpretation is acceptable. The transition from Matthew 9:35 to Matthew 10:1-8 presents the disciples as participating in activities already exemplified by Jesus (see sections 5.4.1, 5.4.5.4 and 5.6).

Inference: The interpretation appears to arise from the literary flow of the narrative.

12. **Observation**: PMat08-miracle-01 and PMat09-miracle-04 observe that Gospel miracles follow no fixed formula.

Evaluation: This assertion is well founded. The Gospel narratives display considerable diversity in the manner in which miracles occur, and the commissioning texts prescribe no standardised procedure (see section 5.4.6.2.1 [Q1B]).

Inference: The interpretation appears to reflect broad engagement with the miracle narratives of the Gospels.

13. **Observation**: PMat09-miracle-03 sees miracles as evidence that the message of the kingdom is intended to be both proclaimed and demonstrated.

Evaluation: This interpretation is acceptable. Matthew 10:7-8, Mark 3:14-15 and Luke 10:9 consistently combine verbal proclamation with visible acts of ministry (see sections 1.2.1.1 and 5.5.5.1).

Inference: The interpretation appears to be grounded in the literary structure of the commission narratives.

14. **Observation**: PMrk01-miracle-02 maintains that God is the ultimate source of miraculous power, while believers function as his agents when they obey him and model his character.

Evaluation: This position is theologically sound. The authority exercised by the disciples throughout the commission narratives is presented as delegated rather than inherent.

Inference: The interpretation seemingly reflects appropriate attention to the textual relationship between divine authority and human agency.

15. **Observation**: RLuk08-miracle-01 advocates contextualising the communicative and demonstrative dimensions of the commission.

Evaluation: This proposal is appropriate. It corresponds with the Reformed hermeneutical concern to bridge the socio-historical and linguistic distance between the biblical world and contemporary readers (see section 4.4.3).

Inference: The interpretation appears to be informed by contextualising principles in biblical interpretation.

16. **Observation:** PLuk07-miracle-05 attributes the submission of demons to the disciples' exercise of their delegated authority.

Evaluation: This interpretation is textually grounded. Luke 10:17-19 explicitly links the disciples' success over demonic powers with authority granted by Jesus.

Inference: The interpretation appears to arise directly from the literary context of Luke 10.

Weak

17. **Observation:** RMat02-miracle-01, RMat02-miracle-02, RMat05-miracle-02, RMat09-miracle-02, RMat10-miracle-01, RMat10-miracle-03, RMrk01-miracle-02 and RMrk10-miracle-04 understand miracles primarily as proofs of Jesus' Messiahship and credentials for the disciples.

Evaluation: This interpretation is not fully persuasive. While miracles may function as signs associated with Jesus' identity and mission, the commission narratives themselves emphasise compassionate ministry, kingdom proclamation and delegated authority rather than evidential authentication (cf. Matt. 16:1, 4; Lk. 7:19-23; Jn. 2:18; section 5.4.6.2.2).

Inference: The interpretation has no explicit grounding in the immediate literary contexts. It therefore tends toward eisegesis.

18. **Observation:** RMat02-miracle-02, RMat02-miracle-03, RMat10-miracle-02 and RMat10-miracle-04 deny the continuation of miracles beyond the apostolic era. RMat02-miracle-03 denies the ability to raise the dead today, and RMat10-miracle-02 posits that desire for the miraculous is an attempt to undermine the apostolic foundations.

Evaluation: This conclusion is not supported by the texts under consideration. Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 neither address nor predict the cessation of miraculous ministry.

Inference: The interpretation appears to depend more on a prior theological framework than on the immediate textual evidence.

19. **Observation:** RMat07-miracle-01 treats miracles as phenomena restricted to particular dispensations of redemptive history.

Evaluation: This interpretation is difficult to sustain from the commissioning texts themselves, which make no distinction between periods of miraculous abundance and absence.

Inference: The interpretation appears to introduce theological assumptions not evident in the texts.

20. **Observation:** RMat10-miracle-05, RMat10-miracle-06 and PMat08-miracle-03 interpret the miracle imperatives metaphorically. Accordingly, RMat10-miracle-05 anticipates healing of “the sick soul by the preaching of the gospel”, raising “the dead soul to life by their message”, cleansing “the sinfulness of the soul”, and dispelling “the wicked forces and the satanic work that had invaded the heart”. RMat10-miracle-06 and PMat08-miracle-03 reason along similar lines, with the latter anticipating the beauty of a “spiritually dead” person coming back to life.

Evaluation: This interpretation is difficult to sustain. The miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8 refer to concrete conditions and actions and provide no literary indicators that a figurative meaning is intended (see sections 3.2.3, 4.4.2 and 4.4.5).

Inference: The interpretation appears to override the literal sense of the imperatives.

21. **Observation:** RMrk10-miracle-01 equates miracles with ordinary providential events such as daily living.

Evaluation: This interpretation lacks precision. The commissioning texts envisage acts other than the routine operations of divine providence (see section 2.2.5).

Inference: The interpretation appears to conflate distinct theological categories.

22. **Observation:** PLuk07-miracle-03 understands miracles primarily as instruments for securing conversions.

Evaluation: This interpretation overstates the evangelistic function of miracles. Although miracles may accompany proclamation, the NT records numerous instances in which miraculous acts fail to produce faith (cf. Matt. 9:34; 12:24; Mk. 3:22; Lk. 11:15).

Inference: The interpretation appears to assign a causal role to miracles that exceeds the evidence of the biblical narratives.

23. **Observation:** PMrk07-miracle-01 treats healing and exorcism primarily as elements of a training curriculum for the disciples.

Evaluation: This interpretation is unpersuasive. Mark 3:13-19 presents healing and exorcism as dimensions of an active commission rather than as instructional components within a programme of preparation.

Inference: The interpretation appears to rely on an overly pedagogical understanding of discipleship and gives insufficient weight to the immediate literary context.

Hints at a hermeneutic key for understanding “miracle”

1. Miracles should be understood as integral components of the commissions in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, functioning alongside proclamation of the kingdom of God.
2. Miracles should be interpreted as manifestations of the in-breaking kingdom of God, as well as signs associated with the messianic mission and authority of Jesus.
3. The miracles performed by the disciples should be understood as extensions of Jesus' own ministry and as visible demonstrations of the message they proclaim.
4. The miracle imperatives in the commission narratives should be interpreted according to their literal sense rather than as metaphors for spiritual or moral transformation.
5. Interpretations of the miracle texts should recognise that the NT does not explicitly restrict miraculous ministry to the apostolic age.
6. While miracles may accompany evangelism and sometimes contribute to faith responses, they should not be regarded as automatic or guaranteed instruments of conversion.
7. Miracles should be understood as acts of divine power exercised through human agents and therefore should never become objects of commercial exploitation or personal glorification.
8. Any interpretation of miracle ministry should preserve the close relationship between proclamation, healing, exorcism and the wider mission of the kingdom found in the commission narratives.

6.5.2.12 Theme: “we”

Text: none

Strong

RMat02-we-01

“We as Christians ... are called to spread the Gospel. And in spreading the gospel we are to follow Christ's example.”

RMat02-we-03

According to Matthew 10:1, power to change people comes directly from Christ, not from us.

RMat05-we-01

"In as much as we read the Bible and communicate the word of God to other people, his word and spirit are just as effective as they ever were in the time during his ministry."

RMat05-we-02

"We're passing through this time and space but with a very essential mission on behalf of others. Just as others have brought us into the kingdom of heaven so it's our work to extend that kingdom of heaven to others."

RMat05-we-03

"That makes us ambassadors of an ongoing extension of the ministry of his apostles and his own ministry, which we have had a chance to look at here at the beginning versus of Matthew 10."

RMat06-we-01

"Don't forget that in the previous passage Jesus was instructing His disciples to pray for more workers! We are some of those workers. We are to also be Gospel pioneers!"

RMat09-we-01

"Heaven and hell are at stake as we go to the world with the Gospel. The church ... is the agent of Jesus Christ in the salvation of sinners. The great issue of eternity for men and women, boys and girls, is the business of the church and a business in which every Christian is vitally involved."

RMat09-we-02

"Here's what's really at stake in the mission Jesus gives the apostles, still gives to the church today – the peace of saving grace or the destruction of divine wrath."

RMat09-we-03

"That's the real significance of the work entrusted to us, of the business of the church. Eternal destinies worked out in response to our labors. If the scope of the mission given highlights the incredible privilege that is ours we extend Jesus' work, we are His ambassadors, His spokesmen – what a privilege – then the significance of the mission highlights its urgency and its gravity and its weight."

RMat10-we-01

"And notice how Jesus instructed us in Chapter 9: He said, 'Beseech the Lord', that means, 'Pray'. So, he tells us to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send down labourers. It's very interesting because this same parallel passage in Luke 6:12, Jesus himself does the very thing he is asking us to do."

RMat10-we-02

"But I tell you he chooses to use you as believers to extend his will, not in the sense of an apostle but I want us to see the connection here that God uses people he chooses to use"

RMat10-we-03

"I can't speak for the President; he wouldn't want me to speak. But the Lord gives us authority—those who he has called—to speak with his authority. Now, he has not given the authority to speak God's word as he did the apostles, because the apostles were the ones who wrote the scriptures we have by the inspiration of the Spirit. So, there's a difference there, but I want us to see that one who is sent is an apostle."

PMat01-we-01

"The need for the harvest is workers. Jesus said to pray that God would send workers. You and I are the answer to Jesus' prayer."

PMat01-we-02

"I want us to concentrate on the first key, which is, the HELPERS IN THE HARVEST. That is, you and me. Jesus gives His disciples some instructions, and from those instructions, we find a number of principles to take with us in our mission."

PMat01-we-03

"Take the authority Jesus has given you."

PMat01-we-04

"They were simply ordinary guys, called to do an extraordinary task. This should encourage each of us. None of us are what we would describe as superstars. Nevertheless, as Jesus sent His disciples, He also sends you and I."

PMat01-we-06

"Speak the message Jesus has given you. As you go, preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.'"

PMat01-we-07

"What is the message God has given us to speak? The same one: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' In fact, it's here and available to all who will take it."

PMat03-we-01

"We have received freely the grace of God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, God is expecting us to give same freely for the blessings of mankind and to the glory of His name."

PMat03-we-05

"As Jesus' disciples, we have been called and commissioned to go out and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom to every nation."

PMat04-we-01

"The entire Gospel of Mathew stresses the authority of Jesus Christ and that which He gave unto those who believe on Him, to function and display through service. There was authority to His teaching (Matt 7:29), (1Thess. 1:5, Rom. 1:16). Jesus exercised authority in healing (Matt 8:1-13) and over Satan and He delegated that authority to

all who believe in Him. (Mk 16:17) You too can exercise your power in serving the Lord, demonstrate your faith power to heal the sick, raise the dead and perform miracles. You can do it, the power is in you."

PMat06-we-01

"... He was encouraging them to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send down laborers into the harvest field, and now they are going to be the answer to the prayer. And so, I guess it's kind of a reminder to all of us that when we pray that prayer, "Lord, send down labourers into the harvest field, that he might just want to use us to be the answers to that prayer."

PMat09-we-01

"There is evidence of the healing power of God already here right now in this place...."

PMat09-we-02

"Church, I want you to know that healing is here; Jesus the great Physician is in our midst today; he is among us and he can heal any disease."

PMat09-we-03

"I believe this is important: we as a church need to talk about healing, we need to deal with our sicknesses and come to Jesus who is able."

PMat09-we-04

"We do not believe that God heals simply because we're charismatic but because our beliefs are consistent with what the Bible says. If the Bible says it, we can believe it. And so as we engage with God's word today, may our faith in the healing power of God increase."

PMat09-we-05

"If Jesus could do it then, certainly Jesus could do it now. So, we're going to have this confidence in God that we can do what he says we can do. As he empowered his disciples, so he empowers us.... The scripture that comes to mind is the one that Jesus says that you shall do greater things than these very things that Jesus was doing...."

PMat09-we-06

"I also think that the passage that we read this morning, I mean we can apply it even to ourselves. When Jesus called the disciples in Matthew 10, the first thing he did was to give them the authority to heal."

PMat09-we-07

"As children of God, we have his authority and we have his anointing to not only see the miracles but to walk in them.... It's not just for the pastors but it's for each and every one of us."

PMat09-we-08

"As we sat on the flight and we spoke, ... the discussion led to a point where we were able to go through scriptures. We were able to talk about healing as the power of a believer, and right there on the flight we prayed together and she was healed."

PMat09-we-09

The concept of healing is so radically counter cultural; isn't it? The world is coping with sickness but we're not of this world.... If I dare to even pray or declare healing over a person with sickness, I need to be prepared to be considered insensitive by the world standards, even inside the walls of this church. It is as if I'm giving people a sense of false hope just to be disappointed again. But ..."

PMat09-we-10

"I've noticed that there's a huge gap between what the first century experienced and what we in the 21st century experience. I am convinced that we're conditioned to cope with our sickness." In a highly therapeutic world, we are quick to take medication for our illness before calling on God for healing. "We have willingly chosen alternatives instead of seeking gods healing."

PMat09-we-11

"Like the torch that is passed in the Olympics, Jesus is passing to you today a torch of healing from himself to you. Whatever his disciples did in his name bore the same results as if he did it himself. In other words, Jesus has given us license to heal. We call this the authority of the believer."

Weak

RMat02-we-02

"Now this week we are going to see that Christ is going to send out laborers into the harvest and they are going to be twelve from among His Disciples. Now there are going to be some different aspects of this call that do not apply to us today, but on the other hand we can get some valuable principals from this passage."

Table 6.17(2): Theme-codes of "we" in Matthew 10:1-8

Strong

RMrk01-we-01

"When Jesus calls you, He is calling you to a purpose that involves His kingdom and that has eternal ramifications.... Today we are thinking about Jesus' calling us, training us, appointing us, sending us, and empowering us to bless others, minister to others, and help see lives transformed by the power His gospel."

RMrk02-we-02

Jesus appoints us for four specific purposes: to be with Jesus, to be sent, to be his messengers, and to receive power.

RMrk02-we-03

"Oh...well pastor, that was for those disciples back then." That may be true BUT you and I have been called and appointed to receive that same power..."

RMrk03-we-01

"Once you say that then you are a cessationist. That is my conviction, but I don't like that phrase. It implies impoverishment or the ceasing of the flow of the Spirit in his life-giving and illuminating powers."

RMrk04-we-01

"Third, disciples are given authority to drive out demons.... In Jesus' ministry on earth this often meant sending demonic spirits out of possessed individuals. However, attacking demonic forces (which we are all still called to do)"

RMrk04-we-02

"Simply put, we are called to be able to explain the Kingdom perspective on life in its simplest and most basic terms. The Kingdom perspective says, 'Jesus is Lord'. If you can say that and know what it means, you can preach as a disciple of Jesus. To proclaim Christ as Lord means that he rules over your life and that you see this world and your life from that perspective."

RMrk04-we-03

"These are the three tasks given to the ones whom Christ calls: to be with him, to preach, and to drive out demons. In the light of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ we hear the call of Christ to proclaim the New Creation where he is the Ruler over everything."

RMrk04-we-04

"Jesus calls his own; we come to him; he makes us what we are to be."

RMrk05-we-01

"We have the privilege of announcing the gospel — the good news of what Jesus has done — and, in his power, to oppose the work of Satan."

RMrk06-we-01

"The first part of being a disciple was to be with Jesus. The same is true for us today. As followers of Jesus we must know Him and live in fellowship with Him (John 15:4-5).... The Apostles were sent out with the message and the authority of Jesus. This is the mission that Jesus gave to His disciples, and this is the mission that we have been given — to take the message of the Jesus to the world."

RMrk07-we-01

"Also like the apostles, we too are called to Christ to be sent out to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God."

RMrk07-we-02

"Like the apostles, we must preach the reality and the goodness of Jesus, especially in our culture that is increasingly hostile to His name."

RMrk10-we-01

"I said this passage was special and it is because it reminds us that anyone who will follow the Lord can be used by the Lord. As we look at the kind of men Jesus chose and used in those days it gives us hope in these days. If Jesus can use men like these in the manner that He did, then surely He can use you and me in these days. If you are saved, I want you to know that you have a place in the Lord's service."

RMrk10-we-02

"Now, while God only calls some to be preachers; He calls all His children to be witnesses! When He saved you, He placed His Spirit within you. When the Spirit came in, He gave you a testimony to share and a commission to share it, Acts 1:8. So, while you may never stand in a pulpit and preach a sermon, you can still preach the Gospel everywhere you go to every creature you encounter, Mark 16:15. Jesus still wants His disciples to declare His message!"

RMrk10-we-03

"You might not be a preacher, but He has called you to serve Him too! In fact, He calls every person He saves into His service, Eph. 2:10; James 2:18. When He saved you, He gifted you and gave a place in the body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12:7-26. I encourage you to seek His face, find your gifts and get busy for Jesus."

PMrk01-we-01

You see, when Jesus goes up on the mountain, He calls you and me (His disciples) unto Himself. He calls for us to come and join Him there. And Jesus calls you to join Him because He loves you and He wants you with Him.... He wants every single person on this earth to respond to His loving call, to come to Him on His terms by way of the cross and to be received into a loving relationship and significant purpose in Christ. Jesus wants you today."

PMrk01-we-02

"By that I mean that Jesus is here now, working in our lives day by day, creating miracles, signs, and wonders if we will choose to turn aside and look. And God creates these burning bush moments in our lives so we'll stop and look at Him, so we'll stop and listen, and so we'll go out on His mission. And He creates these burning bush or mountain top moments for you and me because He wants you."

PMrk01-we-03

"As we realize all that God has waiting for us as we respond to His call, we gain the strength and courage we need to carry on in every situation."

PMrk01-we-04

"Jesus goes up on the mountain and calls the disciples to Himself. And they choose to come. Then Jesus gives them power to go out and help others have an exodus out of bondage; in the same way God commissioned Moses to go help the children of Israel gain freedom, Jesus commissions us, His disciples, to help others find freedom from demonic, worldly, and fleshly oppression."

PMrk01-we-06

"As we interact with others, we show them the love of Jesus by giving people what they need practically, both on a spiritual level and a physical level."

PMrk01-we-07

"Jesus does this for us. He fulfills us, He brings us to Himself where we can have an encounter with Him, a mountaintop experience, and then He sends us back down into the valley to continue the mission He started."

PMrk01-we-08

"The call and the commission are worked out by the power and the promises. In other words, His power and His promises enable us to fulfill His call and His commission. And today, I want to reiterate the point that you have been the one called by Jesus Himself. You have been called up to the mountain with Him so you can be His hands and feet down in the valley."

PMrk01-we-09

"Why does it matter? Because it means that Jesus is the One making you and me into His sent-out ones.... Jesus makes us into people who can go out and preach the gospel; Jesus is the author and the cause of us going out to preach and help others in need."

RLuk01-we-02

"Jesus says that if you want joy, don't rejoice just that the demons submit. Rejoice in something much more basic: rejoice that your names are written in heaven, secure in a relationship to Christ."

RLuk04-we-01

"Jesus instructed these disciples, and in turn all believers, to ask God to send out more laborers The first thing to do is pray. Why must we pray? Because this is the Lord's work. What is impossible with men is possible with God. If there is going to be a great reaping of the harvest it will be because of God. The harvest we want is impossible with us."

RLuk04-we-02

"In the days of Christ's ministry on the earth the laborers were 'few' and they still are today. How can we ask God to send forth someone else without first saying, 'Lord, send me?' ... We cannot help but be moved to be the "someone" that God would use.... In the text we see that the ones who he had commanded to pray for laborers became workers themselves."

RLuk05-we-01

"Wherever they were accepted, they were to minister to the people there with words and deeds. They were to 'heal the sick' and proclaim the coming of God's kingdom in Jesus Christ. As Christ's disciples today we are also sent out to find those who are receptive to the Gospel message, and wherever we are received we are to minister. First, we are to minister by meeting their physical and material needs. Second, we are to witness to them and give them the plan of salvation. We are to show them how God's love purchased eternal life for them through what Jesus did at Calvary."

RLuk08-we-02

"When we are true to God's directions and boldly proclaim God's love to those around us and demonstrate God's love, great, fantastic and wonderful things will happen. When they returned, those who had been sent out expressed amazement at what the Holy Spirit had done through them. They had healed the sick, and cast out demons. People had responded to God's love and to the proclamation that the kingdom of God had come near."

RLuk09-we-01

"Christ Jesus is counting on us to tell others about His saving grace in our lives. He wants us to share with others, to pass on the good news of the gospel to others. --- 'Presbyterians just don't do that well!'"

RLuk09-we-02

"After we have experienced the love of Christ in our lives, Jesus wants us to spread the good news. He wants us to tell others so they may be able to experience that same good news in their lives."

RLuk09-we-03

"Christ Jesus wants us to reach out to those who are staggering with their burdens of life and show them His grace."

RLuk09-we-04

"You have been appointed by Christ to go reach out to our hurting world. If not now, when? If not you, who?"

RLuk10-we-01

"We are all sinners and need the help of Jesus, but at the same time Jesus is counting on us to tell others about His saving grace in our lives. He wants us to tell others how we have been changed and affected by His grace in our lives. He wants us to share with others, to pass on the good news of the gospel to others."

PLuk03-we-01

"We can't guarantee that God heals everyone but we can pray and we know this: if we don't pray for people, God's not going to work through us to heal them.... And so, we can pray for them and then announce to them, 'God's kingdom is near. His peace is available to you. You can be healed by the stripes of Jesus.'"

PLuk03-we-02

"The harvest is plentiful and God has called us to prepare the way for Jesus by proclaiming the good news. You must participate in the harvest, and the lessons that Jesus gives to harvesters are that you can pray for laborers and you're going to be on that list of people God sends."

PLuk03-we-03

"God has called us and he has positioned us and he has equipped us to be laborers in his harvest. We must participate in preparing the way for Jesus and in bringing in the harvest.... We are a frontier church. We are a church on a mission for Jesus. Circumstances don't change that mission."

PLuk05-we-01

"The problem is that there are not enough workers to bring them into the kingdom. How can they and we solve the problem of not enough workers? We must earnestly pray to the Lord, who is the Lord of the harvest, to send out more workers. And what happens when you pray that kind of prayer? You are the first ones that Jesus sends out."

PLuk05-we-02

"Let's think about how Jesus' instructions to the 72 apply to us. First of all, Jesus' instructions to any of His disciples directly do apply to us as disciples today. Each believer is called to pray for God to send more workers into the harvest. And each Jesus' follower is to be an answer to their own prayer, to be one of the workers in the plentiful harvest all around them."

PLuk05-we-03

"You might ask, Where is the harvest field? The harvest field for us is the people around us. Our friends, our relatives, our co-workers is our immediate harvest field. How do we go into that harvest field? We go by intentionally doing what Jesus and His disciples did for our unique harvest field. We share the good news of the kingdom, we heal the sick and we free people from demonic oppression."

PLuk07-we-01

"... True biblical evangelism is often accompanied by signs, miracles, and wonders. I do believe that today God can do the same things. In our day, in our time, what we read in Scripture we can experience in the here and now."

PLuk07-we-02

Many of us are willing to pray for laborers, but few of us are willing to actually work as laborers. Friends, you're not saved in order to stay home and to be comfortable.... Jesus is expecting us to be the answer to our own prayers. Jesus wants to mobilize his church. Jesus is not telling us to only pray; he is telling us to go."

PLuk07-we-03

"If there is someone sick among the unbelievers you evangelize, you should take the opportunity to proclaim healing over them in prayer. Now, this might require some boldness. You'd have to muster up your faith."

Weak

RMrk01-we-02

"Whatever God wants you to do, He is going to empower you to do it. He is going to equip you to minister to the people in your life. Don't become obsessed with casting out demons and healing diseases and illnesses. That is not the primary goal of your ministry. Your primary goal is to share the gospel and let God bring about a transformation in their heart and lives that will last for eternity. Are there going to be times where you need to address a demon, a disease, or an illness? Absolutely. But there are also times when you will need to address a life, a false belief, or a false gospel in the hearts and minds of people. God will empower you with the truth and words to say at that time."

RMrk02-we-01

"The Greek translation means "they went away unto Him." This is the idea that they left, forsook, their former work and undertook the new work assigned by Jesus. When Jesus calls you...He calls you to a new life. This means that we must forsake the old life ... our former things for a relationship with Jesus that is real and personal. Too often, these days, what we find are many who want Jesus but are unwilling to let go of the 'old man'. BUT that's not how it works."

RMrk10-we-04

In our day, we do not have those same signs following our ministries any longer. Oh, some people on TV and elsewhere claim to be able to heal and such, but they are charlatans and liars! If they can heal let them follow the New Testament model and heal whoever they meet that needs healing like Jesus and the disciples did, John 5:1-10; Acts 3:1-9. We do not need the sign gifts to validate our message. Why? The sign gifts were designed to speak to the Jewish people to let them know that their Messiah had come, 1 Cor. 14:22. Today, our message is validated by the lives Jesus changes by His grace."

RLuk01-we-01

"You see, the problem with so many of us is that we want to go around obedience to Christ. We are afraid of being out on display, and so we shy away from doing anything that's risky. That's our demon. We're afraid of failing, and so we play it safe, we take no risks, try nothing new, attempt nothing bold. That's our demon. We postpone real discipleship. We put off doing what we know we are called to do. Those are our demons, our weaknesses. And those demons have control of us. That's where we forfeit our joy. It means we have surrendered our opportunity for joy. If we do not just plunge in and do what Christ wants us to do, setting aside our anxieties, then we yield to our demons and we surrender our joy."

Table 6.17(3): Theme-codes of "we" in Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9

Observations, evaluations, and inferences

1. **Observation:** RMat02-we-01, RMat05-we-02, RMat09-we-01, PMat01-we-02, PMat03-we-05, RMrk01-we-01, RMrk04-we-03, RMrk05-we-01, RMrk10-we-02, RMrk10-we-03, PMrk01-we-01, RLuk09-we-01, RLuk09-we-02, RLuk09-we-03, RLuk09-we-04 and RLuk10-we-01 assert that contemporary believers are called to communicate the gospel to others, just as they themselves were reached through

the witness of preceding believers. RMrk10-we-02 provides one of the most comprehensive articulations of this position, stating in part: “Now, while God only calls some to be preachers; He calls all His children to be witnesses.... He gave you a testimony to share and a commission to share it.... Jesus still wants His disciples to declare His message!”

Evaluation: These claims are plausible and broadly consistent with NT imperatives and narratives concerning witness to Jesus Christ (cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Lk. 24:47; Ac. 1:8; 8:4; 13:6-12). They also align with the exegetical conclusions and applications derived from Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 (see sections 5.3.7, 5.4.7, 5.5.8 and 5.6).

Inference: The assertions appear to be grounded in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 and their wider canonical context.

2. **Observation:** RMat05-we-03, RMat09-we-02, RMat09-we-03, RMat10-we-02, RMat10-we-03, PMrk01-we-07 and PMrk01-we-08 contend that contemporary believers participate in the continuation of the ministries of Jesus and his disciples. RMat09-we-03 states that “... We extend Jesus’ work, we are His ambassadors, His spokesmen”. Similarly, PMrk01-we-07 asserts that “Jesus ... brings us to Himself ... and then He sends us back ... to continue the mission He started”.

Evaluation: These claims are plausible insofar as the NT appears to envisage continuity between the ministry of Jesus and the mission of his followers (Jn. 20:21–22; cf. Jn. 14:12; Ac. 1:8).

Inference: The assertions apparently draw upon the principle of the analogy of faith.

3. **Observation:** RMat10-we-01 and RLuk04-we-01 urge contemporary believers to pray for labourers in the harvest, following both Jesus’ own example in prayer (Lk. 6:12) and his instruction to his disciples.

Evaluation: This position is plausible, since Matthew 9:37-38 and Luke 10:2 appear to encourage believers to pray for the raising up of workers for God’s mission. This understanding is consistent with the conclusions reached in the exegesis of Matthew 10:1-8 (see section 5.4.6.2.1).

Inference: This interpretation appears to be both textually grounded and informed by literary context.

4. **Observations:** RMat06-we-01, PMat01-we-01, PMat06-we-01, RLuk04-we-02, PLuk03-we-02, PLuk03-we-03, PLuk05-we-01 and PLuk07-we-02 assert that contemporary believers themselves constitute part of the answer to the prayer for

labourers. RMat06-we-01 remarks, “We are some of those workers”. Likewise, PLuk07-we-02 states that “Jesus is expecting us to be the answer to our own prayers.... Jesus is not telling us to only pray; he is telling us to go”.

Evaluation: These claims are plausible. They cohere with the literary progression from Matthew 9:37-38 into 10:1ff. (see sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.6.2.1) and with the thrust of Luke 10:1-3 (see sections 5.5.7.2.1–5.5.7.2.2).

Inference: The assertions appear to be both text-based and literary-contextually informed.

5. **Observation:** Observation: RMat02-we-03, PMat01-we-04, RMrk04-we-04, RMrk06-we-01, RMrk07-we-01, RMrk07-we-02, RMrk10-we-01, PMrk01-we-04, PMrk01-we-05 and PMrk01-we-09 assert that, just as Jesus commissioned ordinary individuals in the first century, he similarly commissions contemporary believers without requiring extraordinary personal qualifications.

Evaluation: These claims are plausible, given that the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 is framed in a manner that extends beyond the immediate circle of the first disciples and appears to invite the participation of subsequent believers.

Inference: The interpretations seemingly rely on the wider narrative context around the Matthean and Markan commissions.

6. **Observation:** PMat01-we-03, PMat01-we-06, PMat01-we-07, PMat04-we-01, PMat09-we-05, PMat09-we-06, PMat09-we-07, PMat09-we-11, RMrk02-we-02, RMrk04-we-01, RMrk04-we-02, RLuk05-we-01 and PLuk05-we-02 claim that the authority motif, imperatives and expectations in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 remain applicable to contemporary believers. PMat09-we-11, for example, states that “Jesus is passing to you today a torch of healing from himself to you.... In other words, Jesus has given us license to heal. We call this the authority of the believer”. Similarly, PLuk05-we-02 maintains that “Jesus’ instructions to any of His disciples directly do apply to us as disciples today”.

Evaluation: This claim is plausible. The contemporary applications developed from the exegesis of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 envisage analogous responsibilities for present-day believers (see sections 5.3.7, 5.4.7, 5.5.8 and 5.6).

Inference: These claims appear to arise from a hermeneutic of faith.

7. **Observation:** RMat05-we-01, PMat09-we-01, PMat09-we-02, PMat09-we-08, RMrk02-we-03, RMrk03-we-01, PMrk01-we-02 and PLuk07-we-01 affirm that miracles continue to occur in the present.

Evaluation: This position is acceptable within a continualist framework. It appears to result from a literal and prescriptive reading of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 (see sections 4.4.5, 5.2.1 and 5.4.6.3).

Inference: These assertions seemingly depend on the literal sense of the texts while also treating their imperatives as prescriptive beyond their original setting.

8. **Observation:** PMat09-we-03 and PMat09-we-04 argue that the contemporary church should both discuss and actively seek divine healing.

Evaluation: Such a position is broadly consistent with biblical passages that present God as healer (cf. Exo. 15:26; Psa. 103:3; 1 Pet. 2:24).

Inference: Affirmation of the place of miraculous healing in contemporary Christian practice appears to reflect a hermeneutic of faith.

9. **Observation:** PMat03-we-01 encourages Christian ministry that is free from financial exploitation, on the grounds that divine grace and spiritual gifts are freely given.

Evaluation: This interpretation is consistent with the thrust of Matthew 10:8 (see section 5.4.6.2.3[Q3D]).

Inference: The interpretation appears to depend on the literal sense of the text.

10. **Observation:**

RLuk01-we-02, RLuk08-we-02, PLuk03-we-01 and PLuk07-we-03 maintain that the exercise of miracle ministry is not autonomous. Contemporary believers are urged to remain rooted in Christ, walk in obedience, and exercise faith. RLuk01-we-02, for example, emphasises the need to be “secure in a relationship to Christ”.

Evaluation: This assertion is plausible. Luke 10:19-20 suggests that successful ministry should remain subordinate to one’s relationship with God and participation in his kingdom.

Inference: This interpretation appears to take account of the broader literary context of Luke 10 rather than focusing exclusively on either the miracle imperative in v. 9 or the report of success in v. 17.

Weak

11. **Observation:** RMat02-we-02 asserts that some aspects of the disciples’ calling are not applicable to contemporary believers, though useful principles may nevertheless be drawn from Matthew 10.

Evaluation: While this position may be defensible in principle, its failure to specify which elements are transferable and which are not leaves the claim insufficiently defined. Such ambiguity may create room for divergent conclusions, including cessationist readings.

Inference: The interpretation may reflect, or at least lend itself to, a cessationist tendency.

12. **Observation:** RMrk01-we-02 asserts that the primary goal of ministry is gospel proclamation, while healing and exorcism occupy a secondary place and should not become a central concern for believers.

Evaluation: This distinction appears difficult to establish from Mark 3:13-19 itself. The passage, together with Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9, presents proclamation and miracle ministry as closely integrated dimensions of the commission. Consequently, an interpretation that hierarchically ranks these activities may be reading into the text distinctions that are not explicitly articulated.

Inference: The interpretation tends toward eisegesis.

13. **Observation:** RMrk02-we-01 interprets the disciples' response to Jesus' call as a decision to forsake the "old man" and then applies it to contemporary believers as an exhortation to embrace "a new life".

Evaluation: Although the language of the "old man" is biblically grounded (e.g., Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9), it appears more naturally related to salvation and sanctification than to the commissioning context of Mark 3:13ff., which focuses primarily on vocation and service.

Inference: The interpretation seemingly extends beyond the immediate concerns of the passage and therefore tends toward eisegesis.

14. **Observation:** RMrk10-we-04 and RMrk10-we-05 claim that miraculous signs no longer occur and that those who claim miraculous healing ministries are "charlatans and liars". In place of signs, they argue that transformed lives now function as the validation of Christian ministry.

Evaluation: This claim appears to reflect a cessationist perspective. While transformed lives undoubtedly constitute an important testimony to the gospel, the categorical denial of contemporary miraculous activity does not appear to be clearly established by explicit NT teaching.

Inference: The interpretation appears to be shaped substantially by cessationist assumptions.

15. **Observation:** RLuk01-we-01 describes fear of engaging in ministry among contemporary believers as their “demon”.

Evaluation: This figurative interpretation appears difficult to justify from Luke 10. The “demons” referenced in the passage function as personal spiritual entities within the narrative world of the text (see section 5.2.7.2.5). Recasting the term as a metaphor for fear may obscure its literary and semantic function in the passage.

Inference: The interpretation appears not to give sufficient attention to the genre and lexical meaning of the text.

Hints at a hermeneutic key for understanding the “we” dimension of the texts of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9

1. Interpreters should recognise that bearing witness to the gospel of the kingdom is not limited to the first disciples but may be understood as an ongoing responsibility of contemporary believers, who participate in the continuing mission of Jesus Christ.
2. The authority motif, together with the preaching and miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, should be carefully examined with a view to discerning their possible relevance and application to contemporary believers.
3. Interpreters should acknowledge that many Christian traditions understand miracles to remain a present reality and, accordingly, regard prayer for healing and other forms of divine intervention as legitimate dimensions of Christian faith and practice.
4. Application of the miracle imperatives should be situated within the broader framework of discipleship, emphasising the believer’s relationship with Christ, faith, obedience, and dependence on divine authority rather than personal ability.
5. The miracle imperatives should be interpreted in close relationship with the preaching mandate, reflecting the integrated manner in which proclamation and demonstration are presented in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, rather than treating one dimension as inherently subordinate to the other.

6.6 Consolidated hermeneutic key for Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9

6.6.1 Justification

Section 1.2.1.2 of this study anticipated results that could contribute to cooperation between Reformed and Pentecostal traditions. In the present study, such cooperation has been sought in the area of developing a hermeneutic key that can demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. It is therefore significant that the foregoing analyses of interpretations of these passages reveal both convergent and divergent understandings of motifs across the two traditions, broadly characterised as either “strong” or “weak” claims/assertions. In essence, the sampled Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the passages have *together* helped to highlight hermeneutical issues, which will now be leveraged to develop the said hermeneutic key.

What follows is a synthesis of the hermeneutic hints drawn from the thematic analyses above. The study depended on such a wide range of themes because, rather than exist or function in isolation in the passages, the miracle imperatives are structurally and contextually linked to other themes. Therefore, a holistic investigation of the passages—as has been done—enhances understanding of the miracle imperatives in within the contexts of the passages.

6.6.2 A hermeneutic key to demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9

The miracle imperatives in question are:

- i. ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε = *Heal the sick* (Matt. 10:8; cf. v. 1)
καὶ θεραπεύετε τοὺς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀσθενεῖς = *and heal the sick in it* (Lk. 10:9)
- ii. νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε = *raise the dead* (Matt. 10:8)
- iii. λεπροὺς καθαρίζετε = *cleanse the lepers* (Matt. 10:8)
- iv. δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλετε = *drive out demons* (Matt. 10:8)
καὶ ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἐκβάλλειν τὰ δαιμόνια = *and to have authority to drive out demons*
(Mk. 3:15)

The following multidimensional hermeneutic key is formulated to demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of these miracle imperatives:

1. Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters should give careful attention to the literal sense of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. This requires exegeting the texts primarily within the horizons of their immediate literary and contextual meaning, while exercising caution against interpretive approaches that may unduly spiritualise or metaphorise the miracle imperatives.
2. They should ground their interpretations in careful lexical and contextual study of the key themes and concepts within the texts. Such an approach helps to clarify the specific sense in which terms such as “authority”, “kingdom”, and “raise the dead” are used in their particular literary contexts, thereby reducing the likelihood of overly broad or contextually detached interpretations.
3. They should give careful attention to the literary and socio-historical significance of the existential motifs and related miracle imperatives in the texts. Such an approach helps to illuminate both the severity of the conditions described and the potential social implications of the mandated miracles. For example, the cleansing of leprosy persons may be understood not only as physiological healing but also as social restoration in GMatthew. Similarly, exorcisms in GMark may also be interpreted as carrying socio-political implications, including possible symbolic resistance to oppressive imperial structures.
4. They should explore the theological connections between the miracle imperatives and other motifs in the investigated texts, such as “kingdom”, “authority”, and “disciple”. Attention to these interrelationships may help demonstrate that the miracle imperatives are best understood within a broader literary and theological framework, while also illuminating their eschatological significance. For instance, the listed miracles may be interpreted as signs of the manifestation of the eschatological kingdom of God, the fulfilment of certain messianic expectations in the OT, and the portrayal of Christ as the compassionate Shepherd of the scattered house of Israel, particularly in GMatthew. They may also be understood as anticipatory signs pointing toward ultimate restoration at the Parousia. Similarly, exorcisms may function as

foretaste motifs of the eventual defeat of Satan and the kingdom of darkness through Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God.

5. They should intentionally emphasise the literary connection between the miracle imperatives and the mission mandate in the texts. Such an approach may help frame redemption in a more holistic sense, encompassing spiritual, moral, and existential restoration. It is also important to observe that the texts do not present miracles as contingent upon prior repentance. Within this literary context—particularly in Matthew 10:1ff. and Luke 10:1ff.—both explicit and implicit instructions may be understood as suggesting that mission agents or miracle workers were expected to exercise their ministry free of charge. This emphasis may help guard against tendencies toward merchandising, exploitation, or self-aggrandisement in contemporary ministerial practice.
6. Where appropriate, Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters should carefully contextualise the meaning and contemporary relevance of the miracle imperatives. For example, λεπρός (“leprosy”) in Matthew 10:8 may be interpreted more broadly to include conditions analogous to leprosy and other serious skin-related diseases recognised in contemporary contexts. Consequently, λεπρούς καθαρίζετε (“cleanse the lepers”) may also be understood as extending beyond the treatment of leprosy alone to encompass the healing of comparable afflictions in present contexts.
7. They may need to develop a hermeneutic of faith, by which is meant an interpretive disposition that regards the miracle imperatives as potentially valid and applicable within contemporary Christian contexts, and as invitations to believers—as disciples of Christ—to exercise Christ-given authority in ministering to the sick, oppressed, and afflicted. The proposed hermeneutic of faith would then serve as a helpful safeguard against certain concessional, cessationist, or overly spiritualised interpretations of the miracle imperatives repeatedly observed in the analysed samples. Indeed, considering the literary parity between the miracle imperatives and particularly the preaching imperative in the texts, one may reasonably infer that if the latter is regarded as valid and applicable today, then there are grounds for considering the former equally valid and applicable. Similarly, if people are saved today when the message of the kingdom is preached, one may also expect that people could receive such miracles when Christ’s messengers minister to them for such purposes.

8. One important hermeneutical element that Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters should give greater attention to is compassion. This emphasis is largely absent from the sampled interpretations, except in PMat01-disciple-02, where the idea of compassion is only peripherally mentioned. Nevertheless, the Gospel narratives suggest that compassion constitutes an important basis for Jesus' miracles and the miracle imperatives given to his disciples. Compassion should therefore be highlighted as a significant disposition in relation to the performance of the anticipated miracles.
9. Finally, they should hold their interpretations of the miracle imperatives with a degree of tentativeness that allows for refinement as their understanding of the texts continues to deepen.

6.6.3 Conclusion

In pursuit of the ideal of cooperation between Reformed and Pentecostal traditions, this section has sought to develop a hermeneutic key for interpreting the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 in a manner that can meaningfully engage both Reformed and Pentecostal concerns. In the process, it has synthesised relevant theme-related hermeneutical insights generated earlier and, on that basis, proposed interpretive guidelines that may assist in the plausible interpretation of the miracle imperatives in these passages. Although the initial aim was to formulate a concise hermeneutic key, the analysis ultimately required a more nuanced and multidimensional framework. This multiplicity reflects the broader complexity of interpretation, particularly in relation to biblical texts. The motif of NT miracle has a rich and diverse interpretive history and, as demonstrated above, both Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters continue to navigate this complexity in their attempts to interpret the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.

6.7 Summary and conclusion

This chapter has culminated in the design of a modestly-framed, multidimensional hermeneutic key for demonstrating the strengths and helping to reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. The guidelines in the key are largely methodologically grounded in nature, and the suggestions made have been informed by inferences drawn from the interaction between the sampled Reformed and

Pentecostal interpretations of the passages on the one hand, and the theoretical and exegetical conclusions reached in the preceding chapters on the other hand.

Qualitatively, the sampled interpretations within the two traditions exhibit varying strengths and weaknesses in their hermeneutical engagement with the miracle imperatives in the selected passages. Consequently, neither tradition can be regarded as inherently superior in its interpretation of these imperatives. A more productive approach, therefore, involves integrating both convergent and divergent insights in such a way that the strengths and weaknesses across both traditions serve as mutually informative hermeneutical cues, as has been demonstrated above. In this way, both traditions make significant contributions, and both literal and non-literal interpretive approaches yield valuable insights for the formulation of a more robust hermeneutic.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The main aim of this research, as stated in section 1.3.1, was *to develop a hermeneutic key that can demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches to the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.*

To achieve the above aim, the following objectives were formulated in section 1.3.2:

1. to study the meaning and role of “miracle” in the New Testament;
2. to study the history of interpretation of New Testament miracle stories within Reformed and Pentecostal traditions;
3. to study the natures of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutics;
4. to examine the meaning of Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9 from a Reformed exegetical perspective;
5. to examine the understandings of the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 by contemporary Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters; and
6. to develop a hermeneutic key that can demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutical approaches to the miracle imperatives in Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9.

This concluding chapter summarises findings from chapters 2–6, draws conclusions, and offers some recommendations.

7.2 Summary of findings

Chapter 2 examined the meaning and role of miracles in the NT from philosophical, etymological, socio-historical, and biblical-literary perspectives. Philosophically, the study engaged David Hume’s influential definition of miracles as violations of the laws of nature but found it inadequate for interpreting NT miracle accounts. It argued that concepts such as “nature” and “natural law” are neither sufficiently uniform nor stable to serve as definitive criteria for assessing miracle claims. Moreover, Hume’s reliance on human empirical experience as the primary measure of reality was considered too restrictive for a biblical worldview that presents God as sovereign over creation rather

than subject to its processes. In contrast, theories of causation and intentionality were found more helpful because they interpret miracles as purposeful acts of divine agency.

From etymological and socio-historical perspectives, the study traced the English term “miracle” to the Latin *miraculum*, which denotes an event that evokes wonder or amazement. Similar emphases were found in Graeco-Roman culture and in the Greek term *θαῦμα*, both of which focus primarily on the observer’s reaction. While these perspectives illuminate important aspects of miraculous phenomena, they were judged insufficient because they do not adequately account for the theological significance of miracles or the biblical emphasis on divine agency.

The study therefore turned to the New Testament’s own vocabulary, highlighting four key terms: σημεῖα (“signs”), τέρατα (“wonders”), δυνάμεις (“mighty deeds” or manifestations of power), and ἔργα (“works”). Together, these terms portray miracles as revelatory acts that manifest divine power, evoke wonder, and point beyond themselves to theological realities such as the kingdom of God and the identity of Jesus Christ. On this basis, the study proposed a working definition that integrates these complementary dimensions.

Regarding function, the study concluded that miracles occupy a significant place within the NT narrative. They serve as signs associated with Jesus’ messianic identity, manifestations of the kingdom of God, and expressions of divine compassion toward human suffering. They also perform apologetic, theological, and faith-related functions, underscoring their importance within the ministry of Jesus and the broader witness of the New Testament.

Chapter 3 examined the history of interpretation of NT miracle narratives within Reformed and Pentecostal traditions. It found that Reformed engagement with miracles emerged from the 16th-century Protestant Reformation, particularly through critiques of medieval Catholic miracle claims such as relics, saintly miracles, and Eucharistic transformations. While these critiques were theologically significant, they often extended to scepticism toward contemporary miracle activity, contributing to cessationist tendencies within parts of the tradition. The absence of a single, unified

Reformation doctrine of miracles further encouraged diversity in later Reformed interpretations.

Among the Reformers, Martin Luther displayed some interpretive tension, affirming divine action while often placing greater emphasis on the theological and soteriological significance of miracles than on their contemporary occurrence. John Calvin viewed miracles as signs that authenticated divine revelation and pointed to Christ, but his restriction of apostolic miracles to a particular historical period inadvertently contributed to a cessationist trajectory. Huldrych Zwingli's rejection of superstition, saintly miracles, and transubstantiation reinforced confidence in Scripture while also diminishing expectations of miraculous activity in ecclesial life. The study also noted that some contemporary Reformed theologians adopt more open positions. Vern Poythress interprets miracles as Christological signs that continue to testify to Christ's reign and future consummation, while Wayne Grudem affirms the ongoing possibility of miracles as divine acts that bear witness to God and support the proclamation of the gospel.

Pentecostal interpretation developed within a context that strongly emphasised religious experience and the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit. Influenced by the Holiness Movement and early 20th-century revivalism, Pentecostalism cultivated a robust theology of healing and miracles. Charles Parham viewed healing as a redemptive provision available to believers, while William Seymour integrated healing and deliverance into revival practice as expressions of Spirit empowerment and Christ's saving work. Among contemporary Pentecostal scholars, Thomas Samuel highlights the missional and soteriological functions of miracles in Luke–Acts, Øyvind Andersen situates healing within the kingdom of God and its redemptive purposes, and Gordon Fee emphasises the Holy Spirit's role in empowering ministry while affirming the continuing work of the Spirit in the church.

Chapter 4 examined the nature of Reformed and Pentecostal hermeneutics as the theoretical framework for the study. It began by defining hermeneutics as the discipline concerned with understanding and interpreting communication, and biblical hermeneutics as the specialised field that develops the principles and methods required for interpreting Scripture. The chapter argued that biblical hermeneutics is necessary because of linguistic, cultural, historical, and contextual distances between

modern readers and the biblical world, as well as the unique backgrounds of individual biblical books. Consequently, hermeneutics serves as a guide for arriving at interpretations that are appropriate to the text.

The study found that Reformed hermeneutics places strong emphasis on the authority of Scripture as the inspired Word of God and seeks interpretations that are consistent with both the immediate text and the broader redemptive message of the Bible. Its distinctive features include a historical-grammatical and redemptive-historical approach, together with close attention to textual and contextual details. Key Reformed presuppositions include the inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of Scripture. Correspondingly, its interpretive principles stress authorial intent, historical and literary context, grammatical analysis, genre sensitivity, and the analogy of Scripture.

In contrast, the study noted that Pentecostal hermeneutics is more difficult to define because of the diversity within the Pentecostal movement. Nevertheless, it identified several recurring characteristics, including the importance of experience, narrative, praxis, and the continuing activity of the Holy Spirit in interpretation. Pentecostal hermeneutical presuppositions include the formative role of Pentecostal spirituality, the Spirit's ongoing work in illuminating and transforming believers through Scripture, the authority of the Bible, and the influence of Full Gospel and restorationist convictions. Its interpretive principles include reading Scripture as a unified narrative, employing intertextual connections, reading Christologically, recognising the experiential dimension of understanding, and interpreting Scripture through the dynamic interaction of *Spirit*, *text*, and *community*.

Chapter 5 undertook a Reformed exegetical investigation of Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9 in order to establish an exegetical basis for evaluating Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of the miracle imperatives in these passages and for developing a hermeneutic key for demonstrating the strengths and minimising the weaknesses of both traditions. The study employed both synchronic and diachronic methods, including word-studies, literary analysis, and socio-historical investigation.

With respect to Mark 3:13-19, the analysis found that discipleship in the passage is inseparably linked to authoritative service. In its socio-historical setting, exorcism symbolically reflected resistance to oppressive structures, particularly Roman domination, while at the narrative level it referred to the literal expulsion of demons. The passage was therefore understood as portraying disciples as those called to remain with Jesus, proclaim the kingdom of God, and exercise delegated authority over demonic forces. Matthew 10:1-8 was interpreted within Matthew's wider missionary framework, extending from the proclamation of the kingdom in the early chapters to the Great Commission in Matthew 28. The miracle imperatives were seen as expressions of messianic fulfilment and as extensions of Jesus' own authority to his disciples. The study further highlighted the theme of compassion, portraying Jesus as the true Shepherd who responds to Israel's neglected condition by sending disciples to minister to the "lost sheep". Consequently, the miracles of exorcism, healing, cleansing leprosy, and raising the dead were understood as literal, compassion-driven acts.

Regarding Luke 10:1-9, the analysis concluded that Luke–Acts was written largely for Gentile God-fearers who required assurance concerning the truth of the Christian faith and the availability of salvation. The commissioning of the Seventy was interpreted as evidence of the inclusiveness and expansion of mission beyond the Twelve. The passage contributes to Luke's emphasis on immediate, holistic salvation, the proclamation of God's kingdom, and ministry to the marginalised. The Seventy were commissioned both to proclaim the kingdom and to heal the sick, thereby foreshadowing Jesus' own ministry.

Drawing together the findings from all three passages, the study concluded that the contemporary church is called to cultivate committed disciples, recruit and support labourers for mission, proclaim the gospel authoritatively, minister compassionately to those in need, and avoid exploiting spiritual gifts for financial gain. It further argued that Mark challenges the church to confront evil with confidence in Christ's victory, Matthew emphasises compassion-driven ministry to the lost and suffering, and Luke calls the church to urgent, inclusive, and holistic mission that integrates proclamation with practical relief and care for all people.

Chapter 6 focused on analysing sampled Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 in order to develop a hermeneutic key that can demonstrate the strengths and help reduce the weaknesses of both traditions in their interpretation of the miracle imperatives in the passages. The study examined sixty (60) online units of analysis organised into six (6) strata and analysed them using ATLAS.ti 24.

Fifteen themes were identified from concepts found in or related to the passages: kingdom, authority, disciple, demon, exorcism, leprosy, cleanse, preach, dead, raise, sick, heal, miracle, mission, and “we”. Twelve themes were ultimately analysed, while three (cleanse, raise, and sick) were excluded because they received no treatment in the sampled materials. From 397 quotations, the study generated 434 theme-codes, which were classified as either “strong” or “weak” according to the plausibility of their claims. These classifications were then used to formulate hermeneutic hints and, subsequently, the proposed hermeneutic key.

Analysis of the strong theme-codes revealed recurring interpretive characteristics. More plausible interpretations tended to be grounded in the texts of the passages, informed by relevant biblical and theological data, sensitive to literary and socio-historical contexts, based on careful word-study, attentive to genre, and supported by broader scriptural connections. They also commonly reflected a hermeneutic of faith, a continualist understanding of miracles, the analogy of faith, contextualisation, and a commitment to the plain sense of the texts. By contrast, the weak theme-codes often displayed limited lexical and contextual sensitivity, insufficient attention to literary and grammatical considerations, departures from the apparent sense of the passages, and tendencies toward eisegesis. Many also reflected cessationist assumptions and a more cautious approach to the continuing operation of miracles.

The study identified four miracle imperatives in the passages—healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing lepers, and driving out demons—and developed a hermeneutic key for their interpretation. This key highlights the value of careful attention to the literal sense of the texts, word-study, literary and socio-historical contexts, theological and missional connections, contextualisation, compassion, a hermeneutic of faith, and interpretive tentativeness. Taken together, these principles are proposed as a

framework for promoting more balanced and textually grounded interpretations of the miracle imperatives by both Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters.

7.3 Conclusion

This study concludes that, for theological and practical purposes, the biblical concept of “miracle” should be understood in light of the cluster of NT terms that collectively express it—σημεῖον (“sign”), τέρας (“wonder”), δύναμις (“mighty deed”, “power”, or “inherent ability”), and ἔργον (“work”). Each term contributes a complementary dimension to the concept and helps to illuminate its meaning and function within the NT. Moreover, the significant role played by the miracle subgenre in the NT leads to the conclusion that its interpretation requires careful attention to its biblical meaning and usage, lest it be trivialised or misrepresented. By extension, the study also concludes that the NT miracle imperatives should be recognised as integral—and therefore valid—components of the Bible’s treatment of this subgenre.

Based on the evidence examined in this study, the primary guiding principle for scholarly or practical reflection on the miracle subgenre should remain the testimony of Scripture itself, irrespective of one’s theological persuasion. This is not to deny the role of presuppositions in the interpretation of biblical texts; rather, while acknowledging the inevitability of presuppositions, the study calls interpreters to uphold the hermeneutical principle that the authority of Scripture must remain paramount. Both the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions share a commitment to this ideal and should therefore be able to embrace the responsibility of giving primacy to biblical witness in their interpretation of the miracle motif. With particular reference to the NT miracle imperatives, and insofar as Scripture does not explicitly foreclose their relevance for the contemporary church, interpreters within both traditions bear the responsibility of reassessing traditional assumptions wherever these appear to be in tension with the biblical evidence.

With respect to the four miracle imperatives—ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε, νεκροὺς ἐγείρετε, λεπροὺς καθαρίζετε, and δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλετε—the exegeses of Mark 3:13-19, Matthew 10:1-8 and Luke 10:1-9 led to the conclusion that, on a synchronic level, these expressions are communicated in plain language and are not presented as metaphors. Accordingly, they refer respectively to the miraculous healing of physiologically sick persons, the miraculous restoration of physiologically dead

persons to life, the miraculous healing—and consequent ritual cleansing—of persons afflicted with leprosy, and the miraculous expulsion of demons.

At the same time, although all four imperatives synchronically address concrete existential conditions, they also carry diachronic implications. As elements of the Synoptic Gospels' vision of the kingdom of God, they portray the ideals and benefits of God's reign and offer hope to the faith communities addressed by the Evangelists amid their particular socio-historical circumstances. More specifically, the study found that exorcism narratives in GMatthew and GMark may also function symbolically by evoking aspirations for liberation from oppressive structures, including Roman domination. Such diachronic dimensions suggest that biblical miracle narratives and imperatives may continue to encourage the church to confront evil and oppression in its various forms, while remaining confident in the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom.

Finally, the analysis of sampled interpretations led to the conclusion that variations in the understanding of miracle-related themes within the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions demonstrate that interpretive diversity is not merely an inter-traditional ("us-versus-them") phenomenon but also an intra-traditional reality. As shown throughout the study, both traditions produced interpretations that were classified as either "strong" or "weak". Consequently, neither tradition exhibited complete interpretive uniformity and, within the limits of this study, neither could be regarded as inherently more hermeneutically stable than the other¹⁴⁸.

At the same time, these interpretive divergences created an opportunity to move beyond the frequently dichotomous treatment of the Reformed and Pentecostal traditions and to explore the possibility of constructive synergy between them. For this reason, the various assertions were evaluated and analysed on their individual merits rather than on the basis of their ecclesial affiliation. As a result, both Reformed and Pentecostal data contributed meaningfully to the formulation of the proposed hermeneutic key. The hermeneutic key may therefore be described as a modest, purpose-specific interpretive aid that draws upon the complementary strengths of the sampled Reformed and Pentecostal interpretations while providing helpful safeguards

148 A more rigorous numerical analysis might have clarified these differentials, but because the study was qualitative in nature, it only attended to quantities cursorily, as shown in Appendix 4.

against some of their respective limitations. It is however not intended to function as a definitive interpretive standard but rather as a guiding framework for engaging the miracle imperatives examined in this study. Its formulation thus represents an effort to encourage the kind of constructive collaboration between the two traditions envisioned at the outset of the research.

7.4 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters of the NT miracle subgenre should allow biblical testimony to remain central to their interpretive efforts. Such an approach may assist them in recognising the existential implications of the conditions described in miracle narratives and targeted by the miracle imperatives, as well as the biblical portrayal of God's disposition toward such situations. In turn, this may encourage the development of hermeneutically sound interpretations that can contribute meaningfully to contemporary engagement with similar human needs and challenges.
2. Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters may benefit from giving serious consideration to the possibility that NT miracles and miracle imperatives retain contemporary relevance. Accordingly, they may approach Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 with openness to the theological and practical implications of these texts for present-day faith communities. Reformed and Pentecostal churches may also explore ways of translating the messages of these passages into practical forms of ministry and service. Such efforts could include the intentional preparation of clergy and laity for ministries of prayer, healing, care, and deliverance, consistent with their theological convictions.
3. Interpreters should endeavour to read the miracle imperatives in accordance with the way they are presented in the texts and should exercise caution in adopting metaphorical interpretations that lack clear textual support. At the same time, attention should be given to the socio-historical contexts of NT miracle narratives and imperatives so that their broader theological and social implications, particularly with respect to the reign of God, may be more adequately appreciated and applied.

4. Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9 are encouraged to consider the hermeneutic key proposed in this study alongside other established interpretive methods and insights. Its use may contribute to strengthening interpretations of the miracle imperatives while helping to minimise some of the hermeneutical limitations identified in the course of the research.
5. Reformed and Pentecostal researchers are encouraged to undertake further studies that evaluate, refine, and expand the hermeneutic key developed in this study. In particular, this researcher suggests:
 - i. that future studies explore the possibility of collaborative research involving both Reformed and Pentecostal scholars, thereby facilitating mutual critique, the integration of diverse theological perspectives, and findings that may be more widely received across the two traditions;
 - ii. that the scope of such investigations be expanded to include additional NT passages, larger sample sizes, and a broader range of Reformed and Pentecostal expressions, thereby enriching the available data and enhancing the representativeness of the findings; and
 - iii. that future investigations incorporate a quantitative component, preferably within clearly defined local contexts, in order to empirically assess the extent of hermeneutical agreement and divergence regarding the miracle imperatives among Reformed and Pentecostal interpreters. Such an approach could complement qualitative findings by providing statistical estimates, testing emerging patterns, and facilitating comparative analyses across different groups within the two traditions.

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APPENDICES

Seven (7) appendices are attached hereunder, namely, Appendix 1A, Appendix 1B, Appendix 2A, Appendix 2B, Appendix 3A, Appendix 3B, and Appendix 4.

Appendices 1A–3B provide detailed source information about the units of analysis that were studied in this research. Each appendix has ten (10) units of analysis, each of which is described by the pericope being interpreted, the topic of the sermon/message, the author, denomination and/or tradition of origin, date of publication, date of access, source web address, and, in some instances, confirmation of Reformed or Pentecostal background (where this is not explicit in the source information). Under the column “Pericope”, each unit of analysis carries a subscript, “tx”, “ad”, or “vd”, indicating that it is a textual, audio or video material respectively.

Appendix 4 presents cursory quantitative analyses of the twelve themes identified and investigated in the empirical analyses of samples of interpretation of Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9. These are: kingdom, authority, disciple, demon, exorcism, leprosy, preach, dead, heal, miracle, mission, and “we”.

Appendix 1A: Details of sampled Reformed interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8

S/No	Pericope	Topic of the sermon/message	Author	Denomination/ Tradition	Date of publication	Date of access
1	RMat01 _{tx} : Matthew 10:1-21	A tribal thing	Norris Harris I.	Baptist	27/11/2002	17/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/a-tribal-thing-norris-harris-i-sermon-on-sharing-my-testimony-52760				
2	RMat02 _{tx} : Matthew 10:1-15	Not the equipped but the called	John Graves	Baptist	03/03/2007	17/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/not-the-equipped-but-the-called-john-graves-sermon-on-evangelism-fear-of-103376				
3	RMat03 _{tx} : Matthew 10:1-8	And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand	William D. Brown	Baptist	01/04/2014	17/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/and-as-ye-go-preach-saying-the-kingdom-of-heaven-is-at-hand-william-d-brown-sermon-on-apostles-general-184315				
4	RMat04 _{ad} : Matthew 10	Empty-handed evangelists?	Cara DeHaan	Reformed Christian Church	16/02/2020	27/09/2023
	Source address	https://faithcrc.ca/archive/empty-handed-evangelists/				
5	RMat05 _{ad} : Matthew 9:35–10:15	The Call of the Undershepherd	Michael Mudlaff	Presbyterian	11/06/2022	24/09/2023
	Source address	http://www.westkirk.org/resources/messages/the-call-of-the-undershepherd-matthew-935-1015/				
6	RMat06 _{tx} : Matthew 10:1-15	The Gospel Pioneers	Matthew C. McCraw	Baptist	19/05/2019	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://fbcbartow.org/sermons/gospel-pioneers-matthew-101-15/#:~:text=Jesus%20is%20telling%20the%20disciples,King%20is%20in%20the%20midst				
7	RMat07 _{vd} : Matthew 10:1-42 (YouTube)	Matthew 10:1-42 lesson	Bob Utley	Baptist	04/03/2014	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.bing.com/search?q=1.+Matthew+10%3A1-42+lesson+%E2%80%93+Bob+Utley&cvid=753710c3b2a445feb8b47ea02f32720&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIFCAEQ6wfSAQg3MzE2ajBqMagCALACAA&FORM=ANAB01&PC=U531				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	http://www.biblelessonsintl.com/founder.htm				
8	RMat08 _{tx} : Matthew 9:35-10:8 = 08	A compassionate harvest	Sherman D. Stenson	Lutheran	15/06/2015	18/09/2023

	Source address	https://www.bing.com/search?pglt=41&q=Matthew+9%3A35-10%3A8+Archives+-+St+Paul+Lutheran+Church+A+Compassionate+Harvest+DATE+June+15%2C+2008+SPEAKER+Rev.+Sherman+D.+Stenson%2C+Associate+Pastor&cvid=5edafdc7216c431cadb05e8aacdf660f&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIFCAEQ6wfSAQc3MzJqMGoxqAIA&FORM=ANNTA1&PC=U531				
9	RMat09 _{tx} : Matthew 10:1-15	Sacrificial Generosity	David Strain	Presbyterian	03/11/2014	24/09/2023
	Source address	https://fpcjackson.org/resource-library/sermons/sacrificial-generosity/				
10	RMat10 _{vd} : Matthew 10:1-8 (YouTube)	The Shepherd of Israel and his shepherds	Grace Covenant Church Gunnison	Confessional Reformed Baptist	28/08/2022	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7B50B29ZR8				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	https://www.bing.com/search?pglt=41&q=grace+covenant+church+gunnison+about&cvid=131e0d8dd98b48f298c74b03698ff0c8&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIFCAEQ6wcyBggCEEUYQNIBCTE1MjM1ajBqMagCALACAA&FORM=ANNTA1&PC=U531				

Appendix 1B: Details of sampled Pentecostal interpretations of Matthew 10:1-8

S/No	Pericope	Topic of the sermon/message	Author	Denomination/ Tradition	Date of publication	Date of access
1	PMat01 _{tx} : Matthew 10:1-10	Helpers in the harvest	Ralph Juthman	Pentecostal	02/11/2008	17/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/helpers-in-the-harvest-ralph-juthman-sermon-on-missions-128355				
2	PMat02 _{tx} : Matthew 10:1-16	Individual work versus team work	Tesh Njokanma	Pentecostal	24/05/2015	17/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/individual-work-versus-team-work-tesh-njokanma-sermon-on-teamwork-193874				
3	PMat03 _{tx} : Matthew 10:1-8	Freely ye have received freely give	Julius Soyinka	Pentecostal	01/02/2023	17/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/freely-ye-have-received-freely-give-bishop-prof-julius-soyinka-sermon-on-gifts-of-god-271203				
4	PMat04 _{tx} : Matthew 10:1-8	Power for service	Nnaemeka Durueke	Pentecostal	30/05/2016	17/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/power-for-service-nnaemeka-durueke-sermon-on-holy-spirit-s-power-202184				
5	PMat05 _{tx} : Matthew 10:1-39	The authority of the believer	Paul Vincent	Assembly of God	18/10/2000	17/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/the-authority-of-the-believer-paul-vincent-sermon-on--18470				
6	PMat06 _{vd} : Matthew 10 (Facebook)	Devotions with Dan – Matthew 10	Connaught Heights Pentecostal Assembly	Pentecostal	05/01/2021	27/09/2023
	Source address	https://web.facebook.com/ConnaughtHeightsPentecostalAssembly/videos/218950443236345				
7	PMat07 _{tx} : Matthew 9:35-10:15	Daybreak: Matthew 9:35 through 10:15	Apostolic Faith Church	Pentecostal	03/03/2021	12/10/2023
	Source address	https://apostolicfaith.org.uk/devotionals/daybreak-matthew-935-through-1015/				
8	PMat08 _{vd} : Matthew 10:1-15 (Facebook)	Grace Chapel Hemet Foursquare Church		Pentecostal	11/10/2020	23/10/2023
	Source address	https://mobile.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=832544930818682&paipv=0&eav=AfbUrZEvyd4zElsm0o1BwiGRBV4wwuA76QrjNGzy57xJoHExVlcSmunv1rcKlrMWtEl&_rdar				
9	PMat09 _{vd} : Matthew 9:35–10:8	Flashback – Heal the sick	Chris Pediath	Waterloo Pentecostal Assembly	March 31, 2019	16/06/2024
	Source address	d3d9lb6d44soir.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/20190401121447/2019-03-31-Flashback-1-Heal-the-Sick-1.mp3				
	Confirmation of Pentecostal background			https://wpa.church/sermons/		

10	PMat10 _{vd} : Matthew 10:1-15 (translated)		Simion Timbuc	Bethesda (Betezda) Romanian Pentecostal Church	20/03/2022	17/06/2024
	Source address	https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=1df6290f1908df70JmltdHM9MTY5NDk5NTIwMCZpZ3VpZD0xMjgzZDQ5NC0yOGViLTZyODktMjAzMC1jNzkzMjl mNjYyOTMmaW5zaWQ9NTE4Mw&pfn=3&hsh=3&fclid=1283d494-28eb-6389-2030-c79329f66293&psq=6.+Matt+10%3a1-15+%e2%80%93+Pastor+Simion+Timbuc+(Betezda+Church+%e2%80%93+Romanian+Pentecostal+%e2%80%a6)&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cueW91dHVIZS5jb20vd2F0Y2g_dj1iYmJ0SERa0Jubw&ntb=1				

Appendix 2A: Details of sampled Reformed interpretations of Mark 3:13-19

S/No	Pericope	Topic of the sermon/message	Author	Denomination/ Tradition	Date of publication	Date of access
1	RMrk01 _{ix} : Mark 3:13-19	Jesus: Prepares you for a purpose	Jeff Stort	Reformed	27/07/2020	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://truthappliedjs.com/mark-313-19-jesus-prepares-you-for-a-purpose/				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	https://truthappliedjs.com/about/				
2	RMrk02 _{ix} : Mark 3:13-19	Called...appointed and changed by the Master	James Lee	Baptist	21/11/2013	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/called-8230-appointed-and-changed-by-the-master-8221-mark-3-13-19-james-lee-sermon-on-transformation-180645				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	http://geoffthomas.org/index.php/gtsermons/313-19-the-calling-of-the-twelve/				
3	RMrk03 _{ix} : Mark 3:13-19	The calling of the Twelve	Geoff Thomas	Reformed	09/03/2003	18/09/2023
	Source address	http://geoffthomas.org/index.php/gtsermons/313-19-the-calling-of-the-twelve/				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	http://geoffthomas.org/				
4	RMrk04 _{ix} : Mark 3:13-19	The school of discipleship	Mark Verbruggen	Reformed	16/09/2017	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://thirdmill.org/articles/mar_verbruggen/mar_verbruggen.schoolofdiscipleship.2.html				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	https://thirdmill.org/search.asp/au/mar_verbruggen				
5	RMrk05 _{ix} : Mark 3:13-21	Jesus chooses nobodies	Darryl Dash	Reformed	19/08/2018	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.dashhouse.com/jesus-chooses-nobodies-mark-313-21/				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	https://libertygrace.ca/beliefs/				
6	RMrk06 _{ix} : Mark 3:7-19	The crowds and the called	Matthew Breeden	Baptist	10/05/2020	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.southernhillslife.org/get-connected/resources/sermons-and-podcasts/sermon/2020-05-10/the-crowds-and-the-called-mark-3:7-1				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	https://www.southernhillslife.org/get-connected/resources/sermons-and-podcasts/sermon/2020-05-10/the-crowds-and-the-called-mark-3:7-19				
7	RMrk07 _{ix} : Mark 3:7-19	The great crowd and the twelve Apostles	Cole Newton	Reformed	28/06/2021	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://bcnewton.co/2021/06/28/the-great-crowd-the-twelve-apostles-mark-37-19/				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	https://bcnewton.co/				
8	RMrk08 _{ix} : Mark 3:7-35	Study Six: Mark 3:7-35	Rosemary Bardsley	Reformed	2013	18/09/2023

	Source address	https://www.godswordforyou.com/bible-studies/gospel-of-mark/777-mark-37-35.html				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	https://www.godswordforyou.com/the-author-topmenu.html				
9	RMrk09ix: Mark 3:13-19	Choosing the Twelve	Mark L. Strauss	Reformed	2023	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/commentary/mark/#section-1				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/about/foundation-documents/				
10	RMrk10ix: Mark 3:13-19	The choosing of the Twelve	Alan Carr	Reformed	2003	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermonnotebook.org/mark/Mark%2015%20-%20Mark%203_13-19.htm				
	Confirmation of Reformed background	https://www.sermonnotebook.org/index.htm				

Appendix 2B: Details of sampled Pentecostal interpretations of Mark 3:13-19

S/ No	Pericope	Topic of the sermon/message	Author	Denomination/ Tradition	Date of publication	Date of access
1	PMrk01 _{tx} : Mark 3:13-19	Come to the mountain	Kasey Campbell	Foursquare	20/06/2021	18/09/2023
	Source address	https://sermons.faithlife.com/sermons/766415-6-20-21-come-to-the-mountain:-mark-3:13-19				
2	PMrk02 _{tx} : Mark 3:13-19	Maintaining contact & connection with God	Gabriel Adunmade	Redeemed Christian Church of God	13/03/2022	24/10/2023
	Source address	https://rccgwakefield.org.uk/maintaining-contact-connection-with-god-mark-3-13-19-by-pastor-gabriel-adunmade/				
3	PMrk03 _{vd} : Mark 3:13-19		Dan Eagle	Connaught Heights Pentecostal Assembly	02/10/2020	27/09/2023
	Source address	https://web.facebook.com/watch/?v=1027216451054690				
4	PMrk04 _{tx} : Mark 3:7-19	DAYBREAK: Mark, 1 & 2 Corinthians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 1 & 2 Peter	Apostolic Faith	Pentecostal	2021	12/10/2023
	Source address	https://www.apostolicfaith.org/library-units/daybreak-mark-1-and-2-corinthians-and-1-and-2-timothy-and-titus-philemon-1-and-2-peter				
5	PMrk05 _{tx} : Mark 3:13-19	Helping the people around you to accomplish great things with their lives	Dag Heward-Mills	Pentecostal	05/01/2011	18/10/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/helping-the-people-around-you-to-accomplish-great-things-with-their-lives-dag-heward-mills-sermon-on-goals-153222 Mark 3:13-19				
	Confirmation of Pentecostal background	https://charismatanews.org/a-week-later-bishop-dag-heward-mills-elected-onto-pentecostal-world-fellowship-council/				
6	PMrk06 _{vd} : Mark 3:7-19	The crowd and the committed	Ben Dixon	Foursquare	23/01/2022	23/10/2023
	Source address	https://nwc-foursquare.org/media/yvffxrr/the-crowd-and-the-committed-mark-3-7-19				
7	PMrk07 _{tx} : Mark 3:13-35	Be-with-me-fellowship skill: an exegetical analysis of Mark 3:13-19	Seth Akhilele	House of Purpose Travellers Assembly	01/03/2022	24/10/2023
	Source address	http://doi.org/10.47036/SC.2.1.32-43.2021				
	Confirmation of Pentecostal background	https://vymaps.com/NG/House-of-Purpose-Travellers-Assembly-Headquarter-Lekki-Lagos-Nigeria-263287064328856/				
8	PMrk08 _{tx} : Mark 3:13-19	Part of the team	Glenn Burris Jr.	Foursquare	23/01/2020	12/06/2024
	Source address	https://resources.foursquare.org/part-of-the-team/				

9	PMrk09 _{vd} : Mark 3:7-21	Who Is This? A Portrait of Jesus Through the Gospel of Mark	Eric Baker	Mission Church	14/05/2023	12/06/2024
	Source address	https://www.missionbg.com/sermons/sermon/2023-05-14/mark-37-21				
	Confirmation of Pentecostal background	https://www.bing.com/search?pglt=41&q=mission+church+bowling+green+and+affiliation&cvid=d94ca30a91dc47a192ed56698b60e91f&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJv bWUyBggAEEUYOTIGCAEQABhAMgYIAhAAGEAyBggDEAAYQDIGCAQQA BhAMgYIBRAAGEAyBggGEAAYQDIGCAcQABhAMgYICBAAGEDSAQkxND Y4MWowajGoAgCwAgA&FORM=ANNTA1&PC=U531				
10	PMrk10 _{ad} : Mark 3:7-21	Mark 3: It's like a sandwich	Kathleen Tetzlaff	Pullman Foursquare	May 2024	14/06/2024
	Source address	https://soundcloud.com/pastorjamiepagels/mark-3-its-like-a-sandwich				

Appendix 3A: Details of sampled Reformed interpretations of Luke 10:1-9

S/No	Pericope	Topic of the sermon/message	Author	Denomination/ Tradition	Date of publication	Date of access
1	RLuk01 _{ix} : Luke 10:1-21	If you want joy	Joseph Smith	Baptist	13/03/2010	18/11/2022
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/if-you-want-joy-joseph-smith-sermon-on-disciples-145170				
2	RLuk02 _{ix} : Luke 10:1-20	Reaching our community with the gospel of Jesus Christ	David Cook	Baptist	09/10/2010	18/11/2022
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/reaching-our-community-with-the-gospel-of-jesus-christ-david-cook-sermon-on-discipleship-150770				
3	RLuk03 _{ix} : Luke 10:1-17	The harvest is plentiful	Nicky Evans	Baptist	18/11/2011	18/11/2022
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/the-harvest-is-plentiful-nicky-evans-sermon-on-evangelism-urgency-158769				
4	RLuk04 _{ix} : Luke 10:1-24	Giving joy to the Lord's heart	John Lowe	Baptist	03/06/2018	18/11/2022
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/giving-joy-to-the-lords-heart-john-lowes-sermon-on-a-call-that-needs-answering-231338				
5	RLuk05 _{ix} : Luke 10:1-24	The service of the seventy	John Lowe	Baptist	05/09/2017	18/11/2022
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/the-service-of-the-seventy-john-lowes-sermon-on-laborers-are-few-224558?page=2				
6	RLuk06 _{ix} : Luke 10:1-16	Preparing your world to meet Jesus – 1	Byron Sherman	Baptist	17/03/2004	18/11/2022
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/preparing-your-world-to-meet-jesus-1-byron-sherman-sermon-on-attitude-general-66875				
7	RLuk07 _{ix} : Luke 10:1-16	Preparing your world to meet Jesus – 2	Byron Sherman	Baptist	17/03/2004	18/11/2022
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/preparing-your-world-to-meet-jesus-2-byron-sherman-sermon-on-evangelism-how-to-66876				
8	RLuk08 _{ix} : Luke 10:1-20	On the job training	Kevin Ruffcorn	Lutheran	09/07/2007	18/11/2022
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/on-the-job-training-kevin-ruffcorn-sermon-on-christian-love-109120				
9	RLuk09 _{ix} : Luke 10:1-20	Appointed	Gaither Bailey	Presbyterian/Reformed	14/07/2007	18/11/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/appointed-gaither-bailey-sermon-on-faith-109368				
10	RLuk10 _{ix} : Luke 10:1-20	Calling on others	Tim Zingale	Lutheran	30/06/2004	18/11/2023
	Source address	https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/calling-on-others-tim-zingale-sermon-on-evangelism-urgency-69815				

Appendix 3B: Details of sampled Pentecostal interpretations of Luke 10:1-9

S/No	Pericope	Topic of the sermon/message	Author	Denomination/ Tradition	Date of publication	Date of access
1	PLuk01 _{ad} : Luke 10:1-11		Cody Cochran	Bethel Assembly of God	02/11/2022	21/09/2023
	Source address	https://www.bethel-anson.com/podcasts/media/2022-11-02-worship-and-word				
	Confirmation of Pentecostal source	https://www.bethel-anson.com/about				
2	PLuk02 _{tx} : Luke 10:1-20	How Jesus developed leaders: Four principles we can apply today	Stephen Blandino	Assemblies of God	25/03/2021	21/09/2023
	Source address	https://influencemagazine.com/en/Practice/How-Jesus-Developed-Leaders				
	Confirmation of Pentecostal source	https://influencemagazine.com/en/authors/stephen-blandino				
3	PLuk03 _{vd} : Luke 10:1-12	The harvest is plentiful	Stephen Thee	Bethany Assembly of God	19/04/2020	28/09/2023
	Source address	https://bethany-ag.org/messages/the-harvest-is-plentiful-11am-service/				
4	PLuk04 _{tx} : Luke 10:1-20	Are you a willing worker?	Russ Walden	Pentecostal	09/04/2018	09/10/2023
	Source address	https://fathersheartministry.net/morning-light-april-9th-2018-luke-10-are-you-a-willing-worker/				
	Confirmation of Pentecostal source	https://www.fathersheartministries.church/#:~:text=Father's%20Heart%20Ministries%20is%20affiliated,with%20signs%2C%20wonders%20and%20miracles				
5	PLuk05 _{tx} : Luke 9:57-10:12	How to know you're a Christian	Dan Walker	Life Church St. Louis (Assemblies of God)	17/07/2022	20/10/2023
	Source address	https://messages.lifechurchstlouis.org/sunday-messages/message/how-to-know-youre-a-christian-luke-10/read				
6	PLuk06 _{vd} : Luke 10:1-16		Simion Timbuc	Bethesda (Betezda) Romanian Pentecostal Church	12/06/2019	18/-9/2023
	Source addresses	https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=99b7cb45d0a091eeJmltdHM9MTY5NDk5NTIwMCZpZ3VpZD0xMjgzZDQ5NC0yOGViLTZyODktMjAzMC1jNzkzMjlmNjYyOTMmaW5zaWQ9NTI5OA&ptn=3&hsh=3&fclid=1283d494-28eb-6389-2030c79329f66293&psq=luke+10+%e2%80%93+Pastor+Simion+Timbuc+(Betezda+Church+%e2%80%93+Romanian+Pentecostal+%e2%80%a6)&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cueW91dHVIZS5jb20vd2F0Y2g_dj1BMFpjU2NwWHB5aw&ntb=1				
7	PLuk07 _{tx} : Luke 10:1-10	Influencers – a passion for souls	Chris Pediath	Waterloo Pentecostal Assembly	27/12/2018	18/10/2023

	Source address	https://wpa.church/sermons/				
	Confirmation of Pentecostal source	media.wpa.church/wp-content/uploads/20210104101758/2021-01-03-Infuencers-1-A-Passion-for-Souls-Pastor-Chris-Padiath.mp3?_gl=1*1urz69k*_ga*MTAyNzA0MjA4OC4xNzE4MTcxODgw*_ga_PV454ESWG1*MTcxODE3MTg3OS4xLjAuMTcxODE3MTg3OS4wLjAuMA				
8	PLuk08 _{tx} : Luke 10:1-42	DAYBREAK	The Apostolic Faith Church	The Apostolic Faith Church	2023	18/10/2023
9	PLuk09 _{tx} : Luke 10:1-17		Dag Heward-Mills	Pentecostal	18/07/2014	18/10/2023
	Source address	https://emmaampadu.wordpress.com/2014/07/18/daily-devotional-by-dag-heward-mills-18th-july-2014/				
10	PLuk10 _{tx} : Luke 10:1-24	More Than Earthly Joy	W. F. Kumuyi	Deeper Christian Life Ministry	27/12/2021	18/10/2023
	Source address	https://flatimes.com/dclm-daily-manna-27-december-2021-earthly-joy/ " https://flatimes.com/dclm-daily-manna-27-december-2021-earthly-joy/				

Appendix 4: Quantitative analyses of samples and theme-codes

This appendix presents cursory quantitative information about the quotations and theme-codes that were investigated in this study. This comprises numerical analysis of groundedness of quotations and theme-codes, tabular presentations, and graphical presentations of theme-code distributions across samples.

Meta-analysis of quotations and theme-codes

Tables 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 present details of the groundedness of quotations and theme-codes.

Sample	Unit of analysis	Groundedness of quotations	Kingdom	Authority	Disciple	Mission	Preach	Heal	Dead	Leprosy	Demon	Exorcism	Miracle	"We"	Groundedness of theme-codes
		397	70	78	60	19	37	16	5	1	11	5	52	80	434
RMat	RMat01	6	1	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	7
	RMat02	18	4	2	1	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	3	3	18
	RMat03	8	3	1	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	9
	RMat04	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	RMat05	13	3	3	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	3	14
	RMat06	10	3	1	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	10
	RMat07	12	3	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	12
	RMat08	9	4	1	-1	-	2	1	-	-	2	-	1	-	12
	RMat09	11	-	-	1	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	11
	RMat10	25	1	6	7	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	6	3	26
PMat	PMat01	19	3	4	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	6	19
	PMat02	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	PMat03	15	2	4	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	6	2	17
	PMat04	11	-	9	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	12
	PMat05	9	-	8	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
	PMat06	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3
	PMat07	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
	PMat08	19	1	4	2	1	1	5	1	1	1	-	3	-	20
	PMat09	30	4	3	4	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	4	11	32
	PMat10	21	16	3	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	22
RMrk	RMrk01	6	2	2	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	10
	RMrk02	6	-	4	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	8
	RMrk03	6	1	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	7
	RMrk04	9	2	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	4	11
	RMrk05	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3
	RMrk06	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
	RMrk07	6	2	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	7
	RMrk08	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	RMrk09	3	1	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
	RMrk10	9	1	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	10
PMrk	PMrk01	20	-	5	2	-	3	1	-	-	1	-	2	8	22
	PMrk02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	PMrk03	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	PMrk04	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2
	PMrk05	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	PMrk06	4	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
	PMrk07	10	1	-	7	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	11
	PMrk08	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

	PMrk09	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	PMrk10	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
RLuk	RLuk01	6	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	2	7
	RLuk02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	RLuk03	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	RLuk04	7	2	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	8
	RLuk05	4	3	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	7
	RLuk06	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	RLuk07	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	RLuk08	5	1	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	6
	RLuk09	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
	RLuk10	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
PLuk	PLuk01	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
	PLuk03	10	1	-	1	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	10
	PLuk04	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	PLuk05	10	-	-	6	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	14
	PLuk06	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	PLuk07	10	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	10
	PLuk08	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	PLuk09	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
	PLuk10	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
		397	70	78	60	19	37	16	5	1	11	5	52	80	434

Table 6.1: Groundedness of quotations and theme-codes

Sample	Groundedness of quotations
RMat	113
PMat	130
RMrk	50
PMrk	37
RLuk	28
PLuk	39
	397

Table 6.2: Summary of quotation groundedness

Theme	Groundedness of theme-codes in samples						Total
	RMat	PMat	RMrk	PMrk	RLuk	PLuk	
Kingdom	22	27	9	1	8	3	70
Authority	19	35	11	9	2	2	78
Disciple	21	14	1	11	2	11	60
Mission	9	3	1	-	2	4	19
Preach	9	4	13	5	2	4	37
Heal	1	12	-	1	1	1	16
Dead	4	1	-	-	-	-	5
Leprosy	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Demon	2	2	1	1	5	-	11
Exorcism	-	-	5	-	-	-	5
Miracle	19	18	3	4	1	7	52
“We”	13	21	18	8	11	9	80
	120	137	62	40	34	41	434

Table 6.3: Summary of theme-code groundedness

Sums and percentage weights of “strong” and “weak” codes

Table 6.5(1) below presents cumulative sums of “strong” and “weak” theme-codes.

The theme-codes are plotted against their percentage values in a multiple bar chart.

Theme	Numerical/percentage value	Theme-code hierarchy		Total
		“Strong”	“Weak”	
Kingdom	Numerical value	61	9	70
	Percentage value	87.14	12.86	100.00
Authority	Numerical value	53	25	78
	Percentage value	67.95	32.05	100.00
Disciple	Numerical value	40	20	60
	Percentage value	66.67	33.33	100.00
Mission	Total in figure	17	2	19
	Percentage value	89.47	10.53	100.00
Preach	Numerical value	34	3	37
	Percentage value	91.89	8.11	100.00
Heal	Numerical value	15	1	16
	Percentage value	93.75	6.25	100.00
Dead	Numerical value	1	4	5
	Percentage value	20.00	80.00	100.00
Leprosy	Numerical value	-	1	1
	Percentage value	-	100.00	100.00
Demon	Numerical value	5	6	11
	Percentage value	45.45	54.55	100.00
Exorcism	Numerical value	4	1	5
	Percentage value	80.00	20.00	100.00
Miracle	Numerical value	34	18	52
	Percentage value	65.38	34.62	100.00
“We”	Numerical value	75	5	80
	Percentage value	93.75	6.25	100.00

Table 6.5(1): Percentage values of “strong” and “weak” theme-codes

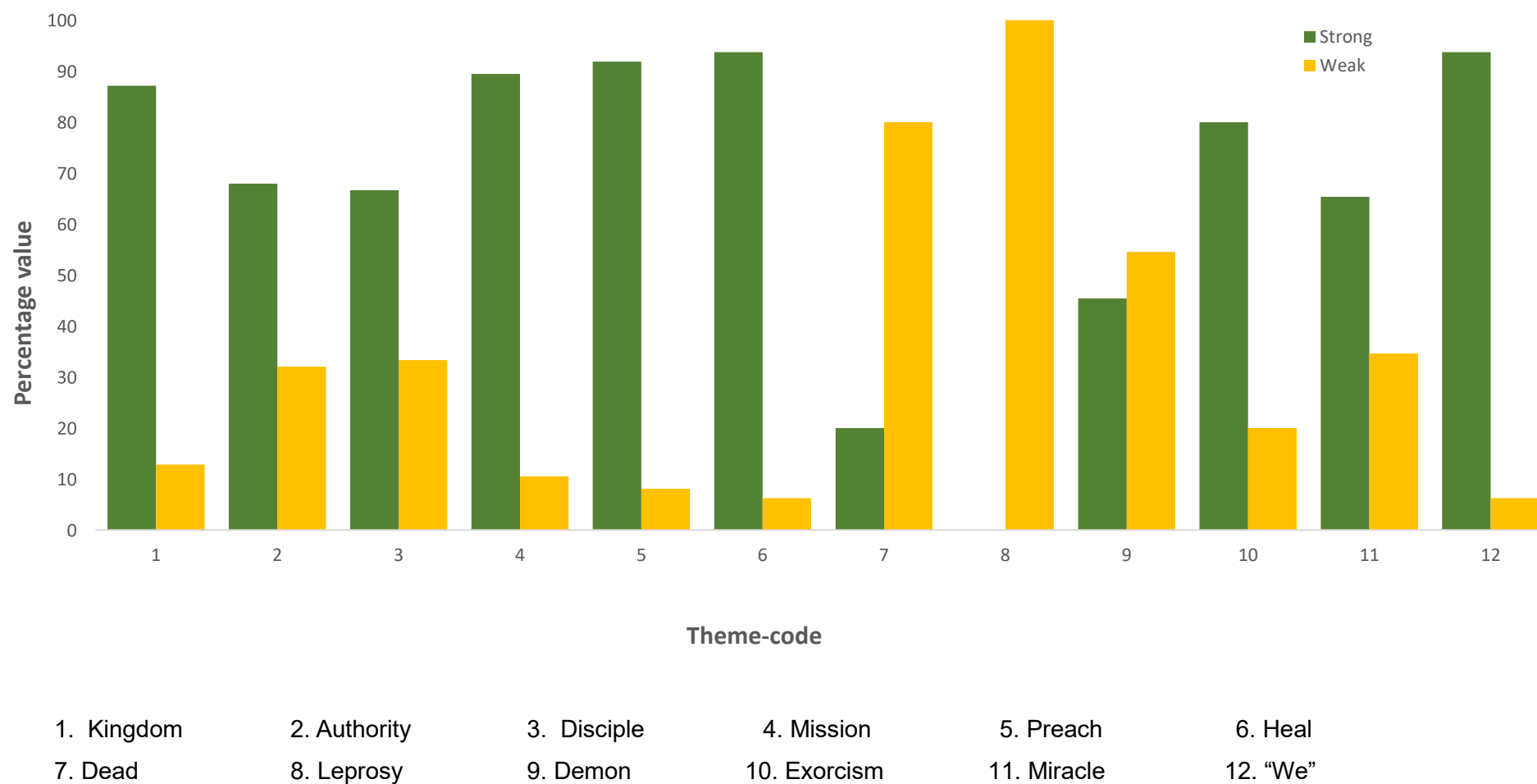


Chart 6.1: Multiple bar chart showing the percentage values of “strong” and “weak” theme-codes

Table 6.5(2) below presents cumulative sums of “strong” and “weak” theme-codes *for all the themes*—notwithstanding their Reformed or Pentecostal backgrounds or specific claims. The cumulative sums are transformed into percentages and plotted in a pie chart.

Theme-Code hierarchy	Numerical value	Percentage value
“Strong”	311	71.66
“Weak”	123	28.34
Total	434	100.00

Table 6.5(2): Cumulative percentage values of “strong” and “weak” theme-codes

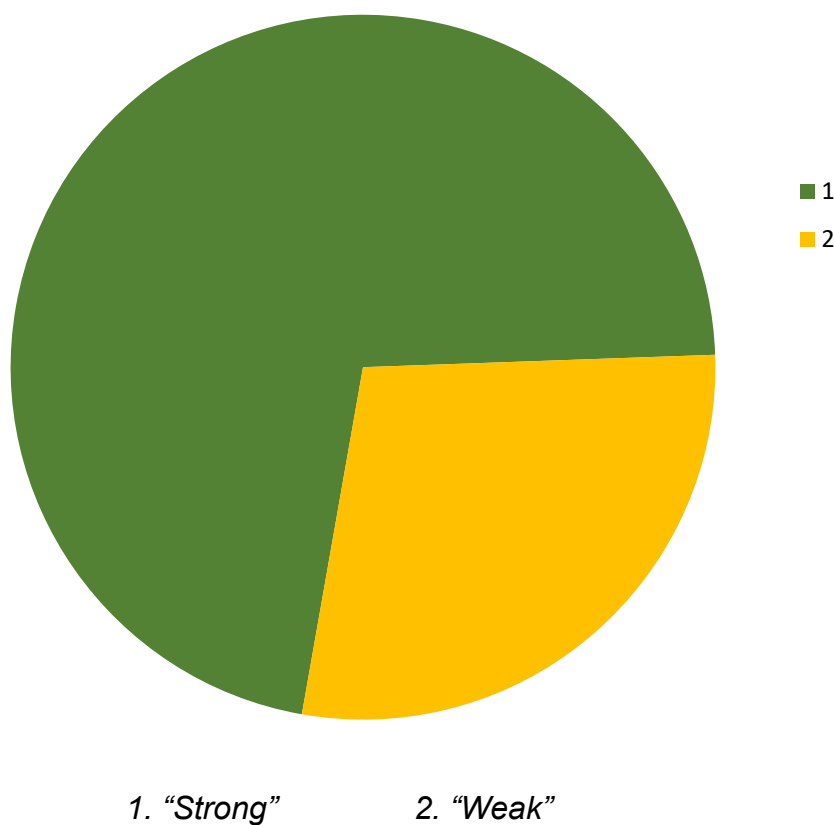


Chart 6.2: Pie chart showing the cumulative percentage values of “strong” and “weak” theme-codes

Numerical analysis of theme-codes

This section presents a concise statistical summary of the theme-codes generated in the course of the study. Through tabular presentation, it indicates the numerical and percentage distributions of units of analysis and theme-codes examined under each theme. Attention is given to the two broad interpretive families—Reformed and Pentecostal—without disaggregating the data according to individual biblical passages. The tables are organised on the basis of the following categories of information:

<i>TNU</i>	Total number of units of analysis (i.e., total sample size) = 60
<i>TNPU</i>	Total number of participating units of analysis from each of Reformed and Pentecostal sources respectively (taken over the total number of units of analysis, i.e., 60).
<i>PPVU</i>	Percentage participation value of units of analysis [$PPVU = (TNPU/60) \times 100$]
<i>TNT</i>	Total number of theme-codes, i.e., 434
<i>TNPT</i>	Total number of participating “strong” or “weak” theme-codes (taken over the total number of theme-codes under each theme; e.g., 70 under “kingdom”, 78 under “authority”, etc. drawn from Table 6.5(1) above)
<i>PPVT</i>	Percentage participation value of theme-codes. For instance, under “kingdom”, $PPVT = (TNPT/70) \times 100$; under “authority”, $PPVT = (TNPT/78) \times 100$, etc.

Theme: kingdom

Units of analysis			Theme-Codes		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 70)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	19	31.67	Strong	35	50.00
			Weak	4	5.72
Pentecostal	9	15.00	Strong	26	37.14
			Weak	5	7.14
Total	28	46.67	Total	70	100.00
				16.13% of TNT	

Table 6.6(1): Theme-code groundedness of “kingdom”

Twenty-eight (28) units of analysis addressed the theme “kingdom”, representing 46.67% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Seventy (70) theme-codes were generated under this theme, accounting for 16.13% of the total number of theme-

codes (TNT). Of these, sixty-one (61) are “strong” claims, while nine (9) are “weak”. This indicates that 87.14% of the assertions align with the exegetical conclusions on ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν/ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ (see Q3B of section 5.4.6.2.3; cf. section 5.2.3.8), whereas 12.86% do not.

Theme: authority

Units of analysis			Theme-codes		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 78)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	16	26.67	Strong	13	16.67
			Weak	19	24.36
Pentecostal	12	20.00	Strong	40	51.28
			Weak	6	7.69
Total	28	46.67	Total	78	100.00
				17.97% of TNT	

Table 6.7(1): Theme-code groundedness of “authority”

Twenty-eight (28) units of analysis treated the theme “authority”, representing 46.67% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Seventy-eight (78) theme-codes were generated under this theme, accounting for 17.97% of the total number of theme-codes (TNT). Of these, fifty-three (53) are “strong” claims, while twenty-five (25) are “weak”. This means that 67.95% of the assertions agree with the exegetical conclusion that ἐξουσία denotes authority or warrant together with power to perform miracles (see section 5.2.3.1), whereas 32.05% do not.

Theme: disciple

Units of analysis			Theme-codes		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 60)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	12	20.00	Strong	15	25.00
			Weak	9	15.00
Pentecostal	17	28.33	Strong	25	41.67
			Weak	11	18.33
Total	29	48.33	Total	60	100.00
				13.82% of TNT	

Table 6.8(1): Theme-code groundedness of “disciple”

Twenty-nine (29) units of analysis treated the theme μαθητάς (“disciple”), representing 48.33% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Sixty (60) theme-codes were generated under this theme, accounting for 13.82% of the total number of theme-codes (TNT). Of these, forty (40) are “strong” claims, while twenty (20) are “weak”. This means that 66.67% of the assertions concerning “disciple” agree with the

exegetical conclusion that μαθητής refers to disciples in the sense of persons consistently following Jesus (see section 5.2.3.3), whereas 33.33% do not.

Theme: mission

Units of analysis			Theme-codes		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 19)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	6	10.00	Strong	11	57.89
			Weak	1	5.26
Pentecostal	6	10.00	Strong	6	31.59
			Weak	1	5.26
Total	12	20.00	Total	19	100.00
				4.38% of TNT	

Table 6.9(1): Theme-code groundedness of “mission”

Twelve (12) units of analysis treated the theme “mission”, representing 20.00% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Nineteen (19) theme-codes were generated under this theme, accounting for 4.38% of the total number of theme-codes (TNT). Of these, seventeen (17) are “strong” claims, while two (2) are “weak”. This means that 89.47% of the assertions agree with the exegetical conclusion on “mission”: that the disciples of Jesus are to exercise passion for souls as “fishers of men”, that the church is to remain committed to proclaiming the message of the kingdom of God, and that all members of the church should be actively involved in mission (see section 5.4.4.3). By contrast, 10.53% of the claims do not agree.

Theme: preach

Units of analysis			Theme-codes		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 37)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	16	26.67	Strong	22	59.47
			Weak	2	5.41
Pentecostal	8	13.33	Strong	12	32.43
			Weak	1	2.70
Total	24	40.00	Total	37	100.00
				8.53% of TNT	

Table 6.10(1): Theme-code groundedness of “preach”

Twenty-four (24) units of analysis treated the theme “preach”, representing 40.00% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Thirty-seven (37) theme-codes were generated under this theme, accounting for 8.53% of the total number of theme-codes (TNT). Of these, thirty-four (34) are “strong” claims, while three (3) are “weak”. This shows that 91.89% of the claims agree with the exegetical conclusion that κηρύσσετε/κηρύσσειν (“preach”/“proclaim”/“announce”) charges the disciples to persuasively proclaim the message of the dawning kingdom of God (see section

5.2.4.1; P1B(2) of section 5.3.6.4; Q3B of section 5.4.6.2.3; and R2E of section 5.5.7.2.2), whereas 8.11% do not agree.

Theme: heal

Units of analysis			Theme-codes		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 16)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	2	3.33	Strong	1	6.25
			Weak	1	6.25
Pentecostal	5	8.33	Strong	14	87.50
			Weak	-	-
Total	7	11.66	Total	16	100.00
				3.69% of TNT	

Table 6.11(1): Theme-code groundedness of “heal”

Seven (7) units of analysis treated the theme “heal”, representing 11.66% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Sixteen (16) theme-codes were generated under this theme, accounting for 3.69% of the total number of theme-codes (TNT). Of these, fifteen (15) are adjudged “strong” claims, while only one (1) is adjudged “weak”. This means that 93.75% of the claims agree with the exegetical conclusion that the imperative ἀσθενοῦντας θεραπεύετε means to cause sick persons to recover physiologically (see Q3C of section 5.4.6.2.3; cf. sections 5.2.3.7 and 5.2.4.5), whereas 6.25% do not agree with this conclusion.

Theme: dead

Units of analysis			Theme-codes		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 5)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	3	5.00%	Strong	1	20.00
			Weak	-	-
Pentecostal	1	1.67%	Strong	-	-
			Weak	4	80.00
Total	4	6.67%	Total	5	100.00
				1.15% of TNT	

Table 6.12(1): Theme-code groundedness of “dead”

Four (4) units of analysis treated the theme “dead”, representing 6.67% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Five (5) theme-codes were generated under this theme, accounting for 1.15% of the total number of theme-codes (TNT). Of these, only one (1) is a “strong” claim, while four (4) are “weak”. This means that only 20.00% of the claims agree with the exegetical conclusion on the imperative νεκρούς ἐγείρετε (“raise the dead”) in Matthew 10:8, namely, that it refers literally to causing

physiologically dead persons to return to life (see Q3C of section 5.4.6.2.3; cf. sections 5.2.3.9 and 5.2.4.7), whereas 80.00% do not agree.

Theme: leprosy

Unit of analysis			Theme-code		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 1)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	-	-	Strong	-	-
			Weak	-	-
Pentecostal	1	1.67	Strong	-	-
			Weak	1	100.00
Total	1	1.67	Total	1	100.00
				0.23% of TNT	

Table 6.13(1): Theme-code groundedness of “leprosy”

Only one (1) unit of analysis treated the theme “leprosy”, representing 1.67% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Similarly, only one (1) theme-code was generated under this theme, accounting for 0.23% of the total number of theme-codes (TNT). This theme-code is classified as a “weak” claim, as it interprets the cleansing of leprous persons metaphorically rather than literally.

Theme: demon/unclean spirit

Units of analysis			Theme-codes		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 11)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	6	10.00	Strong	3	27.27
			Weak	6	54.55
Pentecostal	2	3.33	Strong	2	18.18
			Weak	-	-
Total	8	13.33	Total	11	100.00
				2.53% of TNT	

Table 6.14(1): Theme-code groundedness of “demon”/“unclean spirit”

Eight (8) units of analysis treated the theme “demon”, representing 13.33% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Eleven (11) theme-codes were generated under this theme, accounting for 2.53% of the total number of theme-codes (TNT). Of these, five (5) are “strong” claims, while six (6) are “weak”. This means that 45.45% of the statements concerning “demons” agree with the exegetical conclusion that δαιμόνιον or πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον denotes an evil spirit that afflicts its host (see sections 5.2.3.2 and 5.2.3.4), whereas 54.55% of the claims diverge from this conclusion.

Theme: exorcism

Units of analysis			Theme-codes		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 5)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	4	6.67	Strong	4	80.00
			Weak	1	20.00
Pentecostal	-	-	Strong	-	-
			Weak	-	-
Total	4	6.67	Total	5	100.00
				1.19% of TNT	

Table 6.15(1): Theme-code groundedness of “exorcism”

Four (4) units of analysis treated the theme “exorcism”, representing 6.67% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Five (5) codes, accounting for 1.19% of the total number of theme-codes (TNT), were generated under this theme. Of these, four (4) are “strong” claims, while one (1) is a “weak” claim. This means that 80.00% of the assertions concerning the imperative to cast out demons agree with the exegetical conclusion that δαιμόνια ἐκβάλλετε (“cast out demons”) refers to literal exorcism of demons (see P1B[3] of section 5.3.6.4 and Q3C of section 5.4.6.2.3; cf. sections 5.2.3.1, 5.2.3.2, and 5.2.4.2), whereas 20.00% of the claims disagree with this conclusion.

Theme: miracle

Units of analysis			Theme-codes		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 52)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	11	18.33	Strong	8	15.38
			Weak	15	28.85
Pentecostal	13	21.67	Strong	26	50.00
			Weak	3	5.77
Total	24	40.00	Total	52	100.00
				11.98% of TNT	

Table 6.16(1): Theme-code groundedness of “miracle”

Twenty-four (24) units of analysis treated the theme “miracle”, representing 40.00% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Fifty-two (52) codes were generated under this theme, accounting for 11.98% of the total number of theme-codes (TNT). Of these, thirty-four (34) are “strong” claims, while eighteen (18) are “weak”. This indicates that 65.38% of the assertions agree with the exegetical conclusions that Matthew 10:1, 8, Mark 3:15 and Luke 10:9 anticipate various miraculous interventions through both the first disciples of Jesus and present-day disciples. By contrast, 34.62% of the claims do not agree.

Theme: “we”

Units of analysis			Theme-codes		
	TNPU (over 60)	PPVU (%)		TNPT (over 80)	PPVT (%)
Reformed	19	31.67	Strong	37	46.25
			Weak	5	6.25
Pentecostal	9	15.00	Strong	38	47.50
			Weak	-	-
Total	28	46.67	Total	80	100.00
				18.43% of TNT	

Table 6.17(1): Theme-code groundedness of “we”

Twenty-eight (28) units of analysis treated the theme “we”, representing 46.67% of the total number of units of analysis (TNU). Eighty (80) codes were generated under this theme, accounting for 18.43% of the total number of theme-codes (TNT). Of these, seventy-five (75) are “strong” claims, while five (5) are “weak”. This means that 93.75% of the “we” assertions agree with the exegetical conclusions derived from Matthew 10:1-8, Mark 3:13-19 and Luke 10:1-9, namely, that the imperatives given by Jesus to his first disciples remain valid for believers and ministers today. By contrast, 6.25% of the assertions do not agree.