

**THE TRILOGY OF PARABLES IN MT 21:28-22:14
FROM A MATTHEAN PERSPECTIVE**

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Betreuer: Professor Dr. Bernhard Heininger
Zweitkorrektor: Professor Dr. Hans Rechenmacher

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ROWLAND ONYENALI

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ABBREVIATIONS

AnBib	Analecta biblica
AncB	Anchor Bible
ASTI	Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute (in Jerusalem)
AThR.SS	Anglican Theological review Supplementary Series.
BBR	Bulletin for biblical research
BDAG	A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature
BDB	The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gensenius Hebrew and English Lexicon
BETHL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium
BEvTh	Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie
Bib.	Biblica. Roma
BiLe	Bible und Leben
BiTr	Bible Translator
BJRL	Bulletin of the John Rylands Library
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
BR	Biblical research
BSNTS	Bulletin of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas
BT	Bibliothèque de théologie. Paris
BTB	Biblical theology bulletin
BThSt	Biblich-theologische Studien
BU	Biblische Untersuchungen
BZ	Biblische Zeitschrift
CBQ	Catholic biblical quarterly
CBQ.MS	Catholic biblical quarterly Monograph series
ChQ	Church quarterly
Clit	Christianity and literature
CNT	Coniectanea neotestamentica
CRB	Cahiers de la Revue biblique
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean desert
DSD	Dead sea discoveries
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
ET	Expository times
ETHL	Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses
EThSt	Erfurter theologische Studien
EvTh	Evangelische Theologie
EWNT	Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
GermR	Germanic review
HBT	Horizons in biblical theology
HeyJ	Heythrop journal
HibJ	Hibbert journal
HNT	Handbuck zum Neuen Testament
HThk	Herders theological Kommentar zum Neuen Testament

HThR	Harvard Theological review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College annual
ICC	International critical commentary
Interp.	Interpretation
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of biblical literature
JBS	Jerusalem biblical studies
JES	Journal of ecumenical studies
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JJS	Journal of Jewish Studies
JR	Journal of religion
JRH	Journal of religious history
JRS	Journal of Roman studies
JSJ	Journal for the study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman period
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JSNT.S	- Supplement series
JSOT	Journal for the study of the Old Testament
JSOT.S	- Supplement series
JSP	Journal for the study of the Pseudepigrapha
JSP.SS	- Supplement series
JThSB	Jahrbuch der Theologischen Schule Bethel
JTS	Journal of Tamil studies
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
LeDiv	Lectio divina
MSSNTS	Monograph series. Society for New Testament Studies
NAC	The New American Bible
NDIEC	New documents illustrating early Christianity
NEB.AT	Neue Echter Bibel-Kommentar zum AT
NEB.NT	Neue Echter Bibel-Kommentar zum NT
NES	Nordelbingische Studien
NIGTC	New international Greek Testament commentary
NT	Novum Testamentum
NTS	New testament studies
OxyPap	The Oxyrhynchus papyri
Phoe.	Phoenix
RGG	Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart
RIDA	Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité
RTR	Reformed theological review
SBL.	Society of Biblical Literature
SBL.SP	- Seminar papers
SE	Sacris erudiri
SJTh	Scottish Journal of theology
SNTS	Society for New Testament Studies
ST	Studies in theology

StTh	Studia theologica
TBei	Theologische Beiträge
ThV	Theologische Versuche
ThWNT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament
ThZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
TNICNT	The new international commentary on the New Testament
TThZ	Trierer theologische Zeitschrift
TynB	Tyndale bulletin
TZ	Theologie en zielzorg
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word biblical commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WTJ	Westminster theological journal
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZNW	Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZEP	Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik
ZSTh	Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie
ZThK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

0. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

0.1 THE TERM PARABLE

For many exegetes, among the several sayings attributed to Jesus in the synoptic Gospels, those which best embody his speech and which are the most typical of him, are the parabolic sayings ascribed to him. It can thus be said that we stand right before Jesus when reading the parables.¹ These parables are rich in images that through them the everyday life of rural first century Palestine comes alive or can be reconstructed in a way true of few ancient cultures.² This is why a study of the NT parables is very relevant in reaching the core of Jesus' preaching of the kingdom. On the other hand, bible parable scholarship seems to have reached an embarrassing state to the extent that a singular parable can be interpreted to reference the kingdom of God, to illustrate a general Christian teaching, to reflect authentic or inauthentic existence, to reflect eschatology, etc.³ Sometimes these interpretations are so mutually exclusive that it must be wondered how Jesus could have intended a particular parable to teach myriad and contradictory realities. This is an uneasy state of affairs which the present work intends to appraise as far as possible. But it is important here to clarify, the meaning of "parable."

The verb *παραβάλλω* simply means to throw two or more things together. The aim of this throwing together might be to see to what extent the two things being compared relate to or differ from one another. But the noun *παραβολή* did not become a rhetoric term until Aristotle.⁴ Before him, *παραβολή*, *ὁμοίωσις* and *εἰκὼν* were used synonymously.⁵ According to Aristotle, parables were used by orators in inductive or indirect proof as a generally recognised means of demonstration and illustration. They are of two types: true events taken from the everydayness, and the more easily created fiction. Fiction itself is subdivided into two types, fables and parables like the ones used by Socrates in Plato's dialogue.⁶ In the ancient rhetorical textbook *Ad Herennium* (about 80 BC), parable is said to be used either to embellish the presentation (*ornandi causa*), or to prove something (*probandi*) or to say something more clearly (*apertius dicendi*) or to put something before the eyes of the audience (*ante oculos ponendi*).⁷ BDAG describes parable as something that serves as a model or example pointing beyond itself for later realization, type or figure. It also sees it as a narrative or saying of varying length, designed to illustrate a truth especially through comparison, simile, illustration, parable, proverb, or maxim.⁸

The LXX uses *παραβολή* to translate the Hebrew word *לְפָנָיִם* twenty times.⁹ In both the OT and rabbinic literature the term *לְפָנָיִם* has various connotations which make its meaning difficult to encapsulate and its translation to English almost impossible. It

¹ J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 7.

² J. R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parables*, 2.

³ C. H. Hedrick, *Many Things in Parable*, xiii.

⁴ See B. B. Scott, *Parable*, 19.

⁵ See McCall, *Ancient Rhetorical Theories*, 6f.18.

⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II.20.

⁷ See IV.xlv.59.

⁸ BDAG, 1214f.

⁹ See H. G. Liddell et al., *Lexicon*, 1304.

includes almost any type of figurative speech from the short riddle to a fully developed allegory. However, the root meaning seems to be “to represent” or “to be like.”¹⁰ The noun form of the word reflects fully the myriad of meanings which it attracts. For example, it refers to a proverbial saying (e.g. 1 Sm 10:12; 24:13), a byword (Deut 28:37; 1 Kgs 9:7), prophetic oracle (Num 23:7; 24:3ff), taunting song (Isa 14:4-23),¹¹ a didactic poem (Job 29), a wise saying (Sir 39:2), and a similitude (Ezk 24:3-5). The above shows that the Hebrew Bible uses the word לִשְׁמֵךְ for whatever has a proverbial meaning, making the word to have a wider range of meaning than the Greek word παραβολή does. It seems secure to conclude that the OT uses לִשְׁמֵךְ to refer to any saying whose meaning is not immediately clear. Strangely enough, neither the Hebrew לִשְׁמֵךְ nor the Greek παραβολή ever appears as meaning a story parable in the OT even though numerous passages like Nathan’s story of David (2 Sm 12:1-4), Jotham’s fable (Jgs 9:8-15) or Isaiah’s song (Isa 5:1-7) are remarkably analogous to parables in rabbinic literature and in the Synoptics. This implies that the use of terminology alone is not enough to distinguish לִשְׁמֵךְ from other stories.

In the Synoptics, different literary forms of writing are called parables. They include narratives (e.g. Lk 10:30-35); proverbs (e.g. Lk 4:23); images (e.g. Mk 13:28). The gospel of John does not make use of the term. The author of the letter to the Hebrews, the only other NT book that contains the word παραβολή outside of the synoptics, employs the term as denoting a symbol or a figure. In Heb 9:9 the daily sacrifices of the priests and the yearly offerings of the high priests are an illustration to the present age (*ἥτις παραβολή εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεσθηκότα*) that the way into the most high place has not yet been opened. And in Heb 11:19, Abraham received Isaac parabolically from the dead (*ὅθεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐν παραβολῇ ἐκομίσατο*). Here, parabolic means figurative. From the above, it is then clear that the NT writers did not regard parable as a formal literary form. Just like the OT use of לִשְׁמֵךְ the NT’s use of παραβολή seems not to be precise. It is then not surprising that the history of bible parable scholarship has witnessed massive interpretive models from one epoch to the other. However, the predominant mode of interpretation of the parables was allegoric until the end of the 19th century.

0.2 MODERN PARABLE SCHOLARSHIP

But since the 20th century parable scholarship has evoked tremendous shift in emphasis especially through the masterly works of Jülicher and Dodd. Though Jones¹² feels that as far back as the middle of the 19th century Meyer had to some extent anticipated the views of Jülicher and Dodd in rejecting the allegorical interpretations of the parables, it was Jülicher who imparted such a thought a definite direction to the extent that any discussion on the parables which does not take his

¹⁰ BDB, 695.

¹¹ But see B. B. Scott, who argues that the LXX prefers not to use the word παραβολή for these taunts since the parables have mainly a positive connotation. Parables, 20.

¹² G. V. Jones, Parables, 1.

work into consideration seems to be inadequate. Since the Jülicherian era, it has been traditional to suppose that Jesus' parables were no longer to be interpreted allegorically since they are stories reflecting the everydayness of his time. In this respect the stories or parables told by Jesus resembled those of the OT. All begin from a realistic perspective.¹³ For him, the many images in a parable come together to form the picture part (*Bildhälfte*) and the substance part (*Sachhälfte*). He is convinced that a parable makes a particular point. This single point is what the parable is all about. Jülicher differentiates between simile/*Gleichnis im engeren Sinn*, parable/*Parabel* and example story/*Beispielergählung*.¹⁴ The example stories which are contained only in the gospel of Lk are four in number. They are the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Rich Fool, the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Pharisee and Tax Collector. These parables are not figurative or metaphorical but rather present examples from daily lives. Of interest to my work is Jülicher's differentiation between *Gleichnis im engeren Sinn* and *Parabel*.¹⁵ He sees *Gleichnis im engeren Sinn* as the illustration of a sentence through its comparison with another similar sentence. It makes use of simile/*Vergleich*. It is narrated with the present tense, tells of everyday occurrences and makes only one point.¹⁶ The understanding of this type of narrative lies in the ability of the interpreter to find the single *tertium comparationis* of the story. Jülicher does not allow any element of allegory in this sort of tale. On the other hand, the *parabel* tells of a single occurrence and is narrated in the past tense. The *parabel* narrates interesting and extraordinary stories, freely formulated by Jesus. It makes extensive use of metaphor which can be elaborated into allegory.¹⁷ This differentiation is supported by notable scholars including Rudolf Bultmann. Although he differs from Jülicher in the actual classification of the parabolic materials, Bultmann isolates between *Bildwörter*/figurative sayings, *Gleichnisse*/similitudes and *Parabel*/parables proper.¹⁸ For him, the "eigentlichen Gleichnisse" are distinguished because of their elaborateness.¹⁹ His position and that of Jülicher have not been without its exponents and opponents as we shall come to see.

In 1935, C. H. Dodd, a British scholar, introduced a new idea into bible parable scholarship. For him, Jesus used the ordinary life of first century Palestine to reference the kingdom of God. He demonstrates that the parables have three life

¹³ See J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 1.

¹⁴ This is one of the most prominent contributions of his monumentuous work, *Die Gleichnisreden Jesu*. Martin Dibelius classifies four types of parabolic material, namely, comparison in the present (e.g. Mk 4:30); comparison in the past (e.g. Mt 13:33); the short teaching-story (e.g. Mt 7:24); and the elaborate parable story (e.g. Lk 15:11-31). See his *Formgeschichte* (6. Aufl.), 250f.

¹⁵ He finds only four example stories in the synoptics, all in Lk and they include the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-35); the Rich Harvest (Lk 12:16-21); the Rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31); the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk 18:10-14). He argues that in these stories, the *Bild* and *Sachhäfte* are one and the same thing and reflect the religious situation of the people. A. Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden*, I.112. For criticism of Jülicher's analysis of example stories see W. Harnisch, *Gleichnisergählungen*, 86-88.

¹⁶ A. Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden*, I.69.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 93

¹⁸ R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 179-222.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 184.

settings: the historical Jesus, the early church and the gospel writers. And in his classic definition of parable, Dodd sees parable as “a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting a hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.”²⁰ This definition has at least three implications, namely, that the meaning of most parables is not immediately obvious, most parables contain elements that are strange or unusual, and that parables do not define things precisely but only use comparisons. And if any element of the story is surprising that might be the point of the story. Like Bultmann he classifies the parables into figurative speech, similitude and parable proper. He also rejects the allegorical interpretation of the parables.²¹ Supporting Dodd’s classification Perrin argues: “Dodd does not distinguish example stories from parables, and properly so. From a literary standpoint *The Good Samaritan* and *The Prodigal Son* are equally metaphor extended into narrative; to distinguish them as example story and parable respectively is to make a distinction based on their supposed function on the lips of Jesus. But such a supposition is not necessarily correct and, in any case, the distinction is not being made on grounds of language and literary form.”²²

However Funk sees four elements in Dodd’s definition: (a) parable is a metaphor or simile which may remain simple, be expanded into a picture or be expanded into a story; (b) the metaphor or simile is drawn from concrete life; (c) the metaphor arrests the hearer by its strangeness or vividness; (d) the application is left imprecise to tease the hearers into making their own application.²³ The implication is that parables are polyvalent. This polyvalence led Scott to argue that any methodology that seizes on the one point of likeness of a parable’s meaning destroys the parable.²⁴ This assertion is then given a concretization in his definition of parable thus: “a parable is a *marshal* that employs a short narrative fiction to reference a transcendent symbol.”²⁵ The implication of the above assertion is that few, if any of the parables of Jesus were originally given applications by the earthly Jesus. Then where applications are found, the Gospel authors are responsible and these applications may not correspond with the original meaning of the parable. This last point will be aptly demonstrated in the trilogy of 21:28-22:14.

The localization of the original meaning of the gospel parables was the main aim of J. Jeremias. Influenced by the work of Dodd,²⁶ he tries to trace the parables to the

²⁰ C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 16.

²¹ But Dodd’s dislike for allegorical interpretation of the parables has been criticized sarcastically by M. Black in “Parables,” 283. In reference to Dodd’s analysis of the parable of Mk 12:1-12 where the following equations are made: vineyard= Israel; the tenants=dwellers of Jerusalem; servants=prophets; Son=Jesus, Black complains: “while thus showing allegory firmly to the door, one cannot but wonder if Dr. Dodd has not surreptitiously smuggled it in again by the window.”

²² N. Perrin, *Language*, 100.

²³ R. Funk, *Language*, 141.

²⁴ B. B. Scott, *Parables*, 45.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁶ In the preface to the sixth edition of his *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* Jeremias remarks that Dodd’s book “leitet eine neue Epoche der Gleichnisforschung ein.” See his *Gleichnisse*, 5.

historical ipsissima vox of Jesus.²⁷ This is because of his conviction that no one apart from the son of man himself can give authority to our preaching. For him, the parables open a window to the original teaching of Jesus. He sees the allegories in the parables as a distraction to the message they contain and as a creation of the early church.²⁸ He also makes the important remark that even the literary settings of the parables are a product of the primitive church. He concludes that the parables of Jesus, as they are delivered to us, have two different historical moments: (1) just like any other words of Jesus, the parables have their first origin, in a particular moment in the life and mission of Jesus. (2) Then, as these words were written down, they were preached by the early church in her missionary activities.²⁹ By the time of Jesus, the parables manifested the eschatological tone of his preaching and his conflicts with the crowds and the Jewish religious leaders of Palestine. But in the Gospels, the parables seem to react according to the situation of the early Church between the cross and the Parousia.³⁰ I find it interesting that he uses the parable of the Wedding Feast (Mt 22:1-13) and the parable of the Wicked Tenants (Mk 12:1-11) to demonstrate how these allegorical interpretations developed and increased over time.³¹ He therefore intends to redirect the parables from the early Church back to Jesus.

In the last part of the 20th century, numerous and interesting parable studies began to compete for recognition. Their main argument, however, is that the parables are to be seen as literary objects. For example, in 1967, D. O. Via proposed that parables are important as literary creations. For him, they are nonreferential aesthetic objects.³² In 1994, C. W. Hedrick³³ and W. R. Herzog³⁴ argued that the parables are nonreferential poetic fictions and nonreferential didactic stories respectively. The central argument of C. W. Hedrick is that, as non-referential poetic fictions, the parables reflected the social world of first-century Palestinian Judaism. Hence, in order to understand them, the parables must be read in the context of the values and culture of the first century. They are not meant to teach theology or God's intervention in human affairs but rather narrate the gory details of how oppression served the interests of the ruling class in the first century. The inference is that since parables are nonreferential, their understanding should not go beyond what they narrate to another reality which they are supposed to represent, for example, the kingdom of God. This could be seen as an attack on the metaphoric interpretation of the parables.

However, what cannot be rejected is the fact that Jesus was the first to use the parables as a method of teaching extensively.³⁵ Again his parables are close to

²⁷ J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 114.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 45f.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 19.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 64-75.

³² This is the main contribution of D. O. Via's *Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension*.

³³ C. H. Hedrick, *Parables as Poetic Fictions: The Creative Voice of Jesus*.

³⁴ W. R. Herzog II, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, especially p.3.

³⁵ See Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, cxxxii and cxxxv.

nature. This is in line with the argument of Jülicher that Jesus the son of Galilee clothed his thoughts “in das Gewand der Heimat und leitete mit sicherer Hand seine Getreuen vom Bekannten zum Unbekannten, von der Sinnenwelt zum Reiche der Himmel.”³⁶ One of the implications of the above submission is that the parables have their take-off from the daily experiences of the hearers. However, these experiences are transferred to the theological realm of the kingdom of God. This transfer explains the presence of numerous unexpected details in the parables. Heininger clearly argues, “wenn die Erzählung eine völlig unerwartete Wendung nimmt...dann sind das Erzählszüge, die die vertraute alltägliche Welt verfremden, aufbrechen und letztlich sprengen.”³⁷ His conclusion is that it is this mixture of the normal and abnormal in the parables of Jesus that leads to their being considered analogously to the metaphors. This fact, plus the numerous parallels in structure and form between the synoptic parables and the rabbinic parables, makes it unnecessary to oppose the parables of the rabbis so diametrically to those of Jesus. Paul Fiebig has amassed numerous rabbinic parables to show that they were in essence the same as the Gospel parables in form and that they evidenced allegory and mixtures of parable and allegory. He concludes that it is logical to interpret both sets of parables in reasonably similar fashion.³⁸ His greatest contribution seems to be the demonstration that the closest analogies to the Gospel parables at our disposal are the rabbinic meshalim.³⁹ He is supported in this argument by Culbertson who feels that the parables of Jesus reflect an aggadic nature, an evidence of the Pharisaic tradition.⁴⁰

0.3 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PARABLE AND ALLEGORY

The above discussion has shown the unease with which scholars consider elements of allegory in the parables of Jesus. The question as to whether the parables of Jesus are allegories and the difference between parable and allegory is one that has hunted bible parable scholarship for ages. To elucidate this point, recourse has to be made again to Jülicher. As already said, one Jülicherian legacy is the supposition that an allegory is a metaphor that has many separate but connected points of reference and each detail is important in itself and has to be labouriously interpreted. On the other hand, the parable is a simile and has only one major point and all the details serve to build up this single reference. Jülicher’s conclusion is that allegory conceals

³⁶ A. Jülicher, Gleichnisreden 1.145.

³⁷ B. Heininger, Metaphorik, 15f.

³⁸ P. Fiebig, Altjüdische Gleichnisse. In the first section of this book, 14-73, Fiebig says that his interest is not in making an etymological analysis of mashal or in discussing the meaning of such terms as allegory, fable, parable, similitude, riddle, etc. Rather he wishes to examine parabolic or allegorical sayings or stories from Mekilta, which is a midrashic commentary on parts of Exodus. In 1912 he published another book-Die Gleichnisreden Jesu im Lichte der Rabbinischen Gleichnisse des Neutestamentlichen Zeitalters, in which he continued his criticism of Jülicher. His intention was to find a middle way between exegetes like Jülicher who disregarded rabbinic material and such skeptics who held that rabbinic writings helped confirm that Jesus of the synoptic Gospels was a mythical figure invented from contemporary traditions.

³⁹ This is also the contention of J. D. Kingsbury, Parables, 7.

⁴⁰ Culbertson, A Word Fitly Spoken, 5.

while parable reveals.⁴¹ And because the allegory is an artificial figure, it cannot have been used by Jesus.⁴² The implication is that where allegories are seen in the parables, the early church is responsible.⁴³ This supposition has made the allegory very unpopular and inferior to the parable.

Nowadays, however, there are heavy protests against Jülicher's stark distinction between allegory and parable. Many exegetes have come to identify allegory in Jesus' stories. Through the influence of contemporary literary criticism, allegory is winning a better admiration. This seems to be a product of the distinction between allegory and allegorising. This distinction was clearly made by Hans-Josef Klauck in his *Allegorie und Allegorese in Synoptischen Gleichnistexten*. He sees *Allegorese* as those interpretations that produce extraneous and fantastic meanings to the texts. On the other hand, *Allegorisierung* is the subsequent allegorical elaboration of a text in which allegorical elements are already present.⁴⁴ It is this process that makes the texts relevant for today's listeners or hearers. The implication is that the NT parables are texts spoken by Jesus but interpreted by the Gospel writers for their communities. It allows the fading voice of the earthly Jesus to be heard again by the believing community. He comes to the conclusion that allegorical elements are already present in the authentic words of Jesus.⁴⁵ The result is that apart from *Allegorisierung* we would no longer have the parables of Jesus in our disposal. In the same year that Klauck published his book, Hans Weder, another notable German bible scholar, published his *Die Gleichnisse Jesu als Metaphern*. Just as the name of the book implies, its main aim was to understand the parables of Jesus from a metaphorical background.⁴⁶ From this take off, he argues that Jülicher's distinction between parable and allegory has become decrepit.⁴⁷ Hence, allegory does not hide the reality it wants to express except when it is not well constructed or the hearers are not civilized in the metaphors it employs.⁴⁸

The above ideas were well accepted by Ruben Zimmermann, who articulates several attributes of the genre parable. For him, it is a narrative, short text that tells of familiar things in the narrative world but shows either implicitly or explicitly that the meaning of the text is different from the text itself. It then beckons on the reader to make a metaphorical transfer which is enabled by the information provided by the co-and context of the story.⁴⁹ This description implies that one struggles in vain to

⁴¹ This view is also shared by R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 214.

⁴² A. Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden*, 1.65,70-73,77-78,84-86,102,121. He defines allegory as "...derjenigen Redefigur, in welcher eine zusammenhängende Reihe von Begriffen (ein Satz oder Satzkomplex) dargestellt wird vermittelt einer zusammenhängenden Reihe von ähnlichen Begriffen aus einem anderen Gebiete," *Gleichnisreden*, 1.84.

⁴³ One of the strongest upholders of Jülicher's view is E. Linnemann. See her *Die Gleichnisse Jesu, Einführung und Auslegung*, 6. Auflage written in 1975.

⁴⁴ H-J. Klauck, *Allegorie*, 20.

⁴⁵ See also H-J. Klauck, "Gleichnis, Gleichnisforschung," *NBL* I.851-855.

⁴⁶ H. Weder, *Gleichnisse*, 5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 69f.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 71f.

⁴⁹ R. Zimmermann (Hrsg.), *Kompendium*, 25.

make a clear genre distinction between parable and allegory since both contain elements of metaphor.

From this perspective, allegory is no longer seen only as a sequence of connected metaphors and the previous endeavour to distinguish between parable and allegory on the basis of the number of points of comparison is gradually being rejected. For instance, Sider sees the one point theory as the most pernicious part of Jülicher's legacy to a century of interpretation.⁵⁰ Hence, the stark difference depicted between parables and metaphor by many exegetes is put to question. A book like Ryken's *The Literature of the Bible* declares boldly that "the parables of Jesus belong to the literary family known as allegory."⁵¹ He thus ties allegory and parable together and expectedly sees allegory as the family of which parable is one of the species. We get a precise description of allegory from Batson. For her, allegory is to be perceived as the embodiment of beliefs in concrete form. It is a work in which the author imitates external actualities and at the same time suggests the significance of such imitations by extending a central metaphor and by showing additional analogies.⁵²

Several other scholars have also seen the interconnection between allegory and parable. This tendency is reflected in Crossan's *In Parable, the Challenge of the Historical Jesus*. The expressed intention in the book is not to continue the long argument about parable and allegory but to determine whether Jesus' stories are allegories *in whole or in part*, and if not to determine what they are.⁵³ Such an assertion is supported by the work of Hayes who declares that whenever the facts presented in a story are 'likened unto' something else as in the biblical parables so that a figurative language comes into use and the factual gains a dimension of pervasive extrinsic meaning, it cannot be anything but allegory.⁵⁴ Such a contention can have no other implication than to suggest that all or at least most of the parables of Jesus are allegories. Similarly Jeffrey T. Tucker, whose main contribution to parable scholarship is that the categorical distinction between parable and example stories rests on precarious foundations, argues that "having read Aristotle and Quintilian, we are forced to acknowledge that all of the parables (*παραβολαί*) of Jesus recorded in the synoptic gospels are examples (*παραδείγματα*)."⁵⁵ Thus he fails to acknowledge the formal distinction between parables and example stories. This conclusion is also worthwhile in the discussion between parable and allegory by virtue of the presence of allegoric elements in the NT parabolic narratives.

Some of the characteristics of parables include the use of metaphoric language. Most of the parables also consist of two parts, namely, the *Bildhälfte* and the *Sachhälfte*. The *Bildhälfte* consists of the metaphors employed in narrating the parable while the *Sachhälfte* is the reality which the metaphors embody. Sometimes there is the presence of the *tertium comparationis* which is the point of comparison

⁵⁰ J. W. Sider, "Nurturing Our Nurse," 17f.

⁵¹ L. Ryken, *Literature*, 301.

⁵² E. B. Batson, *John Bunyan: Allegory and Imagination*, 130. For G. C. Spivak, allegory involves the setting up of a double structure. "Thoughts on the Principle of Allegory," 348.

⁵³ J. D. Crossan, *In Parable*, 10. The emphases are mine.

⁵⁴ C. Hayes, "Symbol and Allegory," 284.

⁵⁵ J. T. Tucker, *Example Stories*, 395.

between the metaphors and the reality they represent. This enables the transfer from image to reality in the parables. It is introduced by the comparative particle ὅμοιος in its various forms. All the parables contain a central figure, designated by the German word *Handlungssouverän*, whose actions control the course of the story. This principal actor is often accompanied by two or more actants who mutually contradict themselves in their reactions to the *Handlungssouverän*. These actants are known as the *dramatische Hauptfigur* and the *dramatische Nebenfigur* respectively. How this model plays itself out would be exposed later in the course of the work.

Since the focus of my work is on the Matthean parables, I will now present an overview of the parables contained in Mt’s special materials.⁵⁶ I will not attempt a formal distinction between them since Mt’s presentation sees them as belonging to the same genre of parables.⁵⁷

0.4 THE MATTHEAN PARABLES

The evidence of the NT shows that the evangelists took the parable as Jesus’ best form of teaching (e.g. Mk 4; Mt 13; Lk 8). Many sayings are expressly named *παραβολή* by the evangelists. These range from the short saying “physician heal yourself” (Lk 4:23) to the 22 verses of the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-31). In Mt’s gospel there are also some narratives that are not explicitly named *παραβολή* but which must be taken as parables because of their nature as explained above. Typical examples include the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Mt 20:1-16), the parable of the Ten Maidens (Mt 25:1-13) and the parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14-30). Also the parable of the Two Sons (Mt 21:28-32) is not explicitly named a parable unless one is to take the use of “another parable” in 21:33 as an inference.

Towards the end of the 80s and 90s, there arose a great interest in the study of the parables as they are contained in particular Gospels. This is based on the recognition that the parables in each Gospel manifest the theological interests of the particular author. A reading of these parables then gives clues to the theology of the relevant gospel writer. Hence, apart from the parables Mt takes over from Mk and Q, Mt knows a collection of nine parables which are unique to him among the synoptic writers. However, four of them are contained in the gospel of Thomas. These parables are presented in the table below.

Parable	Matthew	Thomas
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⁵⁶ The parables in Mk include Garments & Wineskins Mk 2:21-22//Mt 9:16-17; Strong Man Mk 3:27//Mt 12:29; Sower and Seed Mk 4:3-20//Mt 13:3-23; Lamp Mk 4:21//Mt 5:15; Seed growing Secretly Mk 4:26-29; Mustard Seed Mk 4:30-32//Mt 13:31-32; Salt Mk 9:50//Mt 5:13; Wicked Tenants Mk 12:1-11// Mt 21:33-46; Budding Fig Tree Mk 13:28-29//Mt 24:32-33; Door Keeper Mk 13:33-37. The list shows that Mt keeps all but two parables in his Markan source. But as we shall see later, this omission is because of his theological needs.

⁵⁷ R. Zimmermann supports the view that the formal distinctions of the parables that originated from Jülicher should be abandoned. This is the main argument of his *Hermeneutik der Gleichnissen Jesu: Methodische Nueansätze zum Verstehen urchristlicher Parabeltexte*, written in 2008.

Wheat and Tares	13:24-30	57
Treasure	13:44	109
Pearl	13:45-46	76
Net	13:47-48	8
Unmerciful Servant	18:23-35	-
Vineyard Workers	20:1-16	-
Two Sons	21:28-32	-
Ten Virgins	25:1-13	-
Sheep and Goats	25:31-46	-
Total 9		Thomas has 4

Although the table above contains ‘parables’ in Mt, the term *παραβολή* is used especially beginning from chapter 13. This chapter alone uses *παραβολή* eleven times (13:3.10.13.18.24.31.33.34.35.36.53). It occurs again in 15:15; 21:33.45; 22:1 and 24:32. The fact that Mt concentrates his use of *παραβολή* in chapter 13 of his gospel could be a pointer that he understands the term especially as it is used in this chapter. It is important to note that the parables contained in the Matthean special sources reveal Mt’s theology. They seem to cluster around four main themes: Christian discipleship (13:24-30; 13:47f; 18:23-35), Judaism (21:28-46), eschatology (20:1-16; 25:1-13) and Christology (25:31-46).⁵⁸ Kingsbury has observed that the Matthean parables seem aimed to address the needs of the community to which Mt belongs.⁵⁹ His remarks that a study of the parables of Mt 13 within the context of Mt’s Gospel reflects Mt’s own age and theology can as well be said of the parable trilogy of 21:28-22:14. Kingsbury comes to the conclusion that “Matthew employs parables of Jesus in order that Jesus Kyrios, who lives in the midst of his Church, can address himself to the situation of the Church’s own day. This reveals that Mt conceives of Jesus’ parabolic tradition as a living tradition, for through it Jesus directs, teaches and exhorts Christians of a later age.”⁶⁰ This comment goes a long way to explain the Matthean redactions and applications of the parables as we shall later come to see.

Following this line of thought, Goulder contends that “there are marked differences of tone and doctrine between the parables in the several Gospels,⁶¹ leading to the fact that the parables in the Gospels reveal the interests of their various authors. He therefore discovers some characteristics of the Matthean parables including the setting of his parable in the world of humans and not on nature,⁶² he is a lover of the grand scale,⁶³ his long parables are all black-and-white caricature contrasts,⁶⁴ he is a lover of interpretations,⁶⁵ and allegories.⁶⁶ These and similar

⁵⁸ See J. Drury, *Parables*, 72.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁶¹ M. D. Goulder, “Characteristics,” 51.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 52.

⁶³ *Ibid.*; M. D. Goulder, *Midrash*, 60-62.

⁶⁴ M. D. Goulder, *Midrash*, 54.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁶⁶ M. D. Goulder, “Characteristics,” 60; M. D. Goulder, *Midrash*, 56-60.

arguments are at the foundation of Goulder's argument that Mt's parables are in the rabbinic style in every way, while Mk's and Lk's in most respects are not.⁶⁷ The allegorical nature of the Matthean parables is given an accentuation by Drury who views Mt's parables as allegorical historical parables.⁶⁸ Of special importance is the fact that the trilogy of 21:28-22:14 is situated in a section in which the relationship between Christianity and Judaism comes to the fore. The role this section gives to the entire narrative of Mt justifies the position of Drury that the interest of Mt in the relation of the Church to Judaism is fundamentally a concern with an historical question or cluster of questions.⁶⁹

For Jones, a study of the Matthean Parables can throw fresh light on the intention, purpose and genre of the gospel as a whole.⁷⁰ For him the Matthean parables are a result of a lengthy tradition which cannot be reduced to a consistent pattern,⁷¹ they achieve their premium together with other texts in the gospel and are not free from cultural values.⁷² They also reflect the adaptation of non-Matthean materials leading to lack of complete harmonization.⁷³ These adaptations leave room for multiple applications of the parables to various contexts. It is of interest that Jones uses the parable of the Wedding Feast as an example of the non-complete harmonization of the parables. This point would be seen later in the work.

One of the most recent works devoted to the Matthean parables is the work of Münch written in German. After analyzing some earlier contributions on the parables in general and on the Matthean corpus in particular, Münch tries to determine the form and function of the Matthean parables.⁷⁴ He observes that "Matthäus vermehrt in Kapitel 13 und 21f das Vorkommen von παραβολή."⁷⁵ This is because Mt stresses the stories in Ch. 13 as παραβολαί (13:3.31.33.35.36.53). Also in Ch. 21:28-22:14 Mt describes the three stories as παραβολή.⁷⁶ The texts known as parables are identified as such in their introductions or in the opening words of Jesus.⁷⁷ Münch argues that the parables, just like the teachings of Jesus are in Mt's Gospel a characteristic of Jesus preaching.⁷⁸ This is shown by the combination between the two verbs, λαλεῖν and παραβολή. Jesus uses the word παραβολή especially when talking with those outside the apostolic circle, but this does not mean that the disciples are not present when he teaches in parables.⁷⁹ Most of the texts described as parables are indirect

⁶⁷ M. D. Goulder, *Midrash*, 61f.

⁶⁸ He agrees with Kingsbury that the parables in ch. 13 have an enhanced historical force by being the point at which Jesus turns away from frustrated mission to Israel. J. Drury, *Parables*, 73.

⁶⁹ J. Drury, *Parables*, 73.

⁷⁰ I. H. Jones, *Parables*, 110.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 141.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁷⁴ C. Münch, *Gleichnisse*, 58.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 74f.

⁷⁶ The use of ἄλλην παραβολήν ἀκούσατε (21:33) indicates that Mt understands the text of 21:28-32 as a parable.

⁷⁷ C. Münch, *Gleichnisse*, 75.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

answers to questions about the works or teachings of Jesus.⁸⁰ An exemption is 24:32 where the *παραβολή* of the fig tree is used to explain the signs of the coming of the son of man. Finally, Mt uses *παραβολή* many times to demand from the audience to hear (*ἀκούειν*: 13:9.18.45; 15:10; 21:33), to understand (*συνιέναι*: 15:10), and to learn from them (*μαθητεύειν*: 24:32).⁸¹

0.5 REDACTION-CRITICAL STUDIES OF THE TRILOGY

Apart from the many works and articles devoted to the various Gospel writers which we shall encounter in the course of this work, there is also a great deal of work devoted to the parable trilogy of Mt 21:28-22:14 in its context in Mt's Gospel. This shows a paradigm shift from an interest on what the parables were supposed to mean in themselves to a concentration of their supposed intentions by the evangelist. Most of these studies are from a redaction-critical perspective to the trilogy. Although we shall still encounter these authors in the course of the work, I present a summary of some of their views here.

0.5.1 Wolfgang Trilling

The main interest of Trilling was to explain the tradition-history of the parable of the Wedding Feast (Mt 22:1-14). Following a redaction-critical approach he observes that the parable of the Wedding Feast has been consciously constructed to continue the parable of the Wicked Tenants. This is shown by the verbatim repetition of words and phrases between the two parables and the correspondence between the threat at 21:43 and its execution in 22:7.⁸² Again, the obvious resemblances in the parables of the Wicked Tenants and the Wedding Feast in the mission and fate of the servants and the fact that these parables depart from their synoptic counterparts at these points show Mt's hand in shaping these parables and in the formation of the trilogy generally.⁸³ However, he concludes that both the polemic and paraenetic motifs in the parable of the Wedding Feast show a pre-Matthean *Vorlage*. It is to the credit of Mt that these motifs have been developed and sharpened. And in developing these motifs, Mt shows an ad-hoc re-writing manifested in the tensions present in the parable.

0.5.2 S. V. Tilborg

In his book, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*, Tilborg devotes the first part of chapter three to the exploration of the parable trilogy of Mt 21:28-22:14. He stresses the repetition of words and phrases in the parables to show that an editor's hand is visible in the trilogy.⁸⁴ Just like Trilling, he argues that these parables are already linked in the tradition. Mt only strengthened the traditional links.⁸⁵ He underlines the connection and contrast between the child who initially rejected the father's

⁸⁰ Ibid., 78.

⁸¹ Ibid., 79.

⁸² W. Trilling, "Überlieferungsgeschichte," 254f.

⁸³ Ibid., 263.

⁸⁴ S. V. Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 47.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 47-63.

command to work in the vineyard but later repented (21:28-31) and the invited guests who twice refused to honour the invitation to the wedding feast but never repented (22:3-5). On the other hand, he uses the repeated mission of the servants (21:34.36//22:3.4), their maltreatment (21:35//22:6) and the subsequent retaliation by their owner (21:41//22:7), as well as a syntactic and lexical analysis of Mt's editorial to conclude that Mt did not place the parables together. They were already together in the tradition but Mt only strengthened this unity.⁸⁶

0.5.3 Eduard Schweizer

The first point Schweizer draws attention to in his study of the trilogy is the common vineyard motif that joins the first two parables of the trilogy and the surprising presence of *βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ* which is not typically Matthean. He points out that this phrase is again repeated in the redactional v.43 and implies that Mt is referring back to the judgement of v.31.⁸⁷ Like other scholars, he recognizes the almost verbatim repetitions of the sending of the servants in the second and third parables and concludes that the whole of the four pericopes from 21:23-22:14 should be assigned to Mt. Another of his telling contributions to the study of the trilogy is the recognition of the progressive intensity of the figures in the parables. While the first is about a man, the second is about a landowner, and the third about a king. The events also describe different responses. The first parable concerns response to John the Baptist, the second is about response to Jesus while the third deals with response to the messengers of Jesus. This progression is also shown in the different panels of the controversy between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. First, the evasive answer of the Jewish leaders to the counter-question of Jesus puts them under trial. This *Verhör* (21:23-27), proceeds to a *Schuldigsprechung* (21:28-32), which gives way to a *Strafzumessung* (21:33-46) and finally the *Urteilsvollstreckung* or the execution of the sentence (22:1-10).⁸⁸ Although the above sketch shows the terrible guilt of Israel and the punishment that accompanies it, Schweizer is of the opinion that the trilogy reaches its climax in 22:1-14 when Mt warns his church that the fate of Israel can also be her fate if she does not wear the appropriate garment.

0.5.4 Ivor H. Jones

Jones references the work of Tilborg about the verbal links between the parables, arguing that the present form of the parables in Mt's narrative shows that the parable of the Wicked Tenants has been assimilated to that of the Two Sons. Both parables show the failure of the Jewish leadership to respond appropriately to Jesus and John. The effect of this failure is the replacement of the Jewish leadership establishment with an unlikely stock.⁸⁹ Again, a strong link is established between the second and third parables through the themes of the violent rejection of the prophets and the replacement of the Jewish leadership.⁹⁰ Significantly, Jones adduces several lexical

⁸⁶ Ibid., 47-49.

⁸⁷ E. Schweizer, *Matthäus*, 118.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 118f.

⁸⁹ I. H. Jones, *Matthean Parables*, 371,389.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 405,412.

and syntactical arguments to conclude that the grouping of these parables belongs to an earlier stage in the development of the tradition.⁹¹

0.5.5 Warren Carter

Like the other scholars before him, Carter notes the abundance of elements that show the unity of the trilogy. For him the three parables have their origin from the same situation and are directed against the same people, the Jewish religious leaders. In this strife with the Jewish leaders, the question of Jesus' authority plays a prominent role.⁹² In reading the trilogy as a progression of the audiences increasing understanding of the parables, he comes to the conclusion that "the immediate following of the first parable with a second, and Jesus' opening comment 'hear another parable', create for the audience the expectation that this second parable will reinforce and develop the insights of the previous parable in several ways."⁹³ Despite the language of 21:41.43, the replacement of Israel is not in view in the allegory. What changes is the group to whom the vineyard would be entrusted.⁹⁴ He makes the insightful remark that trilogy expands what the audience knows about the Jewish leaders in this gospel. As to the pragmatism of the text he concludes that the trilogy helps the audience in living a life faithful to God's purpose. Since the main interest of his analysis was to see the role the three parables play in the immediate Matthean context he neglects to discuss the origin of the trilogy.

0.5.6 W. G. Olmstead

In his 2003 monograph, Olmstead focuses on how the trilogy functions in the entire Matthean narrative. He combines narrative-criticism with redactional-criticism in order to answer the question 'what response[s] did the evangelist intend to elicit from his readers?'⁹⁵ After making a review of scholarly opinion on the trilogy, he proceeds to a narrative criticism of the three parables and sees in the formal unity therein the hand of the evangelist. He concludes that "the evangelist himself has constructed this trilogy."⁹⁶ To buttress his point, he evaluates Mt's characterization of the Jewish leaders and the nations in his gospel. His analysis leads him to the insight that the heightening of polemic against the Jewish leaders which is present in the three parables in their Matthean form is a characteristic of Mt's gospel. This polemic tends to intensify as the narrative progresses. And in this intensification, the crowds seem to be progressively drawn to the side of their leaders in forming a united front against Jesus. This insight leads Olmstead to make a very bold conclusion which runs against contemporary scholarly thought on the trilogy, namely, that the judgement which the trilogy envisages falls upon the whole of Israel and not upon her leaders alone. Commenting on 27:25 where *παῖς ὁ λαός* declare upon themselves and upon their children the responsibility of the blood of Jesus, Olmstead concludes that "the parables of the Tenants and the Wedding Feast... have prepared the ground too well. Having shared in the responsibility for the murder of the vineyard owner's son, all the people share in the judgement it has summoned: the suspension of national

⁹¹ Ibid., 371-412.

⁹² W. Carter, "The Parables in Matthew 21:28-22:14," 147.

⁹³ Ibid., 159f.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 164f.

⁹⁵ W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 4.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 46.

privilege.”⁹⁷ The result of this suspension is the incorporation of all the nations in the nation which God promised to raise up for Abraham.⁹⁸

0.5.7 Matthias Konradt

Konradt places the parable trilogy of Mt 21:28-22:14 under the consequence of the negative reaction to Jesus’ actions. He sees the trilogy as a Matthean composition, arguing that Mt has added a parable from his special source (21:28-32) and another from Q (22:1-14) to the Markan parable of the Tenants.⁹⁹ He sees many formal connections between the first two parables and also the many vocabularic correlations between the last two parables. This leads him to conclude that the Markan parable of The Tenants is the point of crystallization of the Matthean trilogy.¹⁰⁰ One of the notable contributions of Konradt is his answer to the question whether Mt has constructed his trilogy against the Jewish folk. The analysis of Jesus’ opponents in the pericope, the micro-context of the trilogy, Mt’s choice of vocabulary, as well as the tradition behind his composition all lead to the summation that the trilogy, especially 21:43 is not against Israel but rather against the Jewish leaders.¹⁰¹ This conclusion is carried on the parable of the Wedding Feast. Here, even the destruction of Israel which the parable depicts (cf. 22:7) is seen as a sentence against the Jewish leadership since Jerusalem does not represent Israel in Mt’s gospel as 21:9-11 shows.¹⁰² This is a conclusion that will play a great role in my study of the trilogy.

The above sketch is a rough summary representation of current thought on the parable trilogy of Mt 21:28-22:14. The attention of these scholars on the intention of Mt in narrating these parables is a welcome venture in parable scholarship. It takes attention away from how the parables may have been narrated by the historical Jesus while focusing on the way the evangelist has received them and how he wants them to be understood by his community. It is in the tradition of these scholars that the present work belongs.

0.6 METHOD AND STRUCTURE OF THE WORK

As already seen in the above introductory notes, there are numerous problems that bedevil any attempt to interpret the parables of Jesus from their historical situations. This is understandable since the only recorded teachings of the historical Jesus are what we glean from the biblical writers based on the traditions they received. These traditions are already interpreted before they are transmitted. Hence my belief that a correct interpretation of the parables should rather focus on the way the individual gospel writers have understood them and not on the possible way Jesus could have wanted them to be understood. The central question is thus: “how might the evangelist have expected this story to be heard” rather than “how might Jesus have

⁹⁷ Ibid., 63.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 73-97.

⁹⁹ M. Konradt, *Israel*, 182f.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 184.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 200.

¹⁰² Ibid., 216.

expected this story to be heard.”¹⁰³ This informs my aim to study the trilogy of Mt 21:28-22:14 in the context of Mt’s gospel. I will attempt to answer some of the questions raised by the parable trilogy and through them arrive at the original meaning of the trilogy in the context of Mt’s Gospel¹⁰⁴ with the help of some synchronic and diachronic exegetical methods: literary criticism, source/redaction criticism, and form criticism. This will eventually lead to a determination of the nature and social situation of the community to which Mt was writing and what could have given rise to the trilogy.¹⁰⁵

As said above, the methods employed in the work are both synchronic and diachronic. This is because of the recognition that a work so complex like the Matthean gospel must be approached from diverse angles so as to arrive at a meaningful comprehension of its manifold nature. The synchronic method focuses on the texts as finished products served to the Matthean community. It involves a narrative-critical reading of the trilogy. This approach takes the Matthean Gospel as a unity and tries to see how the various pericopes come together to expose Mt’s understanding of the message of Jesus in the trilogy. It does not consider the processes or traditions that lay behind the formation of these texts. Rather each pericope is taken in its relation to the Matthean theology. It argues for the integrity of the gospel as a complete narrative. A typical example is the presentation of the genealogy of Jesus (1:1-17) as a manifestation of the universal dimension of Mt’s Gospel. The implication is, then, that the universal commission at the end of the Gospel (28:19) should be taken as forming a fitting conclusion to the story of Jesus that sees all the nations as belonging to the one family of Abraham. This conclusion is also seen in many other passages in our first gospel. This knowledge has serious implication in considering the meaning of the statement that the kingdom of God would be taken away from the Jewish leaders and given to a nation producing the fruits of the kingdom (21:43). From this perspective, one sees that it is difficult to conclude that Mt intends to make a distinction between the Jews and other nations. This implies that the notion “nation” could have a special meaning in the Matthean corpus. This idea will further be developed in the course of the work.

Although this gives a concise view of the Matthean composition, the work I undertake shows how reductionistic and simplistic this view is. In fact, various pericopes in Mt’s gospel stand at a certain tension with each other that one wonders whether they do not manifest different theological orientations by some members of the Matthean community. This is especially the case considering the restriction of the mission of the followers of Jesus to the house of Israel (Mt 10:5f without parallel)

¹⁰³ W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 161.

¹⁰⁴ See J. R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parables*, ix. He observes that the parables play out the themes of their respective Gospels and claims that, “to study the parables of the Gospels is to study the Gospel in parable.” Also I. H. Jones maintains that “the parables do not have an isolated function but are related to the Gospels of their occurrence.” See his *Parables*, 123.133.139.141.

¹⁰⁵ In the introduction to his book, *Origins*, 1, G. D. Kilpatrick argues that “the study of Matthew begins with a consideration of the factors in its composition and with a preliminary survey of the evidence on authorship, date, and place of writing.” But I have decided to follow a different direction. I will work from the trilogy of parables in 21:28-22:14 to arrive at the provenance of Mt’s Gospel.

and the universal commission at the end of the gospel (Mt 28:19). This tension is also evident in the gospel's strong affinity to the Jewish tradition and an unrepentant attack against the Jewish Leaders which Mt manifests more than any other synoptic writer. He shows his Jewish roots, among other things, by presenting Jesus as a sort of new Moses who has come to fulfil the law and the prophets (Mt 5:17f) and by making the fulfilment quotations an important mark in his work.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, his attack of the Jewish establishment acquires a striking finality in the unparalleled statement of Mt 27:25 where the whole people pleaded on themselves the effect of the death of Jesus. My thesis seeks to understand these apparent tensions using the parable trilogy of 21:28-22:14. It argues for the necessity of reading the gospel account as a unity from start to finish so as to see the different currents or undercurrents which the author was battling against.

In contrast, the diachronic method regards Mt's Gospel, and in our case the trilogy, as a product of a synthesis of older traditions. It involves tradition and redaction. This process is an examination of Mt's gospel from a redaction-critical perspective. It accepts the theory that Mt used the gospel of Mk as its main source of tradition. Apart from this source, it also made use of the Q source as well as his peculiar source or *Sondergut*. Since Mt took over the bulk of Mk, it must be accepted that he shares most of Mk's tradition. His redaction of Mk, then, shows to what extent he agrees with the Markan presentation of the Jesus' story. This perspective examines how Mt has revised the traditions behind Mk's story and the possible reasons that could lie behind these revisions. The reason behind this approach is the conviction that Mt's redactions manifest his distinct theological convictions. It goes to show that Mt was not simply gathering traditions and editing them haphazardly. Rather he has to be regarded as a theologian in his own right. This would be shown especially in Mt's redaction of the parable of 21:33-46 which he took over from Mk and the parable of 22:1-14 which he (probably) took over from Q.

The work is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter presents the text and co-texts of the trilogy. The co-texts refer to those texts that surround the trilogy. Their investigation helps to situate the parables of the trilogy in their immediate environment in the Matthean narrative. The reason for the study of the literary context is the fact that the situation of the parables in a particular literary setting shows the evangelists' understanding of the parables.¹⁰⁷ The situating of the trilogy in the section of the gospel dealing with controversy between Jesus and the Jewish leaders could give a clue to the manner Mt wants the trilogy to be understood. In the presentation of the text of the trilogy, I have tried to make the Greek text clearer by following a translation that is more faithful to a word-for-word interpretation. But naturally I have made the translation to correspond to the English rules of grammar. The presentation of the text is preceded by a determination of the textual units under investigation, namely, the trilogy of 21:28-22:14 which shows the reasons for my choice of studying this section as a unit. This is then concluded with an investigation of the thematic and verbal similarities that give the parables of the trilogy their unity.

¹⁰⁶ For a thorough analysis of these quotations see R. T. France, "Quotations," 233-51.

¹⁰⁷ C. W. Hedrick, *Parables*, 11.

Chapters two, four and six are devoted to the syntactic and semantic constructions of the parables of the trilogy as well as the traditions from which they are constructed by Mt. In the syntactic analysis, the idea is to see how the different words and sentences are brought together and how they can help in discovering the inner dynamics of the text. Egger sees the task of this analysis as the investigation of the concrete linguistic form of a text, the relationship between the linguistic elements of the text as well as the rules guiding the bringing together of these elements.¹⁰⁸ Although this may seem as an exegetic valley of dry bones for many, it helps the parables to speak for themselves.¹⁰⁹ The dryness of this section is offset by the semantic analysis which focuses on the words or groups of words that could help in the interpretation of the parables of the trilogy. It is then followed by redaction/source analysis. Only then will it be stated if Mt has constructed the trilogy of parables from his special source, the so-called M, or if he has adapted it from Mk or Q to suit his own understanding of the Jesus' teaching. These chapters are then concluded with a determination of the genre of the various parables of the trilogy. I use the frames of the parables (the introduction and application), as well as its actantial analysis as genre signals.

Chapters three, five and seven investigate the historical or cultural kernel of the parables respectively and how Mt has transformed this historical nub of the parables to fit his theological agenda. The investigation of the historical contexts of the parables is to show that the parables could be traced back to the historical Jesus in one form or the other. C. H. Dodd seems to hint to the importance of this venture when he writes: "in the parables of the Gospels, however, all is true to nature and to life. Each similitude or story is a perfect picture of something that can be observed in the world of our experience. The processes of nature are accurately observed and recorded."¹¹⁰ Although this might not be true of all the parables, it actually outlines a general truth. This is shown in the historical background of the trilogy. But the aim is not to underline what Jesus said or did not say. The emphasis is on Mt as narrator. This is why Mt's understanding of the trilogy acquires pride of place in these chapters.

The final chapter of the work is devoted to the Matthean community as the origin of the trilogy. This chapter will focus on the way the trilogy of 21:28-22:14 serves to portray the self-image of the Matthean community and the political and theological conflicts she encountered in the course of her self-definition. Here, the position of the Jewish leaders looms large in Mt's case against Israel. It goes on to consider that since the trilogy has Mt's community as its place of origin, it is meant to urge the members of his community on the need for a better righteousness than that of their opponents, the Jewish Leaders. This work is a theological synthesis that does not pretend to say the last word, either relative to the Matthean parables or to his community. It is a humble contribution to the on-going dialogue on the relevance of

¹⁰⁸ W. Egger, *Methodenlehre*, 77.

¹⁰⁹ For Wilder, the parables, like works of art, should be allowed to be heard naively and undisturbed. See his *Jesus' Parables*, 89f.

¹¹⁰ C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 20.

the Scriptures to modern life. What does the Matthean trilogy of 21:28-22:14 say to the Church today?

CHAPTER ONE CO-TEXT AND TEXT OF THE TRILOGY

1.1 CO-TEXT¹ OF THE TRILOGY

The trilogy of parables (21:28-22:14) has its starting point from the entrance of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem (21:10).² The mention of Jerusalem reminds the reader of the events at Jesus' birth (2:3) and his passion predictions (16:21; 17:12). This entrance introduces the reaction of the dwellers of the city to the person of Jesus.³ The first question of the whole city (*πᾶσα ἡ πόλις*) is with this inquiry “*τίς ἐστὶν οὗτος;*” (who is this)?⁴ Perhaps, the answer to this question *οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ προφήτης Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἀπὸ Ναζαρεθ τῆς Γαλιλαίας* (this is the prophet, Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee, 21:11) already foresees the actions that begin from 21:12 (the cleansing of the Temple).⁵ These actions can be seen as prophetic or messianic actions (see Mal. 3:1ff).⁶ The deed of cleansing,⁷ plus the healing in the Temple (21:14) and the cries of the children (21:15)⁸ introduce the perspective of the high priests (*οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς*) and the Scribes (*οἱ γραμματεῖς*) and present them as a front that stays in opposition not only to Jesus but also to the crowds. It is important to note that the conflict here is between Jesus and the Jewish leaders and not with the whole people of Israel.⁹ This remark is necessary because the opposition between Jesus and the Jewish leaders plays a prominent role in the trilogy and the whole of the Matthean narrative as we

¹ I use the word ‘co-text’ to refer to linguistic units that are part of the discourse, that is, those units that surround the trilogy. Exegetes have made a distinction between it and context, with the latter meaning extra linguistic factors that influence discourse production, which include the immediate historical situation in which a discourse occurs and the prevalent world views. For a fuller discussion, see, for e.g., M. A. K. Halliday, *Language*, 28f and S. E. Porter (ed.), *Handbook*, 195.

² This entrance seems to mark an important turning point in the ministry of Jesus. For the exposition of this point see D. A. Hagner, *Matthew*, II.591.

³ It appears that the shock (*ταράσσω*) that greeted the announcement of the birth of Jesus (2:3) has been replaced by an unexpected excitement (*σείω*) of his entrance into Jerusalem (21:10). Jesus' arrival into the city of Jerusalem in 21:1-9 is his first narrated entrance into the city within Mt's Gospel. However, there are hints that Jesus may have in fact been there before (see e.g., 23:37; 27:57). Also the fact that he can get some support from the local populace in 17:17; 21:2-3; 26:6.18 could point to his popularity in this city.

⁴ The combination of *οὗτος* + *ἐστὶν* shows Mt's interest in the identity of Jesus. Cf. R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 411.

⁵ It seems that the question about the identity of Jesus and the actions he carried out have overshadowed the question bothering on his topographical origin, that is, Nazareth as opposed to Jerusalem. For detailed analysis of this cleansing see T. W. Manson, “Cleansing,” 271-82.

⁶ Cf. D. J., Harrington, *Matthew*, 295. The words of Jesus in this section repeat the prophetic assertions of Isaiah (56:7) and Jeremiah (7:1). His actions, here contradict those of David, who attacked blind cripples and decreed that the blind and the crippled cannot enter the Lord's house (see 2 Sm 5:8; cf. Lev 21:18-19). See R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 413. A similar prejudice against the unclean is to be found in 1 QSa 2:5-22; 1 QM 7:5-6; CD 15:15-17. So also B. Repschinski, *Controversy Stories*, 189.

⁷ The cleansing of the Temple is always associated with the restoration of Israel. Cf. 2 Kgs 18:4ff; 22:3-23:25.

⁸ It appears that the “little ones” (cf. Mt 11:25) have been granted knowledge of the secrets of God. See E. Schweizer, *Matthäus*, 266.

⁹ The reaction of the Jewish leaders in 21:15 seems to be informed by the miracles of Jesus in the Temple. See E. Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, 300; W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.141; M. Konrad, *Israel*, 134.

shall come to see. Their first question to Jesus, in response to the cries of the children *ἀκούεις τί οἱ οὔτοι λέγουσιν;* (do you hear what they are saying? 21:16b), is answered by Jesus with a simple *ναί* (21:16c). Jesus then follows up this answer with a rhetorical question bothering on the Jewish leaders' knowledge of the Scriptures (21:16d-e). As the narrative makes it clear, the Jewish leaders were unable to answer Jesus' counter-question. This unanswered question (embedded with the citation of Ps 8:3) concludes the main activities of Jesus on the first day of his stay in Jerusalem. After this interaction, he left them (*καταλιπὼν αὐτούς*) and spent the night in Bethany (21:17).¹⁰

The second day sees Jesus entering again into Jerusalem and introduces a new theme: the authority of Jesus. This theme is first depicted with the surprising withering of the cursed barren fig tree (21:19).¹¹ It is then carried further by Jesus in his teaching in the Temple and by the high priests (*οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς*) and elders of the people (*οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ*) in their two-pronged question about the authority of Jesus in 'doing these things' (21:23).¹² Rather than a direct answer to this question,¹³ Jesus retorts with a question about the divine (*ἐξ οὐρανοῦ*) or human (*ἐξ ἀνθρώπων*) origin of the baptism of John. The mention of John by Jesus links his ministry and authority to that of The Baptist (cf. 3:3),¹⁴ a link which the first parable of the trilogy will eventually strengthen.¹⁵

¹⁰ The use of *καταλείπω* recalls 16:4. For the use of this word as turning away from Israel's lack of faith see A. Kretzer, *Herrschaft*, 152.

¹¹ The proximity between the withering of the fig tree and the cleansing of the Temple suggests that Mt sees them as having the same significance. See D. J. Harrington, *Matthew*, 297; R. H. Hiers, "Purification," 85. This apparent arbitrary use of authority to curse the fig tree seems to be augmented by the similar apparent arbitrary use of authority by the king who cursed the guest without the proper wedding garment at the end of the trilogy. This argument has been fronted by D. Patte, *Matthew*, 291f. Mt seems to highthen the authority of Jesus by narrating the withering of the fig tree immediately after the cursing.

¹² The enquiry about "these things" seems to refer both to the purging of the Temple and the healings there. But for J. Gnilka, the question refers principally to the authority of his teaching. See his *Das Matthäusevangelium*, 216. This is also the view of E. Schweizer, *Matthäus*, 267. For the question as a probe of his whole ministry see W. Carter, "The Parables in Matthew 21:28-22:14," 147-176, here 150. If his actions had been based on a human authority, this could have amounted to a death sentence against him, so M. Ebner, *Markus*, 122. If on the other hand he disclaimed royal authority, he would be discredited by his own followers. See also A. Plummer, *Matthew*, 293; D. J. Harrington, *Matthew*, 299.

¹³ D. A. Hagner, *Matthew* II.609 points out that by refusing to answer their question directly, Jesus employed a rabbinic method, which uses a counter question, which, if answered, would at once reveal the source of Jesus' authority, which stands in continuity with that of John the Baptist, and expose the guilt of the Jewish authorities. See also H. Strack/P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I.861f. Hence, the *λόγον ἔνα*, concerning which Jesus asks them, as they rightly perceived, cannot be answered without revealing the unreceptive hearts of his questioners.

¹⁴ C. E. B. Cranfield, *St. Mark*, 365, writes: "the question was no mere debating expedient, but thoroughly apposite; for the question whether John was a true prophet had a direct bearing on the question of Jesus' authority, their ministries being related as they were."

¹⁵ U. Luz has noted that: "die enge Beziehung zwischen V 23-27 und V 28-32 hat der Evangelist durch Stichworte hervorgehoben (*Ἰωάννης, οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε αὐτῷ* V 25f.32)." see his *Matthäus*, III.205. In this sense, one might be right in positing that we have many parables linked in this section of Mt's gospel. Hence, the evasion of the Jewish leaders could be seen not only as an evasion but equally a parabolic depiction of their character and refusal to recognize in John a man sent by God. In the same way, the refusal of Jesus to answer them could be a tacit rejection of their authority to question him.

The dilemma created by this question of Jesus helps Mt in depicting the political expediency of the Jewish leaders over and above the truth: their answer was based on how the people would react (21:25-27).¹⁶ That the Jewish leaders admit to themselves their policy of political expediency seems designed to intensify their guilt.¹⁷ This character of theirs would later be narrated in 21:46. Their agnostic reply “*οὐκ οἶδαμεν*” (21:27), leads Jesus not to reply directly to their question as to the source of his authority.¹⁸ It also functions as the reason for his telling of the trilogy of parables. Hence our trilogy is located in the context of an authority controversy between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.¹⁹ The question of authority is thus at the heart of the trilogy.²⁰ This explains why the word authority (*ἐξουσία*) is prominent in this section (4 times in 21:23f.27).²¹

This implies that the parable of the ‘Two Sons,’²² the parable of The Wicked Tenants,²³ and the parable of The Wedding Feast are a series of parables that counter-challenge the authority of the Jewish leadership in response to their challenge of the authority of Jesus. Seen in this way, then, our trilogy is strongly tied to the events recorded from the beginning of chapter 21. After the trilogy, the narrative continues with the question about the payment of taxes to the Emperor after which Jesus left them and went away (22:15-22). The implication is that despite the chapter divisions, the trilogy of 21:28-22:14 is contained in an encounter which can be seen as “a single discursive unit in four panels, which begins with Jesus entering

¹⁶ The great influence which John had on the populace has been documented by Josephus, Ant. 18:118.

¹⁷ So R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 419f. Chrysostom seems to support the idea of the political interest of the Jewish leaders. He writes: “if indeed they had been ignorant it would have been requisite for them to be instructed; but since they were dealing craftily with good reason he answers them nothing.” Hom. on Mt. 67.2.

¹⁸ Does their inability to know whether John was from God or not render them unable to question Jesus? This question is answered in the affirmative by F. V. Filson, *Matthew*, 226. F. Hoover, *Five Gospels*, 231, reminds us that the question ‘by what authority’ is reminiscent of the Beelzebub controversy (Mt 12: 22-29), where Jesus turns the logic of his opponents against them in an ironic response.

¹⁹ But this is not the first time that the Jewish leaders would challenge Jesus about his authority. Already his authority has been challenged by Pharisees in the presence of scribes (12:38) and by Sadducees (16:1). In the present circumstance, however, the challenge is posed by those who will constitute the court that will sentence him to death (26:3.47; 27:1).

²⁰ This view has been captured well by Matthias Konradt in his *Israel*, 134. For him, “es ist die Gefährdung der eigenen Führungsposition, die die Feindschaft gegen Jesus prägt. See also B. Repschinski, *Controversy Stories*, 340. He argues that the title of ‘son of David’ given to Jesus in this pericope “expresses the claim of Jesus to displace the Jewish leaders from their position of authority in Israel.”

²¹ John Drury feels that in the question of the leaders nothing more is at stake than the central tenet of Christianity, the divine authority of Jesus. See his *Parables*, 96.

²² This title ‘The Two Sons’ has gained much currency, though the Bible never called them ‘sons’ but ‘children.’ Maybe this title seems to look back to the parable of the Two Sons of Lk which may be seen as its parallel in many respects. In this work, I will allow this parable the traditional title of ‘the two sons.’ For treatment of this issue see E. K. Broadhead, “Gender Bias,” 336-38.

²³ D. C. Allison/W. D. Davies, *Matthew*, III.174, (n. 1) think that this title is appropriate since the emphasis is not upon the new ethnos or the vineyard itself but the guilt of the wicked tenants. Again, since there are three vineyard parables in this gospel, the common title, ‘the parable of the vineyard’, fails to distinguish this parable from those of 20:1ff and 21:28ff.

the Temple...and features four exchanges with the chief priests and elders of the people.”²⁴ This assertion is justified by the fact that at 22:15 the interlocutors and the theme change.

Just like Mk and Lk, Mt²⁵ situates this series of debates at the temple precincts in Jerusalem (cf. Mk 11:27-33; Lk 20:1-8). But unlike Mk and Lk, Mt has three parables together; Lk has two while only the parable of The Wicked Tenants is parallel to all Synoptics.²⁶ This controversy and the resultant parables help to bring to the fore the Matthean Jesus’ idea of the true doing of the will of God, his evaluation of the personality of John, the comparison between the Jewish crowds and leaders and more importantly what I would call a *transference theology* that is given singular clarity in 21:43 where the kingdom of God would be taken away from the Jewish leaders and given to a nation *doing* its fruit (ποιῶντι τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτῆς).²⁷

1.2 DETERMINATION OF THE TEXTUAL UNIT

Just as mentioned above, the first obvious observation about the trilogy of Mt 21:28-22:14 is that the parables are inserted in the middle of an authority controversy between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. This is so because the controversy has no clear conclusion. Although the concluding statement of Jesus in v.27 “οὐδὲ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἐν ποία ἐξουσία ταῦτα ποιῶ” functions as an *inclusio*²⁸ to the initial question of v.23 “ἐν ποία ἐξουσία ταῦτα ποιεῖς;” thus achieving a momentary conclusion, the dialogue however remains open.²⁹ Hence, as is normal with controversy stories, the reader naturally waits for the response of Jesus after the above remark. This he does with the beginning of v.28.³⁰ The fact that the parable of the Two Sons was allowed to flow into the fore-going argument without a change of speaker between vv.27 and 28 shows this close connection.³¹ Again, in v.32, Jesus speaks to the Jewish leaders and reveals to them what he hid from them in v.25. That means that v.32 is a direct way of expressing the thoughts of v.25, that is, the Jewish leaders do not believe The

²⁴ J. S. Kloppenborg, Tenants, 174. See also U. Luz, Matthäus, III.196; R. Zimmermann (Hrsg.), Kompendium, 473.

²⁵ I will use the name ‘Matthew’ to refer to the author or final redactor of the Gospel. I am assuming that the redactor worked from various sources of materials, including the Gospel of Mark, and then reshaped those materials into a distinctive literary and theological document. When I use the word author I use it to refer to the implied author, defined by Booth as “the creating person who is implied by the totality of a given work when it is offered to the world.” W. Booth, Critical Understanding, 269.

²⁶ The parables of the Invited Guests and The Vineyard are also present in Thomas’ Gospel logion 64 and 65 respectively.

²⁷ U. Luz, Studies in Matthew, 246 supposes that Mt 21:43 is significant for Mt’s Israel Theology.

²⁸ So also B. Repechinski, Controversy Stories, 194; D. A. Hagner, Matthew, II.609.

²⁹ The Matthean parallel with 2 Sam 3:13 has led to the supposition that Mt draws a comparison between Jesus and David to serve a Christological need. See for e.g., J. Gnlika, Das Matthäusevangelium, II.215; E. Lohmeyer, Matthäus, 306.

³⁰ For B. B. Scott, the question of Jesus is a conundrum which leaves the debate unresolved. See his Parables, 81.

³¹ A similar argument is adduced by F. Herrenbrück in his Jesus und die Zöllner, 263, who contends that since no new addressee is mentioned in v.28, then with the parable “Jesus wendet die anscheinend offengebliebene Vollmachtsfrage von der rein theoretischen auf die praktische Ebene.”

Baptist. Moreover, the fresh mention of The Baptist in v.32 means that Mt intends vv.23-27 and vv.28-32 to function together.³²

But while the for-going shows the thematic and structural closeness in this section of Mt's Gospel, the trilogy of parables clearly begins from 21:28-32 (the parable of the Two Sons). Here, Jesus begins to tell a story which has a clear identity of its own. The remark in 21:33 (*ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε*), shows the beginning of another story and makes explicit that what we have above is also a parable. The conclusion of our trilogy is with the parable of the Wedding Feast (22:1-14). The fact that the Pharisees went out (*πορευθέντες οἱ Φαρισαῖοι*) to fashion a trap for Jesus (22:15) shows that Mt signals a different setting.

Linguistically the three parables can be differentiated by their introductions: the first parable begins with a question (*τί δὲ δοκεῖ*; 21:28); the second with an imperative (*ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε*, 21:33); and the third with a participial construction (*καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς...22:1*).³³ Finally, while the first parable deals with a father and his two contrasting children, the second parable is about a man and his efforts to get the fruits of his vineyard from his evil tenants, and the third is about a king dealing with invited guests who later became murderers. These three divisions 21:28-32; 33-46; 22:1-14 form the three blocks upon which I will base the analysis of the trilogy.

However, on the historical level, the parables leave many questions unanswered. These include the mode of family relationships in antiquity, the manner of vineyard cultivation and ownership, the manner of marriage celebrations, as well as the relation between a king and his subjects. On the Matthean level, there is the need to explain Mt's understanding of the trilogy by investigating his positive presentation of such concepts as "ethnos," "tax-collectors" and "sinners," over and against the Jewish leaders. I will also look at the way Mt intended the trilogy of parables to be received in his community the time it was told or retold.

But before I do these, I present first the text under consideration with its English translation.

1.3 TEXT OF THE TRILOGY

v.28a	<i>Τί δὲ ὑμῖν δοκεῖ;</i>	But what do you think?
b	<i>ἄνθρωπος εἶχεν τέκνα δύο.</i>	A man had two children.
c	<i>καὶ προσελθὼν τῷ πρώτῳ εἶπεν·</i>	And going to the first he said
d	<i>τέκνον, ὕπαγε σήμερον</i>	Child, go today
e	<i>ἐργάζου ἐν τῷ ἀμπελῶνι.</i>	work in the vineyard.
v.29a	<i>ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν·</i>	But answering he said,
b	<i>οὐ θέλω,</i>	I will not:

³² See J. Nolland, Matthew, 856. So also U. Luz, Matthäus III.205. Cp. R. T. France, Matthew, 801 who argues that formally speaking there is no break between this parable and the preceding dialogue between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, since the issue of the authority of John the Baptist which dominated vv.23-27 will be the basis of the condemnation of the Jewish leaders which follows the parable in v.32.

³³ This boundary is justified because 22:15-46 forms a unit. The Pharisees who in Mt 22:15 take counsel, are the subject in the following verses until Jesus silences them in Mt 22:46. See S. V. Tillborg, Jewish Leaders, 50.

c	ἕστερον δὲ μεταμεληθεὶς ἀπῆλθεν.	but afterward repenting he went.
v.30a	προσελθὼν δὲ τῷ ἑτέρῳ εἶπεν ὡσαύτως.	And going to the other he said likewise.
b	ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν·	But he answering said,
c	ἐγώ, κύριε,	I (go), Lord
d	καὶ οὐκ ἀπῆλθεν.	and went not.
v.31a	τίς ἐκ τῶν δύο ἐποίησεν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς;	Which of the two has done the will of the father?
b	λέγουσιν ὁ πρῶτος.	They say the first.
c	λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς·	Jesus says to them,
d	ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι	amen I say to you:
e	οἱ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρνοι προάγουσιν ὑμᾶς εἰ τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ.	the tax-collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.
v.32a	ἦλθεν γὰρ Ἰωάννης πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης,	For John has come to you in the way of righteousness,
b	καὶ οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε αὐτῷ,	and you have not believed him;
c	οἱ δὲ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρνοι ἐπίστευσαν αὐτῷ·	but the tax-collectors and the harlots have believed him;
d	ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰδόντες οὐδὲ μετεμελήθητε ἕστερον τοῦ πιστεῦσαι αὐτῷ.	and you having seen have not afterward repented, that you might have believed him.
v.33a	Ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε.	Hear another parable:
b	ἄνθρωπος ἦν οἰκοδεσπότης	There was a man, a householder,
c	ὅστις ἐφύτευσεν ἀμπελῶνα	who planted a vineyard,
d	καὶ φραγμὸν αὐτῷ περιέθηκεν	and hedged it round about,
e	καὶ ὥρυξεν ἐν αὐτῷ ληνόν	and dug a winepress in it,
f	καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν πύργον	and built a tower,
g	καὶ ἐξέδετο αὐτὸν γεωργοῖς	and let it out to farmers,
h	καὶ ἀπεδήμησεν.	and went on a journey:
v.34a	ὅτε δὲ ἤγγισεν ὁ καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν,	And when the time of the fruits drew near,
b	ἀπέστειλεν τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς γεωργοὺς λαβεῖν τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτοῦ.	he sent his slaves to the farmers, that they might receive his fruits.
v.35a	καὶ λαβόντες οἱ γεωργοὶ τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ ὃν μὲν ἔδειραν,	and the farmers taking his servants, one they beat,
b	ὃν δὲ ἀπέκτειναν,	and one they killed,
c	ὃν δὲ ἐλιθοβόλησαν.	and one they stoned.
v.36a	πάλιν ἀπέστειλεν ἄλλους δούλους πλείονας τῶν πρώτων,	Again, he sent other slaves more than the first:
b	καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτοῖς ὡσαύτως.	and they did to them likewise.
v.37a	ἕστερον δὲ ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων·	But last of all he sent to them his son, saying,
b	ἐντραπήσονται τὸν υἱόν μου.	they will reverence my son.

v.38a	οἱ δὲ γεωργοὶ ἰδόντες τὸν υἱὸν εἶπον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς	But the farmers seeing the son, said among themselves,
b	·οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ κληρονόμος·	This is the heir;
c	δεῦτε ἀποκτείνωμεν αὐτὸν	come, let us kill him,
e	καὶ σχῶμεν τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ,	and let us seize on his inheritance.
v.39a	καὶ λαβόντες αὐτὸν ἐξέβαλον ἔξω τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος	And taking him, they cast (him) out of the vineyard,
b	καὶ ἀπέκτειναν.	and killed (<i>him</i>).
v.40a	ὅταν οὖν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος,	When therefore the lord of the vineyard comes,
b	τί ποιήσει τοῖς γεωργοῖς ἐκεῖνοις;	what will he do to those farmers?
v.41a	λέγουσιν αὐτῷ·	They say to him,
b	κακούς κακῶς ἀπολέσει αὐτούς	he will wickedly destroy those wicked
c	καὶ τὸν ἀμπελῶνα ἐκδώσεται ἄλλοις γεωργοῖς,	and will let out the vineyard to other farmers
d	οἵτινες ἀποδώσουσιν αὐτῷ τοὺς καρπούς ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτῶν.	who shall render him the fruits in their seasons.
v.42a	Λεγεί αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς·	Jesus says to them,
b	οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς·	have you never read in the scriptures,
c	λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες,	(the) stone which the builders have rejected,
d	οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας·	this became the head of the corner:
e	παρὰ κυρίου ἐγένετο αὕτη	this is the Lord's doing,
f	καὶ ἔστιν θαυμαστὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν;	and it is marvelous in our eyes?
v.43a	διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι	Therefore I say to you:
b	ἀρθήσεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ	the kingdom of God shall be taken from you,
c	καὶ δοθήσεται ἔθναι ποιοῦντι τοὺς καρπούς αὐτῆς.	and given to a nation bringing forth its fruits.
v.44a	καὶ ὁ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τὸν λίθον τοῦτον	And whosoever shall fall on this stone
b	συνθλασθήσεται·	shall be broken;
c	ἐφ' ὃν δ' ἂν πέσῃ	but on whomsoever it shall fall,
d	λικμήσει αὐτόν.	it will grind him to powder.
v.45a	Καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι τὰς παραβολὰς	And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables,
b	αὐτοῦ ἐγνωσαν ὅτι περὶ αὐτῶν λέγει·	they perceived that he speaks of them.
v.46a	καὶ ζητοῦντες αὐτὸν κρατῆσαι ἐφοβήθησαν τοὺς ὄχλους,	And seeking to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude,
b	ἐπεὶ εἰς προφήτην αὐτὸν εἶχον.	since they took him for a prophet.

22:1a	Καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν εἶπεν ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς λέγων·	And Jesus answering again spoke to them by parables, saying
v.2a	ὡμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ βασιλεῖ,	The kingdom of heaven is like a man, a king,
b	ὅστις ἐποίησεν γάμους τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ.	who made a wedding for his son,
v.3a	καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ καλέσαι τοὺς κεκλημένους εἰς τοὺς γάμους,	And sent forth his servants to call the invited to the wedding
b	καὶ οὐκ ἤθελον ἐλθεῖν.	and they did not want to come.
v.4a	πάλιν ἀπέστειλεν ἄλλους δούλους λέγων·	Again, he sent forth other servants, saying,
b	εἴπατε τοῖς κεκλημένοις·	Speak to the invited,
c	ἰδοὺ τὸ ἄριστόν μου ἡτοίμακα,	behold, I have prepared my dinner:
d	οἱ ταῦροί μου καὶ τὰ σιτιστὰ τεθνημένα	my oxen and fatlings are slaughtered,
e	καὶ πάντα ἔτοιμα·	and all is ready:
f	δεῦτε εἰς τοὺς γάμους.	come to the wedding.
v.5a	οἱ δὲ ἀμελήσαντες	But they made light of it
b	ἀπῆλθον,	(and) went away
c	ὃς μὲν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον ἀργόν,	one to his farm,
d	ὃς δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμπορίαν αὐτοῦ·	another to his business:
v.6a	οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ κρατήσαντες τοὺς δούλους	And the remnant took the servants,
b	αὐτοῦ ὕβρισαν	and mishandled them
c	καὶ ἀπέκτειναν.	and killed them.
v.7a	ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς ὠργίσθη	But the king was very angry
b	καὶ πέμψας τὰ στρατεύματα αὐτοῦ	and he sent forth his armies,
c	ἀπόλεσεν τοὺς φονεῖς ἐκείνους	and destroyed those murderers,
d	καὶ τὴν πόλιν αὐτῶν ἐνέπρησεν.	and burned up their city.
v.8a	τότε λέγει τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ·	Then he says to his servants,
b	ὁ μὲν γάμος ἔτοιμός ἐστιν,	the wedding is ready,
c	οἱ δὲ κεκλημένοι οὐκ ἦσαν ἄξιοι·	but the invited were not worthy.
v.9a	πορεύεσθε οὖν ἐπὶ τὰς διεξόδους τῶν ὁδῶν	Go therefore into the highways
b	καὶ ὅσους ἐὰν εὔρητε καλέσατε εἰς τοὺς γάμους.	and as many as you shall find, invite to the wedding.
v.10a	καὶ ἐξελθόντες οἱ δούλοι ἐκεῖνοι εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς	So those servants went out into the highways,
b	συνήγαγον πάντας οὓς εὔρον, πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς·	and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good:
c	καὶ ἐπλήσθη ὁ γάμος ἀνακειμένων.	and the wedding was filled with guests.
v.11a	εἰσελθὼν δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς θεάσασθαι τοὺς ἀνακειμένους	And when the king came in to see the guests
b	εἶδεν ἐκεῖ ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἐνδεδυμένον	he saw there a man who had not on a

	ἔνδυμα γάμου,	wedding garment:
v.12a	Ἰ2α καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ·	And he said to him,
b	ἔταῖρε, πῶς εἰσῆλθες ὧδε μὴ ἔχων ἔνδυμα γάμου;	friend, how did you come in here not having a wedding garment?
c	ὁ δὲ ἐφιμώθη.	And he was speechless.
v.13a	τότε ὁ βασιλεὺς εἶπεν τοῖς διακόνοις·	Then the king says to the servants,
b	δήσαντες αὐτοῦ πόδας καὶ χεῖρας	Bind him hand and foot,
c	ἐκβάλετε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἕξώτερον·	and cast him into outer darkness;
d	ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων.	Where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
v.14a	πολλοὶ γάρ εἰσιν κλητοί,	For many are called,
b	ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί	but few are chosen.

1.4 THEMATIC AND VERBAL SIMILARITIES IN THE TRILOGY

The aim of this section about the thematic and verbal parallels in the three parables is to show the trilogy as a unit and to justify its study as such. The relationship between the parables can be summarized thus: Each of the parables in our trilogy begins with the actions of the main figure or *Handlungssouverän* (21:28; 21:33-34; 22:2-3). The three parables have repeated invitations or demands (21:28.30; 21:34-37; 22:3-4.8-9). These invitations are temporarily spurned and despised (21:30.32; 21:35-39; 22:3-6). Each of the parables shows a contrast of this spurning with persons that obey (21:29; 21:41c.43; 22:10). All three parables pronounce judgment on those who failed to respond positively (21:31b-32; 21:41-43; 22:7). Those initially favoured are replaced by an unlikely stock in all three parables (21:31b-32; 21:41.43; 22:8-14).³⁴ However, the thematic parallels are more illuminating of the unity of the trilogy.

1.4.1 THEMATIC PARALLELS

The question about the unity of the trilogy could be easily answered if one takes note of the common themes that run through them. This point has been noted by many scholars.³⁵ I will approach these common themes from a slightly different angle. They include the demand to bear fruit, the contrast between saying and doing and the themes of rejection and redefinition.

³⁴ See W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 172f. But I will go on to explain how these motifs are carefully joined to serve the polemic purposes of the narrator.

³⁵ For J. Schniewind, *Matthäus*, 220, the unity in the three parables is highlighted since they have all become “*Drohwoorte*”. Scott seems to support the idea of reading these parables as a unit when he writes that: “the parables of the two sons, the wicked tenants, and the king who gave a marriage feast exhibit a progression from John the Baptist to the rejection of Jesus and the punishment of those who rejected him through the final judgment, when those without a wedding garment will be cast out.” B. B. Scott, *Parables*, 81. W. G. Olmstead has also argued extensively for the links and differences in the trilogy. See his *Trilogy*, 135-8. But see C. Münch, *Gleichnisse*, 181f, who sees some differences in the parables especially with the actants and the metaphors employed.

1.4.1.1 The demand to bear fruit

Conceptually, the most obvious bond in the trilogy is the summons to bear fruit. This common motif links the trilogy to its wider context especially to the logion of the withering of the fig tree (21:18-19) and to the macro-context of Mt's narrative.³⁶ The fig tree is thus to be seen as a figure of the fruitless leaders of Israel.³⁷ With the contrast between the two sons in the first parable of the trilogy (21:28-30), the narrator seems to favour the son who went (to the vineyard), just as he favours the tax-collectors and prostitutes who later repented ahead of the Jewish Leaders (21:31e-32). This repentance on the part of the first son and on the part of the official sinners could be seen as a way of bearing fruit. But in contrast to the fruitless fig tree (21:19), the vineyard of the second parable seems to have born fruits (cf. 21:34) only that this fruit is not rendered by the tenants. The narrator describes their action indirectly as lack of fruit bearing, hence the need for a new set of tenants *ποιοῦντι τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτῆς* (cf. 21:41). Also the inability of the first and second set of invited guests to respond positively to the wedding feast shows their unworthiness (to bear fruit)? Hence, repentance refused (by the second son and the Jewish leaders 21:29.32), necessary fruit absent (from the tenants 21:41.43) and refusal of the invited guests (22:8) all amount to lack of fruit.

1.4.1.2 The contrast between saying and doing

This contrast is expressed fully in the two children; one says 'yes' and does nothing, while the other says 'no' and goes (to the vineyard). Also the expectation of the vineyard owner to get his fruit (21:34) presupposes a prior agreement that is now not honoured by the tenants. One could also be right in positing that by expecting the invited guests to honour the invitation, after the banquet had been prepared, the king refers to a prior notice of invitation to these guests. At the end, the second son of the first parable, the tenants of the second, and the first set of invited guests of the third as well as the man without the wedding garment failed to respond in accordance to their words.

1.4.1.3 Rejection and redefinition

The take-off of Ogawa's study of the trilogy is that Mt's intention is to present the church as the true people of God who have taken the place of Israel.³⁸ Rather than this theology of replacement, we seem to get a new definition of Israel in the trilogy. This conclusion can be supported with the following arguments. It is significant that the invitations that are rejected in the three parables are sent out twice (cf. 21:32; 21:34-39; 22:3-4). On the other hand, the action of the second son (21:30), the

³⁶ Cf. A. Plummer, *Matthew*, 291. For him "...the fig is condemned, not for being fruitless, but for being false..." This idea can be defended from the fact Mt's Gospel is inundated with the mandate to bear fruit from beginning to finish. Hence, the parables and their co-text function optimally in Mt's narrative scheme. Trilling calls the fruit-concept the "kerngedanke" of the Matthean parable. W. Trilling, *Israel*, 57.

³⁷ Cf. U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.197; D. A. Hagner, *Matthew*, II.603f; For the haggadic background to the cursing of the fig tree see R. H. Hiers, "Not the Season of Fig," 394-400.

³⁸ See his article "Paraboles de L'Israel Véritable?", 121-149. Here, 121.

mishandling of the servants (21:35.36), the mistreatment and killing of the son of the vineyard owner (21:37), and the spurning of the invitations of the king (22:3.5.6) repeat the same idea of rejection on the part of the ‘invitees’. In the parable of the two sons, the tax-collectors and prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before the Jewish leaders (21:31). In the parable of the wicked tenants, there is reference to the killing of servants and the substitution of the initial tenants (*καὶ τὸν ἀμπελῶνα ἐκδώσεται ἄλλοις γεωργοῖς...*). The final parable records loss on the part of those who ignore the invitation to the banquet, including the loss of their privileged position. This is shown by the fact that the first and second sets of invited guests were replaced by another set (*πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς*). One could thus say that there is a hint that there would be a new definition for membership and a new criterion for entrance into the community of God. This new community is typified by the repentance of the tax collectors and sinners (21:31b-32), new tenants who produce the fruits of the kingdom (21:43) and a new set of invited guests with the appropriate wedding garment (22:8-13). This already moves the mind of the reader to identify with the new sets of invitees.³⁹

Related to this motif of redefinition are the motifs of judgement and punishment. Since the parables of the trilogy are about failure to work in a vineyard, to hand over farm produce, and to attend a wedding feast, there is then the issue of judgement awaiting the disobedient.⁴⁰ This theme of judgement is at the heart of Mt’s presentation of the Jesus’ story.⁴¹ It therefore appears that the trilogy has been polemically constructed to stress the point that the so-called sinners could have a place in the kingdom of God provided they bear the fruits of repentance while those who fail to produce the appropriate fruits would be excluded from the kingdom. Consequently, while 21:41.43 assure judgement, 22:7 enacts this judgement.⁴² The recorded consequence of this judgement is punishment shown by the fact that the Jewish leaders would be preceded by the sinners into the kingdom (21:31e); the wicked tenants would be wickedly destroyed, “*κακοὺς κακῶς ἀπολέσει αὐτούς*” (21:40); while the city as well as the murderers in the third parable would be destroyed (22:7). On the other hand, the guest without the wedding garment would be bound and thrown outside, “*δήσαντες αὐτοῦ πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ἐκβάλετε*” (22:13). All these reiterate

³⁹ See W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 94. It could securely be concluded that the trilogy of parables has been designed to lead the listener or reader to judgment against the Jewish leadership. Powell has commented on the literary effect of sympathy on the reader thus: “Like empathy, sympathy is viewed by the narrative critics as a literary effect created by the implied author. One of the simplest means of arousing the reader’s sympathy for a character is to attribute such sympathy to another character with whom the reader has come to empathize. As a general rule, the reader of a narrative will care the most about those characters for whom the protagonist cares most. This is because the protagonist is usually one character with whom the reader experiences some degree of empathy.” M. A. Powell, *Narrative Criticism*, 57.

⁴⁰ W. Trilling, *Israel*, 85: “die eigentliche Strafe ist, dass Israel seines Berufes und seiner heilgeschichtlichen Stellung verlustig geht.”

⁴¹ The word *κρίσις* appears in the synoptic gospels thus: Mt 12x, Mk 0x, Lk 4x.

⁴² To Mt 22:7 Trilling comments, “der auffällige V.7 ist dann nicht ein isolierte Einschub, der die Geschichte durchbricht, sondern der folgerichtige Abschluss des ganzen ersten Teiles. Nimmt man diese Züge zusammen, so ergeben sie einen geschlossenen Erzählungsablauf, der dem des Winzergleichnisses parallel läuft.” “Überlieferungsgeschichte,” 254f.

the idea of punishment. In his treatment of the parable of the Wicked Tenants, Snodgrass indicates that: “the parables of the two sons is in many ways parallel to the message of the parable of the wicked Tenants, and the parable of the marriage feast has a similar structure as that of the wicked Tenants. All three parables deal with the theme of judgment against those who reject God’s message.”⁴³

1.4.2 VERBAL LINKS

Apart from these thematic parallels, there are a host of verbal links. Here the trilogy employs exact words or similar words with the same meaning. The following lines summarize them:

In the three parables, there is the use of the substantive “man” in the nominative *ἄνθρωπος* (21:28.33) and dative *ἀνθρώπῳ* (22:2) cases as the hero of the story. In the three parables there is the use of the following terms for children/son *τέκνα* (21:28)/*υἱόν* (21:37.38)/*υἱῶ* (22:2). In the first two parables the vineyard is named in the dative *ἀμπελῶνι* (21:28) and in the accusative *ἀμπελῶνα* (21:33.39.40.41). In the first and third parables, *οὐ θέλω* (21:29; 22:3) represents the act of refusal. In the first two parables, *ἕστερον* (21:29.32.37) is used to introduce subsequent action. The word *ὡσαύτως* is used in the first two parables (21:30.36) as a summarium for actions already described. The first two parables use *κύριε* (21:30) and *κύριος* (21:40) as solemn address to the main figure of the parables. These expressions occur in the three parables: question of Jesus + answer of opponents + *λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησους* (21:31.40)/question of king + silence of the guest + *ὁ βασιλεὺς εἶπεν τοῖς διακόνοις* (22:12b-13a). The kingdom of God is used in the first two parables in this form: *βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ* (21:31.43). In the first two parables, *ἰδόντες* (21:32.38) represents the action of seeing first on the part of the Jewish leaders and second on the part of the tenants. The second and third parables employ *ἀπέστειλεν τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ* (21:34; 22:3) to announce the sending out of the servants in the parables. This expression is slightly altered in this form: *ἀπέστειλεν ἄλλους δούλους* (21:36; 22:4). In the second and third parables, the imperative *δεῦτε* (21:38; 22:4) is used as summons to action. The second and third parables employ the coordinating constructions *ὃν μὲν...ὃν δέ* (21:35)/*ὃς μὲν...ὃς δέ* (22:5). The action of killing is narrated in the second and third parables similarly thus: *λαβόντες...τοὺς δούλους...ἀπέκτειναι* (21:35)/*κρατήσαντες τοὺς δούλους ἀπέκτειναν* (22:6). The demonstrative pronoun *ἐκεῖνοις* is used in the second and third parables (21:40; 22:7). The second and third parables utilize *ἀπολέσει* (21:41)/*ἀπώλεσεν* (22:7) to describe the future and past action of destruction respectively. Finally, in the second and third parables, the action of arresting, *κρατέω* is employed in the infinitive and in the aorist respectively (21:46; 22:6). The final two observations show that some of the actions that are alluded to in the second parable find their fulfillment in the third. This has already been observed above and will have huge implications in later parts of the work.

Though these similarities in the trilogy are overwhelming, there seems also to be negative parallelism in the three parables. For instance, dialogue with the interlocutors is absent in the third parable (22:1-14), while the polemic is heightened.

⁴³ K. Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 73.

Whereas the first two parables describe the protagonist as a person (*ἄνθρωπος*) or a householder (*οἰκοδεσπότης*), and the opponents as disobedient child or wicked tenants, the third parable features a king punishing murderers (22:7) and a guest who would be bound and thrown into darkness for not wearing the correct wedding garment (22:13). There is an intensification of aggression.

1.5 CONCLUSION/MATTHEW AS AUTHOR OF THE TRILOGY?

The thematic parallels and verbal links and repetitions already alluded to in this chapter could lead to the conclusion that the trilogy is deliberately fashioned to drive its message home through repetition, alliteration, and rhyme which every good teacher would acknowledge, are good pedagogical tools.⁴⁴ This view is supported by Culbertson with the acknowledgment that hearing is intensified when images pile one on top of another. This accumulation aims at oral intensification. The aim of this oral intensification is the simultaneous narrowing, broadening, and circumscribing of a context. It is narrowed in that more examples make the focus more pregnant; broadened in that more examples give more flexibility to multiplex interpretation; circumscribed in that the central idea might be shaper in outline.⁴⁵ A look at our trilogy seems to confirm this view. It appears that where the comparison between the first and second parables stops, it is picked up by the third. Many centuries ago, Chrysostom found a polemical emphasis in the arrangement of the trilogy and sees them as one and the same story. He seems to summarize the second and third parables of the trilogy thus: “He had planted a vineyard; He had done all things, and finished; when His servants had been put to death, He sent other servants; when those had been slain, He sent the son; and when He was put to death, He bids them to the marriage. They would not come. After this He sends other servants, and they slew these also. Then upon this He slays them, as being incurably diseased.”⁴⁶

On the one hand, these parallels and coherence can easily lead to the conclusion that Mt is the author of these parables, that is, that he has consciously constructed them to mirror each other. On the other hand, it can be said that he has derived the trilogy from various sources and tried to weave them together, hence the presence of parallels. The presence of the second parable of the trilogy in Mk 12:1-12 and the possible Q origin of the third parable (cf. Lk 14:16-24) point to this direction. For V. S. Tilborg, it is not easy to accept Mt’s authorship until certain conditions are met

⁴⁴ The argument that the parables were spoken in Aramaic does not speak against the above argument. For even if the parables were spoken in Aramaic (by Jesus), they were surely written down in Greek (by the evangelists).

⁴⁵ P. L. Culbertson, *A Word Fitly Spoken*, 100. This idea of emphasis is very common with the Psalms. For example, according to Ps 92:13, the righteous shall spring up like a palm-tree; he shall grow taller than a cedar. Commenting on the verse, Midrash Tehillim asks why one righteous person needs to be defined by two trees so obviously different from each other. The text then explains several comparisons including that whereas a palm produces fruit, it provides no shelter, but whereas the cedar provides shelter, it produces no fruit. Because the righteous produce both fruits of their endeavours as well as shelter from storms of life, both metaphors are necessary to correct each other’s deficiencies. In their mutual complementation, each strengthens and honours the other.

⁴⁶ Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew 69.1 (NPNF¹ 10: 422).

and certain questions answered. Beginning from the coherence in the trilogy he thinks that one has to investigate the origin of the unity step by step. For him, even if it has been shown that the framework of the pericope Mt 21:28-22:14 is from Mt, one cannot infer from it that the unity is due to Mt. Not until it has been shown that the introductory verses of the parables have been written by Mt himself, has one found an argument for attributing the composition to the gospel-writer. Even when it is established that Mt is the writer of the introductory verses, this would only mean that Mt has placed the three parables one after the other. Therefore not until it has been demonstrated that the stresses that have been laid here correspond to what we know about Mt from elsewhere, is the proof conclusive. Only then can Mt be the author of this pericope in its totality.⁴⁷

Hence, I will try to focus on the language of Mt so as to locate the source or possible source/s of the trilogy either in part or in totality. But this will be preceded by a survey of the syntax and semantics of the trilogy which will in turn lead to the possible reasons behind Mt's articulation of the trilogy in this fashion.

⁴⁷ S. V. Tillborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 49.

CHAPTER TWO
LINGUISTIC AND TRADITIO-HISTORIC ANALYSIS OF THE PARABLE OF
THE TWO SONS (Mt 21:28-32)

2.1 LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE PARABLE

2.1.1 STRUCTURE

The first parable of our trilogy introduces a father (21:28) who summons his two children to work in the vineyard (21:29-30). The nature of this work is not specified. The first child approached responded negatively (21:29b) with *οὐ θέλω* despite the cordial address with *τέκνον*. As Carter rightly observes, “the double use of “son,” once in the narrative introduction and once as the father’s direct address to him, invokes household relationships in which children honor parents with compliance.”¹ This implies that the refusal must have been an affront to the father.² But the child later changed his mind and went (21:29c). Although his initial reaction was a blunt refusal, his action of going (*ἀπήλθεν*) should be taken as corresponding with the father’s demand. The father approaches the second child (21:30a) and makes the same demand (*ὡσαύτως*). The second child’s response was with a determined acceptance (*ἐγώ, κύριε*), which must have corresponded with the expectations of the father. But in a surprising turn of events, the child did not go (21:30d).³ Though the father may have relied on the relationship of *τέκνον* to make the demand,⁴ there is no narrated reason why the children acted the way they did. This parable is then concluded with the question and answer dialectic which reveals its polemic tone.

In the question to the opponents, Jesus presents the central point of the parable. Here what is at stake is which of the two children did the will of the father (21:31a). The answer of the Jewish leaders with *ὁ πρῶτος* (21:31b) seems to be the expected response since it exposes Jesus’ teachings about the correct doing of the will of God. This is a fact we shall see clearer in the course of the work. However, the application of the parable (21:32) shows that the answer of the Jewish leadership is self-condemnatory.

Perhaps the most obvious division about the parable of the Two Sons is its thematic and structural divisions.⁵ As already indicated in the first chapter, this parable is closely connected to the preceding question about the authority of Jesus. Hence, the dialogue about the authority of Jesus could be seen as the narrative exposition of the parable.⁶

Thematically, the parable can be divided into (21:28b-31b) and (21:31c-32). This division has the advantage of showing the difference between the *Bildhälfte*, that is

¹ W. Carter, “Matthew’s Parables,” 156.

² J. Nolland notes that it is surprising that the father tolerates this affront. See his Matthew, 861.

³ For J. M. D. Derrett, the first child approached was the elder son, while the second was the younger. See his “The Parable of the Two Sons,” 109-16.

⁴ See G. Dellinger, Studien, 270ff.

⁵ Aids to this structure include change in place or time, arrival of new characters, change in the speaker, repetitions, change from direct to indirect speech, change in theme or perspective, sandwiching, meta-narrative sentences, etc. Cf. W. Stenger, Methodenlehre, 47ff.; W. Egger, Methodenlehre, 77ff and M. Ebner/B. Heining, Exegese, 91ff.

⁶ Cf. U. Luz, Matthäus, III.205.

the parable itself, and the *Sachhülft*, that is the central idea or the application of the parable.⁷ While vv.28b-31b deal with a father and his two children and conclude with a question and answer bothering on the will of the father, v.31c takes up a new theme bothering on belief in John The Baptist.⁸ Also the theme of entering into the kingdom of God, which v.31e introduces seems foreign to the parable and the earlier parts of its application. Another justification for this division is the change of tempus in the application of the parable.⁹ While the parable proper makes use mainly of the aorist tense, the application begins with the present tense (λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς).¹⁰ This narrative change to the historic present tense form creates an atmosphere of immediacy in the parable.¹¹ It also places the verb προάγω (v.31e) in the present tense, a usage which might have interpretative implications and which I will explore in the course of the work.

Structurally, the parable could be said to have two main units, namely, the parable proper (21:28b-30) and its application (21:31-32).¹² In this case, v.28a is the introduction. This broad division is justified by the fact that the story runs from v.28b till the end of v.30. In these verses only the voice of the narrator of the parable is heard. But from v.31, he seeks the perspective of his hearers with the question bothering on the will of the father (τίς ἐκ τῶν δύο ἐποίησεν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς). This question seems to form the frame of the story, together with the initial question τί δὲ ὑμῶν δοκεῖ (21:28a). This seems to be the most obvious division of the parable.

Inside these two broad divisions, we also find further structural markers. While v.28a serves as introduction with the question “what do you think?” (τί δὲ ὑμῶν δοκεῖ),¹³ the parable effectively begins with v.28b. It is here that the exposition of the conflict actually begins.¹⁴ Between vv.28b-30, the first section (vv.28-29) deals with

⁷ For H. Frankemölle, Matthäus, II.324, Die Erzählung in 28-31a folgt sozusagen in 31b-32 die “Moral der Geschichte.”

⁸ Jeremias noted that the introduction of The Baptist into the parable of the Two Sons gives to it “eine heilsgeschichtliche Anwendung” foreign to the parable, but which relates it to the salvation-historic construction of the Wicked Tenants and the Marriage Feast. See J. Jeremias, Gleichnisse, 79.

⁹ S. V. Tillborg, Jewish Leaders, 54 argues that it is not possible to say of an application to the parable since the persons addressed are not compared anymore with the picture given in the parable, for neither the first son nor the second son functions as the mirror of the real situation. See also E. Lohmeyer, Matthäus, 311; R. Bultmann, Geschichte, 178.

¹⁰ This remark brings with it another problem of the placement of v.31b, which makes use of the historic present λέγουσιν. I will reserve a thorough treatment of this problem till the next section where I deal with the source-critical problems of the parable.

¹¹ See M. Palachuvattil, Will of the Father, 184. See also A.T. Robertson, Grammar, 867. For the role of historical presents in narratives imploring mainly the aorist, see D. B. Wallace, Greek Grammar, 526. See also J. L. Rose, Aoristic Tenses, 28.

¹² This view is supported by D. C. Allison/W. D. Davies, Matthew, III.164. For them, the two parts of the pericope are: parable (vv.28-30) and commentary/application (vv.31-2), indicating that both parts open with questions (vv.28a.31a). So also Herrenbrück, Jesus und die Zöllner, 264. On the other hand, A. J. Hultgren, Parables, 220, argues that the parable and its application consist of three parts: the introductory material and the interaction between the father and the first son (21:28-29), the interaction between the father and the second son (21:30), and the application (21:31-32).

¹³ This expression implies that the parable is a continuation of the previous dialogue about the source of Jesus’ authority and that of John. See G. Prince, “Introduction to the Study of the Narratee,” 12-15, on the role played by question in drawing the reader into the narrative.

¹⁴ See M. Martin, Recent Theories, 81.

the father and his first child, while the second section (v.30) concentrates on the father and his second child. Also v.31a does not belong to the parable proper. It seems to be the conclusion of the question started in v.28a.¹⁵ In v.31b, the Jewish leaders answer to the question of v.31a in these words ‘ὁ πρῶτος’.¹⁶ This answer ends the dialogue section and then leads to the proper application of the parable in the indictment of the unbelieving leaders to the message of the Baptist who came ἐν ὁδοῦ δικαιοσύνης. Hence, their answer is a form of self-indictment.¹⁷ Consequently, the application (v.31c-32) is made up of Jesus’ denunciation of the leaders’ unbelief (v.31c-e) and the reason for this condemnation (v.32a-d). The amen logion (v.31d) forms the transition from parable to application.¹⁸ This implies that in a way, the comments of Jesus (21:31c-32) are to be taken as a kind of (re)answer that follows on the initial answer provided in 21:31b. One may then be justified in giving the parable the following structure:

Introduction of parable with a question (21:28a)	actant	action
The parable proper (21:28b-30)		
Setting of the parable (21:28b)		
First action (21:28c-d)	father	request
First response (21:29)	first son	οὐ θέλω but went
Second action (21:30a)	father	request
Second response (21:30b-d)	second son	ἐγώ, κύριε but did not go
Introduction of application with a question (21:31a)		
Response to the question (21:31b)		
The application of the parable (21:31c-32)		

Also in the section dealing with Jesus’ counter response to the answer of the Jewish leaders (v.32a-d), there are still minor divisions. Between vv.32a-b, the emphasis is on the coming of John and the negative response of the Jewish leaders to

¹⁵ But while the first question is purely rhetorical the second is not. The non-rhetorical nature of the second question led Jesus’ opponents to give the answer ‘the first’. This makes them to approve of an action that is not similar to theirs and leads inevitably to their self-condemnation.

¹⁶ A few mss (B Θ f⁴³ sa^{mss} bo) reverse the order of the two sons, putting second the one who said he would not go but afterwards went. This means that in the answer of the Jewish leaders in v.31 these mss changed ὁ πρῶτος, “the first,” to ὁ ἔσχατος, “the last,” or ὁ ὑστερος, “the latter.” The text-critical problems involved in this parable between v.29b-31b are too complex. The UBS text takes note of this complexity by labeling the reading “C”, which means that the members of the committee could not easily decide which variant to place in the text. See K. Aland/B. Aland, *Text of the New Testament*, 312-316. B. F. Westcott/F. J. Hort mark this passage with an obelus, indicating a primitive error in the text behind all the extant witnesses. See their *Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek*, written in 1882. Other works that deal with the textual problems in this parable include B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 44-46; J. M. D. Derrett, *The Parable of the Two Sons*, 109-16; reprinted in *ID.*, *Studies in the New Testament*, 76-84; J. R. Michaels, “The Regretful Son,” 15-26; J. Schmid, “Das Textgeschichtliche Problem,” 72-76; J. K. Elliot, “The Parable of the Two Sons,” 70; W. M. Macgregor, “The Two Sons,” 499; I. H. Jones, *The Matthean Parables*, 393-96.

¹⁷ See D. A. Hagner, *Matthew*, II.612.

¹⁸ Cf. U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.205.

him. This is contrasted with the belief of the tax-collectors and sinners (v.32c).¹⁹ This response of the tax-collectors and sinners did not elicit a positive reaction from the religious leaders (v.32d). The implication is that the application of the parable is an indictment of the Jewish leaders (21:31) and the reason for this indictment (21:32). The fact that they do not do what they profess seems to be the central point of the parable.²⁰ This implies that the weight of the interpretation of the parable would lie on the failure on the part of the Jewish leaders and the consequences of such a failure.²¹ This also seems to be the central point of the trilogy.

Although a parable is mainly a narrative text, the above structure indicates that our text is, in the main, constructed in a schematic form that alternates between narrative, question and answer. The question-answer schematic is very evident especially in vv.28a.31a-b. With this, Mt ensures a strong cohesiveness in both the parable proper and in its application. The above comment about the structuring of the text between narrative, question and answer already gives a little idea of the inner texture of the parable. I will now investigate the cohesive materials employed by Mt in this narrative. The aim is to identify the structural properties of the text through the identification of the words and clauses that are typical to it.²² It is the reading of the parable based on comprehensive linguistic models of language structure and cohesiveness. In other words, how Mt has woven the text as a cohesive piece rather than a clutter of unconnected words and sentences. It involves syntax and semantics.

2.1.1 SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

In this short parable, we have a dominance of verbs (27x). The overwhelming presence of verbs shows that our text is a dynamic one.²³ But from these 27 occurrences of verbs, only two (*ὑπαγε* and *ἐργάζου* v.28d-e) are imperative. Hence, what we have is a simple narrative that calls the audience to personal reflection.²⁴ This pericope then corresponds to Dodd's classical definition of parable already seen in the introduction. The narrative of the father's interaction with his two children is mainly constructed in aorist. It again corresponds to Jülicher's notion of parable. Of

¹⁹ I find it important to remark that there has been noted a big problem in the translation of the word *τελώνης*. For e.g., J. R. Donahue, "Tax Collectors and Sinners," 39-61, thinks that the translation "publican" or "tax-collector" is inaccurate. For him the correct translation would be "toll-collector." He is followed in his observations by W. Herzog, *Parables*, 173.187f. But see F. Herrenbrück, *Jesus und die Zöllner*, 15, for a caveat on Donahue's stand.

²⁰ For W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, the response of the Jewish leaders is recounted twice since it is the point of the parable. *Matthew*, III.164. H. Merkel thinks that the polemic in v.31c is the intention of the parable while v.32 is the key of the whole pericope. See his "Ungleichen Söhnen," 254-61. See also M. Konradt, *Israel*, 185.

²¹ This is also the conclusion of A. Ogawa, "Paraboles de L'Israel Veritable?" 125. For A. Jülicher, The parable is one of the clearest and simplest since the *tertium comparationis* shows the discrepancy between saying and doing. *Gleichnisreden II*.385.381.

²² W. Egger articulates the function of this task: "die konkrete sprachliche Gestalt eines Textes [wird] untersucht: die Beziehungen zwischen den verwendeten sprachlichen Mitteln und die Regeln, nach denen diese Elemente sprachlich verknüpft sind." See his *Methodenlehre*, 77. I will first examine the parts of speech that dominate in the parable. Then I will present the connectors in it.

²³ Cf. M. Ebner/B. Heininger, *Exegese*, 94.

²⁴ Texts with many imperatives are meant to communicate directives or instructions. See W. Egger, *Methodenlehre*, 79.

the 14 occurrences of conjunctions,²⁵ only once do we have a declarative conjunction. This occurs in the phrase *ὅτι οἱ τελῶναι κτλ.* (v.31e). The *ὅτι* clause also functions as a causative clause by showing that v.31e is a result of the following argument of v.32, that is, the Jewish leaders have been preceded by the tax-collectors and prostitutes into the kingdom because of their inability to believe The Baptist.

On the other hand, the most cohesive material Mt has employed in the construction of the parable seems to be the use of parallelism.²⁶ These parallels are evident in the whole pericope and in the narrated parable. In the parable itself, the parallelism links the different actions of the actants in the structure of the dialogue. The actions begin from the father and receive different responses from the sons.²⁷ For example, the first action of the father *προσελθὼν τῷ πρώτῳ* (v.28c) is paralleled by his second action *προσελθὼν δὲ τῷ ἐτέρῳ* (v.30a). This is also paralleled by the coming of John *πρὸς ἡμᾶς* (v.32a) in the application. The request of the father to the first son *ὑπάγε σήμερον ἐργάζου...* (v.28d-e)²⁸ is paralleled by his saying the same thing (*ὡσαύτως*) to the second (v.30a). The response of each of the sons is introduced with the words *ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν* (vv.29a and 30b). There is also the narrative opposition between *ἀπήλθεν* (v.29c), and *οὐκ ἀπήλθεν* (v.30d). But the element of parallelism fails in the reactions of the two sons because the *μεταμέλομαι* of the second son is not reported. This could be a subtle way of indicating that from the onset, his profession was an empty one. However, the *οὐκ μεταμέλομαι* of the Jewish leaders is later recalled to depict their determined refusal to accept the message of the Baptist (v.32).

Using *a* to represent the questions of Jesus, *b* to represent the responses to these questions, *c* to represent the parallels between the coming of the father and the coming of the Baptist, and *d* to represent the responses to these comings, the above mentioned parallelism can be schematized thus:²⁹

*a*¹ *Τί δὲ ὑμῖν δοκεῖ; ἄνθρωπος εἶχεν τέκνα δύο.*
*c*¹ *καὶ προσελθὼν τῷ πρώτῳ εἶπεν· τέκνον, ὑπάγε σήμερον ἐργάζου ἐν τῷ ἀμπελῶνι.*
*d*¹ *ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· οὐ θέλω, ὕστερον δὲ μεταμεληθεὶς ἀπήλθεν.*
*c*² *προσελθὼν δὲ τῷ ἐτέρῳ εἶπεν ὡσαύτως.*
*d*² *ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· ἐγώ, κύριε, καὶ οὐκ ἀπήλθεν.*
*a*² *τίς ἐκ τῶν δύο ἐποίησεν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς;*

²⁵ In vv.28a.c.29a.c.30a.c.e.31e [2times].32a.b.c [2times].d).

²⁶ W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, III.164, identify four elements of parallelism in the encounters of the father with his sons, namely, the coming of the father (*προσελθὼν*); his speech to the sons (*εἶπεν ὡσαύτως*); the responds of the sons (*ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν*); and the contrast in the realization of their words (marked by *ἀπήλθεν*).

²⁷ The fact that they are sons is gleaned from the interchange between the neutral *τέκνον* and the masculine *ὁ δὲ*.

²⁸ Some mss (B C² W Z lat sa mae bo^{pl}) create a further parallel between *εἰς τὸν ἀμπελῶνα μου* (v. 28d) and *εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ* (v.31d) by the addition of *μου* at the end of v.28. But for W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, III.167, this addition could be seen as a clarifying addition. A. Jülicher, Gleichnisreden II.366 thinks that this addition does not fit into the dialogue.

²⁹ The aim “is to depict graphically by coordination and by indentation and subordination the relation between words and clauses in a passage.” G. D. Fee, Exegesis, 41f. The underlined words are for emphasis.

b¹ λέγουσιν ὁ πρῶτος.

Apart from the fact that they represent the questions of Jesus, the sections *a¹* and *a²* show their strong connection with the mention of *τέκνα δύο* (two children) and *τίς ἐκ τῶν δύο* (which of the two) and with the mention of *ἄνθρωπος* (man) who is latter referred to as *πατρός* (father). In choosing to use the conjunctive *καὶ* rather than *δὲ* in v.30d, the author couples negative action with deceptive words as characteristic of the second son.³⁰ This idea is made stark by the addition of *κύριε* to the answer of the second son.³¹ He thus presents himself as *δοῦλος* before his father.³² The final question of the parable (v.31) makes use of an ancient parable technique to drive home the moral of the parable.³³ In our parable, this technique succeeds in making the Jewish leaders to render a self-verdict.

In the application of the parable, “additional emphasis falls on Jesus’ answer with the fresh introduction of his name and the opening ‘amen I say to you.’”³⁴ The parallelism that characterizes the parable proper continues here with the repeated *οἱ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρναι*, “the tax collectors and the prostitutes” (vv.31e and 32c). As already indicated, the phrase occurs antithetically parallel with *ὑμεῖς* in v.32 while the opposition between *οὐκ ἐπιστεύσατε αὐτῷ* and *ἐπίστευσαν αὐτῷ* in vv.32b-c is a signal distinction between the response of the Jewish leaders and that of the official sinners. The interactions in v.32 also offer an important stylistic finesse. Between v.32a-b the focus is on the Jewish leaders. This focus shifts to the tax-collectors and prostitutes in v.32c. Later in v.32d the attention goes back to the Jewish leaders. One can speak here of a chiasmic construction.

Further to be noted is the direct application of the language of v.29c (*ὑστερον δὲ μεταμεληθεῖς*), in the final indictment of v.32d (*οὐδὲ μετεμελήθητε ὑστερον*). But the addition of the participle *ιδόντες* to the case of the Jewish leaders is probably meant to raise their guilt.³⁵ This remark and contrast join again the application of the parable to the parable proper. The only difference is that unlike in 29c, there is a reverse order, with the participle becoming the main verb in v.32d.³⁶

³⁰ See M. Palachuvatill, *Will of the Father*, 180.

³¹ Also the use of *ἐγώ* might be designed to produce a heightening effect. Cf. 1Kgs 3:4-8; Tob 2:3; Judt. 13:11. See also J. Gnllka, *Matthäus II.221*.

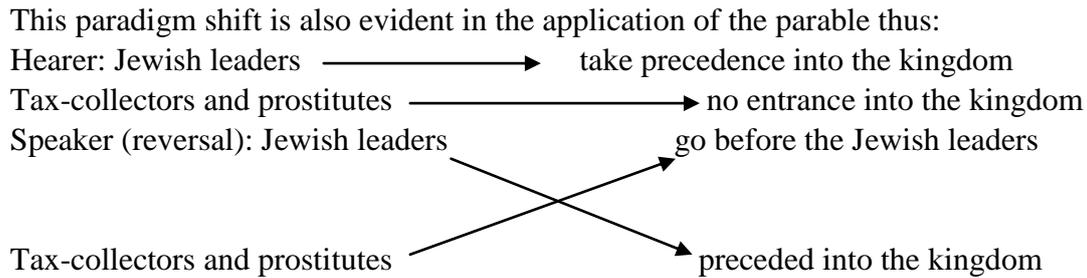
³² When the expression *ἐγώ, κύριε* is seen as a question (I, Lord?), then the whole question of v.31a becomes meaningless.

³³ See C. S. Keener, *Matthew*, 507.

³⁴ J. Nolland, *Matthew*, 862. The introduction of the name *ὁ Ἰησοῦς* (the first of its occurrence in the parable), is also necessitated by the change of speakers between vv.31a-b. The expression *τί δὲ ὑμῖν δοκεῖ* appears in Mt as words ‘by which the narrator shows how sure he is of the verdict of his listeners.’ See E. Linnemann, *Parables*, 65.

³⁵ This is the conclusion of D. A. Hagner, *Matthew*, II.614.

³⁶ The absence of the negative *οὐδέ* in v.32d in some mss has generated much argument. B. M. Metzger in his *Textual Commentary*, 46f seems to echo the majority opinion when he argues that the omission of the negative is probably accidental, for the resulting sense ‘but you, when you saw it, at last repented [i.e. changed your mind] so as to believe in him’ seems to be an extremely inappropriate conclusion of Jesus’ saying; likewise the transfer of the negative to the final verb is no less infelicitous (“...repented later because you did not believe in him”). He concludes that the reading *οὐδέ* supported by early and widely diversified witnesses, seems to have been altered to *οὐ* by copyists who did not see the force of the argument (“and you, seeing this, did not even feel the remorse afterwards so as to



These reversals make explicit that the parable plays against common wisdom⁴⁰ and is made to shock the expectations of the listeners.⁴¹ Hence it is wrong to argue that the son who fails to go to the vineyard could not stand for the Jewish leaders since they “would be astonished to have it suggested that they were not working in the vineyard of God as they had promised.”⁴² This is actually the point the parable wants to make, a point I will return to in subsequent chapters. These reversals and comparisons ultimately set the polemical and juridical tone of the parable. The juridical aspect is highlighted by Jesus allowing the Jewish leaders to pass judgement on the two sons. This same device would still be seen in the next parable. Mt ensures that his readers feel themselves present in the parable through the addition of several details. For instance, we are given the exact words of the father to the two sons and their responses (21:28d-30d). He intensifies the readers’ nearness by restricting his comments in the story. The fact that he allows the first parable to flow into the authority controversy (21:27-28) and the second parable to flow into the first (21:32-33) without any remark is very striking. As already said, the two-fold rejection of the Jewish leaders seems to be the point of emphasis, while the belief of the prostitutes and toll-collectors seems to be a foil.⁴³ This can be shown in the actantial analysis.

2.2 THE ACTANTIAL ANALYSIS

One of the characteristics of the parables are the narrative devices used in them, one of which is the actantial analysis. The actantial analysis reveals that the parables of Jesus take the form of classical stories. In the plot of the parables, the introduction is always followed by the drama of the plot which involves the arrival of elements that help to resolve or increase the tension. These elements or actants are customarily

⁴⁰ In his Parable, 65, Scott rightly argues that the most characteristic feature of the parables of Jesus is the tendency to play in minor key. For example, in the parable of The Prodigal Son, at the conclusion of the parable when an audience expects the father to reject the elder son because of his protest at the younger brothers return, the father instead responds, “*Child, you are always with me and all that is mine is yours.*” This should naturally be a shock to those present. Also B. Heinger argues that the fact that a hated Samaritan (cf. John 4:9) gave a helping hand to a needy Jew in the parable of the Good Samaritan, “muß den Erwartungshorizont einer zeitgenössich-jüdischen Hörschaft einfach sprengen.” See his *Metaphorik*, 24.

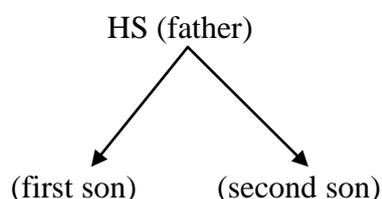
⁴¹ This also corresponds to Amos Wider’s insistence that a metaphor imparts an “image with a certain shock to the imagination which directly conveys a vision of what is signified” which makes the hearer to participate in the reality and even be “invaded” by it. Cf. A. Wider, *Language*, 80.92.

⁴² This is the position of F. W. Beare, *Matthew*, 424.

⁴³ Cf. W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.164; M. Konradt, *Israel*, 186.

three.⁴⁴ The parable of the Two Sons manifests this model.⁴⁵ When one considers only the relationship between the principal actor or determiner (Harnisch⁴⁶ has named such a figure as *Handlungssouverän* HS) and the two contrasting responses to the focal actuality of the parable (what he has called *die dramatische Hauptfigur* dHF and *die dramatische Nebenfigur* (dNF), we realize the so-called dramatic triangle. The focal actuality is the situation created by the determiner.

In our parable proper, the searchlight beams on the father as the main figure confronted by two children of equal but opposite dispositions. The father, however, stands at the centre of the actions from start to finish. He is thus the HS. But it is not possible to identify the dHF and the dNF of the parable since the two sons manifest equal and opposite dispositions to their father. The relationship can be represented with the following figure:



We have here the law of the open triangle, in which two of three possible relationships are developed.⁴⁷

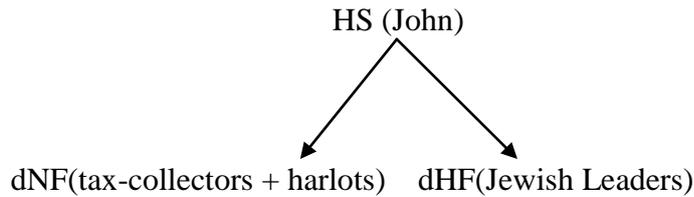
And in the application of the parable, similar opposition is shown in the relationship between the tax-collectors and sinners on the one hand and the Jewish leaders on the other hand relative to John the Baptist. As already noted, the point of emphasis in the application of the parable is on the unbelief of the Jewish leaders. Hence the Jewish leaders can be said to be the dHF while the tax collectors are the dNF. The figure appears similar to that above thus:

⁴⁴ D. Via describes an actant as follows: “an actant is not a character but is a function, role, or status whose quality is to be the subject of or participant in a constant action. The actant is usually a personal character, but it may be an object, institution, feeling, disposition, condition, etc” D. via, “Parable and Example Story,” 107.

⁴⁵ This is the so-called dramatical triangle. Other parables which have three principal actors include, the labourers in the vineyard, the Talents, Ten Maidens, Good Samaritan, Prodigal Son, Unjust Steward, Unmerciful Servant, Rich man and Lazarus, etc. R. W. Funk feels, on the other hand, that the Wicked Tenants is to be understood as a narrative with two principals only. The servants and son would then be subordinate figures who play no essential role. He observes that the fact that servants serve as narrative buffer between different social strata supports this view. “Structure,” 72. Some parables have only two participants, e.g., Unjust Judge, Servants Wages, etc. A few have even one actor, e.g., Lost Coin, Lost Sheep, Sower. It is to be noted that in counting principal participants, groups are treated as one if members of the group act in concert. An example is the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Subordinate characters are not counted though they might provide the missing links in the narrative which are necessary but cannot be supplied by the principal actors.

⁴⁶ W. Harnisch, *Gleichniserzählungen*, 77f. R. W. Funk uses the terms determiner and respondent. “Structure,” 53. But it must be said that not all the parables can be easily represented thus. See, for e.g. Funk, “Struktur,” 224-47.

⁴⁷ See B. Heininger, *Metaphorik*, 11.



When the two figures above are combined, one gets the impression that the father of the story is John the Baptist, the first child that initially refused the father's demand but later changed his mind refers to tax-collectors and harlots while the second child is a figure of the Jewish leaders. These are identifications that would be difficult to defend as we shall come to see. However, the above figures, plus a characteristic sequence of crisis-answer-solution or action-crisis-solution, is typical for parables and example stories and marks them out as different from similitudes.⁴⁸

2.3 SEMANTIC WORD FIELDS

Apart from these narrative devices, a semantic inventory of the dominant themes in the parable is of utmost importance. The aim is to discover where the “weight” of the text leans. In this connection, the use of the verb *προσέρχομαι* (to come [in]/to go [out]) seems to be essential in the construction of this parable. This verb is employed in its various modes.⁴⁹ Another word closely related to the verb is *προάγω*, (to go ahead of).⁵⁰ It could also be conceived that the word *λέγω*, which occurs in its present active and aorist active moods⁵¹ and *ποιέω*⁵² are of semantic importance. It appears that the predominance of the word “saying” in this parable could reveal something about its inherent message.⁵³ It is obvious here that there is the opposition not only between “going” and “not going” but also between “doing” and “saying.”

Another dominant theme in our first parable is the theme of belief. It seems so important that it was introduced at the end of a story that started with an enquiry about doing the will of the father. But the themes of *πιστεύω* and *ποιέω* have already been introduced at the break of the second day of Jesus' stay in Jerusalem (21:21f). Perhaps the two terms “doing” and “believing” should be viewed as a semantic pair and studied in the context of Mt's Gospel so as to see their importance in this parable. One could provisionally say that the connection between the two terms is a parabolic way of depicting that “doing” is a manifestation of “believing.” It is a motif that runs throughout the trilogy and the entire Matthean narrative. This would be shown later in the course of the work.

⁴⁸ See for instance B. Heininger, *Mataphorik*, 11.

⁴⁹ In 21:28.29.30(two times).32.

⁵⁰ In 21:31e.

⁵¹ It occurs in 21:28.29.30[two times].31[three times];

⁵² Cf. v.31a.

⁵³ This question could be answered if we take note of the common themes that run through the parables of the trilogy. These common themes will form the conclusion to this first chapter of the work.

Other words that could be of semantic importance in the parable are “tax-collectors” and “prostitutes,”⁵⁴ two groups despised in the Jewish world. And the fact that they are exalted above the Jewish leaders shows that we have a strong polemic against the Jewish leaders in the parable. It also means that a study of the place of tax-collectors and sinners vis-à-vis that of the Scribes and the elders in the Jewish religion during the time Mt was writing might be essential to the understanding of the parable in Mt’s community.

Though the parable of the Two Sons is told as a singular case, it makes use of traditional Jewish metaphors like “father,” “work,” and “vineyard.” When read devoid of its Jewish background, the conclusion would be that our parable tries to describe father-children relationship in a peasant family. But since the above words are important metaphors in the Jewish world, I will study them under their metaphorical light to determine the meanings they could have in Mt’s presentation of the parable. In the Bible also, the themes ἐργάζομαι- ἐργασία- ἐργάτης- ἔργον seem to have acquired both theological and metaphorical connotations. In Mt’s Gospel, they seem to equate working for God’s kingdom.⁵⁵ In the same vein, “vineyard” seems almost always to be a symbol for Israel.⁵⁶ In the OT it has become a fixed metaphor to describe Israel as the vineyard of God.⁵⁷ This metaphoric representation is also evident in the writings of the Qumran community.⁵⁸ These imply that for us to have a better understanding of the parable, it is proper to undertake a journey into its Jewish background by investigating the meanings the above metaphors had in that milieu during the time the parable was told or retold.⁵⁹ This I will do in the next chapter. But I will first investigate the tradition behind Mt’s text.

2.4 Mt 21:28-32 TRADITION AND REDACTION

When compared with the other synoptic Gospels (Mk and Lk), one would not fail to see, at first glance, that this Matthean parable is absent from the others. This is true especially between vv.28-30. But the parable of Lk 15:11-32 and the logion of Lk 7:29-30³³ have much in common with our present parable and its application respectively. Hence, there is no agreement among scholars as to the source of Mt’s parable of the Two Sons. The following lines aim at establishing the source of the parable as far as possible. I will investigate whether Mt got this parable from a tradition which the other evangelists are not aware of or whether he created it

⁵⁴ J. Gibson, “Hoi Telonai kai hai Pornai,” 429-33 feels that the combination of these two groups is based on the fact that both were regarded as collaborators with the Roman forces.

⁵⁵ For instance in 9:37; 10:10 and 20: 1ff. See U. Luz, Matthäus III.154.

⁵⁶ See for instance C. L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 189 who refers to the vineyard as ‘stock symbol for Israel’

⁵⁷ Cf. Isa 3:14; 5:1-7; 27:2-6; Jer 12:10; Ps 80: 9f; Hos 10:1; Joel 1:7; Ezk 15:1-8; 17:1-21; 19:10-14.

⁵⁸ There is, for instance, the metaphor of planting for the present (1QH 8.5) or for the eschatological community (1QH6.15; 8.6).

⁵⁹ C. H. Dodd rightly suggests that we must look first to the particular setting in which the parables were delivered and hence the application which would suggest itself to one who stood in that situation. See his *Parables*, 26.

himself. This would be shown by an analysis of the vocabulary employed in the construction of the whole parable.

2.4.1 Mt 21:28-32 AS A MATTHEAN COMPOSITION

The opening question of the parable *τί δὲ ὑμῶν δοκεῖ* (v.28) appears in many instances in Mt.⁶⁰ In these places (18:12⁶¹; 22:42; 26:66), all without parallel,⁶² this clause appears in Mt always as the introduction to a question with searching implications.⁶³ In two places (17:25 and 22:17), the question is slightly different ‘*τί σοι δοκεῖ*.’ In the Matthean corpus, it is almost always a dominical question. Only in one place (22:17) do we have the question directed to Jesus from the opposition, where the Pharisees wanted to trap him in word. It has been argued that the expression *τί δὲ ὑμῶν δοκεῖ* appears in Mt as words “by which the narrator shows how sure he is of the verdict of his listeners.”⁶⁴ This certainty about the listeners’ verdict seems to be the case when Jesus poses the question to his audience in our parable (21:28a). Hence the answer they supplied in 21:31 (*ὁ πρῶτος*) is to be expected.⁶⁵ Although *δοκέω* is itself not especially Matthean (Mt 10x; Mk 2x; Lk 10x),⁶⁶ the introductory question (*τί δὲ ὑμῶν δοκεῖ*) occurs six times in the Synoptic tradition but nowhere else outside of Mt. Moreover, in the LXX and other books of the NT, a similar formula occurs only at Jon 11:56 and has a little change in word order (*τί δοκεῖ ὑμῶν*). This could be a strong pointer to seeing the hand of Mt in the whole of the introduction to the parable.⁶⁷

There are many pointers to seeing Matthean redaction in the parable proper. Almost every line of the parable bears evidence to this. The expression *καὶ προσελθὼν πρῶτον*⁶⁸ *εἶπεν* of v.28c is one of them. Not only is the construction *προσέρχομαι* +

⁶⁰ S. V. Tillborg observes that the expression is very good Greek, as appears from the references given by Bauer in his vocabulary and from the LXX, where the expression is only used in typically Greek books, such as Esther, Tobias, Macc 1-4. See his *Jewish Leaders*, 50, n. 1.

⁶¹ This is the only other occurrence of the expression in a parable.

⁶² In four cases (18:12; 22:17; 22:42; 26:66), there are parallel Synoptic passages but without the question. While for instance, Mt uses *τί ὑμῶν δοκεῖ* (26:66) Mk asks for the decision of the Sanhedrin, *τί ὑμῶν φαίνεται* (14:64).

⁶³ Cf. W. Schenk, *Sprache*, 197. It engages both the audience and the Jewish leaders. See W. Carter, “Parables,” 156.

⁶⁴ E. Linnemann, *Parables*, 65. This certainty seems to be evident in the question of Caiaphas (26:66) after declaring the guilt of Jesus and the lack of need for witnesses.

⁶⁵ For U. Luz, the final question of Jesus was so directed that only one answer was possible. The aim was to make the Jewish leaders to pronounce their own judgment. *Matthäus* III.210-211.

⁶⁶ For the statistics employed in this section, see R. Morgenthaler, *Statistik*; R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*; W. Schenk, *Die Sprache des Matthäus*.

⁶⁷ Thus E. Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, 306; Against S. V. Tillborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 50; J. C. Fenton, *Matthew*, 339; R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 102 who argue for the possibility of the original presence of the question in the tradition

⁶⁸ It could be that the term *πρῶτος* refers to the elder son. Derret argues that one son must have been older and the other younger and that the agrarian social setting presupposes that the one approached first would be the elder one. See his *The Parable of the Two Sons*, 111.113-114. But the Matthean use of *πρῶτος* seems to be varied. It suggests priority (5:24; 6:33; 7:5; 8:21; 12:29; 13:30; 17:10.27; 19:30; 20:16.27; 21:36; 22:38; 23:26; 26:17), or precedence of some people over others (10:2; 20:8.10; 22:25), or an antecedent situation (12:45; 27:64).

dative + verb of speech found often in Mt,⁶⁹ but *προσελθών* + dative + *εἶπεν* is redactional in 19:16//Mk 10:17 and 26:49//Mk 14:45. Again *ὑπάγειν* + imperative is employed at Mt 18:15 diff. Lk 17:3 and also Mt 27:65; Mt 28:10; Mt 20:4.7 which have to be taken as redactional.⁷⁰

The words *ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν* of 21:29a may also be redactional. The phrase occurs 16 times in Mt.⁷¹ It occurs only twice in Mk⁷² and only thrice in Lk,⁷³ never in John. From the above, we see that the expression is a Matthean specialty.⁷⁴ This can also be said of the word *ἀπέρχεσθαι* which is common in Mt's redactional additions. They include the following: 8:32 diff Mk 5:13; 8:33 diff Mk 5:14; 9:7 diff Mk 2:12; 14:16 diff Mk 6:37; 16:21 diff Mk 8:31; 27:36 diff Mk 14:32; 26:44 diff Mk 14:41; 27:60 diff Mk 15:46; 28:8 diff Mk 16:8.⁷⁵ Also the word *ὑστερον*⁷⁶ has been added by Mt in some places (cf. 4:2 diff Lk 4:2; 26:60 diff Mk 14:57). These made Hawkins to count it among the "words and phrases characteristic of St Matthew's gospel."⁷⁷ This is again the case with *μεταμέλεσθαι*⁷⁸ which appears only here and in the special Matthean material of 27:3. It has been argued that the construction *μεταμεληθεὶς ἀπῆλθεν* corresponds to Matthean style. This style can be seen in 3:16; 9:7; 9:19; 9:22; 9:25, etc.⁷⁹

Further indices to Matthean authorship appear in v.30c, where the expression *ἐγὼ κύριε* appears to mean I will go lord.⁸⁰ The son's address to his father as lord and his inability to go to the vineyard remind the reader of the warning of the Baptist (Mt 3:7-10; cf. Lk 3:7-9) and inevitably of the warning of Jesus "not everyone who says to me, 'κύριε, κύριε,' will enter the kingdom of heaven but he that does τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς" (Mt 7:21 diff Lk 6:46).⁸¹ Mt seems to be developing the theme of the contrast between words and actions which is central to his gospel. This is specially so in the context of his controversy with the Jewish leaders. The above observations show that the parable proper bears the writing of Mt all over it.

The question to the Jewish leaders at the end of the parable also reveals the hand of Mt. This is evident in v.31a with the phrase 'doing the will of the Father.' *Ποιέω + θέλημα + πατρός* is characteristically Matthean.⁸² Although one expects naturally to

⁶⁹ See 8:5; 9:14; 13:36; 14:15; 15:1; 17:14; 19:13.16; 21:28.30; 22:23; 24:3; 26:49.69=14x.

⁷⁰ Cf. H. Merkel, "Ungleichen Söhnen," 255.

⁷¹ Mt 12:39.48; 13:11.37; 15:3.13.24.26; 16:2; 17:11; 19:4; 21:29.30; 24:2; 25:12; 26:23. The expression *ἀποκριθεὶς/θέντες* + finite verb occurs 46x in Mt, 15x in Mk and 37x in Lk.

⁷² Mk 6:37; 10:3.

⁷³ Lk 8:21; 10:27; 15:29.

⁷⁴ It is curious that Mt never used this phrase until the split between Jesus and the Jews was apparent. The first occurrence (12:39) was a sharp response to the charge of being in league with the evil powers.

⁷⁵ We will later see how Mt takes over the word *ὡσαύτως* in v.36 diff Mk 12:4f.

⁷⁶ 7 times in Mt, none in Mk and once in Lk.

⁷⁷ J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae* (1909²), 19a.

⁷⁸ It occurs 3 times only in the Gospels, all in Mt. The word *ὡσαύτως* could also be redactional (Mt 4; Mk 2; Lk 2).

⁷⁹ This idea has been developed by H. Merkel "Ungleichen Söhnen," 256.

⁸⁰ So also U. Luz, *Matthäus III.210*, n. 46. See also Blaß-Debrunner, *Gammatik*, 274.

⁸¹ Cf. also Mt 12:50, which has parallels in Mk 3:35 and Lk 8:21.

⁸² Mt (3x)=7:21; 12:50; 21:31; Mk 0; Lk 0.

see here Mt's favourite expression 'ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς,' it appears that the context of the parable involving a father with two sons surely gives no room to this addition. While in 21:31 the father refers to a figure in the parable, in the above cited 7:21 and 12:50 the referent is evidently the heavenly father. This omission of ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς and the use of εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ (v.31) have led some scholars to conclude that Mt has made use of a material from his tradition.⁸³ But this conclusion seems inadequate. This is because the same expression at v.31 is used later in v.43 where Mt inserts the taking away of the kingdom of God from the Jewish leaders. If Mt could insert v.43 he could also have written v.31.

It is relevant to observe that in 7:21; 12:50 and 21:31, τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς is the direct object of the verb ποιέω. And the three verses seem to expose the same theme of the right correct discipleship. Again Mt is more prominent than his synoptic mates in the use of the substantive θέλημα. Semantically, the noun is related to the verb θέλω which is used in Mt 42 times.⁸⁴ Besides, Mt stands out in his portrayal of God as father.⁸⁵ As well, Mt's Jesus, summons his disciples to enter a child-father affiliation with God as their father and stresses the filial relationship between God and humans more than the other evangelists.⁸⁶ In the NT the word father is to be seen 414 times of which almost 250 of them have reference to God. In the words of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, God as father is distributed thus: Mk 3x; Q 4x; Lk 4x; Mt 31x.⁸⁷ This brings the expression τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς into the heart of the Matthean narrative.⁸⁸

The hand of Mt is again evident in v.31c. In this verse we have such Matthean words as λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς which recalls 4:10; 8:4.20; 9:28; 15:34; 19:21; 26:31.52.64. Although the word 'amen' has been described as ipsissima vox Jesu,⁸⁹ it is evident that Mt has employed this word redactionally in 18:3 diff Mk 10:15; 19:23 diff Mk 10:23; 19:28 diff Mk 10:29. The use of the Amen word with ὅτι is a Matthean redaction in 19:23.28. This expression is found neither in the OT nor in

⁸³ W. Grundmann, *Matthäus*, 458, writes, "auffällig ist, dass vom Reiche Gottes und nicht vom Reich der Himmel gesprochen wird, was darauf hinweist, dass Gleichnis und Spruch vormatthäischer Überlieferung angehören." Cf. Also C. G. Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, 284.

⁸⁴ As against Mk (24x) and Lk (28x).

⁸⁵ Mt 63x; Mk 5x; Lk 17x.

⁸⁶ Mt 5:16.45.48; 6:1.14.26.32.

⁸⁷ But the mention of God as father is very prominent in Pauline and pseudo-Pauline letters. The salutations at the beginning of these letters take the form χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Gal 1:3; 1Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:2; Rom 1:7; Phil 1:2; Phlm 3; Eph 1:2. This occurs also in the concluding greeting in Eph 6:23.

⁸⁸ One can then surmise that doing the will of the father is for Mt the *conditio-sine-qua-non* for entering the kingdom. He begins the description of the ministry of Jesus with his proclamation that the kingdom of heaven is near and follows it with the narration of the call of the first disciples (4:18-22). The summary report of Jesus' activities narrated afterwards also notes that along with his teachings and healings, he proclaimed the dawn of the kingdom (4:23). The Sermon on the Mount begins with a statement about the kingdom of heaven (5:3) and exhorts the practise of greater righteousness (5:20) as the prerequisite for entering the kingdom. Towards the end of the sermon, Jesus defines the one who eventually qualifies to enter into the kingdom as "one who does the will of my heavenly father." The one who qualifies is the one who hears the words of Jesus and acts on them as opposed to the one who hears but does not act on them (7:24-27).

⁸⁹ See J. Jeremias, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, 43f.

rabbinic literature in a prefatory usage, where the word occurs consistently as a response to a preceding statement.⁹⁰ But it occurs no less than thirty-one times in Mt.⁹¹

Furthermore, John is presented in v.32a as coming ἐν ὀδῷ δικαιοσύνης, to which the Jewish leaders positively refused to obey. Not only does John share the same fate with Jesus in Mt's narrative,⁹² the word δικαιοσύνη also occurs in Mt 3:15; 5:20; 6:1.6.33 (all without parallels). In these places the expression seems to represent the demand of God upon man rather than God's gift to man.⁹³ Moreover, the combination of "tax collectors and prostitutes" occurs in the NT only here and in v.32.⁹⁴ The linguistic analysis thus shows that the parable and its application manifest overwhelming Matthean vocabulary.⁹⁵

V.28d contains an important injunction ὑπάγετε ...εἰς τὴν ἀμπελῶνα, which appears twice in the special Matthean parable of the vineyard workers (Mt 20:1-6; vv.4.7). Again, the word 'vineyard' links up with the following parable of 21:33ff. The parable of 20:1-16 contains many expressions and motifs that appear in the two parables of 21:28-46. First, the land owner is called οἰκοδεσπότης⁹⁶ (20:1), then the themes of work and vineyard, plus the constant going out (20:1.3.5.6) and doing the same thing (ὡσαύτως, 20:5); the distinction between ὁ ἔσχατος and ὁ πρῶτος (20:8) and the concluding theme of reward, which seems to favour the late comers, all point to a close relationship with our trilogy. Again the parable of the vineyard workers is about the reversal of human expectations in the kingdom of heaven that dominates the whole of ch. 19. The importance Mt attaches to this parable could be shown from the fact that it disrupts the Markan sequence which Mt has been following since the beginning of ch. 19.⁹⁷ The situation becomes more revealing if those addressed in the parable of 21:28-32 have heard the parable of 20:1-16.⁹⁸ Finally, the connection between the two parables is that in 20:16 some

⁹⁰ See D. A. Hagner, Matthew I.106; W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, I.489f. For the amen-word as a sign of authority see K. Berger, "Einleitungsformel," 45-75. But Berger's attempt to locate this form of saying in a Hebrew or Aramaic background has been challenged by J. Jeremias, "Zum nicht-responsorischen Amen," 122f.

⁹¹ The expression ἀμῆν (γάρ) λέγω ὑμῖν/σοι is present in Mk 13x and in Lk 6x.

⁹² For the correspondences between the fates of Jesus and The Baptist see D. C. Allison Jr., Studies in Matthew, 226.

⁹³ B. Przybylski, Righteousness, 91, 95.

⁹⁴ This could be a pointer to the fact that Jesus himself was accused of being their friend (cf. Mt 11:19). See, for instance, the article of M. Völkel, "Freund der Zöllner und Sünder," 1-10.

⁹⁵ So also G. Strecker, Der Weg, 153; H. Merkel, "Ungleichen Söhnen," 256.

⁹⁶ R. T. Francis, Matthew, (see note n. 1) has translated this term to mean master of the house (cf. 10:25; 13:27.52), which, for him, clearly designates someone who owns and farms his own land.

⁹⁷ See the arguments of M. Palachuvatill, Will of the Father, 178f. It is also interesting how some exegetes have interpreted οἱ δὲ ἀπῆλθον of Mt. 20:5, with reference to the second invited labourers, as "but they went away." In other words, those invited at the ninth hour simply went away. This is a more literal interpretation which would not affect the outcome of the parable since only the first and last comers are involved at the end. This interpretation brings the parable of ch. 20 closer to its ch. 21 counterpart. If these two parables have the same theme in common (reversal of common expectations), then one is left to wonder if the Jewish leaders could have given the right answer to the question "who did the will of the father?" See also the arguments of R. T. France, Matthew, 751; contra G. R. Beasley-Murray, Jesus and the Kingdom of God, 118, who argues that Jesus was contrasting the Jewish leadership with the social outcasts who received Jesus' ministry.

⁹⁸ It should be observed that the word ἀπέρχομαι carries a negative connotation in this parable (see v. 22). And if it is accepted that the word carries a negative meaning in the parable of the Two Sons, then

ancient witnesses⁹⁹ have an additional clause, which can be translated “for many are called but few chosen.” I see the same hand at the conclusion of the trilogy (22:14).

The above analysis shows a strong tendency to ascribe the whole parable and its application to the hand of Mt.¹⁰⁰ But there are some observations that could point to an earlier source for this parable. These observations include two similar pericopes from the Gospel of Lk. First the two passages Mt 21:32 and Lk 7:29-30³³ seem to parallel. Though Lk does not use the word *δικαιοσύνη*, he presents the Pharisees and the lawyers as having rejected the purpose of God (*τὴν βουλὴν τοῦ Θεοῦ*) for them. The provisional implication is that ‘the way of righteousness’ in the Matthean text is parallel to ‘the will of God’ in the Lukan text.¹⁰¹ Second the motif of God’s gentle dealings with repentant sinners is also the main point of the Lukan parable of 15:11-32. This parable also has the same structure with that of Mt 21:28-32.

2.4.2 Mt 21:31b-32//Lk 7:29-30

The application of the parable (Mt 21:31-32) seems to have a parallel in Lk 7:29-30, a passage inserted between two Q sayings about John’s prophetic function and position in the kingdom of God (Lk 7:24-28, 31-35).¹⁰² Some observations seem to strengthen the connection between the Matthean and Lukan narratives. First, the verb *δικαιῶ* ‘to justify’ (Lk 7:29) is present in this Q material (Lk 7:35//Mt 11:19) which could be seen as corresponding to Mt’s *δικαιοσύνη*, ‘righteousness’ of 21:32. Second, in Mt 21:32a, Mt writes, *ἦλθεν γὰρ Ἰωάννης πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης*. This is also present in Mt 11:18 cp Lk 7:33.¹⁰³ It can thus be said that Mt has edited 21:32a under the influence of 11:18 and Lk 29:30.¹⁰⁴ Not only does Jesus justify the crowd’s opinion of John as a prophet, he likened him to the prophets of old¹⁰⁵ and places him

the difficulty in answering the question of Jesus as to who did the will of the father is explained. See J. R. Michaels, “Regretful Son,” 15-26 for arguments supporting the negative meaning of *ἀπέρχομαι*.

⁹⁹ Gk uncials C, D, W, Θ, and others [the majority text] plus Latin, Syriac, and Coptic texts. But the shorter reading is supported by major Alexandrian texts (the Greek Uncials κ, B,) and other ancient versions.

¹⁰⁰ See also, G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 153.

¹⁰¹ The word never occurs in Mk.

¹⁰² Of the many critics who hold the view of a Q background between Mt 21:32 and Lk 7:29-30, the following stand out: J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 78f; D. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 153 n. 1; J. Lambrecht, *Treasure*, 95-7; S. V. Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 52f; R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 424; D. Catchpole, *The Quest for Q*, 66 n. 28; C. Tucket, *Griesbach Hypothesis*, 148-50. Against a Q background see H. T. Fleddermann, *Q*, 362; J. M. D. Derrett, “The Parable of the Two Sons,” 80. For J. Nolland, there is a family likeness between our parable and both Lk 7:29-30 and Lk 15:11-31. See his *Matthew*, 861.

¹⁰³ It should be noted further that after John’s question to Jesus in Q (Mt 11:2-6//Lk 7:18-23), Jesus begins to proclaim his greatness to the crowds. Jesus praises John and the important place he occupies in the eschatological plan of God. The exaltation of John in this Q material (which is inconsistent with his subordination in other parts of the Gospels), has led many exegetes to accept its authenticity. See D. S. Dapaah, *Relationship*, 119 (note n. 2). The conclusion of F. Herrenbrück seems to be assured: “der Schlüssel der Parabel liegt demnach nicht nur in Vers 32a,b, sondern auch in Mt 11,16-19/Lk 7,31-35 (Q).” *Jesus und die Zöllner*, 266.

¹⁰⁴ This is also the conclusion reached by J. Lambrecht, *Treasure*, 96. For a literary-critical connection between the two pericopes see F. Herrenbrück, *Jesus und die Zöllner*, 266.

¹⁰⁵ See Ex. 23:20; Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1. But at the end, Jesus inserts an ambiguous saying to the effect that the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John.

above them. It can then be concluded that for Mt and Lk, John and Jesus are the key players in the eschatological drama of God's saving activity.¹⁰⁶ This is a strong argument for a Matthean redaction of traditional material.

Finally, the conceptual closeness between the Matthean and Lukan pericopes can easily be seen when one observes that the addressees of Lk 7:29-30 are the same as in 7:33-35.¹⁰⁷ If this connection is correct, then the picture created in the Lukan narrative is that Jesus was not actually rejected by this generation per se (Lk 7:31), but only by the Pharisees and lawyers.¹⁰⁸ Hence, the attack on the Jewish leadership in the trilogy is once more expressed. If Mt had this Q section in mind while writing 21:32, then it could be that he was also influenced by it in writing v.31b.¹⁰⁹ But it should not be overlooked that this Lukan verse contains many typically Lukan expressions especially *λαός*, *δικαίω*, *νομικός* and *βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ*. One could also label *ἀθετέω* as Lukan.¹¹⁰ Hence although the argument to a Q background for the two pericopes is strong, it is not conclusive.¹¹¹

2.4.3 Mt 21:28-32//Lk 15:11-32

In Luke 15:11-32, Jesus gives a parable that presents two contrasting sons and which begins with *ἄνθρωπος τις εἶχεν δύο υἱούς* "a certain man had two sons." Not only do the two parables have a similar introduction, the fact that Lk includes his parable in a trilogy of parables directed to the Pharisees and Scribes in response to their complaints against Jesus' table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners could be a pointer to a common tradition.¹¹² Again, the Lukan parable presents a contrasting response by two sons to a father and also involves work but in this case *ἐν ἀργῶ*.

¹⁰⁶ G. Yamasaki, *John the Baptist*, 96. This alignment could also be said to intend the acceptance of the enigmatic nature of John and his message. This enigma has been well captured by C. H. Kraeling, *John the Baptist*, 3 thus: "many of those in higher places regarded him as dangerous, a demonic force disturbing men's minds and retarding the wheels of progress. Many of the common people of his day found him not only provocative but compelling, so much so that for almost a decade after his violent death the question of his vindication was a popular issue. For some centuries the rite he performed was bartered about and imitated in sundry syncretistic religious communities of the Near East, and in Christianity and in one non-Christian, non-Jewish sect he has played a continuous role down the present day. This makes him a person of significance in his own right and an excellent medium for the study of the period to which he belonged."

¹⁰⁷ The accusations against Jesus (*δαιμόνιον ἔχει, ἄνθρωπος φάγος, καὶ οἰνοπότης τελωνῶν φίλος καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν*) could not have originated from the early church. If this is correct, then the application of the parable of the Two Sons must have been old in the tradition which Mt used. On the contrary, see W. J. Cotter, "Marketplace, Q (LK) 7.31-5," 293, who thinks that Q 7:31-35 is the result by later Christian communities to interpret the parable of the Children in the Marketplace, which they had received.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. U. Wilckens, Art. *Σοφία*, ThWNT V11.516.

¹⁰⁹ So J. Lambrecht, *Treasure*, 96f.

¹¹⁰ *Λαός* Mt 14; Mk 2; Lk 36; *δικαίω* Mt 2; Mk 0; Lk 5; *δικαίω + ἑαυτοῦ* can also be found in Lk 10:29 and 16:15; *βουλή* NT 12; Mt 0; Mk 0; Lk 2; Acts 7; *βουλή τοῦ θεοῦ* can be found in Lk 7:30; 23:51; Acts 2:23; 13:36; 20:27; *νομικός* NT 9; Mt 1; Mk 0; Lk 6; *ἀθετέω* Mt 0; Mk 2; Lk 5.

¹¹¹ For J. M. D. Derrett, "neither in vocabulary nor in ideas is the Lucan passage a parallel to our disputed parable." See his article "The Parable of the Two Sons," 113.

¹¹² The two parables are seen as remote parallels by C. E. Carlston, "Reminiscence," 390.

Again the two parables stress the importance of repentance.¹¹³ Moreover, we have in the two parables, overwhelming structural similarities in the alternation between narrated discourse (ND) and direct discourse (DD).¹¹⁴ Finally, the two parables have basically the same actantial structure which I have already alluded to.¹¹⁵

But the vast differences between the two parables cannot be overlooked. These differences are both stylistic and formal.¹¹⁶ For instance, in the Lukan narrative, the initiative is from the younger son unlike in the Matthean narrative where the initiative proceeds from the father. The differences have led to the suggestion that there is not common tradition between the two parables.¹¹⁷ I however contend that these differences are a result of the evangelists' adaptation of their sources to their theologies. While Mt seems to stress the need to produce fruits of righteousness which is very central to his gospel, Lk stresses rather the importance of forgiveness which is very recurrent message in his special parables.¹¹⁸

The above observations show that although the hand of Mt seems to govern the text of the first parable of the trilogy, vocabulary statistics alone is not enough to establish Matthean authorship or redaction. Therefore, I attempt to use other criteria especially tensions and contradictions and the combination of genres in the parable to establish the possible presence of traditional material in the parable.¹¹⁹

¹¹³ For J. Nolland, Matthew, 861, there is a notable likeness in our parable to the father and prodigal son of Lk 15:11-32.

¹¹⁴ For instance: ND The younger son's journey away from home (Lk 15:13f) = ND The father's going to the first child (Mt 21:28c). DD The younger son's decision to return home (Lk 15:17-19) = DD The father's request to the first child and the child's response (Mt 21:28d). ND The father's reception of the younger son (Lk 15:20) = ND The first child's change of mind and departing (Mt 21:29c). ND The elder son's return home (Lk 15:25f) = ND The father's going to the second child (Mt 21:30a). DD The servant's explanation (Lk 15:27) = DD The second child's answer (Mt 21:30c). But when we reach the application of the parable (Mt 21:32), the structural parallels stop. While Lk continues to alternate between narrative and discourse, the whole of the application of the parable of the two sons is narrative discourse. It thus appears that the aim of the application of the Matthean parable of the Two Sons is to link the parable to the other parables of the trilogy and the wider Matthean Gospel.

¹¹⁵ It appears the same basic structure in the two parables led C. L. Blomberg to agree to their remarkable parallelism. See his *Interpreting the Parables*, 186.

¹¹⁶ For the overwhelming presence of Lukan language in the parable of Lk 15:11-32 see C. E. Carlston, "Reminiscence," 368-90.

¹¹⁷ See for instance H. Merkel, "Ungleichen Söhnen," 258.

¹¹⁸ A look at the parables of the Two Debtors (Lk 7:41-43), the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31), the Pharisee and Publican (Lk 18:9-14), etc confirms this assertion. As seen in the introduction of this work, most of these have been called example stories because they illustrate how one must (not) behave in relation to others. These stories seem to sing the mantra of love and compassion which are dominant themes in Lk's Gospel. An excellent work about the Lukan special parables has been done by B. Heininger in his *Metaphorik, Erzählstruktur und Szenisch-Dramatische Gestaltung in den Sondergutgleichnissen bei Lukas* (Münster, 1991).

¹¹⁹ Cf. M. Ebner/B. Heininger, *Exegese*, 160-166, where also other criteria are named for establishing the redaction of an author.

2.4.4 (a) Tensions and contradictions

(i) In the first chapter, I have pointed out the many parallels, both thematic and verbal that could indicate a Matthean redaction¹²⁰ and the arguments that could show Mt's hand in the concluding verses of the parable. The tensions in the parable are mainly seen from stylistic and motif observations. First, it could be argued that the possibility of having two sons who mutually contradict themselves and one another at the same time is very remote.

(ii) Stylistically, the answer of the Jewish leaders to the question of v.31a does not agree with the verb flow in previous verses. I feel that the present indicative λέγουσιν (v.31b) does not rhyme with the story which has shown a vast use of the aorist so far. This is also the case with the response of Jesus beginning with λέγει αὐτοῖς. This appears to be a Mattheanism because “despite Matthew’s fondness for particles, asyndeton remains a prominent feature of his Greek.”¹²¹ Again, Schenk has called attention to the fact that the historical present is a ‘macro syntactic structural signal in Mt’s gospel’.¹²²

(iii) The original presence of vv.31-32 in the tradition can again be questioned for various reasons: (a) the parable’s contrast between speaking and doing is not present from v.31.¹²³ Instead of the theme of doing the will of the father, Jesus introduces the theme of belief ἐν ὁδοῦ δικαιοσύνης which John brought, thus linking the parable to the question and counter-question of 21:23-25. (b) The parable depicts a change of mind in the obedient son, whereas nothing in Mt’s Gospel shows a change of mind for either the Jewish leaders or the sinners in relation to John the Baptist. That is, the tax-collectors and prostitutes so far the Matthean evidence, did not first refuse to believe in John, and then afterwards believe in him and amend their lives; nor did the Jewish leaders first believe in him and then reject him.¹²⁴ (c) The present arrangement assumes that John the Baptist is compared to the father in the parable. But to think of the ascetic Baptist as a father with two sons and a vineyard would be absurd.¹²⁵ If the parable was originally told to highlight the activity of The Baptist, the metaphor would probably not be that of a father who urges his children to go to

¹²⁰ For instance, v.30 builds an almost perfect parallelism with v.28c. Here ἔτερος takes the place of πρῶτος. As already indicated, the two terms (first and second) are also present in the parable of the workers in the vineyard and shows Mt’s love for dualism and opposites.

¹²¹ W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, I.84. So also M. Black, *An Aramaic Approach*, 55-61.

¹²² W. Schenk, “Das Präsens Historicum,” 466f. To be noted is the fact that, in the Synoptics, the use of λέγω, historic present + asyndeton is so distributed, Mt 27; Mk 6; Lk 0.

¹²³ Majority of scholars regard v.32 as secondary addition. For instance, Strecker, *Der Weg*, 153; A. Kretzer, *Herrschaft*, 156; H. Weder, *Gleichnisse*, 235; J. Lambrecht, *Treasure*, 94f; R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 192; J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 78f. The view of J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II.219f is that the whole of 21:28-32 fuses an authentic parable with the tradition behind Lk 7:29-30. But it is also the view of several scholars that the expression beginning with ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν has not been an original part of the parable. So R. Schnackenburg, *Matthew*, 203; J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II.220; H. Weder, *Gleichnisse*, 234f, thinks that 31b is added before Mt; N. Perrin, *Rediscovering*, 117 is of the view that v.32 is pre-Matthean.

¹²⁴ Cf. C. G. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels*, 284.

¹²⁵ See K. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 266-75 for a broader development of these arguments.

work. To overcome this tension, it is safer to assume that the parable originally ended with the question of Jesus in v.31a.¹²⁶

But seen in another way, the parable could have made more sense if it continued with the λέγει αὐτοῖς of v.31c, that is, without the answer of the Jewish leaders. That means that the parable runs from vv.28b-30. Not only did Mt insert the introductory question (v.28a) he also puts λέγουσιν ὁ πρῶτος on the lips of the Jewish leaders (v.31b). This penchant of ascribing the answer to Jesus' question to his interlocutors will later be seen as a Matthean tendency in the next parable. This original absence of an answer to the question could then explain the presence of various readings of v.31b in the mss. These answers (the first, the second, the latter) could have been supplied by later scribes to fill in the gap.¹²⁷ Mt also adds the whole of v.32 under the influence of some Q material. The implication is that the "original application" of the present parable does not depend on the answer given by Jesus' interlocutors. I think this is the most secure conclusion of the whole argument.

2.4.5 (b) Combination of genres

I have already alluded to the fact that the parable makes more sense if it originally ended with the question of Jesus in v.31a. My reason is based on the insights of the redaction criticism of this parable. Also I have mentioned above that the various answers in the mss (the first, the second, the last) were added by later scribes to fill the gap created by the original conclusion without an answer. The original absence of this answer is justified since Mt had already shown the Jewish leaders as crafty conspirators not ready to commit themselves by answering Jesus (cf. 21:25-27). If these answers are originally absent, then the "application" of the parable is also most likely absent. It is apparent that the verses dealing with the belief of the tax-collectors and harlots as against the unbelief of the Jewish leaders, including also the allusion to the coming of John in the way of righteousness (vv.31e-32), is thematically disjointed from the parable dealing with the father and his two sons.

The result is that while the first part of the parable deals with doing the will of the father, and is related to Lk 15:11-32; the second part deals with belief in The Baptist, which, as already shown, has a synoptic mate in Lk 7:29f. The mention of the name Jesus in 31c could be an index that we have two

¹²⁶ K. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 273 has found some reasons to support those who think that the whole of the parable belongs together. According to him without the explanation in vv.31-32 the parable is puzzling; the story is left incomplete, without direction. He found it very unlikely that Mt or any other early Christian would have changed the parable so that it focused on believing John the Baptist to enter the kingdom. He wondered what would be gained by shifting the focus from Jesus and the will of the Father to John. Finally, the inclusio established between v.29 and v.32 for him favors the view that v.32 belonged with the parable from the first.

¹²⁷ For a few exegetes, the entire section is a Matthean creation, for e.g., H. Merkel, "ungleichen Söhnen" 254-61; R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 422-24; R. Cameron, "Matthew's Parable of the Two Sons," 197-204. Other scholars like J. Lambrecht, *Treasure*, 95-97; H. Weder, *Gleichnisse*, 233, have thought that except for the initial question, vv.28 through 31b are from Jesus, and vv.31c-32 are from Mt or his tradition. R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 192, feels that vv.28-31 form a coherent whole and belong together as a parable from Jesus. I will later argue that the Jewish leaders could not have supplied the right answer since they did not know where Jesus was driving at till the end of the second parable. Mt had earlier shown how crafty they were in avoiding the first question.

different text units from this parable, namely 28a-31a and 31c-32. But if any part of the application is originally present in the parable, then, it is 31c-e.

Hence, a further argument can be fronted. It could be argued that the original words of Jesus started with 31d, after the answer of the Jewish leaders in v.27. That means, at the conclusion of the statement *οὐδὲ ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν ἐν ποίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ ταῦτα ποιῶ* Jesus said to them *ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι οἱ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρνοι προάγουσιν ὑμᾶς*. In this case the so-called parable proper is a later addition by scribes intending to explain the comments of Jesus with a parable. This then explains why the parable is disjointed from the initial question of the origin of the authority of Jesus and that of The Baptist. The conclusion, therefore, is that we have two text units: the first a Matthean parable, the second an apophthegmatic conclusion of the authority controversy bothering on the source of Jesus' authority. However, any attempt to present a dogmatic exposition of where the tradition and redaction of our parable intersect seems to be an enterprise in futility. But a plausible reconstruction is possible.

2.4.6 Mt 21:28-32: A POSSIBLE RECONSTRUCTION

	Matthean special source	From Q
28a b c d e 29a b c 30a b c d 31a b	But what do you think? A man had two children. and going to the first he said Child, go today work in the vineyard. But answering he said, I will not: but afterward repenting he went. And going to the other he said likewise. But he answering said, I (go), Lord and went not. Which of the two has done the will of the father? They say the first.	
c d e		Jesus says to them, amen I say to you: the tax-collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32a	b c d	For John has come to you in the way of righteousness, and you have not believed him; but the tax-collectors and the harlots have believed him; and you having seen have not afterward repented, that you might have believed him.
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Although no conclusive argument seems in view, all considered, it seems that the hand of Mt is obvious, as a redactor, not a creator from the first to the last lines of the first parable of the trilogy. From a story in his tradition, probably a controversy story between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, he formed a parable depicting the central tenet of his theology. Jülicher may then be right in positing that the parable is the real word of the real Jesus.¹²⁸ Again it is obviously Mt who has placed this parable in this context. But it is no longer possible to determine with certainty the original words of Jesus in this pericope. However, the evident tensions in the parable of the two sons manifest Mt's love for dualism and conflict.

2.5 MATTHEW'S LOVE FOR DUALISM AND CONFLICT

The strong contrast Mt depicts between the two children (21:29-30) on the one hand, and between the Jewish leaders and the sinners (21:32) on the other hand is a strong dualism which finds expression in other parts of the first Gospel.¹²⁹ In the Sermon on the Mount, this is made explicit. For example two masters are contrasted (6:24), birds and flowers are juxtaposed (6:26-30), logs and specks are put side by side (7:3-5), dogs and pigs are compared (7:6), there is dualism between asking and knocking (7:7-8), loaves and fishes, stones and snakes (7:9-11), two contrasting roads (7:13-14), sheep and wolves (7:15), grapes and figs, thorns and thistles (7:16), trees with good or bad fruits (7:17-20), two houses (7:24-27).¹³⁰ The last two instances show the contrast between true and false followers.

Of more significance are the three times where Mt has multiplied Mk's figure by two. These include 8:28 where one demoniac becomes two demoniacs (cf. Mk 5:2); a blind man in Mk 10:46-52 becomes two blind men in 20:29-34; the Markan ass of 11:1-10 becomes an ass and her foal.¹³¹ Drury, who does not see this as a stylistic feature alone, has argued that this work by the deployment of two "testifies to a

¹²⁸ A. Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden*, 385. See also R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 192; G. D. Kilpatrick, *Origins*, 30. N. Perrin, *Rediscovering*, 118f; U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.207-08. So also Goulder, *Midrash*, 322 n. 27. But for S. V. Tilborg, both this parable and the entire trilogy is pre-Matthean. *Jewish Leaders*, 47-63.

¹²⁹ Already, Goulder has attributed the presence of "prostitutes" in the pericope to Mt's tendency to complement a male term with a female. M. D. Goulder, *Midrash*, 414.

¹³⁰ For the use of contrasts as a mark of the sectarian nature of Mt's community see D. C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 117.

¹³¹ Some other features of two in Mt have been listed by W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew I*.87.

strong moral dualism which is deeply set in Mathew's mind, sorting people out, *sub specie* of eschatology, into good and bad with a confident simplicity which contrasts with Luke's more nuanced and developmental view of human nature."¹³² His conclusion is that this implies that for Mt there are no good people who do badly or bad people who do well. Actions flow from being.

The element of conflict is more present in Mt than in his synoptic mates. This is more evident in four of the parables unique to Mt. These include the Weeds and the Wheat (13:40-43), The Dragnet (13:47-50), Unforgiving Servant (18:23-35), and the Last Judgment (25:31-46). In the other four where Mt has found a parallel, he makes the violent more intense. This is the case in the Wicked Tenants (21:33-46), the Wedding Feast (22:1-14), Faithful Servants (24:45-51), and the Talents (25:14-30). This is also very stark in the context of the trilogy between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. Kingsbury has suggested that this conflict is central to the plot of Mt, arguing that in this Gospel, the conflicts of Jesus are with the evil one, the forces of nature, civil authorities, gentiles, Israel above all its rulers, the crowds, his disciples and sometimes with himself. But "whereas Jesus freely employs his incomparable authority to vanquish Satan, demons, and the forces of nature and illness, he chooses not to compel humans to do his bidding (26:53; 11:27a). On the contrary, he calls humans to repentance in view of the gracious nearness of God's kingly rule (4:17). The upshot is that the conflict on which the plot of Mt's story turns is that between Jesus and Israel."¹³³ But as our trilogy shows, the conflict is more between Jesus and the Jewish leadership.

2.6 THE FRAMES OF THE PARABLE

In the above section, I presented the many repetitions and tensions, both thematic and verbal which tend towards the conclusion that the parable of the Two Sons is a Matthean redaction of an original story present in his tradition. This conclusion is supported by the presence of a mixture of Matthean and non-Matthean language in the parable (vv.28a-30) and in its application (vv.31-32). The present section investigates the frames of the parable as genre signals.

When taken from vv.28a-31a, it is obvious that the text consists only of the words of Jesus without any intervention whatsoever from his interlocutors. It begins with a question (28a) and concludes also with a question (31a).¹³⁴ The parable proper is

¹³² R. H. Drury, *Parables*, 77. The italics are original.

¹³³ Jack Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 3. This conflicts are given a clear expression in these passages (2:3-5; 3:7-12; 7:28-29; 9:2-8; 9:11-13; 9:32-34; 9:36-38; 11:16-19; 12:22-34; 15:1-20; 16:21; 19:1-9; 21:8-17; 21:23-27; 22:23-33; 23:1-7; 23:13-39; 26:3-5; 26:47-56; 27:20-26; 27:62-66). Very important in the above passages is the distinction that Mt constantly makes between the Jewish leaders and the crowds. For instance, in 9:32-34, Mt tells of the healing of a dumb demoniac leading to the declaration by the crowds that they have never seen anything like that in Israel. This declaration is countered by the Pharisees' accusation of Jesus' being in league with the evil powers. J. M. Gibbs, "Purpose and pattern," 458 thinks that "the crowds grope towards recognition of Jesus but are cut off by the Pharisees, who themselves cannot hear or speak the truth."

¹³⁴ It could be asserted that v.31a is the conclusion of the story started in v.28a, that is, what do you think...which of the two did the will of the father. As already indicated, this would be a very

located between vv28b-30. The present analysis would pay attention to (1) the introduction and (2) the conclusion of the parable. The importance of cutting the parables out of their frames is to bring about the possibility of getting a collection of small, pure narratives, open in many directions.¹³⁵ At the end, we are left with naked narratives with indeterminable messages.

2.6.1 THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PARABLE.

In the Matthean parables, three types of introductions are apparent: (1) forms that show the comparative character of the texts,¹³⁶ (2) imperative introductions and (3) introductions that begin with a question.¹³⁷ The introduction of the parable of the Two Sons belongs to the third category, with the question *τί δὲ ὑμῖν δοκεῖ*. This question has already been employed in 18:12 as introduction to the parable of the Lost Sheep.¹³⁸ Jülicher thinks that a question like this naturally receives the answer provided in v.31a.¹³⁹ Though this conclusion may not be entirely true since all the parabolic questions are not answered by the interlocutors, it remains true that the questions presuppose the capacity of the hearers to make value judgments relative to the particular parable.¹⁴⁰ However, the parabolic introductory questions manifest different forms: *ἐὰν...* (Mt 18:12);¹⁴¹ *μὲν...* (Mt 9:15);¹⁴² *τίς...* (Mt 24:45);¹⁴³ *τίς ἔξ ὑμῶν...* (Mt 6:27¹⁴⁴; 7:9¹⁴⁵; 12:11¹⁴⁶). But as already indicated above, the exact form *τί δὲ ὑμῖν δοκεῖ* is a Matthean formulation.¹⁴⁷

It is to be noted that the Matthean questions (though differently composed) appear more in the short metaphors, manifesting the comparative or analogic tendencies in the pairs being compared (e.g. 5:13; 6:26.28-30; 7:3.9.16; 9:15; 12:11). The fact that most of the above mentioned question-metaphors are

unnatural continuation of the argument after v.27 without vv.28-30. On the other hand, it is possible that the Jewish leaders provided no answer to this question, having discovered the net Jesus was spinning.

¹³⁵ B. Gerhardtsson, "If We Do Not Cut the Parables Out of Their Frames," 325.

¹³⁶ See J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse* 99-102 who calls this form of introduction, nominative and dative introduction.

¹³⁷ J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 102 classifies these question-introductions as special nominative introductions. These introductions clearly differentiate the Matthean parables from pure metaphors (e.g. Mt 5:13.14; 6:22; 7:6; 9:12.15; 12:25; 15:26).

¹³⁸ Here, the question *τί δὲ ὑμῖν δοκεῖ* combines again with the concept *τὸ θῆλημα τοῦ πατρός* to charge the believers to self-judgment. See also the comments of W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, II.776; W. Carter, "Parables," 156.

¹³⁹ See his *Gleichnisreden* II.366.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. C. Münch, *Gleichnisse*, 159.

¹⁴¹ Cp. Mk 9:50; Lk 9:34.

¹⁴² Cp. Mk 2:19; Lk 5:34.

¹⁴³ Cp. Lk 12:42; 14:31; 15:8 cp. Mt 17:25 (*ἀπὸ τίνων*).

¹⁴⁴ Par. Lk 12:25.

¹⁴⁵ Par. Lk 11:11.

¹⁴⁶ Par. Lk 14:5. See also Lk 11:5; 14:28; 15:14; 17:7. The comment of H. Greeven to the importance of this type of question introduction is note-worthy. For him, these questions bring us into the "unmittelbare Nähe der ipsissima Domini" since no contemporary parable has it and is always a form employed by OT prophets. See his article "wer unter euch...?" 101.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. C. Münch, *Gleichnisse*, 158.

to be seen in the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7) could be a pointer to the fact that there is an ethical expectation or demand at the back of the question. This could be supported by the evidence of these questions in the controversy stories¹⁴⁸ and in the judgement sayings.¹⁴⁹ But when a story begins in this question form, the hearers normally expect a parable.¹⁵⁰ The implication is that though these questions appear to be rhetorical, they expose the argumentative form of the parables¹⁵¹ and expect the judgement of the listeners, either uttered or unuttered.¹⁵²

2.6.2 THE CONCLUSION OF THE PARABLE

As already argued above, the conclusion or application of our parable could be said to be the verses beginning from 31. Classical parable analysis has regarded such verses either as secondary additions¹⁵³ or as the key to understanding the parables.¹⁵⁴ The question at the conclusion begins with *τίς ἐκ τῶν* ... This means that the parable of the Two Sons is framed as a classical parable.¹⁵⁵ But the beginning of v.31c shows that the conclusion of the parable could be said to belong to the “authoritative conclusions.” The words “ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν” signifies the authority of the speaker and the truth of what is to be said, at least from the stand-point of the speaker.¹⁵⁶

The conclusion also belongs to the *γάρ* or *ὅτι* type, that is, they are introduced by the coordinating conjunctions *γάρ* or *ὅτι*. As already indicated above, the causal conjunction (see also 24:44; 25:13) shows that what follows (the fact that the Jewish leaders failed to repent) justifies the conclusion already declared (they have been preceded by the sinners). This appears to differ from 11:18f, where the behaviour of the children at the market place is not explained by the causal *γάρ*. This seems to be the case also in 22:14, since the expression “for many are called but few are chosen” corresponds neither to the first invited who never came to the feast nor to the last invited, of whom only one was not chosen. However, when one realises that the parable of 11:18f does not concentrate on the behaviour of the children but on the reaction of “this generation” to the messages of The Baptist and Jesus then the significance of the *γάρ* clause in that pericope is seen to be the same as that of Mt 21:31c.

¹⁴⁸ Cp. 9:14-17; 12:1-14,22-30,46-50; 15:1-20; 17:10-13,24-27; 19:3-9,16-22; 21:23-27; 22:15-46.

¹⁴⁹ Cp. 3:7; 11:7,23; 23:17,19,33.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. G. Lohfink, *Jetzt verstehe ich die Bibel*, 62.

¹⁵¹ See R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 194.

¹⁵² The above shows that the Markan and Lukan Gospels also contain parables that begin in the form of a question. These questions seem to call the listeners to judgment. So also C. Münch, *Gleichnisse*, 159.

¹⁵³ See A. Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden I*,73, who thinks that parables cannot be explained. Also, R. Bultmann has questioned the presence of many applications of the parables, including Mt 13: 49; 18: 35, etc. See his *Geschichte*, 199.

¹⁵⁴ See for instance the works of H. Weder, *Gleichnisse* 97f; C. E. Carston, *Parables* and J. Lambrecht, *Treasure*. But when it is accepted that these “applications” are key to understanding the parables, there arises the problem as to the key to understanding of the parables without such “applications”. Some of these include such Matthean parables as 7:24-27; 13:31f,33,44,45f,52; 24:45-51; 25:15-30, etc.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 175.

¹⁵⁶ See K. Berger, *Formgeschichte*, 54. See also R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 197,199.

The formula of the conclusion shows that Jesus refers the parable back to his hearers and speaks a negative judgement against them.¹⁵⁷ But the fact that the verses 31c-32 are a secondary addition has already been shown.¹⁵⁸ The implication of the above observations is that the parable of the Two Sons is a juridical parable. This type of parable has been defined as a parable that “constitutes a realistic story about the violation of the law, related to someone who had committed a similar offence with the purpose of leading the unsuspecting hearer to pass judgment on himself.”¹⁵⁹ This, the parable was able to achieve.

Apart from the narrative devices already discussed, many exegetes tend towards the view that parables differ from metaphors because of the narrative nature of the former.¹⁶⁰ Bultmann sees the extensive narrative nature of parables as the only difference between them and the metaphors.¹⁶¹ But the fact that Jesus’ parables are metaphors has been thoroughly proved.¹⁶² Finally to be noted in this section dealing with the parable *pro forma* is the tense of the parable, which is mainly the aorist. This implies that our parable is not an everyday event. As Lambrecht puts it “it is a fictitious story which is told in the narrative past tense.”¹⁶³ I have already used the change in tense from v.31b to support the thesis of seeing vv.31b-32 as not being part of the original parable. This is to be accepted together with other criteria already discussed. So what we have is a parabolic narrative that employs contemporary metaphors but without the comparative particle *ὡς ὅμοιον* or *ὅμοιον*. Hence I will study the story as a parable which Mt has given a strong allegorical undertone.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The result of the linguistic and source-critical investigation of the parable of the Two Sons shows clearly how this parable rhymes with both the predominant language and message of the Matthean narrative. At the same time, we are left with the knowledge that the core message of the parable is to be understood in the light of

¹⁵⁷ Cp. K. Berger, Einleitungsformel, 71f. Here, the comments of A. N. Wilder bears weight: “now we know that a true metaphor or symbol is more than a sign, it is a bearer of the reality to which it refers. The hearer not only learns about that reality. He participates in it. He is invaded by it. Here lies the power and fatefulness of art. Rhetoric, 84.

¹⁵⁸ For an informed reading of the secondary nature of the conclusions to the parables, see J. Jeremias, Gleichnisse, 103-12.

¹⁵⁹ U. Simon, “The Poor Man’s Ewe-Lamb,” 220.

¹⁶⁰ A. Jülicher uses the word ‘Erzählung’ to describe parables and example stories. See his Gleichnisreden 1.98.114. In Jülicher’s categories, one must classify our parable as a metaphor since „in der *μεταφορά* verschwindet im Ausdruck die Sache oder die Person, von denen die Rede ist, hinter etwas ähnlichem, das an ihrer Stelle auftritt.” A. Jülicher, Gleichnisreden I.52.

¹⁶¹ R. Bultmann, Geschichte, 184. Also, D. O. Via, Gleichnisse, 1970 and W. Harnisch, Gleichniserzählungen, 1985 see the actantial model as well as the narrativity of the parables as playing important roles. This observation, then, makes it difficult to classify the short narratives in the Matthean Gospel, such as 5:13; 5:15; 5:25; 6:19; 7:6; 7:9; 7:16-20; 8:11; 9:16; 12:29; 15:14; 15:26; 24:28.

¹⁶² A strong representative of this view is the 1966 work of R. W. Funk, Language, especially the chapter titled “the parable as metaphor.”

¹⁶³ J. Lambrecht, Treasure, 100. For C. Münch, “wenn Jesus im Aorist eine Geschichte erzählt, ist ein Gleichnis zu erwarten.” C. Münch, Gleichnisse, 166.

Jesus' conflict with the Jewish leaders and his acceptance of the sinners. This is shown by the contrast between the official sinners and the chief priests and elders in our parable and also the close correspondence between our pericope and the Lukan accounts of 7:29ff and 15:11-32. So we are dealing with a parable which Mt has so modified and given a peculiar allegorical bent that it is no longer possible to recover the exact words of the parable.¹⁶⁴

Since the redaction criticism of this chapter has revealed that what we are dealing with is a concise parabolic narrative that employs antithetical parallelism, my task, in the next chapter then, is to carefully analyze the parable so as to see how typical or how unusual it is for its form.¹⁶⁵ If it omits or adds something new, or if in a certain stage it says something different from what one would expect, then we should ask why Mt has not followed the typical pattern and what he is emphasizing thereby. I will thus proceed to investigate the metaphors which Mt employed in the parable from their Jewish and Hellenistic backgrounds. This will lead to Mt's understanding of the parable.

¹⁶⁴ For the impossibility of seeing any trace of historicity in our parable see F. W. Beare, *Matthew*, 422. Blomberg seems to be on the edge of denying the authenticity of the parable, or at least its true to life character when he argues that the odds of two sons both deciding at the same time to do exactly the opposite of what they promised their father are rather small. Though he concedes that the picture is conceivable, he sees it as not typical. He uses this observation to posit the allegorical nature of the parable. See his *Interpreting the Parables*, 188. But the story contrasting two brothers could have its basis in the book of Genesis, e.g., 4:1-12; 21:3-10; 25:22-34; 27:1-41; 37:2-28.

¹⁶⁵ Cp. N. A. Dahl, "Gleichnis und Parabel," 1618. This situation is more appreciated when one compares the synoptic parables with those of the Gospel of Thomas which are delivered without a mention of their contexts.

CHAPTER THREE (Mt 21:28-32)
THE REAL WORLD AND MT'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE PARABLE

Having surveyed the parable of the Two Sons as to its linguistic properties and having established the possible tradition at the background of the Matthean parable, it is now time to look at the parable with regard to its function in the ears of its first hearers, that is, the Jewish interlocutors of Jesus and in the Matthean gospel. It is an endeavour to situate the parable in its cultural and literary context.¹ This venture is important given that language is not something that an individual invents spontaneously in every new situation. Since it has been shown that the form and content of the preaching of the early Christians were shaped by the sociological and religious demands of the Hellenistic world,² I will demonstrate, in this chapter, how far the conventional metaphors present in the parable of the Two Sons also show Jesus' adaptation of the forms of speech and metaphors available to him in his parables. The establishment of the metaphors at the background of the parable will serve greatly in the overall understanding of the parable. This would, in turn, lead to the determination of the possible specific life situation in which the parable is delivered, the so-called *Sitz-im-Leben*.³ I will also aim to determine the possible paraenetic needs that may have moved Mt's hands in giving the parable its present shape.

As already indicated in the previous chapter, the story of the Two Sons is told as a singular case and narrated in the past tense. That means that what we have before us is a parable. More specifically, it is a juridical parable as defined in the previous chapter. The aim of this kind of parable is to bring the hearer to a self-judgment. This is shown by the fact that the listeners replied to the question posed in 21:31.

Though the parable is told as a singular case, it makes use of traditional Jewish metaphors like "father", "son", "work", and "vineyard", with a possible play on parental honour at the background. Klauck is representative of those who believe that metaphors are not used in isolation; rather they are always part of the contemporary *Bildfelder*. His remarks are as follows: "in der biblischen Sprache haben wir es vorzugsweise mit festen, durch lange religiöse Tradition geprägten Metaphern zu tun. Die Annahme eines Bildfeldes kann die Konsistenz dieser Metaphern erklären."⁴

¹ Vat 11 gives impetus to this endeavour thus: "To search out the intention of the sacred writers, attention should be given, among other things, to "literary forms." For the correct understanding of what the sacred author wanted to assert, due attention must be paid to the customary and characteristic styles of feeling, speaking and narrating which prevailed at the time of the sacred writer, and to the patterns men normally employed at that period in their everyday dealings with one another." Vatican 11 (*Dei Verbum*).

² For instance, B. T. D. Smith, *Parables*, 58 has shown how the homiletic application of parables can affect their transmission.

³ For the task of form criticism see David R. Catchpole, "Source," 168. For R. Bultmann the aim of form criticism is to reach the original form of a piece of narrative, a dominical logion, or a parable, and thereby to distinguish secondary embellishments from it. *Geschichte*, 7.

⁴ H-J. Klauck, *Allegorie*, 143. It is then right to agree with C. Hezser in this comment, "der Autor eines Textes wird nicht mehr als genialer Neuschöpfer von etwas bisher nicht Dagewesenem gesehen, sondern seine Kreativität besteht in der Art und Weise, in der er vorgegebenes Material neu verbindet und aktualisiert." *Lohnmetaphorik*, 220.

With no consideration of the importance of these *Bildfelder*, our parable could be reduced to a description of father-children relationship in a peasant Jewish family.⁵ Before this reduction could be accepted, however, I find it proper to undertake a journey into the Jewish-Hellenistic background of the parable by investigating the meanings the above metaphors had in that milieu before and during the time of Jesus. These metaphors would be studied with the assumption that their meanings were somehow assimilated by the Matthean Jesus. Keener has already pointed out that the basic moral of this story will not be foreign to Palestinian Judaism.⁶ This does not imply ascribing meanings to the individual metaphors but seeing how their coming together could affect the understanding of our parable.

3.1 THE FATHER-CHILD METAPHOR VS. HONOUR DUE TO PARENTS

The parable begins with an indirect description of the main figure of the story as *πατήρ* (21:28), who is later directly referred to by the second son as *κύριος*, with the son's answer *ἐγώ, κύριε* (21:30). Only in one place is the word *κύριος* used in the bible to address a father-in-law.⁷ It is never used by a child for his own father in a secular sense. Rather, the word is used in the OT for God and in the NT as description of God or Jesus.⁸ This already shows the allegorical bent of the parable. The concept of God as father plays a very important role in Mt's Gospel. Again, the question about *δέλημα τοῦ πατρός* in v.31a assures the qualification of the man in our first parable as "father." As already mentioned, the obligations children owe to their parents and the rights of parents over their children in a peasant Jewish family seem to be at play in the parable that tells of a father and his two sons.⁹ The importance of this honour due to parents (especially the father) is a very evident fact in Jewish and Hellenistic texts.¹⁰ Typical examples include Ex 20:12; Deut 5:16 which state unequivocally

⁵ For B. B. Scott, "in the ancient Mediterranean world everyone had a social map that defined the individual's place in the world. At the centre of this map was the family, especially the father; then came the village; finally came the city and beyond, to the ends of the world. This social map furnishes a metaphorical system for the kingdom of God." *Parables*, 79. This corresponds to C. H. Dodd's conclusion that the parables are a reliable index to peasant life in the ancient world. See his *Parables*, 10.

⁶ C. S. Keener, *Matthew*, 507. Cf. Gen 4:1-12; 21:3-10; 25:22-34; 27:1-41; 37:2-28.

⁷ Gen 31:35.

⁸ The numerous OT texts that refer to God as father include Deut 14:1f; 32:6; Jer 31:9; Ex 4:22; Hos 11:1; Sir 23:1.4; Tob 13:4; Ps 103:13; Prov 3:11-12; Wis 14:3, etc. Some of these texts combine the motif of God as the one who has elected Israel as his people and the one who protects her with the connected motif of obedience to him.

⁹ There seem to be three commandments in the Torah describing the obligations parents owe to their children, namely, to redeem the son (Ex 22:29), circumcise him (Lev 12:1-8), and teach him the commandments (Deut 4:9; 6:7; 31:12-13). While the first of these pertains to the first born son only, the rest pertain to all the male children. However, the story of Susanna (cf. Dan 13:3) suggests that the female children were also brought up in the law.

¹⁰ O. L. Yarbrough thinks that the Hellenistic texts do not betray knowledge of Hebrew texts neither did the Hebrew texts borrow from the pagan texts: "neither is dependent on the other. They were both concerned with creating an 'ideal' legal system, but in this particular case we probably have to do with nothing more than what must be an almost universal component of morality and culture". See his

“honour your father and your mother.”¹¹ This is the only commandment that carries a blessing to it, namely, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you (Ex 20:12). This honour appropriate to the father could be a development of the OT’s understanding of the relationship between the concepts father and God. Some of the OT passages that establish this connection include Deut 14:1-2; Ex 4:22; Hos 11:1; Jer 31:18-20. These and many other passages are at the heart of the father-child relationship between God and Israel.¹² This connection seems to be found in the OT’s understanding of the sociological importance of the father as an unreservedly acknowledged and dependable authority and, from the father’s standpoint, in his inner attitude to his household.¹³ Just like in the parable of the Two Sons (cf. 21:30c.31a), one sees a strong connection between “πάτερ” and “κύριος” in these words of Sirach: “κύριε, πάτερ και δέσποτα ζωῆς μου” (Sir 23:1). This connection has already been shown in the previous chapter. In the same light, the subservient words of King Ahas to Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kgs 16:7) reads “I am your servant and son” as if the two terms are the same.¹⁴ This could be evidence of the overwhelming authority of the father.

Judging from the evidence of the OT, honouring the father (and mother) brings blessings (cf. Sir 3:1-16) while failure to obey parents could incur the death penalty as a legal implication. This death comes in the form of stoning (cf. Deut 21:18-21). It is significant that the child involved in this case is not allowed to make any formal defense. Although this death sentence has been rendered almost non-existent by the second Temple period, yet the paternal power held sway till the time of Jesus. This fact would be shown later.

For most Jewish people in the second Temple period, the family formed the central social institution in their lives.¹⁵ In this family (בֵּית־אָב), there is an extended network of relationship,¹⁶ in which “authority over family affairs was vested in the father or eldest son.”¹⁷ This is the so-called *patria potestas* of the *paterfamilias*. In

Jewish Family, 56. He references Plato (Laws 627A) who claims that the parents’ rule over their children is “universally just.”

¹¹ Also Sir 3:2 declares “the Lord honoured the father above the children, and he confirmed the right of the mother over the sons.” The consequence is that whoever honours his father and mother atones for his sin.

¹² There are, however, some OT texts that seem reticent in using the concept of father as an attribute to Yahweh. Only in the last days, says Hos 1:10, shall it be said unto you that you are the sons of the living God. But this does not deny the high position of the father and his prominent role in biblical and non-biblical sources. Nonetheless, father as metaphor for God in this parable is still far-fetched.

¹³ G. Schenk, Art. “πατήρ” ThWNT IV.946-1024 has adequately surveyed this point.

¹⁴ See also Mal 1:6; Tob 13:4; 3 Macc 5:7. Josephus also uses *πατήρ και δέσποτης* for God in Ant. 5:93.

¹⁵ See D. W. Chapman, “Marriage,” 183-239. Here, 183.

¹⁶ Cf. G. Schenk, Art. “πατήρ” ThWNT IV.946-1024. The importance of the patriarchal system in ancient Israel could be gleaned from the search for the person responsible for the defeat of Israel at Ai where the culprit was sorted out according to family lineage. Cf. Jos 7:16-18. We also see this in the genealogy of Jesus (Mt 1:1-16). The *בֵּית־אָב* seems to be the most important small unit in the nation of Israel and for the individual Israelite it was the essential locus of personal security within the national covenant relationship with Yahweh.

¹⁷ D. W. Chapman, “Marriage,” 231; R. Saller, & B. Shaw, “Tombstones,” 124. R. Saller, “Familia,” 336-55.

this connection Judith Hallet has itemised the numerous Latin words which derive from *pater*, like *patronus*, *patricii*, *partial*, and has remarked that no similarity for such linguistic constructions which associate the word *pater* with power, ownership, and achievement, may be adduced among Latin words built from *mater*.¹⁸ This paternal power remained remarkably strong until late antiquity. The *patria potestas* was so strong that a person with a living father can neither marry nor divorce without the father's consent.¹⁹ The implication is that children were expected to obey their parents.²⁰ The duties of the children also include caring for their parents. This fact is underlined in Epictetus (ca. A. D. 55-135)²¹ who writes that "... in the case of man, it is not his material substance that we should honour, his bits of flesh, but the principal things [*τὰ προηγούμενα*]. What are these? The duties of citizenship, marriage, begetting children, reverence to God, care of parents [*ἐπιμελεῖσθαι*]..." The importance of the father-figure was so strong that St. Paul used it to claim his authority over the Corinthian Church (cf. I Cor 4:14-21).

On the other hand, the *pater familias* was not free to act arbitrarily. His actions were not only controlled by the Roman censor,²² an intra family consilium can also gather to moderate the exercise of his authority.²³ In matters of punishment, Philo has urged that the parents should first make verbal threats to the children, beat them and then have them imprisoned. Only then can they ask for their execution.²⁴ Despite the fact that the Roman censor intervened if a father mistreats his household members, the above mentioned death sentence by Philo is repeated by Josephus in a long thesis whose conclusion involves death sentence for the erring child.²⁵ It must, however, be mentioned that what Josephus represents here is the ancient laws of the Jews rather than the actual practice at the time of his writing. Hence, tenderness and love seem to counter-balance the power of the *pater familias*. This seems to be the basis of Seneca's contention that the worst sort of fathers is the one "who controls his children by constant whipping even for the most trivial of things."²⁶

Fragments from Qumran confirm the reality of honouring parents in Palestine. In 4Q416, frag.2, col.iii, lines 10b-19a we read: Give honour to those who glorify you...Honour your father in your poverty, 16 And your mother in your step. For like God is to a human being so is his own father, and like masters are to a man, so is his mother, for 17 they are the oven of your origin. And since he has given them dominion over you and formed (?) the spirit, thus serve them. And since 18 he had opened your ears to (?) the mystery of existence, honour them for your own glory, and [...] honour their

¹⁸ J. P. Hallett, *Fathers*, 28.

¹⁹ Cf. E. M. Lassen, "Father Image," 127-36.

²⁰ The command to listen to a father's precept is well expressed in Prov 4:1-4. The passage of 4 Macc 18:10-19 seems to provide insight to the content of a father's teaching to his children. Cf. also Prov 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:17 and Sir 30:1-13.

²¹ Quoted in P. Balla, *Child-Parent Relationship*, 61.

²² G. Pieri, *L'Histoire*, 102ff and 113ff.

²³ Cf. W. Kunkel, "Das Konsilium." The quotation is from E. M. Lassen, "Father Image," 129.

²⁴ *Spec. Laws*, 2.232.

²⁵ Josephus, *Ant.* 4:260-65.

²⁶ Seneca *On Mercy* 1.16.3.

presence, 19 for the sake of your life and the length of your days.²⁷ This veneration urged in these verses bears a clear relation to the use of the term “κύριε” for the father by the second son in our parable.²⁸

On the other hand, there is evidence of situations where children seem to be at variance with their father. This is shown in this question of a father to an oracle attributed to the first century A. D.: “O Lord Sarapis Helios, beneficent one. (Say) whether it is fitting that Phantias my son and his wife should not agree now with his father, but oppose him and not make a contract. Tell me this truly. Goodbye.”²⁹ Although the reason for this supplication to the gods is not clear, the fact that the father is at a conflict with his son is evident. This sort of conflict is not foreign to the message and person of Jesus. In fact it seems to be at the centre of his proclamation of the kingdom.³⁰ Hence leaving the family becomes a characteristic of those ready to follow his radical way of life. Theißen has used the word “*Wandercharismatiker*” to describe the tension between following Jesus and leaving behind the family.³¹ And since Jesus gives a divine meaning to the teachings of the Torah, we might not then be surprised to find him alluding, in this Matthean parable of the Two Sons, to the honour due to the father which the OT already emphasized.³²

This obedience definitely includes helping the father in the sustenance of the subsistent family.³³ As Josephus writes about his people: “As for ourselves, therefore, we neither inhabit a maritime country, nor do we delight in merchandise, nor in such a mixture with other men as arises from it; but the cities we dwell in are remote from the sea, and having a fruitful country for our habitation, we take pains in cultivating that only. Our principal care of all is this, to educate our children well....”³⁴ Since the Jewish family was a household-based economy (*οικονομία*-household management), it has been suggested that the father of our parable summoned the sons to work on a family farm.³⁵ The high position of the father relative to his children could thus offer useful hints to the command to the children:

²⁷ See F. G. Martinez/E. J. C. Tigchelaar (ed. and trans.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. Vol. 2. 4Q274-11Q31, 851-53. See also P. Balla, *Child-Parent Relationship*, 89. But “father” is also an honorary title for Israel’s teachers (cf. 2 Macc 14:37. See also Jos. Ant. 17:45); for priests (cf. Jdgs 17:10; 18:19); and also for the prophets (cf. 2 Kgs 6:21; 13:14).

²⁸ If the title ‘lord’ was intended as an opposition to the filial address of the father (child instead of son), then the connection between this parable and that of Lk 15:11ff is strengthened, where the prodigal son declared his readiness to be his father’s slave.

²⁹ *Select Papyri*, I.347. The citation is taken from P. Balla, *Child-Parent Relationship*, 58.

³⁰ Cf. Mk 1:16-20//Mt 4:18-22; Mk 3:31-35//Mt 12:46-50; Mk 10:28-31//Mt 19:27-30, etc.

³¹ G. Theißen, “Wir haben alles verlassen,” 161-96.

³² See Mt 15:4-7 and especially the divine punishment of *κακολογεῖν* against parents. See also Mt 17:14-21. But the Q logion of Mt 10:34-36//Lk 12:49-53 seems to suggest that “affiliation to the Jesus movement meant, therefore, a radical re-ordering of the most basic relationships within a kingship society.” Cf. S. Freyne, *Galilee and Gospel*, 272.

³³ This parable can then be said to provide a reliable index to peasant life in ancient Palestine. See C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 10.

³⁴ Josephus, *Apn* 1:60. Cf. also his *Jewish Wars*, 3:42-44. Here, the livelihood of the people is shown to depend purely on agrarian activities.

³⁵ Cf. S. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great*, 159f; R. Horsley and J. Hanson, *Bandits*, 59; R. A. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People*, 203f.

ὑπάγε ... ἐργάζου ἐν τῷ ἀμπελῶνι. This would in turn throw more light on the importance a negative response to this command would have.

3.2 THE COMMAND ὑπάγε ... ἐργάζου ἐν τῷ ἀμπελῶνι

Before I discuss the importance of this command, perhaps it would be useful to look into the Jewish concepts of vineyard and work, concepts that could give a better understanding to the parable. The vineyard provides a strong Galilean setting for work in Mt's Gospel as shown by the parables of Mt 20:1 and Mt 21:33. In the Scriptures, vineyard and work tend to bear an eschatological tenor and without exception, metaphorical references to God's vineyard in the LXX refer to his people Israel.³⁶ Although the metaphorical meaning of vineyard seems to be more accentuated in the second parable of the trilogy, I will consider the importance of the vineyard in the everyday life of the Jews of the second Temple period so as to see what lies at the back of the command to work in the vineyard.

3.2.1 THE VINEYARD

The vine, the fig tree and the olive tree count as the most important fruit plants in Palestine both in the OT, the NT and in the intertestamental books.³⁷ Apart from our parable, the NT uses the vineyard/vine metaphor in many places.³⁸ The vineyard was in antiquity one of the most cost-intensive undertakings and ranks as the best in terms of farms to be purchased, especially "if it produces bountifully wine of great quality."³⁹ The volume of work to be done in a vineyard depends on the season of the year. For instance work in the vineyard is always enormous during the late summer and winter seasons. Some surveys give the impression that small farms with 7 iugera or less (about 1.75 hectares) were common in the Early Republic.⁴⁰ Some Egyptian papyri provide the appropriate equipments necessary for work in a vineyard. An instance is an elaborate depiction of what is needed in a vineyard of 100 iugera or 25 hectares of land. This includes: an overseer, a housekeeper, 10 labourers, 1 teamster, 1 muleteer, 1 willow-worker, 1 swineherd — a total of 16 persons; 2 oxen, 2 draft donkeys, 1 for the mill; 3 complete presses, vats for holding five vintages of 800 cullei, 20 jars for holding grape pulp, 20 for grain, and the necessary covers and tops, etc.⁴¹

Allowing for some statistical variations between Egypt and Palestine as well as epochal differences between the above-cited papyri and Mt's gospel, the simple fact that the above requirements would be hard for a peasant farmer to meet in the first century BC makes the parable of the Two Sons adequate for a peasant family since

³⁶ Cf. Isa 3:14; 5:1-7; 27:2; Jer 12:10. For vineyard as 'stock symbol' for Israel, see for instance C. L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 189.

³⁷ See C. H. Hunzinger, Art *συνή κτλ*, ThWNT VII.751ff.

³⁸ Cf. Mt 7:16//Lk 6:44; Mt 20:1-16; Mk 2:22; Mk 12:1-12//Mt 21:33-46//Lk 20:9-19; Lk 13:6, etc.

³⁹ Cato De Agri, 1:7.

⁴⁰ Pliny quotes Manius Curius Dentatus, (circa 309 BCE), who said that the man must be looked upon as a dangerous citizen, for whom 7 iugera is not enough (NH.18.4).

⁴¹ See Cato De Agri, 11:27. For the analysis of Cato's inventory see A. E. Astin, *Cato the Censor*, 240-66.

the father expects his own sons to work in this farm.⁴² This is in distinction to the parable of 20:1-11 where the *οἰκοδεσπότης* went out in search of hired labourers for his vineyard. The picture thus created in our present parable is that of a father calling his sons to work for the subsistence of the family.

3.2.2 THE CONCEPT OF WORK

Although the concept of work can be viewed as positive in our parable, there are, however, some passages of the Scriptures that tend to suggest that human work has acquired a negative connotation. This could be because of the curse of Gen 3:17.⁴³ This passage in the LXX reads *ἐπικατάρατος ἡ γῆ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις σου*, a line which can be interpreted to indicate that work is a punishment for sin. Other passages that support this notion include Job 11:4 and Job 21:16 where the LXX translates the MT *תּוֹרָה* (“teaching”) and *נַסִּיחַ* (“counsel”) respectively with *ἔργον*. And in Job 4:17, it is the LXX which introduces the thought of *ἔργον*,⁴⁴ questioning if it could be pure in the sight of God.

But this negative view of human work cannot be said of the majority of OT texts, since man is also to become the lord of creation through his work. It seems that work, rather than being sinful, is the only remedy for the sin of disobedience.⁴⁵ Again, the concept of reward and punishment presupposes that human work is performed under divine commission. We read, for instance, from Gen 2:5 *ἐργάζεσθαι τὴν γῆν: מַעֲרַבְתָּ תְּבַעַר*. It can, then, be concluded that “der Mensch ist mit seiner Arbeit in das Gesamtwerk der Schöpfung als in stetig sich vollziehendes hineingestellt und somit Gottes Gehilfe...⁴⁶ The above thesis is supported by the fact that God takes interest in human work and always rewards it. The OT affirms of God: he knows *πάντα τὰ ἔργα* (Ps 32:15), and *αὐτὸς ἐπιγνώσεται πᾶν ἔργον ἀνθρώπου* (Sir 15:19); therefore, *τοῖς σοῖς ἔργοις* will not go unrewarded (Jer 31:16) and *ἐν συντελείᾳ ἀνθρώπου ἀποκάλυψις ἔργων αὐτοῦ* (Sir 11:27).⁴⁷ When seen in this light, the injunction *ὑπάγε ... ἐργάζου ἐν τῷ ἀμπελῶνι* takes on an ultimately divine and positive dimension. Since our parable is directed against the religious leaders and touches

⁴² See W. Carter, “Parables,” 156. For the connection between household and wealth, see W. Carter, *Households and Discipleship*, 19-21, 127-47.

⁴³ Cf. also Ps 90:10; Qoh. 2:11-13; Lk 10:38-42; Mt 6:19-34. It should however be noted that the Sabbath Laws of the Decalogue (Ex 20:8, cf. Mt 6:33) is not a negative appreciation of work but only designed to make the people available for God.

⁴⁴ Cf. also Prov 13:19; Jer 44:9; Mt 7:23; Lk 13:27. But the vanity of human work receives more accent in the Pauline letters as we shall see later.

⁴⁵ Cf. also the injunctions in Eph 6:5; Col 3:22-24; Tit 2:9-10; 1 Tim 6:1-2, where work means serving the Lord.

⁴⁶ K. Schuster, “Arbeit” RGG³ 1.540.

⁴⁷ But the above thesis is jeopardized if one takes the riddle of Qoh. 8:14 seriously: “there be just men unto whom it happens according to the work of the wicked; again there be wicked men, unto whom it happens according to the works of the righteous. Also a positive picture of “work” seems to be present among the Greeks, where it seems to have been sanctified either through philosophy or through religion. See Th. Zielinski, *Religion*, 50ff. In what seems to be a precursor to the injunction of Mt 7:21, Aristotle writes that the knowledge of the truth can only be gained through ones works. *Nic Ethics*, 1179a 19-21. See Xenophon *Ag* 1.6. Cf. Also Xenophon, *History Z* 1 VII 1:10 *ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ἔξεστι γιγνώσκειν*.

deeply on the problem of work, the injunction in the parable to work in the vineyard must be seen from an eschatological perspective. It seems to refer to the command to do something in the vineyard of God. Here it is couched as a command ὕπαγε ... ἐργάζου ἐν τῷ ἀμπελῶνι. This connection between ποιεῖν and ἔργον is brought to the fore in the question of Jesus ‘τίς ἐκ τῶν δύο ἐποίησεν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς.’ What then does it mean to do the will of the father?

3.3 THE EXPRESSION “Τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς”

Already, the stress of our parable is shifting from a concentration on a Jewish father and his two sons to a focus on God and his dealings with his people. Perhaps, in no other place is this shift more completely seen than with the transition from parable to application in 21:31a. The application contains the expression “τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς.” If this supposition is correct, the OT can again fashion us with signal posts to the meaning of this construction.

The LXX employs the word ‘θέλημα’ to translate several Heb. words רצון and צו with a few other special cases.⁴⁸ For instance, the LXX translates the Heb רצון with θέλήματα (in Ps 110:2 and Jer 9:23,⁴⁹ etc) and צו also with θέλημα (Est 1:8; Dan 8:4; etc).⁵⁰ The word θέλημα in the LXX sometimes signifies the element of the will of men (cf. 2 Chr 9:12; Jer 23:17). But especially it refers to the divine will (cf. Ps 39:9; Sir 43: 16; 1 Esdras 9:9; etc). As applied to God, the several nuances could suggest that God’s will has several meanings. Apart from representing God’s creative designs for the universe and his salvific plan for mankind, it does concretely express the commandments to be obeyed.⁵¹ But it has been suggested that the translation of צו with θέλημα carries with it the sense of pleasing and humble obedient attitude of those subjecting themselves to a higher authority.⁵² It could be interesting to note that the doing of this will of God is not restricted to the Israelites since the Bible names king Cyrus as having done the will of God by rebuilding the Temple and the city of Jerusalem (cf. Isa 44:28; 48:14).⁵³ Again the psalmist understands that the doing of the will of God, which is not ethnically restricted, is also better than burnt offering (cf. Ps 39). The doing of God’s will also carries with it a reward since there is a tree of life for those who do his will in 4 Macc 18:16.⁵⁴ If

⁴⁸ Cf. M. Palachuvattil, Will of the Father, 47 and A. L. Pego, Evolution del Significado, 323f, 343f.

⁴⁹ This passage from Jeremiah challenges the nations that claim special relationship with God because of the practice of circumcision. The symbolism of the prophet’s calling these nations uncircumcised despite their claim of privileged status is also at the heart of our trilogy. On circumcision see E. Schürer, Geschichte, 1.675-76 and J. M. Sasson, “Circumcision,” 473-76.

⁵⁰ The evidence, however seems to suggest that the Pentateuch’s use of צו is translated by the LXX with δεκτός (cf. Lev 23:11; Deut 33:16).

⁵¹ Cf. R. E. Brown, The Pater Noster, 236 n. 73.

⁵² Cf. M. Palachuvattil, Will of the Father, 51.

⁵³ It must also be added that the task given to Cyrus is for the sake of Israel, not against her. See J. D. Watts, Isaiah, 700. Here, the fall of Babylon and the call of Cyrus prepare for the restoration of Yahweh’s people.

⁵⁴ This passage, quoting Prov 3:18 compares one who does the will of God to a tree of life.

this passage has any reference to Gen 3:22, then it would be correct to suggest that the doing of God's will is the only assurance of eternal life in the OT.⁵⁵

Also Jewish comparative texts to the parable of the Two Sons are not lacking. For instance in the writing of Philo we read: "If...you keep the divine commandments ...not merely to hear them but to carry them out by your life and conduct, the first boon you will have is victory over your enemies...For if our words correspond with our thoughts and intentions and our actions with our words...happiness prevails...Now while the commandments of the laws are only on our lips our acceptance of them is little or none, but when we add thereto deeds...shown in the whole conduct of our lives, the commandments will be as it were brought up out of the deep darkness into the light..."⁵⁶ Here Philo emphasizes doing as opposed to words. When compared to our parable, this could be an indirect indictment on both sons, whose words did but correspond with their actions. However, there is a tinge of approval of (good) action against mere words even by Philo.

Though the above saying seems to approximate the central theme of the parable of the Two Sons, it does not compare with the kind of question posited by Jesus: 'τις ἐκ τῶν δύο ἐποίησεν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς.' This question is surely different from 'which of the two sons is the father angrier with.' From the evidence above, it can be argued that the parable poses a genuine dilemma for a normal Galilean family. Funk has argued that in a society that makes honour and shame a fundamental choice, there is no right answer to the question since both sons bring shame on their father.⁵⁷ If the parable addresses honour/shame categories, then, when the hearer of the parable is asked to choose which of the two sons has done the will of the father, a dilemma arises. This line of thought was followed by Scott who argues that both sons have insulted the father, one by saying no, the other by saying yes but doing nothing. Scott argues that one of the sons "comes to the family's aid by going into the vineyard and upholding family solidarity, while the other maintains the family's good name by appearing on the surface to be a good son." The question then is whether the father would choose to be publicly honoured and privately shamed, or publicly shamed and privately honoured? His conclusion is that in the first century C.E. that is not much of a choice. The real question is with which one he would be angrier. But in being forced to choose, the hearer "must choose between the apparent and the real, between one who appears to be inside the family and one who appears to be outside."⁵⁸ This coheres well with the genre of NT parables since posing difficult social questions seems entirely consonant with Jesus' other parables.⁵⁹

But this conclusion has been questioned on the grounds that the parable does not address honour/shame categories.⁶⁰ However, when viewed from its first century

⁵⁵ Within the Enochic corpus, 1 Enoch 25:4-5 and 3 Enoch 23:18 refer to the eating from the tree of life as part of the eschatological reward for righteousness.

⁵⁶ Philo, Praem. 79-84. Cp. Josephus, Ant. 20:44.

⁵⁷ R. W. Funk, Five Gospels, 232.

⁵⁸ B. B. Scott, Parables, 84.

⁵⁹ See R. W. Funk, Five Gospels, 232.

⁶⁰ See for instance P. Foster, "A Tale of Two Sons," 30f.

Palestinian background, it is apparent that the hearer cannot make any real choice.⁶¹ This could explain why the textual traditions have different answers since there is no obvious logic to making this choice. This confirms the already held position that posing difficult social questions is a constant characteristic of Jesus' parables.

Ironically, by the response “ὁ πρῶτος” (21:31b), the chief priests and elders would implicitly affirm that the worthy person is the one who repented, and did the will of the father, as John urged people to do. In brief, they would affirm the validity of John's activities and by extension, the divine authority of Jesus, which is at the heart of the Temple controversy in which our parable is located. Therefore, the point the parable tries to make in the answer of the religious leaders and in the application of the parable by opposing the first son (21:29) to the chief priests and elders (21:32b) is that the latter did not even realise that they had said ‘no’ to God. They did not realise that when the tax collectors and prostitutes believed, it was a call to repentance, which God addressed to them.⁶² Again, this interpretation is not crystal clear from the parable.

It appears that the long essay has not yielded much to the understanding of the intention of the parable. This is surely because of the nature of metaphors. Heininger's conclusion is that “eine Metapher besteht demnach aus zwei Komponenten, die man sich am besten als semantische Konzepte vorzustellen hat, zwischen denen eine Spannung besteht. Diese Spannung stellt den Hörer bzw. Leser vor Interpretationsprobleme.”⁶³ This *Interpretationsproblem* must have been realized by Mt, hence the addition of the application. The conclusion, then, is that Mt intends the application of the parable to be an aid or vehicle to its interpretation. I will return to this later.

3.4 THE SOCIAL POSITION OF οἱ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρνοι

Another prominent concept to the understanding of our first parable is the combination οἱ τελῶναι⁶⁴ καὶ αἱ πόρνοι as those who precede the Jewish leaders into the kingdom of God. This combination, only found here in the NT, assumes the fact that these two groups belong together and represent the section of the Palestinian Jewish society “subject to de facto and de jure ostracism.”⁶⁵ It has been suggested that the τελῶναι and πόρνοι may be linked probably because both were regarded as

⁶¹ This parable has been studied against its Semitic and Rabbinic backdrop by W. E. Langley, “Two Sons,” 228-43. He sees a genuine dilemma in the question of Jesus and compares it with many rabbinic parables and concludes that Jesus employed the argumentative principle of *qal wahomer* which is listed first in the famous seven hermeneutical rules of Hillel. This form of argument was also employed in Mt 12:41f//Lk 11:31f; Mt 12:5-6.

⁶² See D. Patte, Matthew, 297.

⁶³ B. Heininger, *Metaphorik*, 17. See also E. F. Kittay, *Metaphor*, especially chapter two, the identification of metaphor.

⁶⁴ According to O. Michael. “τελώνης,” ThWNT VIII.89, the substantive *τελώνης* was used for the first time by Aristoph and is composed of the words *τέλος* (customs) and *ώνεσμαι* (I buy). A *τελώνης* means, therefore, a person responsible for the buying and selling of the customs of the state.

⁶⁵ J. Gibson, “Hoi Telonai Kai Hai Pornai,” 429. For the identification of the tax collectors and sinners see J. R. Donahue, “Tax Collectors and Sinners,” 39-61.

collaborators with the occupying Roman forces. The tax-collectors worked for the Romans while the prostitutes worked near Roman military camps.⁶⁶ Though the Jewish Scriptures forbid the practice of prostitution,⁶⁷ it reports that it occurred.⁶⁸ In the same way Jewish teachers resented prostitution as immoral,⁶⁹ and as a primarily Gentile practice.⁷⁰ The tax-collectors were infamous for their abuses of the system and were generally denied Jewish civil rights.⁷¹

The challenge of the chief priests and Pharisees against Jesus and Jesus' response by positing the notorious group over and against them becomes more acute the more the association of this group with the occupying Roman forces is well recognized. This is what Josephus clearly established in his explanation of the frenzy that engulfed Caesarea in A. D. 44 at the death of Herod Agrippa I. He writes: "when it was known that Agrippa had died, the inhabitants of Caesarea and of Sebaste forgot the kindness he had bestowed on them...and so many of them as were soldiers, which were a great number, went to his house and hastily carried off the statues of the king's daughters, and all at once carried them into the brothel houses, and when they had set them on the tops of these houses, they abused them to the utmost of their power..."⁷²

Apart from this report J. Gibson makes an elaborate x-ray of Talmudic evidence that explicitly joins the Romans and prostitutes,⁷³ concluding that "the prostitutes' association with the tax collector in the common mind of the day was based not so much on the fact that both were morally and ritually suspect, as it was on the grounds that they were regarded as the 'quislings' of their time."⁷⁴ If this conclusion is correct, the counter-challenge of Jesus then takes both a moral and political undertone. But I will return to this point in dealing with Mt's understanding of the tax-collectors and prostitutes.

3.5 THE MATTHEAN ALLEGORY OF A FATHER AND HIS TWO SONS

As seen in the previous chapter, the lack of coherence between the parable (vv.28.30) and the question of authority that led to it (vv.23-27) is an indication that the original parable was later added to its present context by Mt.⁷⁵ But from v.32 Mt

⁶⁶ J. Gibson, "Hoi telonai kai hai Pornai," 430f; See also K. E. Corley, "Women around Jesus?" 487-521.

⁶⁷ Deut 23:17.

⁶⁸ E.g., Gen 38:15-16.

⁶⁹ Sir 9:6; Josephus Ant. 4:206.

⁷⁰ E.g., 2 Macc 6:4. Davies and Allison claim that *τελωναι* are not tax collectors, that is, the state officials who collected poll and land taxes but rather either Hellenistic tax farmers or the despised Jewish tax farmers and their agents who, having purchased the toll collecting concessions, collected indirect taxes for the Romans. W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.558.

⁷¹ Cf. m. Sanh.3.3; b.B. Qam. 94b; b. Sanh. 25b.

⁷² Josephus, Ant. 19:356.

⁷³ He quotes TB. Shab. 33b and TB. Av. Zar. 18a. These texts not only see the prostitutes as consorts of the occupying Roman forces but bear witness to the fact that anyone who even played the prostitute in jest was seen as belonging in a Roman brothel.

⁷⁴ J. Gibson, "Hoi telonai kai hai Pornai," 433.

⁷⁵ Cf. U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.211-13.

tries to correct this tension. He does it with the use of some of his special expressions. These expressions must be seen as Mt's understanding of the parable. They also give the parable its salvation-historic and paraenetic dimensions.⁷⁶

3.5.1 THE EXPRESSION ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης

Perhaps one of the most debated expressions in our parable is the meaning of 'the way of righteousness.' Its importance reserves for it a pride of place in the understanding of this parable. With this expression, the Matthean Jesus answers the question he posed to the Jewish leaders in v.25 with the indication that John came ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης. I will thus see this verse as the *crux interpretum* of the parable. This is based on the high premium placed on δικαιοσύνη in the OT and in Mt's gospel.

On the basis of the OT and a number of Jewish-Palestinian writings, the way of righteousness seems to mean the ways which correspond to right conduct in the sight of God.⁷⁷ Although the singular use of ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης is not evident in the Scriptures, it has a wide range of similarities in the OT where the plural form is common.⁷⁸ But I feel we must turn to Mt to get a clear view of the meaning of δικαιοσύνη and by extension "ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης" since there is no need to suggest that the expression has a different meaning in 21:32 as in other Matthean passages.

As shown in the previous chapter, the noun δικαιοσύνη occurs seven times in Mt (3:15; 5:6.10.20; 6:1.33; 21:32).⁷⁹ In all these places, the expression seems to represent the demand of God upon man rather than God's gift to man.⁸⁰ Apart from the argument from the continuity of meaning, the two passages Mt 21:32 and Lk 7:30 have already been shown to parallel. In Lk 7:30, the Pharisees and the lawyers reject the purpose of God (τὴν βουλήν τοῦ Θεοῦ) for them. The implication is that 'the way of righteousness' is parallel to 'the will of God.' Again since Mt 21:31 uses 'the will of the father,' the concept of the will of God may also govern v.32.⁸¹ The will of the father in v.31 is surely a demand and in no way a gift. When John ἤλθεν ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης (21:32), he demanded righteousness of life in accordance with the will of God.⁸² Hence, ethical demand is in view in our verse.

⁷⁶ The multi-dimensional nature of many Matthean parables has been illustrated by U. Luz, Matthäus, II.371-73.

⁷⁷ This does not mean that δικαιοσύνη does not have a range of meanings. In the LXX it refers to God's saving activity (cf. Isa 46:13; 51:5; 62:1-2; 63:1), as well as to human conduct that conforms to God's demands (cf. Gen 20:5; Ps 15:2; 18:20; Prov 2:9; Isa 5:7; 16:5), etc.

⁷⁸ The plural form ἐν ὁδοῖ δικαιοσύνης is used in Prov 8:20; 12:28; 16:31. The plural without ἐν is used in Prov 16:17; Tob 1:3. The singular form with ἐν is present in Prov 21:16.21.

⁷⁹ Since the word occurs only once in the synoptic (Lk 1:75), it has already been shown that it is a Matthean term. So also T. W. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus, 151; G. Strecker, Der Weg, 153.

⁸⁰ See B. Przybylski, Righteousness, 91. 95. This view has been systematically rejected by D. Hagner in a 1992 essay, where he concludes that ethical conduct cannot be in view, arguing, among other things, that "the emphasis of immediate context is not upon the practice of righteousness but upon receiving the Gospel; not upon doing, but upon believing". D. A. Hagner, "Righteousness," 108-117.

⁸¹ See also D. A. Hagner, "Law, Righteousness and Discipleship," 367, where he uses the Pauline concept of δικαιοσύνη (cf. Rom 1:17), to support the idea of righteousness in Mt as a gift and not always a demand. But the strong contrast between Matthean and Pauline theologies is a stark argument against this thesis. We shall come to see this later.

⁸² G. Schrenk, "δικαιοσύνη" ThWNT II.201.

This view that ethical conduct is in view in Mt's use of *δικαιοσύνη* has been contested by Hagner. For him, while it seems incontestable that in some instances (5:20; 6:1; perhaps also 5:10; 6:33), ethical conduct is in view, this might not be the case in all instances. He thinks that no writer is obligated to use a word in exactly the same sense in all circumstances. Hagner argues that the meaning of a word must be determined from its immediate context and not be imposed upon a text in the name of lexical consistency. If righteousness has a range of meanings, there is then no reason why Mt may not have used the word in different senses. In 3:15, Hagner adduces several reasons for ascribing a salvation-historical meaning to *δικαιοσύνη*: (1) It is difficult to understand submission to John's baptism as submitting to God's demand since there is no divine commandment either in the OT or in the Gospels to submit to John's baptism. Submission to that baptism then can hardly in itself be thought of as an act of righteousness. And even more difficult is the idea that it can be thought of as fulfilling all righteousness.⁸³ (2) Since Mt, as nearly all admit, has a salvation-historical perspective, there is no reason to exclude the possibility that he can understand righteousness here not as moral goodness but as the will of God in the sense of God's saving activity.⁸⁴ This view of Hagner leaves much questions unanswered as we shall come to see.

But if we use Mt's language as a guide, the encounter between Jesus and John (3:14f) also shows that *πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην* refers to the fulfilment of God's demands.⁸⁵ Then 7:21-23 makes it clear that mere profession is of no importance in Mt's thought. Hence, those who will enter *εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν* are only those *ὁ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς*. It appears that what confronts us here is a new kind of righteousness. After all, Mt has asserted that the scribes and Pharisees are righteous, but this righteousness has to be surpassed (5:20).⁸⁶ What the Matthean Jesus proclaims is a new righteousness that demands practice.⁸⁷ Thus ethical demand is implicit in our parable. This goes to confirm the view that the Matthean Jesus has come to fulfil the Law and the Prophets (5:17-19).⁸⁸ In the final chapter, I will look at what this law could have meant concretely for Mt's community.

If we accept the view that righteousness here refers to a demand from God, it remains to assert whether 'the way of righteousness' should be seen as referring to the life of John or the content of his preaching. W. Michaels writes: "the construction *ἦλθεν ἐν ὁδῷ* demands that *ὁδός* be referred to The Baptist himself. What is meant is that he came to you in the way of righteousness, as a righteous man, and yet you did

⁸³ Against this view, see E. Lohmeyer, *Matthäus*, 50f and W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, I.325 who rightly argued that Mt does not mean that in baptism alone Jesus fulfills all righteousness. Rather the baptism is an instance of this fulfillment.

⁸⁴ D. A. Hagner, *Matthew*, I.56

⁸⁵ See W. Carter, "Parables," 158.

⁸⁶ W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 104, has provided a careful analysis linking 5:20 with 21:32, leading to the conclusion that in both cases ethical conduct is at view. On the other side of the divide is J. Reumann, *Righteousness in the New Testament: 'Justification' in the United States Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue* (Philadelphia, 1982), together with Hagner in the argument that demand and gift are to be seen together in 21:32.

⁸⁷ Cf. also 2 Pet 2:21; Jub 23:21; 1 Enoch 82:4; Barn 1:4; 5:4.

⁸⁸ For W. D. Davies, in the Sermon on the Mount, "we cannot speak of the law being annulled in the antitheses, but only of its being intensified in its demand, or re-interpreted in a higher key." *Setting*, 102.

not believe him.”⁸⁹ It is obvious that this assertion does not explain anything in concrete terms. On the other hand, Ziesler thinks that probably ‘ἐν’ here means ‘with’. In this case the whole phrase means ‘with the message of righteousness,’ i.e. the message of the standard which God demands of men, the life of obedience to the divine will.⁹⁰ But the fact that Mt 21:32 states ‘you did not believe him’ could imply that John the Baptist presented a message that should have been believed. This supports the premise that ὁδός refers to the content of his teaching. But bearing in mind the theme in Mt’s Gospel that word and deed should not be separated (7:21; 21:28-30), we are left here to conclude that John’s message as well as his conduct is ‘the way of salvation.’⁹¹

A further implication of accepting that the way of righteousness refers to John’s message as well as his conduct is the tendency to suggest that Jesus expected the Jewish leadership to follow the way of John as his disciples. Barth has clearly argued that: “To be a disciple means for Matthew doing the will of God. This is shown especially by the alteration he has made to the apophthegm about true kinsmen (Mark 3.31-35//Mt 12.46-50). In Mark, Jesus looks round about upon the ὄχλος and says: whoever does the will of God is my brother... In Matthew Jesus stretched forth his hands towards his disciples: They are my brethren, for whosoever does the will of God... The differentiation from the multitude is clear: The will of God is actually done in discipleship.”⁹² There are indications that confirm this view. Mk 3:35//Mt 12:46-50) is the only place reference is made to the will of God in Mk. Also in Lk (22:42//Mt 26:42), we have only one reference. But Mt has additional three references (6:10; 7:21; 18:14). In the first reference, Jesus tells his disciples to pray to their father ‘thy will be done.’ At the end of the parable of the lost sheep, Jesus concludes ‘so it is not the will of my father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.’ In 7:21 Jesus says that ‘he who does the will of my father who is in heaven’ will enter the kingdom of Heaven. It appears that Mt reserves ‘the will of the father’ for the disciples while ‘righteousness’ is seen in situations involving non-disciples (see 3:15; 5:6.10.20; 6:1.33; 21:32).

Eventually, if the above hypothesis is accepted that Mt reserves ‘the will of the father’ in situations involving the disciples, it is then evident that the application of the parable directed against the Jewish leaders which does not make use of ‘the will of the father’ but rather the term ‘righteousness’ does in no way invite them to discipleship but to match their words with action. Their inability to do so places them below the *τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρνοι* in the moral scale. The social position of this group of sinners in the Jewish world has already given an insight to the impact the parable

⁸⁹ W. Michaels, “ὁδός” ThWNT I.86

⁹⁰ J. A. Ziesler, Righteousness, 131

⁹¹ The expression can also refer to John’s movement. This has been supported by J. A. T. Robinson who wrote: “just as both the covenanters 1 QS IX, 18 and the Christians (Acts 9:2) knew themselves as ‘the way’, and dwelt strongly on the two ways (I QS iii, 13-iv, 26; Didache i-vi; Mt 7:13f), so ‘the way of righteousness’ may well have been the popular name for John’s movement.” “The Baptism of John,” 185

⁹² G. Barth, “Matthew’s Understanding,” 102, n. 1.

could have had to the original hearers. But Mt's presentation of this group has a different connotation.

3.5.2 MATTHEW'S "οἱ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρνοι"

The expression "the tax-collectors and the prostitutes" is found only here in Mt's narrative.⁹³ The more usual phrase is tax-collectors and sinners (Mt 9:10-11; Mt 11:19). The combination of οἱ τελῶναι καὶ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ (Lk 15:1) and ὁ ἐθνικός καὶ ὁ τελώνης (Mt 18:17) has been interpreted to imply a negative tag on the tax-collectors.⁹⁴ This negative accretion is especially acute in Q 7:34 because of the use of one article for οἱ τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ and since the opponents of Jesus accuse him in this last text of associating with this group.⁹⁵ To judge from the Gospel evidence, Jesus extended the hand of friendship to the tax-collectors and prostitutes and even ate with them (cf. Mt 9:10-11; 10:3; 11:19).⁹⁶ But in Mt 5:46, they are presented as a negative example not to be imitated.⁹⁷ The only logical conclusion, then, is that the way to salvation is open to this group only on condition that they repent.⁹⁸ Our parable indicates that they have repented by following the call of John.

But it is also to be noted that Mt alone includes ὁ τελώνης in the list of the Twelve Apostles (Mt 10:3).⁹⁹ And it is of interest that Mt is the only evangelist who qualifies the Jewish leaders as πονηροί. Mt applies πονηρός to the Jewish leaders in 9:4; 12:34.39.45; 16:4; 22:18. In 12:33-35 the fact of speaking evil alone was enough to qualify the Jewish leaders as evil.¹⁰⁰ In order to remove the 'people' from the

⁹³ In the Synoptics, the word *τελῶναι* occurs in the controversy story of Mk 2:13ff; in the biographical Apophthegm of Lk 19:1ff; in the Matthean logion of 5:46; the community rules of Mt 18:17; Lk 3:12; the I-word of Mk 2:17 and the parables of Lk 18:9ff; Mt 11:18f. //Lk 7:34. According to R. Bultmann, all these texts belong to the "Wortüberlieferung." See his *Geschichte* 7.

⁹⁴ I. Abrahams writes, "The association in the Gospels of the two expressions Publicans and Sinners is parallel to the combination of 'publicans and robbers' in the Rabbinic literature." "Publicans and Sinners," 55. On the other hand, O. Michael in his Art. *Τελώνης*, ThWNT VIII.104 thinks that the text of Mt 18:17 does not pass moral judgment on the *τελῶναι* but rather assumes the contemporary thought about them. But this acceptance of the contemporary thought should also involve an acceptance of the contemporary moral evaluation about them.

⁹⁵ E. Fuchs *Wort und Tat*, 71, thinks that Mt 11:19 ist ein im Munde der Gegner hämisch formulierter Satz und insofern historisch allerdings gut zu gebrauchen. We are thus dealing with a piece of historical reporting. See W. H. Raney, "Who were the 'sinners'?" 579, who thinks that "the term *ἁμαρτωλός* seems to refer to a class of socially inferior people." The above considerations can lead to the conclusion that the expression (οἱ) *τελῶναι καὶ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ* means the same as the sinful tax-collectors as applied in Lk 19:7.

⁹⁶ Since 'eating' is a special way of expressing a tight relationship in antiquity, the fact that Lk 5:29 makes it clear that Jesus ate in the house of the tax-collector (it is not clear who the host is in Mk 2:15 and Mt 9:10), shows how open Jesus is to this group. See E. P. Sanders, "Jesus and the Sinners," 5. For him the one distinctive marker of Jesus' teaching about the kingdom is that it would include sinners.

⁹⁷ The Christian community appears here to be at par with the Qumran community that understands itself as the true Israel. Cf. W. Trilling, *Israel*, 116f.

⁹⁸ The story of Zaccheus in Lk 19 and the parables of Mt 18 and Lk 15 show that there is more joy in heaven when such sinners mend their lives. Cp. J. Jeremias, "Gedanke," 191-93

⁹⁹ Cp. Mk 3:18; Lk 7:15. In his article "Zöllner und Sünder," 293-300, Jeremias addresses the issue while fellowship with this group would cause scandal. See also F. W. Horn, "Zöllner im Neuen Testament," RGG⁴ VIII.1899.

¹⁰⁰ See S. V. Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 29.

accusation of belonging to *γενεὰ πονηρὰ καὶ μοιχαλὶς* in 12:38-42//Lk 11:29, Mt replaced them with the Scribes and Pharisees.¹⁰¹ The picture in this passage is that since the Jewish leaders were neither converted by the preaching of a prophet greater than Jonah nor by the wisdom that is greater than that of Solomon, the sign that would be given to them would lead to their condemnation.¹⁰²

It thus appears that the impression the application of the parable of the Two Sons creates is that, not being content with classifying the Jewish leaders as *πονηρός*, Mt has placed them here behind these social *πορναί* because of their insensitivity to John. And since the first parable of the trilogy has placed them behind the social outcasts (meaning that the verb *προάγω* is not used here in an exclusive sense),¹⁰³ it would, then, not be surprising to hear Jesus telling his opponents in the second parable that the kingdom of God will be taken away from them and given to another nation, probably because of this insensitivity. That means that the second parable of the trilogy would be an intensification of the first. The salvation-historic nature of the parable means that the figures in it have to be understood also in a metaphoric sense.

3.6 THE METAPHOR OF THE FATHER AND HIS SONS

As already argued, the stress of the parable seems to be tilting to a metaphorical depiction of God's dealings with his people. For some exegetes, although the expression *τὸ δέλημα τοῦ πατρός* refers directly to the father of the parable, the whole of the parable points to God.¹⁰⁴ However, the second child's addressing his father as "lord" in our parable is not enough to identify the father with God. In the Matthean narrative, the word *κύριος* has been used to refer to an owner of animals or vineyards (cf. Mt 20:8). It could therefore be said that the metaphorical divine meaning of the parable is not very clear. But the coming together of the metaphors of "father," "work," and "vineyard" suggests that we are at the heart of Israel's dealings with its God. And once the summons to work in the vineyard is identified as obedience to God, automatically the father in the story must be identified as God. This identification will gain more clarity in the second parable.

This implies that the sons in the parable must have a metaphorical connotation as well. The connection between Jesus and The Baptist has already been made at the start of the authority controversy (21:24). Again, the Baptist's 'way of righteousness' has already been criticized, just like 'the way of Jesus' (cf. Mt 11:18-19). If this implies identifying Jesus and John in the figures of the two sons, then there is no prospect of getting from the Jewish leaders a right or wrong answer to the question 'which of the two did the will of the father?' Perhaps the contrasts Mt makes between the ways of Jesus and those of The Baptist and the response of the Jewish

¹⁰¹ See G. Baumbach, *Verständnis*, 85

¹⁰² S. V. Tillborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 33.

¹⁰³ Cf. Louw *Nida Semantic Domains* 15.142, where the verb is given the following meanings: to go prior to someone else's going, to go prior to, to go beforehand. An example is Mk 6:45: *Καὶ εὐθύς ἠνάγκασεν τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ ἐμβῆναι εἰς τὸ πλοῖον καὶ προάγειν εἰς τὸ πέραν πρὸς Βηθσαϊδάν. Προάγω* also implies that both parties are moving in the same direction. Cf. Mk 11:9.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. A. Wouters, *Willen*, 170. *Contra* Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden* II.369f.

leadership to both would add more light to the above thought. Just as Jesus was called a friend of tax-collectors and sinners, a glutton and drunkard,¹⁰⁵ John was seen as demonized. Jesus points out that the same insensitivity that greeted the message of John has also relegated his opponents to the rear in the race of entering into the joy of the kingdom.¹⁰⁶ This is a conclusion that is demanded by the logic of the parable. Although this could be a literary ploy to make the hearers pronounce their own judgement, this kind of argument runs foul to conventional thoughts on this passage so far, that have all seen the indictment of the Jewish leadership in the image of the son that said ‘yes’ and did nothing.

In a recent masterly work on the Gospel of Mt, R. T. France is representative of current thought. For him “the Jewish leaders (like the second son) claimed to be living in obedience to God’s law, and kept themselves strictly apart from those who (like the first son) made no such claim. It was Jesus’ interest in such ‘tax collectors and sinners’ (Luke 15:1-2) which gave rise to another parable about two sons (Luke 15:11-32). In this Gospel, the ‘underclass’ of Jewish society have also been described as ‘tax collectors and sinners’ (9:10.11; 11:19), and on two occasions the Jewish tax collectors have been even more dismissively linked with Gentiles (5:46-47; 18:17)...”¹⁰⁷ The implication is that just as the father of the parable refers to God, the son who said ‘no’ and went to the vineyard represents the tax-collectors and sinners while the son that said ‘yes’ but did nothing is a picture of the Jewish leaders. This is a conclusion that is demanded by Mt’s narrative. These metaphors will later be expanded in the next parable.

3.7 CONCLUSION

I think it is now time to test the result of this long journey into Mt’s literary and social world with some established thesis on this parable. On the one hand, Chrysostom argues that the two children of our parable ‘declare what came to pass with respect to both Gentiles and the Jews. For the former, not having become hearers of the law, show forth their obedience in their works; the latter having said, “all that the Lord shall speak, we shall do, and will hearken” (Ex 19:8), in their works were disobedient.’¹⁰⁸ This is augmented by Drury’s conclusion that “...the parable explains the momentous transfer of divine approval from orthodox Jewry to the unrespectable but responsive gathering of repentant sinners who make up the Church.”¹⁰⁹ But this conclusion seems not to agree with the central theme of this section of Mt’s gospel. There seems not to be an interest in addressing Jewish-

¹⁰⁵ This describes the unruly son of Deut 21:18-22; cf. Jer 5:21-24.

¹⁰⁶ W. Wink points out that Mt has assimilated the Baptist and Jesus traditions with one another pointing out that words of Jesus are placed in the mouth of John and vice versa. See his *John the Baptist*, 27-41. For example, Mt takes the warning that every tree that does not bear fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire (3:10b) and places it in Jesus’ parable of the trees (7:19). Again, in 12:34 and 23:33, Mt places in Jesus’ mouth some woes against the brood of vipers (cp. 3:7). See also H. Merkel, “Ungleichen Söhnen,” 259; J. Gnllka. *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II.217.

¹⁰⁷ R. T. France, *Matthew*, 804.

¹⁰⁸ *Hom. On Mt.* 67.2.

¹⁰⁹ J. Drury, *Parable*, 96.

Gentile relations in the fifth narrative discourse of the gospel. Rather, the section shows the division of Israel into two groups of believers and non-believers in Jesus.

On the other extreme is Jülicher. In his infinite bid to remove every element of metaphor from the parables and to reduce every parable to a single point, Jülicher suggests that the parable of the Two Sons could be encapsulated in the one concept of the need to avoid discrepancy between doing and saying.¹¹⁰ But this could mean that one who promises nothing will have nothing required of him.¹¹¹ However, it must be noted that Jülicher was arguing from the point of view of the historical Jesus and not from Mt's understanding of the parable.

The conclusions of Allison and Davies seem right with regard to Mt's intentions in narrating this parable. For them, the parable encourages the reader to think in terms of believing and unbelieving Israel. Hence the most natural interpretation, then, is that which finds in our pericope (i) depiction of a divided Israel, (ii) illustration of divided response to Jesus and John (iii) illustration of the first (the chief priests and elders) becoming last and the last (toll-collectors and prostitutes) becoming first, and (iv) characterization of Jesus' opponents as hypocrites. The advent of the messiah's forerunner, like the advent of the Messiah himself, compelled Israel to make a decision that split her asunder. The former tended to come from disenfranchised groups whereas the latter included men of power and prestige who sinned knowingly.¹¹²

What appears here is thus a new definition of the people of Israel with new members replacing the old ones rejected for their lack of faith. This is well-expressed in the words of Dodd that "the manifest disintegration of the existing system is to be preliminary to the appearance of a new way of religion and a new community to embody it. And yet, it is the same Temple, first destroyed, that is to be rebuilt. The new community is still Israel; there is continuity through the discontinuity. It is not a matter of replacement but of resurrection."¹¹³ The parable is thus a perfect example of Mt's chief accusation against the Jewish leaders that they teach but do not do the right things (cf. 23:3f.).¹¹⁴ It thus appears that 'work in the vineyard' is only the scenery of the parable. Obedience alone appears to be the main issue.¹¹⁵ This idea would be refined in the parable of The Wicked Tenants.

This obedience is conveyed in the imagery of the father's command *ὑπάγε σήμερον ἐργάζου ἐν τῷ ἀμπελῶνι* and in the question *τίς ἐκ τῶν δύο ἐποίησεν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς;* The divine meaning of the concept "the will of the father" seems to have acquired form especially in Mt's gospel. As I already noted in the second chapter, the Matthean Jesus makes use of this expression more than in Mk and Lk, which has led to the conclusion that the parable of the Two Sons resonates with Matthean language

¹¹⁰ A. Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden*, II.365-85.

¹¹¹ This is the critique given by C. L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 188

¹¹² See D. C. Allison/W. D. Davies, *Matthew*, III.172

¹¹³ C. D. Dodd, *Founder*, 90. See also J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II.223.

¹¹⁴ D. Trilling, *Israel*, 189. David Flusser recognises that the vineyard imagery in Mt 20:1-16 and 21:28-32 symbolizes "die menschliche Leistung vor und für Gott." See his *Die Rabbinischen Gleichnisse*, 170.

¹¹⁵ See F. Filson, *St. Matthew*, 227. Also A. H. McNeile, *Matthew*, 306.

and concerns.¹¹⁶ The concept however seems to have a special meaning in the Matthean corpus, which might colour the understanding of its use by Jesus. The evidence can be summarized by noting the distinctiveness of Mt's linking of *θέλημα* with the title "father." As already shown, in Mt the term 'the will of the father' occurs always in the context of Jesus' instruction to his followers (cf. Mt 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; 18:14), with the exception of this parable and Jesus' own prayer that he does the will of the father (26:42). In this parable, the contrast is between the son who says 'ἐγώ, κύριε' but does not go and the one who says *ὁ θέλω* but actually does the will of the father. This contrast also distinguishes true and false disciples at the conclusion of the Sermon on the mount: 'not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my father who is in heaven' (7:21). It has been suggested that "Mt has his own community in mind when he recalls the parable that speaks of the true son as the one who does the will of the father."¹¹⁷ The pedagogical bent of the trilogy would later be highlighted in the course of the work. Therefore Mt thus shows that doing the will of the father and not empty words is the only criterion by which a person is judged.

Perhaps this section can be summarized with the observation that the Matthean Jesus uses the words *ἐργάτης* and *καρπός* as synonyms. This is so especially for the texts that refer to the eschatological judgement: 3:1-12; 12:33; 13:24ff; 21:28 and 21:43. This implies that work is only positively seen when it produces corresponding fruits. If this observation is correct, the connection between the first two parables of our trilogy and the wider Matthean narrative is yet accentuated. This connection is again strengthened by the fact that in the synoptic gospels, the concept of work and *καρπός* are frequently associated by the verb *ποιεῖν* in an eschatological sense.¹¹⁸ As we shall come to see the same connection is made in the parable of the Wicked Tenants who stone and slay the messengers of the vineyard owner (*ἐποίησαν αὐτοῖς ὡσαύτως* Mt 21:36) instead of handing over the fruits of the vineyard.

However the parable of the Two Sons has a clear paraenetic or hortatory function,¹¹⁹ which surely invites a self-verdict from the listeners. And when, like David (2 Sm 12:6), the Jewish leaders declare the judgement, Jesus applies the obvious verdict to them: they have been preceded by the official sinners, who obeyed the message of The Baptist. From a wider Matthean perspective, the expression *οἱ τελῶναι καὶ αἱ πόρνοι προάγουσιν ὑμᾶς...* does not, in my view, indicate an exclusion of the leaders¹²⁰ but rather warns the reader against towing the path of the leaders.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ See also J. R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable*, 87

¹¹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 88f.

¹¹⁸ The evidence is readily seen in both Lk and Mt. For example, the action of the unjust steward (Lk 16:3.4=*ποιέω*) shows his shrewdness (Lk 16:8= *φρονίμως*). So too, the industry of the slave who puts to use the talents entrusted to him is shown by *ἐποίησεν ἄλλα πέντε τάλαντα* (Mt 25:16). So, too, is the watchful slave whose master finds *οὕτως ποιοῦντα* (Mt 24:46 and par.). On the other hand, the rich fool who provided for the security of his *καρπός* is a warning (Lk 12:17.18). So, too, is the slave who wittingly or unwittingly does not act according to his master's will (*ποιήσας* Lk 12:47), or does things worthy of punishment (*ποιήσας* 12:48). Cf. G. Bertram, "ἔργον κτλ.," ThWNT II.631-53.

¹¹⁹ So G. Barth, "Matthew's Understanding," 60.

¹²⁰ Contra D. E. Garland, *Intention*, 84; A. Schlatter, "Jesu Gleichnis von den beiden Söhnen," 42; J. Gnllka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II.222.

The above supposition can be grounded on the fact that Mt has the tendency to merge action with words. We have already seen this in the Sermon on the Mount (7:21) and will encounter it later in the tirade against the Jewish leaders (23:1-36). Hence, the addition of the parable has its foundation in the fact that Mt accuses the Jewish leaders of not doing the will of God.

But the non-explicit metaphorical usage of “vineyard” and the non-exclusion of the Jewish leaders among those entering the kingdom seen in the first parable of the trilogy cannot easily be said about the imagery of the vineyard and the taking of the kingdom away from the leaders in the second parable, to which I turn my attention in the next chapter.

¹²¹ This corresponds to the notion of many reader-response analysts who argue that the parables of Jesus are meant to arrest the reader so as to draw him into active thought. I have already quoted Dodd’s definition of parables. See his *Parables*, 16. See also E. Fuchs, *Historical Jesus*, 221-2; R. W. Funk, *Language*, 133.

CHAPTER FOUR
LINGUISTIC AND TRADITIO-HISTORIC ANALYSIS OF THE PARABLE OF
THE WICKED TENANTS (21:33-46)

4.1 LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE PARABLE

4.1.1 STRUCTURE

This parable, which occurs at the centre of the trilogy, can rightly be said to be the most discussed parable in the NT parable corpus.¹ This is so because of its many inherent problems.² Its opening statement *ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε* (21:33) shows how the author wants it to be read together with the just concluded parable of the Two Sons.³ This connection is highlighted by the fact that there is no change of speaker between vv.32-33. But unlike the previous parable that identifies the main figure simply as *ἄνθρωπος*, the present parable specifies the status of the main actor with the designation *οἰκοδεσπότης*.

And while the main focus of the first parable is to work in the vineyard, the nature of which is not specified, the present parable focuses on rendering the fruit of the vineyard. In as much as the background thinking of the first parable is that the vineyard in question belongs to the father of the parable, the second parable makes the ownership of the vineyard clear. This is shown not only by the designation *οἰκοδεσπότης* but also by the careful erection of the vineyard by the *οἰκοδεσπότης*. After the preparation of the vineyard, the owner hands it over to tenants and embarks on a journey. The parable does not mention any contractual details with the tenants and the length of time of the owner's absence.

Moreover, unlike the parable of the Two Sons, the present pericope consists basically of three main parts: (1) the parable (vv.33b-39); (2) its application (vv.40-44);⁴ and (3) the response of the hearers (vv.45-46).⁵ In terms of activities, the parable is also narrated linearly. After the short imperative introduction (v.33a), the parable tells the tale of a master and his tenants. The first part which is the parable proper (vv.33-39) narrates (a) the construction of the vineyard (v.33b-f),⁶ (b) the handing over of the vineyard to servants and the journey of the vineyard owner (v.33g), (c) the sending of servants to receive the harvest and their rejection (vv.34-36), (d) the sending of the son (v.37), and (e) the killing of the son (vv.38-39). The

¹ For C. H. Dodd, this is "the most difficult of the parables." *Parables*, 96. This is despite the insistence of Snodgrass that the parables are quite clearly stories with intent. See his "Recent Research," 187.

² U. Mell notes that the facts are too strained, too unlikely. He feels that the naïve philanthropy of the owner is too good; the suicidal actions of the landless farmers who make their living in the vineyard are too unbelievable; the contrast between power and powerlessness is made too abstract on both sides; law based on contractual relations and vengeful lawlessness are juxtaposed too unintelligibly for the story to be part of the real world. See his *Die "anderen"* Winzer, 125f.

³ Cf. C. Warren, "Parables," 161f.

⁴ U. Luz who includes 33b-44 as part of the parable argues that the two temporal clauses of v.34a and v.40a divide the parable into two, namely, the real story (vv.34-39) and the concluding dialogue (vv.40-44). See his *Matthäus*, III.216.

⁵ For J. D. Crossan, the story has seven main elements, namely, construction of the vineyard, mission of the servants, the mission of the son, the death of the son, punishment of the tenants, citation from Psalm, and application of the parable to the authorities. In *Parables*, 86-91.

⁶ The implication is that the imperative at 33a, which recalls 24:32 is to be seen as the introduction.

sending of the servants *ὅτε δὲ ἤγγισεν ὁ καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν* is clearly divided into (i) the first group of servants (vv.34-35) and (ii) the second group of servants (v.36). The servants, without exception, meet with violence and death. Finally, the owner sends his son as the last emissary while saying that the tenants will reverence his son *ἐντραπήσονται τὸν υἱὸν μου* (v.37). But the tenants kill the son while saying to themselves (*ἐν ἑαυτοῖς*) that they would inherit the vineyard (v.38f).

On the other hand, the question of Jesus and answer of the Jewish leaders (vv.40-41) introduce the second part or the application of the parable. The question bothers on what the vineyard owner will do to his tenants when he comes. Just like in the previous parable of the Two Sons, this question is answered by the Jewish leaders. Jesus then builds on it by quoting Ps 118:22-23. This implies that the application of the parable consists of three logia: (a) the logion concerning the rejected stone (v.42), (b) the logion about the transference of the kingdom (v.43), and (c) the logion about the significance of the rejection of the stone (v.44).

Finally, the third part of the parable recounts the negative response of the Jewish leaders to Jesus and contrasts it with the positive response of the crowds (vv.45-46).⁷

The structure appears thus:

Introduction with an imperative (v.33a)

The parable proper (21:33b-39)

	actant	action
First action (v.33b-f)	householder	erecting vineyard
Second action (v.33g)	householder	handing over
Third action (v.33h)	householder	journey
Fourth action (v.34)	householder	sending servants
Fifth action (vv.34-35)	tenants	maltreatment
Sixth action (v.36a)	householder	sending servants
Seventh action (v.36b)	tenants	maltreatment
Eight action (v.37)	householder	sending son
Ninth action (vv.38-39)	tenants	killling of son

Conclusion with a question (21:40)

The answer of the Jewish leaders (21:41)

The application of the parable (21:42-44)

The rejected stone (21:42)

The transference of the kingdom (21:43)

The significance of the stone (21:44)

Reaction to the parable (21:45-46)

The Jewish leaders' desire to arrest Jesus (21:45)

Their fear of the crowds (21:46)

⁷ See D. Hagner, Matthew II.617-19, who has a similar structure. W. D. Davies/D. A. Allison feel that the pericope, especially vv.34-39 consists of a series of three actions and three responses, namely, 1. the householder sends servants (v.34), the tenants beat one, kill one, stone one (v.35); 2. the householder sends more servants (v.36a), the tenants act as before (36b); 3. the householder sends his son (v.37), the tenants kill him (vv.38-9). See their Matthew, III.174.

The above structure shows that the question and answer or action/reaction device which characterized the parable of the Two Sons is also evident in the second parable. This makes the parable part of the controversy theme that dominates the whole of chapters 21-23.⁸ The question of Jesus is introduced from v.40 with ὅταν οὖν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος, preceded by a narrative unit that runs from v.33b-39. In v.41, the Jewish leaders provide the answer. This is followed by the counter-response of Jesus that brings out the moral of the parable.

The inner structure of the parable also reveals interesting dynamics, especially the tensions that exist between the vineyard owner and the tenants. The syntax and semantics show how the above noted tensions are played out in the parable.

4.1.2 SYNTAX AND SEMANTIC

The first syntactic observation to be made about this parable is that, just like the preceding parable of the Two Sons, it is action-packed because of the overwhelming verb occurrences (56 times). The table below simplifies the parts of speech employed in the parable.

Parts of speech	Particle	Article	Pronoun	Verb	Adj	adv	Prep	Noun	Conj
No of occurrences	2	33	42	56	7	6	16	47	29

This section is dominated by verbs of “building,” “sending,” “saying,” “coming,” “taking,” and “killing.” The beginning of the parable focuses attention on the householder. He is named in v.33b as land owner (οἰκοδεσπότης), and in v.40a as the lord of the vineyard (ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος). But every other reference to him uses the pronoun (especially the genitive αὐτοῦ).⁹ This interchange between the nouns and pronouns makes the story cohesive. The numerous references to the householder throughout the parable place him at the centre of the actions.

Also the parable records detailed activities of the householder. From v.33c-34b, seven verbs (φυτεύω, περιτίθῃμι, ὀρύσσω, οἰκοδόμω, ἐκδίδωμι, ἀποδημέω, ἀποστέλλω) describe his erecting of the vineyard (which echoes the planting details of LXX Isa. 5:2) and the efforts to receive the fruits thereof. Till this point, the parable gives the hearer the impression of an agricultural set up. From the beginning it appears that the householder is the κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος and of the entire story. This is well depicted in the structure of the parable above. But the handing over of the vineyard to tenants and the journey of the householder bring an element of tension into the story.¹⁰ It is also here that the parable deviates from the vineyard song of Isaiah. The tension introduced by the journey of the vineyard owner is then highlighted with the coming

⁸ Cf. D. J. Harrington, Matthew, 303.

⁹ These appear in vv.34b.c.35a.and 37a. In the direct speech of v.37b, the vineyard owner makes use of the first person genitive pronoun μου.

¹⁰ For W. Carter, “the owner’s absence is a crucial element in the development of the parable’s plot. It provides not only an element of realism in reflecting a common economic practice, but also the means by which the tenants’ accountability to the owner is measured.” “Parables,” 160.

of the time of harvest (v.34) and the request to the tenants to render the fruit of the harvest (v.35). The repeated sending of the servants (v.36) and also of the son of the vineyard owner (v.37) and the fate they suffered only heighten the suspense.¹¹ The remainder of the story goes on to develop this element of tension, which characterizes not only the parable but also the whole of the trilogy.

Also, from v.33g-h, the handing over of the vineyard to tenants and the journey of the householder introduce a spatial dimension to the story that will eventually play a vital role. From this moment the story is directed from two places, namely the residence of the householder in a foreign land and the vineyard now in the possession of the tenants. Apart from the above named spatial indication there is also a temporal indication in v.34a where the time of the harvest drew near. The tension is thus heightened as the householder sends his first slaves to collect the fruit of the vineyard from the tenants.¹² Between vv.35-39, Mt shows that the actions of the tenants are anticlimactic to the actions of the vineyard owner. He uses negative verbs (*λαμβάνω, δέρω, ἀποκτείνω, λιθοβολέω*) to characterize the activities of the tenants.¹³ This opposition is clearly shown first in the interaction between the vineyard owner and the tenants and second in the treatment meted out to the son of the vineyard owner. Meanwhile the conflicts take place at the vineyard while the residence of the householder remains untouched.

The sending of the son (v.37a) is narrated longer than those of the servants and heightened by the use of the adverb *ὑστερον*. It is also framed by the self-reflection of the householder (*λέγων...*) and of the tenants (*εἶπον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς...*). It appears that Mt has consciously constructed the text to show that every action of the householder was repressed by the tenants. The three actions of the householder towards the tenants are marked by *ἀποστέλλω* (21:34.36.37). But the increasing urgency of these actions is specified by the addition of *πάλιν* and *ὑστερον* to the second and third commands respectively. It therefore seems that Mt employs here the narratological principle of *regel de tri*, which involves the threefold repetition of an action in folklore. This principle is also seen in the threefold action of the tenants. Using *a* to represent the actions of the vineyard owner towards the tenants and *b* to represent the response of the tenants to these actions, the interaction can be shown thus:

¹¹ It seems that Mt has divided vv.34-39 into three segments shown by the temporal markers in vv.34.36 and 37. This view is shared by E. Lohmeyer/W. Schmauch, *Matthäus*, 312.

¹² T. Oldenhage has pointed out the numerous questions that could be evoked in the minds of the hearers of this story with the sending of the first set of slaves. See R. Zimmermann (Hrsg.), *Kompendium*, 353.

¹³ Jülicher has already noted that it is not surprising that *λιθοβολέω* follows *ἀποκτείνω* since in the eyes of the Jews it is worse to be stoned than to be killed. Stoning was a capital punishment with a strong religious meaning (cf. Ex 19: 13; Lev 20: 2.27; 24: 14; Num 15: 35-6; Deut 13: 11). He is supported by W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.181-82 who contend that Mt gives the order of the verbs (beat, kill, stone) “a climax in which the third step is an atrocious species of the second.” This is because stoning was a brutal and, especially in the Jewish and Greek worlds, a shameful death, one legislated as punishment for blasphemy idolatry, divination, child sacrifice, adultery, and Sabbath violation (cf. Ex 19:13; Lev 20:2-5; 24:14.16.23; Num 15:32-6; Deut 13:6-10; 17:2-7; 21:21; 22:21.24; 2 Chr 24:20-1; Josephus, *Ant.* 14:25; 20:200). Against this view see F. W. Beare, *Matthew*, 428; W. Grundmann, *Matthäus*, 460.

a ἀπέστειλεν τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοὺς γεωργοὺς λαβεῖν τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτοῦ
b καὶ λαβόντες οἱ γεωργοὶ τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ
b ὃν μὲν ἔδειραν ὃν δὲ ἀπέκτειναν ὃν δὲ ἐλιθαβόλησαν
a πάλιν ἀπέστειλεν ἄλλους δούλους πλείονας τῶν πρώτων,
b καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτοῖς ὡσαύτως
a ὑστερον δὲ ἀπέστειλεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ λέγων...
b οἱ δὲ γεωργοὶ ἰδόντες τὸν υἱὸν εἶπον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς...
b καὶ λαβόντες αὐτὸν ἐξέβαλον ἔξω τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος καὶ ἀπέκτειναν

Hence, just as some of the servants were killed, the son was also killed after being cast out of the vineyard.¹⁴ The narrative makes it clear that the mission of the son was a bigger failure than that of the servants. This is so because the tenants did not only kill the son; the sight of the son made them to conceive of inheriting the vineyard.¹⁵

Further observations about the syntactic features of the verses above reveal the dominance of parallels. For instance, in v.33 six parallel aorist verbs, each coupled by *καί*, supply the predicate of the relative pronoun *ὅστις*. In vv.34b, 36a, and 37a, the verb *ἀπέστειλεν* occurs three times, the second time being modified by *πάλιν*, the third by *ὑστερον*. In the third instance the object *τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ* stands parallel to *τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ*, and in the second instance to *ἄλλους δούλους*. V.35 contains three parallel aorist verbs, each employing the distributive pronoun *ὃν*. The second of these verbs *ἀπέκτειναν*, finds its parallel in v.39 in reference to the killing of the son.¹⁶

However, from v.40, the temporal clause *ὅταν* changes the perspective¹⁷ and introduces the coming of the lord of the vineyard with the question of Jesus to his opponents about what the future action of the householder to the tenants would be.¹⁸ The question is so formulated to echo the question of the first parable (cf. 21:31) and perhaps to bring back to the mind of the hearers the vineyard song of Isaiah.¹⁹ The first answer provided by the Jewish leaders begins with an anarthrous construction, describing the nature of the tenants (*κακοὺς*) and the fate that awaits them (*κακῶς ἀπολέσει*).²⁰ They identify that the owner will destroy the tenants wickedly and hand

¹⁴ A few mss representing the Western text (D Θ it) reverse the order of the casting out of the vineyard and the killing of the son, with the result that the son was first killed and then cast out of the vineyard. This could be a harmonization of the sequence with the Markan account. Metzger supports this idea when he comments: “the chief characteristics of Western readings is fondness for paraphrase, words, clauses and even whole sentences are freely changed, omitted, or inserted. Sometimes the motive appears to have been harmonization, while at other times it was enrichment of the narrative by the inclusion of traditional or apocryphal material.” B. M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 6.

¹⁵ Notice the substantial construction “*οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ κληρονόμος*” and the play on the words “*κληρονόμος* and *κληρονομίαν*” But for the word *σχῶμεν* (inherit) in v.38d many mss (C W f⁴³ TR sy^{p,h}) have *κατάσχωμεν* (possess).

¹⁶ See D. A. Hagner, *Matthew II.619*.

¹⁷ Of the 29 conjunctions in the parable, we have three subordinating conjunctions at v.34a (*ὅτε*), v.40a (*ὅταν*), and v.43a (*ὅτι*). This makes these three points great turning points in the story.

¹⁸ For U. Luz, *Matthäus III.216*, it is here that the second part of the parable begins.

¹⁹ So also U. Luz, *Matthäus III.224*.

²⁰ The introduction of *κακοὺς κακῶς* makes Meier to argue against the hypothesis of an original Semitic Mt, arguing that the classical idiom has no precise Aramaic equivalent. J. P. Meier, *Matthew*, 244. But

the vineyard over to others who will render its fruits at the proper time. The implication is that they would experience the same end they meted out to others, or as Tilborg puts it, “the vine-growers are described as *κακοί*, and therefore their downfall will be *κακῶς*.”²¹ The second part of the answer then refers to the vineyard: it would be given to a new set of *γεωργοί* who would do the opposite of what the present set has done, namely *ἀποδώσουσιν αὐτῷ τοὺς καρπούς ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτῶν*. This could be a reference to Ps1:3.²² Jesus seems to approve this answer. But he seems to intensify the answer of the Jewish leaders with the introduction of the transfer of the kingdom of God from his opponents, the Jewish leaders, to a nation producing its fruits. We are thus presented with the thrust of the parable: the importance to bear fruit. The importance of fruit-bearing has been hinted in 21:34a (*ὁ καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν*), 21:34c (*τοὺς καρπούς αὐτοῦ*), 21:41d (*τοὺς καρπούς*), and 21:43c (*τοὺς καρπούς αὐτῆς*). These fruits must however be delivered *ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτῶν*. This remark about the season of fruits links the application of the parable to v.34, where Mt refers to the approach of the fruit-bearing season (*ὅτε δὲ ἤγγισεν ὁ καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν*).

Another significance of the answer to the question by the Jewish leaders (v.41) is that it once more shows their blindness to their actions²³ and leads to a rhetorical question beginning with *οὐδέποτε*, which bothers on the knowledge of Scriptures. The scriptural reference joins the parable to its wider context (cf. 21:13), which could be a subtle accusation of the Jewish leadership’s ignorance of their own Scriptures. This connection to the wider context is strengthened by the similar introduction to the sayings at 21:16 and 21:42 (*οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε*). Both introduce a Psalm quotation (the first Ps 8:2 and the second Ps118:22f). The current Psalm quotation joins again the two parts of our parable (for instance; v.35c *ἐλιθοβόλησα*//v.42c *λίθον*; v.33f *ῥυπαροποιῶ*//v.42c *οἰκοδομοῦντες*; v.40a *κύριος*//v.42c *κυρίου*). It changes the mission and fate of the son from the status of failure to that of vindication.

The end of the quotation in our parable begins the answer of Jesus which replaces the Jewish leaders’ judgment of destruction with a judgment of transference. Here, there is also structural parallelism depicted in the use of the futuristic verbs *ἀρθήσεται*, “it will be taken away,” and *δοθήσεται*, “it will be given” (v.43). Each of the verbs has an additional modifying phrase. While the first has *ἀφ’ ὑμῶν*, the second has *ἔθνη*. But this parallelism is broken by the addition to the latter of the words *ποιούντι τοὺς καρπούς αὐτῆς*, “producing its fruits.” As already seen, this corresponds to the reference to *τοὺς καρπούς* in v.41.²⁴ The *ὅτι* in v.43 shows that what God²⁵ will do (*ἀρθήσεται ἀφ’ ὑμῶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ δοθήσεται ἔθνη*...) is a consequence of

E. Lohmeyer/W. Schmauch, Matthäus, 313f argue that the first part of the answer reflects a common Greek legal expression which was also current in Palestine. For them, the legal expression and the Psalm quotation fit the situation well since those who answered were leaders of the highest Jewish tribunal and thus would have spoken both the language of law and of religion.

²¹ S. V. Tilborg, Jewish Leaders, 56.

²² Cf. M. Konradt, Israel, 188.

²³ W. Carter has made a connection between the Jewish leaders and the labourer with the evil eye in Mt 20:15. See “Parables,” 163.

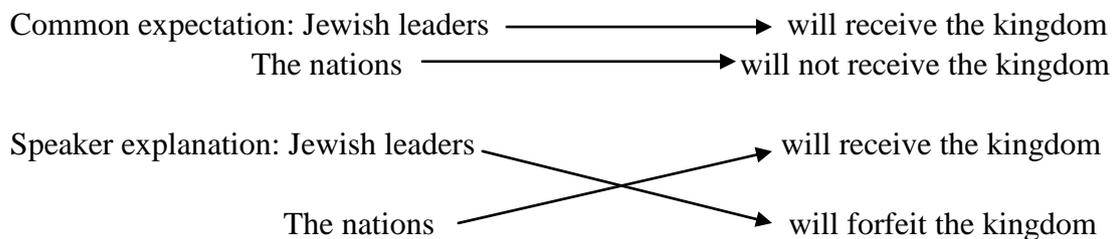
²⁴ See D. A. Hagner, Matthew, II.619.

²⁵ Notice the genitivus absolutus in the verbs *αἶρω* and *δίδωμι*. The fact that God is the agent of the actions is already made explicit in the Psalm quotation by the phrase “*παρὰ κυρίου ἐγένετο αὐτή*”.

the actions of the tenants. The implication is that the Psalm quotation explains vv.43-44.²⁶

Grammatically it seems that the participial construction at v.43c corresponds to the relative clause of v.41c.²⁷ It reveals that the Jewish leaders are the ones from whom the kingdom will be taken because of their lack of attention to the vineyard. Between vv.40-44, the parable ends with a dialogue between Jesus and the Jewish authorities in a chiasmic form thus: v.40 Jesus' (question); v.41 authorities' (answer); vv.42-44 Jesus' (application).

But it is crucial that the Jewish leaders never realized that they spoke about themselves. The implication is that the response of Jesus is only a confirmation of their answer.²⁸ Consequently, the answer of the Jewish leaders and the response of Jesus to this answer reveal the juridical nature of the parable (cf. 2 Sm 12:5-7). The juridical nature of the parable repeats the idea of the reversal of common expectations already seen in the first parable thus:



This reversal of common expectation seems to be carried forth in the reaction of the Jewish leaders vis-à-vis that of the crowds. This reaction shows that the religious leaders fail to grasp the deep meaning of the parable unlike the crowds. The Jewish leaders' intention to arrest Jesus (21:46) implies that they seek to do to him what the tenants have done to the son of the vineyard owner.²⁹ This reaction seems to be an internal prolepsis about the death of Jesus which the reader will later learn in Mt's narrative.³⁰ Here, the Jewish leadership seeks to destroy Jesus but were held back only because of the fear of the crowds.³¹ This remark brings not only tension in the story but has theological consequence. It is a form of a *procataleptic* remark in that the Jewish leaders anticipate the reaction of the crowds. The reaction of the leaders

²⁶ The entire v.44 is omitted by many mss including D 33 it Sy^s. The illogical sequence of this verse appears to me to be an argument for its originality or at least its antiquity. I find no reason to infer that a later scribe inserted this verse in this particular place. The more probable place to have inserted it would have been after v.42. If v.44 were an interpolation of Lk 20:18, surely the scribe should have followed the wordings of Lk more closely. Metzger argues that its omission can be accounted for by asserting that the eye of the copyist jumped from *αὐτῶν* (v.43) to *αὐτόν*. See B. M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 47.

²⁷ Cf. M. Konradt, *Israel*, 188.

²⁸ W. Carter, "Parables," 166; U. Luz, *Matthäus III.225*.

²⁹ W. Carter, "Parables," 166.

³⁰ It seems that the actions of Jesus in Jerusalem provide the Jewish leaders the opportunity to kill him. See W. Carter, "Parables," 149. This threat has been hinted in 12:14 and 16:21 and will again be seen in the Temple charge in 26:61.

³¹ The crowds could represent those who are being called in Mt's day to hear again the message of Jesus and to bear fruit. See J. R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parables*, 92; W. Carter, "Parables," 167.

and that of the crowds (*ζητοῦντες αὐτὸν κρατῆσαι ἐφοβήθησαν τοὺς ὄχλους, ἐπεὶ εἰς προφήτην αὐτὸν εἶχον*) link our trilogy to the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem (21:11.26) and also to the fate of John the Baptist repeating almost the exact words of 14:5 (*καὶ θέλων αὐτὸν ἀποκτεῖναι ἐφοβήθη τὸν ὄχλον, ὅτι ὡς προφήτην αὐτὸν εἶχον*).³² The beginning of the reaction of the Jewish leaders in v.45 (*καὶ ἀκούσαντες*) seems to form an *inclusio* with the beginning of the parable in v.33a (*ἀκούσατε*).³³ Another *inclusio* is to be seen in the words “*παραβολὴν*” (v.33) and “*παραβολὰς*” (v.45).

With a kind of authorial focalization,³⁴ the narrator shows that none of the figures in the parable knows the plans or thoughts of the others. The vineyard owner’s continuous sending of his servants and eventual sending of his son, and the reckless actions of the servants, including the thought of possessing the vineyard while the vineyard owner is still alive show this ignorance. The fact that the author knows more than the actants is clearly shown in 21:37 where he brings the reader into the mistaken soliloquy of the owner of the vineyard (*ἐντραπήσονται τὸν υἱόν μου*) and in 21:38 where the equally mistaken thought of the tenants is narrated (...*σχῶμεν τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ*). This authorial focalization is repeated in 21:46.

The direct speech to the readers could be seen in the stone saying, where it reads ‘the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone...’ (21:42) and/or in its application ‘the kingdom of God shall be taken from you...’ (21:43b). The lesson could then be that the determination of the will of God does not lie in the hands of the religious leaders, here represented by the chief priests and scribes but by God. This then implies that the pragmatic of our text could point to the destruction of the temple sacrificial system and the separation of Christianity from Judaism.³⁵ There seems therefore to be a Christological background to the trilogy.³⁶ The location of the controversy (near the Temple) and the question as to the identity of Jesus at his entrance to Jerusalem (21:10) give credence to this view. It could also be that Mt intends to show that the cause of Jesus’ execution is this series of conflicts recorded

³² This implies the Jewish leaders heard Jesus’ parable, recalling the charge at the beginning of the parable. But the action they proposed to carry out (*καὶ ζητοῦντες αὐτὸν κρατῆσαι*) reveals that on a higher level they have failed to grasp the meaning of the parable. Just like in the first parable, they now confirm what Jesus said about them and what has been identified as Jesus’ reason for speaking in parables in Mt, that is, *ὅτι βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ συνίουσιν*.

³³ For Allen, Mt has placed the clauses in this verse in logical order: (a) the motive, “they perceived that He spoke about them”; (b) the consequent action, “seeking to arrest him”; (c) the hindrance, “they feared the people. W. C. Allen, *Matthew*, 233f. The mention of *ὄχλοι* takes the mind back to Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem. Then the conclusion of the parable confirms that the people see Jesus in the same light as The Baptist. It seems also that the crowd’s perception is concretized in the parable.

³⁴ An omniscient or authorial narrator has knowledge of time, place, people, places and events. A limited narrator, in contrast, may know absolutely everything about a single character and every piece of knowledge in that character’s mind but is limited to that character, that is, he cannot describe things unknown to that focal character.

³⁵ See J. Drury who sees Mt’s interest as a sharp polemic between Mt’s church and Israel. *Parables*, 96. In the same line of thought, B. B. Scott, *Parables*, 81 argues that the three parables expose Mt’s ideology of the true Israel demonstrating the claims of the Pharisees to be false and those of the Church to be true.

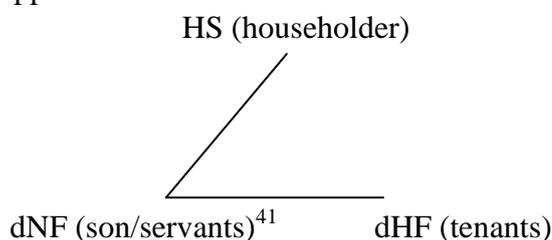
³⁶ Münch observes that the Matthean parables make more meaning “wenn die Christologie voll in Rechnung steht.” *Gleichnisse*, 69.

in chapters 21-22.³⁷ However, all these remain an open question that would be dealt with in the interpretation of the parable.

4.2 ACTANTIAL ANALYSIS

It is apparent that the actions and actants in the second parable of the trilogy manifest the nature of the parables as narrative more evidently than the parable of the Two Sons does. The parable is played out within three figures or groups of figures whose relationship to each other evolves in more conflict as the story unfolds.³⁸ The actants are the householder and the tenants as well as the slaves and the son. The relationship between the vineyard owner and his vineyard (21:33a-f) changes immediately with the introduction of the tenants (v.33g)³⁹ and slaves (v.34). However, the introduction of the son (v.37a-39c) leads to an obvious climax.⁴⁰

Also in this parable, the actantial schema looks a bit different from the first. Here, the *Handlungssouverän* (HS) is the householder, while the *dramatische Hauptfigur* (dHF) and the *dramatische Nebenfigur* (dNF) are the tenants and the son/servants respectively. Although the dHF and dNF do represent contrasting responses to the HS, the dNF provides the point of contact between the HS and the dHF (e.g. vv.35.36b.39). The HS is present only in that part of the narrative involving contact between it and the dNF (e.g. vv.34.36a.37), disappears from the narrative during the time of contact between the dHF and the dNF (e.g. v.35.38f). Hence, the response of the dNF looks two ways: in one direction toward the dHF and in the other toward the HS. The schema appears thus:



Not only does the schema appear different from that of the first parable, the drama is also bigger because of the presence of many actants who help to increase the tension in the story.⁴² Surely there is no happy end in this parable.

³⁷ The cleansing of the Temple (21:12-13) could be seen as the most striking of Jesus' challenge to the authority of Judaism. E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 1985, chap. 1, assesses this incident as historical and understands it as part of Jesus' attack on the Temple establishment.

³⁸ T. Oldenhage has rightly termed the parable "Spiralen der Gewalt." See R. Zimmermann (Hrsg.) *Kompendium*, 352.

³⁹ This is the only contact between the householder and the tenants.

⁴⁰ See the analysis of W. Egger, *Methodenlehre*, 119.

⁴¹ Although C. L. Blomberg came up with a different schema, he recognises the fact that "the son and servants are still less significant than the master and his two groups of tenants, being simply dramatic vehicles by which the first tenants express their opposition to the landlord." See his *Interpreting the Parables*, 248.

⁴² Münch captures the sentiment well: "je länger die Gleichnisse sind, desto länger wird die Ereignisketten, desto mehr Personen treten auf, desto stärker erscheint die Handlung als eine Folge von Szenen, desto stärker wird der Dialog als Mittel der Erzählung eingesetzt. Der erzählende

4.3 Mt 21:33-46 TRADITION AND REDACTION

Just as the parable of the Two Sons has generated much heated debate over its text-critical problems, the parable of the Wicked Tenants remains in the spotlight as one of the most debated and misunderstood parables of Jesus. At virtually no point do scholars agree concerning this parable. It appears that this parable says so much that several attempts to reconstruct its earlier form have suggested that the parable cannot be understood⁴³ or even that the parable was probably told by John The Baptist.⁴⁴ The influence of Christian teaching has also led to reading a lot of meaning to this parable so that the parable points to Jesus' death outside Jerusalem, the destruction of Jerusalem, the rejection of Israel, and the granting of election to the Gentiles.⁴⁵ These motifs are not explicitly stated in the parable. It has also been argued that the parable charts the cause of the passion narrative.⁴⁶ This is mainly because of the textual connections between the stone and builders in the quotation of Ps118:22 in the application of the parable (21:44) and the mention of stones and buildings in the apocalyptic discourse of 24:2.⁴⁷

This parable is taken over from Mk 12:1.12 (cf. also Lk 20:9-19; Gospel of Thomas logion 65).⁴⁸

The version of Thomas reads thus: He said, "There was a good man who owned a vineyard. He leased it to tenant farmers so that they might work it and he might collect his fruits (*τὸν καρπὸν αὐτοῦ*) from them. He sent his servant so that the tenants might give him the fruit of the vineyard (*τὸν καρπὸν τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος*). They seized his servant and beat him, all but killing him. The servant went back and told his master. The master said, 'Perhaps he did not recognize them.' He sent another servant. The tenants beat this one as well. Then the owner sent his son and said, 'Perhaps they will respect my son.' Because the tenants knew that he was the heir to the vineyard, they seized him and killed him. Let him who has ears hear." Logion 66 contains the following words: Jesus said, "Show me the stone which the builders have rejected. That one is the cornerstone."

Since the Matthean version surely uses the Markan version as source, a comparison between these versions would be undertaken. The version of Lk will be at the background while that of Thomas will not play much role because of its apparent late composition.⁴⁹ And since the differences between the Matthean and Markan stories appear in almost every verse, I will make a line by line analysis of

Charakter ist stärker ausgeprägt, die Erzählung gewinnt „dramatischen Charakter.“ C. Münch, *Gleichnisse*, 164.

⁴³ E.g., J. P. Duplantier, *Les vigneron meurtriers*, 265; W. Harnisch, *Vorsprung*, 29; B. B. Scott, *Parables*, 252.

⁴⁴ J. C. O'Neill, "Wicked Husbandmen," 485-89.

⁴⁵ See R. H. Stein, *Luke*, 490.

⁴⁶ For instance, M. A. Tolbert, *Sowing The Gospel*, 232; J. Marcus, *The Way of the Lord*, 120f.

⁴⁷ Cf. U. Mell, *Die "anderen" Winzer*, 125f.

⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that Thomas' parable concludes a trilogy of sayings (63-65) that criticize wealth. See U. K. Plisch, *Das Thomas Evangelium*, 171.

⁴⁹ The thesis that the absence of the allegorical elements in the parable in Thomas is a later interpretation to suit the gnostic dimension of the gospel has been rightly defended by U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.218.

these stories. The aim is to make clear the Matthean redaction and the possible reasons behind it. I will begin with the agreements between Mt and Mk and then proceed to the substantial redactions as well as the stylistic changes Mt has introduced to Mk's story of the vineyard owner and his tenants.

4.3.1 AGREEMENTS BETWEEN MT 21:33-46 AND MK 12:1-12

4.3.1.1 The construction of the vineyard

Although the introductions to the parable of the Wicked Tenants differ between Mt and Mk,⁵⁰ yet each echo the planting details of Isa 5:2 (Mk 12:1//Mt 21:33).⁵¹ Mt agrees with Mk that a man planted a vineyard and that he handed the vineyard over to tenants and travelled.⁵² Also Mt and Mk agree in the chronological details of the planting of the vineyard (put a fence round it, dug a hole for the winepress, and built a watch-tower), but Mk's vat (*ὑπολήμιον*) becomes a winepress (*ληνόν*) in Mt. This change could imply that Mt aims at stressing the completeness of the owner's preparation.⁵³ Again a closer look reveals that Mt's version has been assimilated to the text of the LXX Isa 5:2 by reversing Mk's *ἀμπελῶνα ἐφύτευσεν* to agree with the object-verb order of the LXX. The same is true of Mt's *φραγμὸν αὐτῷ περιέδηκεν*, where he also adds an indirect object. In the digging of the winepress Mt adds *ἐν αὐτῷ* in agreement with the LXX.⁵⁴ This septuagintalization of Mk by Mt has already been pointed out by Stendahl⁵⁵ but strongly challenged by Gundry.⁵⁶

4.3.1.2 The sending of the slaves

Mt and Mk also agree substantially to the householder's sending of the slaves and the fate that they suffered Mt 21:34-35//Mk 12:2-3. The only difference is that Mt begins with *ἤγγισεν ὁ καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν*⁵⁷ for Mk's *τῷ καιρῷ*, and writes the plural *τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ*, for Mk's singular *δούλον*. This is in accord with the plurality of slaves that occur in other parables unique to Mt.⁵⁸ Here, Mt switches the order of

⁵⁰ Distinctive is Mt's description of the man as *οἰκοδεσπότης*, "house master," a favourite Matthean word, which he uses seven times in comparison to Mk's single use. Mt 10:25; 13:27.52; 20:1.2; 21:33; 24:43. Mk 14:14. One could see here an implicit stress on the status of the man, or an intention at distinguishing him from the *ὁ ἄνθρωπος* of the first parable and the *ἄνθρωπος βασιλεῖ* of the third.

⁵¹ I. H. Jones, *Parables*, 373-75 argues that the details are intended to recall the Isaiah passage, not to have individual allegorical significance. But the great difference in the two texts is that in Isaiah it is the fruits that fail but here it is the tenants. In Isaiah, the vineyard will be destroyed, but here it would be given to a nation producing its fruits. But the echo seems to be heard nonetheless.

⁵² *καὶ ἐξῆλθετο αὐτὸν γεωργοῖς καὶ ἀπεδήμησεν* alludes to 25:14-15.

⁵³ This is the conclusion reached by J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 179.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁵⁵ K. Stendahl, *The School of St Matthew*, 148. Examples abound (Mt 19:18-19//Mk 10:19; Mt 21:9//Mk 11:9-10; Mt 22:32//Mk 12:26; Mt 24:30//Mk 13:26; Mt 26:64//Mk 14:62. Kloppenborg thus supports Stendahl's suggestion that Mk "was in use in the Matthean church and school and had thereby been gradually conformed to the church's Greek O.T." See J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 179.

⁵⁶ Cf. R. H. Gundry, *Old Testament*, 155-59. In fact, Gundry writes *non sequitur* to the whole thesis of Stendahl.

⁵⁷ For this expression as Matthean allegory see D. A. Hagner, *Matthew II.620*; W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 111; contra J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 180.

⁵⁸ Cf. 13:27-28; 18:23; 22:3.4.6.8.10; 25:14-30. For the argument that Mt's plurality of slaves is more original see P. Gaechter, *Matthäus*, 682.

slaves and tenants for the sake of narrative smoothness. And whereas Mk first refers to three individual slaves, Mt differentiates individual slaves, the first of whom is beaten, while the second two are killed. Mt omits the reference to the first servant being sent away empty-handed (*ἀπέστειλαν κενόν* Mk 12:3) since the first set of servants were killed in Mt. He also omits Mk's verbs *ἐκεφαλαίωσαν*, and *ἠτίμασαν* (Mk 12:4).⁵⁹ But he adds the word *λιθοβολέω*. *Λιθοβολέω* appears of the stoning of prophets in 23:27 (cf. 2 Chr 24:21; Heb 11:37; Jer 2:1).⁶⁰ The word plays a major role in the death of Jeremiah in the *Paraleipomena Jeremίου*⁶¹ and already points to an allegorical identification of these servants as the OT prophets.⁶² Mt thus seems to have a more developed allegory in this verse.⁶³ The grammatical construction of v.35 (*ὃν μὲν... ὃν δὲ... ὃν δὲ*) is also a Mattheanist that appears 13x in Mt redactionally.⁶⁴

Mt's alteration of Mk's *τῶν καρπῶν τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος*, "the fruits of the vineyard" to *τοὺς καρπούς αὐτοῦ*, "his fruits" (Mt 21:34//Mk 12:2) seems aimed at emphasising the householder's complete ownership of the vineyard's fruit. Mt's *τοὺς καρπούς αὐτοῦ* as opposed to *τῶν καρπῶν τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος* of Mk also seems to accentuate the totality of the fruits and not merely a part of it.⁶⁵ This implies that unlike Mk, Mt's householder demands the (whole) fruits from the tenants. This Matthean detail gives the impression that the theological symbolism of God demanding the totality of people's lives has swallowed economic realism, which requires rental payment of only part of the crop.⁶⁶ If this is true, then we get another allegorical development in Mt's narrative. I have already pointed out the overwhelming stress on *αὐτοῦ* in this parable (for instance, his servants, vv.34.35; his fruits, v.34; his son, v.37; his inheritance, v.38). This emphasis on the vineyard owner seems to explain the changing of Mk's subjunctive *λάβῃ ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος* to the stronger infinitive *λαβεῖν τοὺς καρπούς αὐτοῦ*.⁶⁷

⁵⁹ The word *ἐκεφαλαίωσαν* could refer to the fate of John. See J. D. Crossan, "Wicked Husbandmen," 452. This implies that the person of the John The Baptist still lurks in the background.

⁶⁰ W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, III.181-82 urge that *λιθοβολέω* is appropriate here because it refers to a mode of execution that involved the participation of a group, it enhances the continuity between the son=Jesus and the servants=the prophets, for according to Deut 21:22-3 a person guilty of a crime punishable by death must be hung up after execution. Again it makes for an ironic wordplay with v.43.

⁶¹ Esp. ch. 9:22-32.

⁶² See E. Schweizer, Matthäus, 270; E. Lohmeyer/W. Schmauch, Matthäus, 313. The Deuteronomic conception of the fate of the prophets is seen, for instance in Jer 7:25-27. But the only OT prophets explicitly said to have been killed by their own people are Uriah (Jer 26:20-23) and Zachariah (2 Chr 24:20-22). Jeremiah also came close to being killed (Jer 26:10-19.24; 38, 4-13). Some were massacred by Jezebel (1 Kgs 18:4). Mt develops the themes of persecution and murder of the prophets in 5:11-12 and 23:29-36.

⁶³ See also J. D. Crossan, "Wicked Husbandmen," 453; J. S. Kloppenborg, Tenants, 181.

⁶⁴ Cf. 10:13; 13:8.23.32; 16:3.14; 20:23; 21:35; 22:5.8; 23:27.28; 25:15. It is also present in the special material of 25:33.

⁶⁵ So also A. Ogawa, "Parables," 128; E. Schweizer, Matthäus, 270.

⁶⁶ So R. H. Gundry, Matthew, 426. This view is shared by J. S. Kloppenborg, Tenants, 180. But K. Snodgrass, Wicked Tenants, 75, n.13, thinks that this conclusion is reading into Mt's account.

⁶⁷ Already J. Schmid sees in this redaction "den Übergang von der profanen zur religiösen Wirklichkeit." Matthäus, 305.

4.3.1.3 The mission of the son

In the episode concerning the sending of the son Mt 21:37-39//Mk 12:6-8, Mt follows Mk in recording that the son was the last envoy to be sent. He also follows Mk in recording three acts of violence (*λαβόντες, ἐξέβαλον* and *ἀπέκτειναν*). But Mt omits Mk's *ἔτι ἓνα εἶχεν*, "he had yet one," and begins instead with the word *ὑστερον*, "afterwards," a favourite word of his,⁶⁸ which also joins the present parable to the previous one. The word *ἀποκτείνω* often appears in Mt for the deaths of prophets (23:34.37), John (14:5), disciples and Christians (10:28; 24:9), and Jesus (16:21; 17:23; 26:4). But Mt surprisingly omits Mk's adjective *ἀγαπητός*, "beloved" (Mk 12:6) in describing the son.⁶⁹ No less surprising is the fact that scribes have not inserted the adjective in later manuscripts. This Matthean omission has led some exegetes to the implausible suggestion that Mt's form of the parable is more original.⁷⁰ But the absence of this adjective can rightly be argued to be a deliberate omission, due to the fact that Mt's emphasis is less Christological but rather more ecclesiological and paraenetic.⁷¹ On purely linguistic level, the omission of *ἀγαπητός* could be a bid to achieve a parallelism with the constant use of 'his servants' (vv.34.35).⁷²

There is a minor agreement between Mt and Lk in the insertion of *ἰδόντες τὸν υἱὸν* "seeing the son" (Mt 21:38//Lk 20:14)⁷³ which might be an attempt to intensify the guilt of the tenants.⁷⁴ On the other hand, the expression seems to be a subtle Matthean assimilation to the first parable (cf.21:32) where the Jewish leaders saw the example of the tax-collectors and prostitutes (*ὕμεις δὲ ἰδόντες*) but this "seeing" did not lead them to mend their ways. In the present circumstance, seeing the son provided the tenants an opportunity to think of possessing the vineyard. This assimilation is strengthened by the use of *ὑστερον* (vv.29.37). Also, the fact that the Matthean tenants said in themselves "*εἶπον ἐν ἑαυτοῖς*" against Mk's tenants who said to one another (*πρὸς ἑαυτούς*) shows a connection with 21:25, where the Jewish leaders manifested their political expediency by speaking to themselves (*διελογίζοντο ἐν ἑαυτοῖς*). The use of 'said in themselves' also recalls Mt 9:6; 16:7; 8:21.25; and 24:48, passages which refer to opponents or wicked individuals. It thus shows the

⁶⁸ Mt 7x; Mk 1x; Lk 1x.

⁶⁹ cf. Mt's application of the adjective to Jesus in 3:17; 12:18; 17:5.

⁷⁰ For example, Snodgrass has argued that Mk took pains to point out that this is the only son and that he was sent last (*ἔσχατον*). Lk emphasized the son by reserving death for him and by using the climactic three plus one formula. While Mk and Lk made certain of the identity of the son, no attempt to emphasize him was made by Mt. Since neither Mt nor the early Church wanted to play down Christology, Snodgrass comes to the conclusion that the Matthean tradition preceded those of Mk and Lk. K. Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 59. He argues further that the term *υἱὸς ἀγαπητός* is used by all three synoptics of Jesus in the accounts of the baptism and transfiguration. Apart from these two instances, the other time *ἀγαπητός* occurs in the Synoptics is in the application of Isa. 42:1 to Jesus (Mt 12:18). Thus, if the tradition Mt used for this parable had *ἀγαπητός*, he would probably not have omitted it.

⁷¹ E.g., Th. De Kruijf, *Der Sohn*, 140; H-J. Klauck, *Allegorie*, 291.

⁷² This grammatical aim has been argued by W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.182 n. 48.

⁷³ Though instead of *ἰδόντες τὸν υἱὸν* Lk has *ἰδόντες δὲ αὐτὸν*.

⁷⁴ That the minor agreements are due to Matthean influence see for example, R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 426-29. That they are a product of independent redactions by the evangelists, see A. Ennulat, *Agreements*, 266.

Jewish leaders as having the same traits as the tenants since Mt has already shown them to be crafty conspirators. Mt's addition of *αὐτοῦ*, in the clause *καὶ σχῶμεν τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ* (v.38), stresses the relation between the inheritance and the son.⁷⁵

There is also a minor agreement between Mt and Lk in that the two evangelists reverse Mk's order of the killing and the casting of the son out of the vineyard to the effect that in the Matthean and Lukan tradition, the son was cast out before being killed.⁷⁶ If Mt wants to identify the son with Jesus, this then coheres with the historical fact that Jesus was executed outside the city of Jerusalem.⁷⁷ But this is only on the supposition that the vineyard refers to Jerusalem.⁷⁸ It could also be that Mt intends that the tenants would not want to desecrate the vineyard by killing someone in it.⁷⁹

4.3.1.4 Question to the opponents

Again, at the end of the parable, Mt agrees with Mk that Jesus poses a question to the Jewish leaders thus: *τί [οὖν] ποιήσῃ ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος; // ὅταν οὖν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος, τί ποιήσῃ τοῖς γεωργοῖς ἐκείνοις; Mt 21:40//Mk 12:9*. The introduction of Mt's question beginning with *ὅταν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος* corresponds with the remark (cf. Mt 21:33//Mk 12:1) that the vineyard owner journeyed and has been operating through the agency of his slaves. Mk's account gives the impression that the vineyard owner continues to act from a distance. The Matthean use of *ὅταν* in this verse is paralleled in 19:28 (as an insertion) and 25:31 (a unique passage). This addition modifies Mk's abrupt *τί [οὖν] ποιήσῃ ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος*. Here also Mt inserts *ἐκείνοις* to Mk's *τοῖς γεωργοῖς*. This insertion of *ἐκείνοις* also has the effect of intensifying the guilt of the tenants or at least focusing squarely on them.⁸⁰

4.3.1.5 Answer to the question

In the answer to the above question, Mt 21:41//Mk 12:9 agree that the landowner will punish the tenants. Although the terms of the punishment differ, they share some words: *ἀπολέσει, καὶ τὸν ἀμπελῶνα, [ἐκ]δώσε[ται] ἄλλοις*. And in the rhetorical

⁷⁵ Some expressions here recall the OT. For e.g., 'this is the heir recalls Gen 15:4 and also Heb 1:2; 'let us kill him' recalls Gen 37:20.

⁷⁶ For this as appropriate for the sin of blasphemy see E. Lohmeyer/W. Schmauch, *Matthäus*, 313. This argument is based on Lev 24:14. It is possible that Mt's verse was influenced by Lk since Lk seems to be interested in this motif in the life of Jesus (Lk 4:29: *ἐξέβαλον αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς πόλεως*) and in the passion of Stephen (Acts 7:57: *καὶ ἐξβαλόντες ἔξω τῆς πόλεως*). Cf. H-J. Klauck, *Allegorie*, 290.

⁷⁷ So C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 130; J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 71; E. E. Ellis, *Luke*, 232; J. Schniewind, *Markus*, 153.

⁷⁸ S. Pederson, "zum Problem der vaticinia ex eventu," 171; H. Marshall, *Luke*, 731.

⁷⁹ A. T. Cadoux, *Parables*, 40. K. Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 60f, remarks that if the tenants had been concerned with laws of cleanliness, they would have thrown the son out before killing him since it is normal procedure to expel a person before killing him. Cf. 1 Kgs 21:13; Lk 4:29; Acts 7:58. But leaving the body unburied as implied by Mk would be a case of desecration. See D. Daube, *New Testament*, 302.

⁸⁰ J. Jeremias asserted that both the question and answer are secondary since the question refers back to LXX form of Isa 5 while the Hebrew text of Isa 5 does not have a question. See his *Gleichnisse*, 72. But K. Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 61 rightly observes that Jeremias has made a mistake since there is not a question in the LXX at Isa 5:5 but in Isa 5:4 where both the Hebrew and LXX texts have a question.

question concerning the knowledge of the Scriptures Mt21:42//Mk 12:10, Mt follows Mk but replaces Mk's *οὐδέ* with the more emphatic *οὐδέποτε* and Mk's singular *τὴν γραφὴν ταύτην* with the plural *ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς*.⁸¹ The use of *οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε* (a negative immediately before *ἀνέγνωτε*) is also characteristic Matthean.⁸² The beginning of the OT quotation is in word for word agreement between Mt and Mk. Mt agrees with Mk against Lk about the subject of turning the rejected stone to the cornerstone (*παρὰ κυρίου*). The Markan version ends with the exaltation of the rejected stone. But there is a minor agreement between Mt 21:44 and Lk 20:17d-18 against Mk as to what becomes of the one who encounters this stone, namely, *...τούτον συνθλασθήσεται· ἐφ' ὃν δ' ἂν πέσῃ λικμηῆσει αὐτόν*. I see this as a major shift of emphasis from the stone to those that encounter it. But the remainder of the answer in the Matthean version must be seen as Mt's redaction.

4.3.1.6 Contrast between the crowds and the leaders

At the end of the parable and its application, Mt agrees with Mk on the reaction of the hearers. While the Jewish leaders intend to arrest Jesus, they were held back by the crowds' high esteem of him as a prophet. But Mk's unidentified subjects of 12:12 are identified in Mt 21:45 as *οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς*, (cp. vv 15:23), and *οἱ φαρισαῖοι*. They are also the ones who knew that the parable was spurn against them. This sharpens Mt's critique against the Jewish leadership which is at the heart of the trilogy.

4.3.2 THE MATTHEAN REDACTION

Already the hand of Mt has been seen in his version of the parable even in the places he seems to agree with Mk. But his theological and polemic interests are shown more in the motifs he has added and some of the ones he has removed from the tradition available to him. In his redactional efforts, Mt makes use of additions and subtractions from his Markan source. I will begin with the substantial redactions.

4.3.2.1 The introduction

The first Matthean word in the parable (*ἄλλην*) counts as an addition and is to be seen as a Mattheanism.⁸³ The same can also be said of *ἀκούσατε*.⁸⁴ In the introduction of the parable, Mt omits the Markan *καὶ ἤρξατο αὐτοῖς...* (Mk 12:1), beginning rather with *ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε...* (Mt 21:33). The Matthean introduction shows the parable as a continuation of the preceding discussion between Jesus and the Jewish leaders,⁸⁵ and as a continuation of the previous parable of the Two Sons. Mk, who does not have the parable of the Two Sons, consequently does not have Mt's introduction. The *ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε* of Mt compares with 13:18 (Mt's

⁸¹ This tendency to use the plural is also seen in Mt 22:29//Mk 12:24; Mt 26:54 and Mt 26:56//Mk 14:49.

⁸² The use of *οὐκ/οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε* is Mt 6; Mk 2; Lk Lk 0. This already occurred in Mt a few verses earlier (21:16). In Mt, when Jesus speaks to the crowds, he uses 'you have heard.' But when he speaks to the leaders he says, 'have you not read.' (cf. 5:21-48; 19:4; 21:16.42; 22:31).

⁸³ Mt 14; Mk 4.

⁸⁴ Mt 26; Mk 6.

⁸⁵ This is the third vineyard parable in Mt and its opening recalls 20:1.

distinctive introduction to the explanation of the parable of the Sower), and 13:24.31.33 (which are without parallels).⁸⁶

Although we encounter the actual use of *ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε/παρέθρημεν/ἐλάλησεν* only in four parables (Mt 13:24.31.33; 21:33), the use of *ἀκούω* and *συνίημι* is overwhelming in Mt's parable narrative. For instance *ἀκουέτω* is evidenced in the parables of The Sower and The Tares, *ὑμεῖς οὖν ἀκούσατε τὴν παραβολὴν* (13:9.43), at the outset of the explanation of the parable of The Sower *ἀκούσατε τὴν παραβολὴν τοῦ σπείραντος* (13:18), at the introduction to the parabolic saying about defilement *ἀκούετε καὶ συνίετε* (15:10), the introduction to the parable of the Wicked Tenants *ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε* (21:33) and the remark at its conclusion *καὶ ἀκούσαντες οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι...* (21:45). These give the two expressions *ἀκουέτω* and *συνίημι* a close functional connection and point to the fact that Mt's gospel may have been designed "for oral performance, not for silent personal reading."⁸⁷

4.3.2.2 The respondents to Jesus' question

But the most important addition seems to begin from Mt 21:41 (cp. Mk 12:9b). Here Mt's addition of *λέγουσιν αὐτῷ* puts the answer to the preceding question of v.40 in the mouth of the Jewish leaders, just as he did in the first parable, thereby stressing their blindness to their own sins.⁸⁸ This asyndetic construction is a Matthean characteristic way of enlivening debate.⁸⁹ The fact that Mt alone allows the Jewish leaders to supply the answer could be a way of intensifying the charge against them.⁹⁰ This sharpens the Matthean narrative more as a classical parable.⁹¹ Not only did the Jewish leadership supply the answer in the Matthean version, the answer given is markedly different from that of Mk. Mk simply had Jesus respond 'he will come and destroy the tenants, and give the vineyard to others.' But Mt begins with a description of the nature and fate of the tenants with *κακούς κακῶς* with the implication that since they have been doing evil, they will now experience evil.⁹² The echo of the destruction of Jerusalem seems to be present here.⁹³ The expression *λέγουσιν αὐτῷ* also alludes to v.31b, which reports the answer of the Jewish leaders to the question posited by Jesus in v.31a. As already noted, this a characteristic Matthean use of the historic present with asyndeton.

⁸⁶ R. Bultmann sees it as an editorial introduction sentence by Mt. *Geschichte*, 352.

⁸⁷ See G. N. Stanton, *Gospel*, 73-76; B. M. W. Knox, *History*, 7-10. For the overwhelming presence of Mt's vocabulary in this parable see U. Luz, *Matthäus*, I.57-77 and III.216-17, n.4.

⁸⁸ This allusion that the Jewish leaders are blind is once more referred to in 15:14; 23:16.17.19.24.26.

⁸⁹ See J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 187f.

⁹⁰ This element of interlocution is also present in Mt 12:11-12/Mk 3:1-6 where Mt allows his opponents to posit a question and then responds to it unlike in Mk where the opponents remain silent throughout.

⁹¹ K. Snodgrass sees this as keeping with classic parable form. See his *Wicked Tenants*, 61. Also C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 127. H. J. Klauck points out that a parable ending with a rhetorical question answered by the person who asked it is a singular phenomenon. See his *Allegorie*, 288.

⁹² For this expression as a classicism see J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 186, n. 42. For the expression as pre-Matthean see S. V. Tillborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 57.

⁹³ So C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 128.

4.3.2.3 The transfer of the kingdom

The second part of the answer (Mt 21:41c//Mk 12:9c) shows what would happen to the vineyard: it would be given to a new group. Mt adds *γεωργοῖς* (tenants) to qualify the new group. He also adds what is expected of this new group “*οἵτινες ἀποδώσουσιν αὐτῷ τοὺς καρπούς ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτῶν*” (who will give to him the fruits in their seasons). This points again to Mt’s insistence on the need to bear fruit and alludes to the culpability of the tenants since the time of fruit bearing had already come (21:34) yet the tenants remained unfruitful (21:41). Hence, the only thing that awaits them is judgment.⁹⁴ *Ἐκδίδωμι* recalls 21:33 (the only other occurrence of the word in Mt), and highlights what the other two parables of the trilogy maintain, namely, that the first group called are less worthy than the second. The answer confirms that the wish of the vineyard owner, expressed in v.34 would eventually be realised, just as the wish of the father who had a marriage feast for his son in the next parable would be fulfilled despite all odds.

The action of taking away of the kingdom and giving it to a nation producing its fruit, which Mt inserts in v.43 (with echoes in 13:12 and 25:28-9), appear to be the most important adaptation Mt made to this parable. Mt’s acceptance/rejection antithesis manifests strongly with the addition of this verse, which I think is very important for the understanding of the parable and the whole Matthean gospel.⁹⁵ Perhaps Mt’s introduction of the concept of *ethnos* shows not only his distinctive understanding of this parable but also the whole of the Jesus’ message.

For R. T. France, “the mention of another “nation” to replace “you” in the tenancy of the vineyard takes us to the heart of the issue of the true Israel which underlies this whole section of the Gospel, and in conjunction with the other two parables in the group it enables the reader to reach a far-reaching understanding of what the vineyard parable implies rather is possible from Mark and Luke when they record it alone.”⁹⁶ It could be argued that the motif of producing good fruit which appears

⁹⁴ W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 115 has seen in this parable an allusion to Psalm 1, with the sharp distinction it draws between the two ways and their destinies. Those who are blessed (v.1), the righteous (v.6), like trees that yield fruit in due season, prosper in whatever they do (v.3). On the contrary, the godless (v.4), the sinners (v.5), are like chaff, which the wind drives from the face of the earth (v.4). He then concludes: “the failure of the first tenants to yield fruit marks them as those who walk not the first path, but the second.”

⁹⁵ Already the redactional introductions to vv.34 and 41 seem to have prepared the reader for the present verse. So also W. J. C. Weren, “The Use of Isaiah,” 22.

⁹⁶ R. T. France, 808. A. Plummer argues thus: “...whatever may be Mt’s authority for this verse (43), there is no doubt that it is part of the original text of this Gospel. That cannot be asserted of the next verse (44). These words also are not found in Mk, but they are found (with the insertion of his characteristic *πάντες*) in Lk... It is perhaps possible that they are a very early gloss in Mt., and thence passed to Lk., but no sure conclusion can be reached. They are wanting in D 33 Syr-Sin. and important Old Latin authorities, and they read more like comment than an original saying.” He sees in the stone quotation a coming together of the stone of Isa 8:14-15 and that of Dan 2:34.44- 45. See his *Matthew*, 299. For Allen, it is not very probable that after thus interpreting the parable and closing the narrative the editor would have added v.44, which carries the thought back again to v.42. But a later copyist of the gospel has been reminded by the word *ἔθνη* v.43 of a passage in Dan 2:44 where it is said that the kingdom shall not be left to another people; *ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ λαῶν ἐτέρων οὐκ ὑπολειφθήσεται*.... Whilst considering this contrast, his eye was caught by the next clause in Dan,

in this verse places it in a central position in the interpretation of the parable and this cluster of parables, if not the entire Matthean Gospel.⁹⁷ Hence, I will later take a special interest in Mt's understanding of the concept *ἐξυμει*.

This verse could be pointing to the separation between the Matthean Church and Judaism while holding the Jewish leadership responsible for this break. This is a point I will return to later.

4.3.2.4 The reaction to the parable

Finally to be noted are Mt's redaction of the reason for the fear of the chief priests and Pharisees in arresting Jesus: *ἐπεὶ εἰς προφήτην αὐτὸν εἶχον*, "since [the crowds] held him to be a prophet" (v.46), rather than Mk's notion that the opponents of Jesus were afraid because they know the parable was told against them. For Mt, the Jewish leaders feared the crowd because the crowd held Jesus as a prophet, just as they held John. This redaction by Mt (that the crowds held Jesus as a prophet) links the second parable once more to the Two Sons in the high esteem of The Baptist and to the question of authority (21:14.15). This final verse has further links with 2:1-3 where the birth of Jesus and the reaction of Herod are narrated. If the son of the vineyard owner is an allegorical representation of Jesus, then the link between Jesus and The Baptist is once more strengthened and implies that Jesus is more than a prophet. And if the Jewish leaders realised truly that Jesus told the parable against them, then he has answered their question of authority. This means that the conclusion of the parable recognises that the Jewish leaders heard Jesus' parable, recalling the charge at the beginning of the parable. But the action they proposed to carry out (to arrest him) reveals that on a higher level they have failed to grasp the meaning of the parable. They now confirm what has been identified as Jesus' reason for speaking in parables, that is, *ὅτι βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ συνίουσιν*. (Mt 13:13).⁹⁸ The Matthean version, therefore, increases the allegory and the polemics against the Jewish leaders.⁹⁹

4.3.3 STYLISTIC DIFFERENCES

Whereas Mk begins with Jesus speaking *ἐν παραβολαῖς* (in parables) and narrates only one parable, Mt begins with the singular *παραβολήν*. Since Mt uses Mk, then the use of "*ἐν παραβολαῖς*" in Mk, while he gives only one parable could have given Mt the spur to add the other two parables to this pericope. This agrees with Mt's duplication of his Markan source. Also Mk's simple *ἄνθρωπος* becomes *ἄνθρωπος*

λεπτινεῖ καὶ λικηθήσει πάσας τὰς βασιλείας. This afforded him the nucleus of an explanatory gloss of v.44, which he has built up out of Dan 2:15. W. C. Allen, Matthew, 233.

⁹⁷ The need to bear fruit is also present in Mt3:8-10/Lk 3:8-9; Mt 7:16-20; Mt 12:33/Lk 6:43-4; Mt 13 8//Mk 13:8; Mt 13:26; 21:41.

⁹⁸ For C. S. Keener, Matthew, 516, the actions of the Jewish leaders is in tandem with their character in the gospel of Mt.

⁹⁹ Despite the supposition of K. Snodgrass, Wicked Tenants, 70 that the Matthean version preserves the earliest account till the Psalm quotation.

οἰκοδεσπότης. The introduction of *οἰκοδεσπότης* reflects Mt's hand.¹⁰⁰ The advance of *ἄνθρωπος* to the first position links the word to its first position in the previous parable (cf. v.28), while the insertion of *ὅστις* is Matthean.¹⁰¹

In Mt 21:34//Mk 12:12 Mt expands Mk's simple (τῷ) *καιρῷ* (lit. "in the season") to *ὅτε δὲ ἤγγισεν ὁ καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν*. It could allude to 21:1 (*ὅτε ἤγγισαν*), where Jesus drew near to Jerusalem. It could also be a reflection of Mt's interest in the imminence of eschatology.¹⁰² This point is supported by the fact that many of the special Matthean parables focus on eschatology and the call to be ready for the master's return.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, this expression could also be a re-introduction of the Markan remark (11:13) that "it was not the time for figs" which Mt initially omitted. It therefore appears that it is high time that the Jewish leaders produced fruit.¹⁰⁴

This stylistic redaction is again seen in v.36 where Mt deletes *καὶ* and *πρὸς αὐτούς* as unnecessary and continues the pluralisation of the servants. Mt's second group of servants is described with the comparative *ἄλλους δούλους πλείονας τῶν πρώτων*,¹⁰⁵ which replaces Mk's simple *καὶ πολλούς ἄλλους*, (Mk 12:4). Both *πλείονας* and *πρώτων* are Mattheanisms. Furthermore, whereas Mk refers again specifically to the beating and killing of these other servants,¹⁰⁶ Mt characteristically abbreviates with the words *καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτοῖς ὡσαύτως*, (v.36), reflecting a resonance with the first parable where the father said likewise to the second son. The Matthean reworking avoids the Markan anticlimax where many others were sent after reaching a climax of sending away, putting to shame and killing of the servants.

In narrating the reaction of Jesus' opponents (Mt 21:45//Mk 12:12), Mt changes Mk's *πρὸς αὐτούς* with the stronger *περὶ αὐτῶν* while Mk's *εἶπεν* is again replaced with

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Mt 10:25; 13:27; 20:1.11. For the allegorical implication of the Matthean word see A. Ogawa, "Paraboles," 127-28.

¹⁰¹ Mt 23x; Mk 5x.

¹⁰² W. G. Olmstead has argued that the word *ἐγγίζω* has been used in Mt in salvation-historical contexts. In its first three occurrences the kingdom is its subject and the phrase in which it occurs summarizes the preaching of Jesus and John (3:2; 4:17; 10:7). At 21:1 the word signals Jesus' approach into Jerusalem. It also signals the hour of his betrayal (26:45) and the hour of his betrayer (26:46). See his *Trilogy*, 111.

¹⁰³ By way of illustration, the parable of the Seed Growing Secretly (Mk 4:26-29) is not found in Mt. In its place, Mt has the parable of the Tares (13:24-30). The parable of the Tares seems to be a development of the parable of Mk 4:26-29 since they make the same point and seem to have the same background and language. See H. J. Holzmann, *Hand-Kommentar*, 243. But as is typical with Mt, the parable of the Tares has a grander scale, an interest in angels and hell, etc, all of which are very Matthean. This tendency to rewrite Markan parables is also shown in the absence of the parable of the doorkeeper (Mk 13). Mt has replaced it with a series of parables: The Burglar (Mt 24:43-44); The Faithful and Unfaithful Servants (Mt 24:45-51), The Bridesmaids (Mt 25:1-13), and the Talents (Mt 25:14-30). All of these have the same concept-watch. G. D. Kilpatrick suggests that through church use, preaching and so on, these parables gathered in a cluster and pushed out the little doorkeeper. See his *Origin*, 89.

¹⁰⁴ Although Mk did not speak of a season of fruits at 12:2, some scholars think that Mt only reworked this traditional material since *καιρὸς* and *καρπός* form part of his vocabulary here. See for e.g. G. Stanton, *New People*, 331-32; R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 425.

¹⁰⁵ Could this refer to the fact that the latter prophets are more numerous than the former? At least this idea seems to be gleaned from Jer 7:25-26.

¹⁰⁶ A. Plummer, *Matthew*, 297, thinks that the third messenger and subsequent messengers who are killed in Mk is a representation nearer to historic fact.

the historic present λέγει. It has been suggested that Mt has placed the clauses in v.46 in logical order: (a) the motive, ‘they perceived that He spoke about them’; (b) the consequent action, ‘seeking to arrest him’; (c) the hindrance, ‘they feared the people.’ The ἔγνωσαν γὰρ of Mk explains not the immediately preceding clause, but ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν κρατῆσαι. Then to maintain the external form of Mk’s sentence, he adds another clause stating the ground of ἐφοβήθησαν ὄχλους (because they held him as a prophet).¹⁰⁷ At the end of the story, Mt omits Mk’s καὶ ἀφέντες αὐτὸν ἀπῆλθον, “and leaving him, they departed” because Mt has yet a third parable addressed to them.¹⁰⁸

From the foregoing, one can thus say that the most radical reworking of the parable in Mt is to be seen in the application of the parable, especially in the placing of the answer to the question of Jesus on the lips of the Jewish leadership in v.41 and in the introduction of the concept of ἔθνος to whom the kingdom would be given (v.43).¹⁰⁹ Hence, instead of a stress on the vindication of the rejected stone, Mt stresses the transfer of the kingdom. The implication is that Mt emphasises an outline of salvation-history.¹¹⁰ Trilling has already explained how Mt 21:43 is to be understood as showing the self awareness of the Matthean community,¹¹¹ a point to which I shall return later. Apart from this, there is also a stress on the need to bear fruit or to render the fruit of the kingdom, which, as we shall see later implies judgement for the new people to whom the care of the kingdom has been entrusted.¹¹² However, the whole section has shown the evidence of Matthean redaction. The fact that the parable has been shaped by Matthean intents and vocabulary can also be shown by the apparent tensions and contradictions in the story.

4.3.4 TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

Already the Mattheanism of the second parable of the trilogy has been highlighted through the synoptic comparison. Apart from the presence of this parable in Mk, a look at the tensions and contradictions in the parable could shed more light on the fact that Mt’s version is a reworking of his Markan source.

(i) Just like the application of the parable of the Two Sons, the application of the present parable, especially v.42 seems to stand at a certain tension to the preceding narrative. This verse moves the parable from the realm of vineyard planting and harvesting to building and construction.¹¹³

(ii) But from v.43 the parable changes again from vineyard planting or construction to kingdom. And in this verse, what would be taken ἀφ’ ὑμῶν ‘from you’

¹⁰⁷ W. C. Allen, *Matthew*, 233f. The mention of ὄχλοι takes the mind back to Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem. Then the conclusion of the parable confirms that the people see Jesus in the same light as The Baptist. It seems also that the crowds’ perception is concretized in the parable.

¹⁰⁸ See D. A. Hagner, *Matthew* II.618.

¹⁰⁹ See W. Trilling, *Israel*, 2, n.1. He argues that the guilt of Israel and the loss of the kingdom of God by the original owners are the most important Matthean redactions.

¹¹⁰ See R. J. Dillon, *The Parables of the True Israel*, 19; J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 75.

¹¹¹ W. Trilling, *Israel*, 154.

¹¹² G. Strecker also shares this view. See his *Der Weg*, 111.

¹¹³ For the view that Mt has added discrepant foreign *nimshalim* to the *mashal* of this parable, see P. L. Culbertson, *A Word Fitly Spoken*, 219-29.

and given ἔθνηι ‘to a nation’ producing its fruit is not the vineyard but rather the kingdom of God.¹¹⁴ This reversal of expectations therefore links the parable with that of the Two Sons where the prostitutes and toll-gatherers enter the kingdom before the Jewish leadership. Hence, the concept of reversal is once more extolled and the theme of fruit-bearing strengthened (cp. Mt 3:10).

(iii) Also the use of βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is non-Matthean.¹¹⁵ It could thus have been influenced by the language of the parable of the Two Sons (v.31) which has also been shown to contain non-Matthean language.

(iv) While the stress of the parable is the rendering of fruit, v.43 introduces the concept of producing fruit.¹¹⁶

(iv) Again the position of v.44 after v.43 (to the effect that the kingdom saying is sandwiched between two stone sayings) blurs the message of these three verses.

(v) Moreover, the ἀρθῆσεται-δοθῆσεται schema is traditional.¹¹⁷

(vi) The use of ἔθνος in v.43 is in the singular while Mt normally uses it in the plural.¹¹⁸

(vii) Finally, It is evident that the encounter narrated by Mt 21:23-22:22 started with Jesus and the chief priests and the elders (see 21:23). But in 21:45, this group is replaced by the chief priests and the Pharisees. This is a definite contradiction in the story.¹¹⁹

As already shown, the parable of the Wicked Tenants appears in a short logion in the Gospel of Thomas 65, which seems not to have much allegorical references. This, plus the fact that the psalm quotation comes in the next logion is seen by Fitzmeyer as justification for not seeing the quotation as an original part of the parable and for considering the Thomistic version as more original.¹²⁰ This view is shared by many others¹²¹ although dissident voices abound.¹²² The most important analysis of the Thomas’ account of the parable seems to be that of J. M. Severin.¹²³ I rather think that Thomas’

¹¹⁴ W. C. Allen, *Matthew*, 232, argues that the phrase βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is here more appropriate as the characteristic βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν because Mt has always employed the latter in his Gospel for the eschatological kingdom which Christ announced. Since this kingdom has never been in the possession of the Jewish leaders, it cannot be taken from them.

¹¹⁵ Βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ: Mt 4x; Mk 14x; Lk 32x. Βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν: Mt 33x. For the view that Mt combines elements of tradition with the influence of 21:31 see A. Ogawa, “Parables,” 130.

¹¹⁶ Cf. E. Lohmeyer/W. Schmauch, *Matthäus*, 315.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Mt 13:12//Mk 4:25//Lk 8:18; Mt 25:29//Lk 19:26

¹¹⁸ G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 169,n.4 argues that v.43 contains non-Matthean vocabulary that it cannot be attributed to the first evangelist.

¹¹⁹ Further tensions in the story have been listed by K Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 31.

¹²⁰ See J. A. Fitzmeyer, *Luke*, II.1280f, who felt that Thomas preserves the earliest tradition.

¹²¹ For e.g., C. S. Mann, *Mark*, 462; W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.187.

¹²² E.g., H. F. Bayer, *Jesus’ Prediction*, 96f; R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 683. K. Snodgrass argues that the account in the Gospel of Thomas is a secondary account based on orality from three reasons: (i) verbal contacts with Lk, (ii) the evidence from the old Syriac Gospels that Thomas represents a harmonizing tendency in Syria, and (iii) the attachment of Ps 118:22 as the next logion in Thomas, even though the writer does not understand the connection. See his *Wicked Tenants*, 52-54.

¹²³ He analysed the grouping of three parables in Thomas in logia 63-65, namely, the Rich Fool, the Great Banquet, and the Wicked Tenants. The introduction to these parables is the same: ‘a man had...’ The purpose of Thomas seems to be to show the futility of any attempt to amass wealth since riches are impediment to salvation. Sevrin argues that Thomas has altered the parable of the Wicked Tenants by focusing on the servant’s lack of knowledge and the tenants’ possession of knowledge. Because of

version can be posited as a deallegorizing effort.¹²⁴ Although no assured conclusion seems to be in sight in this regard, it is indisputable that Mt has reworked an original story which he found in his Markan tradition to serve his theological needs.

4.3.5 IMPLICATION

The conclusion, therefore, is that Mt has reworked this parable present in his source and given it a distinctive allegorical interpretation focusing on the production of fruit and increasing the polemic bent against the Jewish leaders. The remarks of Kloppenborg can be quoted here with approval: “Matthew’s version of the story can be accounted for solely by positing Mark as his literary source and appealing to an array of redactional alterations which are attested elsewhere in his gospel. Improved connectives, condensation, the elimination of parataxis, the enhancement of dialogue and a substantial set of vocabularic and syntactic preferences are all characteristic of Matthew’s verbal art. The editing of the parable emphasizes the owner’s (=God’s) proprietary interest in the ‘harvest’, which likely refers to good works or righteousness. Finally, Matthew has heightened the polemic against the priestly elite by his addition of v.43, by casting the tenants (=the priestly elite) more clearly in the role of those who reject and persecute the prophets...and by sharpening the distinction between the elite and the crowds.”¹²⁵

Nonetheless, the explanation of the parable would take into consideration that it is constructed with traditional metaphors of “vineyard,” “workers,” “slaves,” and “son.” The exploration of these metaphors forms the next chapter of this work. But I will proceed by investigating the frames of the parable.

4.4 THE FRAMES OF THE PARABLE

Here I will look at the form of the parable with regard to the narrative materials employed therein. Just as in the second chapter this will take into consideration the introduction of the parable and its conclusion, as well as the narrative materials, including the Scriptural citation which the parable employs. The aim is to see their function in the Matthean parable corpus. As already said at the beginning of the chapter, we are dealing with a parable, (vv.33b-39) sandwiched between parabolic signals. These signals include the introduction *ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε* (v.33a), a question and answer beginning with *ὅταν οὖν ἔλθῃ ὁ κύριος τοῦ ἀμπελῶνος* (v.40f) that

the importance of knowledge in Thomas’ composition, this makes the tenants positive characters and the servants negative characters. See J. M. Severin, “Un Groupment,” 425-39. W. G. Morrice attempted to counter the evidence of the Syriac Gospels by suggesting that they have been shaped by Thomas. Cf. his “The Parable of the Tenants,” 106.

¹²⁴ Cf. A. Ennulat, *Agreements*, 263.

¹²⁵ J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 197. For a possible reconstruction of the original form of this parable, see M. Hubaut, *La Parabole*, 131f. His reconstruction sees Mt’s two groups of slaves (21:34.36) not as a redactional abridgment of Mk’s three slaves, but a reflection of the original structure of the parable, which had two individual slaves followed directly by the son. For him the original Matthean version converted the two slaves into two groups of slaves, thinking of them as the prophets as the phrase testifies ‘some they killed and others they stoned’ (21:35). See also B. M. F. van Iersel, “Der Sohn,” 132-141; J. Lambrecht, *Treasure*, 113.

introduce the application beginning with *διὰ τοῦτο* (v.43). Further, our parable has a Scriptural citation introducing the rejected stone (v.42), the application of the parable (v.43), the significance of the rejected stone (v.44), and the reaction to the parable and its application (vv.45-46). These correspond to the five elements identified in rabbinic parables.¹²⁶ But to be analysed here as parabolic signals include the introduction and the conclusion. Though the introduction and the conclusion of the parable assume a clearer function in the classification of the parable, the scriptural citation also helps in its understanding.¹²⁷ This is a point I will return to in the next chapter.

4.4.1 THE NARRATIVE INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the second parable of the trilogy *ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἀκούσατε* (21:33) falls into the imperative introductions in the Matthean corpus. J. Jeremias classifies it, together with the introduction to our first parable, under the category Nominative introduction. His definition of it as ‘reine Erzählung ohne jede Einleitungsformel’¹²⁸ has been questioned.¹²⁹ Here, Mt puts the expression on the mouth of Jesus, what in Mk 12:1 appears as a narrative introduction of the evangelist (*καὶ ἤρξατο αὐτοῖς ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖν*). Since it is the Matthean Jesus that designates the story as a parable, one gets the impression that Mt intends to use the story as a fulfilment of the words already spoken by Jesus. But the real introduction to the parable begins from v.33b with the words *ἄνθρωπος ἦν οἰκοδεσπότης*. That means that, just like the first story of the trilogy, what we have here corresponds to what Jülicher calls a *Parabel* shown by the fact that it does not depict and everyday occurrence.¹³⁰

Further introductory parabolic imperatives in Mt include *ἀκούετε καὶ συνίετε* (15:10),¹³¹ *ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς συκῆς μάθετε τὴν παραβολὴν* (24:32), and *ἐκεῖνο δὲ γινώσκετε ὅτι* (24:43). From the above, it could be seen that Mt uses the imperatives as an invitation to his addressees to listen to the parable that is about to be narrated to them. The fact that in Mt’s account, the imperative is put in the mouth of Jesus and that in Mt alone Jesus allows the religious elite to supply the answer to the question of 21:40 (already seen in 21:31) makes it possible that the imperative has a special argumentative weight in Mt.¹³²

¹²⁶ See R. Johnston, “Parabolic Traditions,” 164-66.

¹²⁷ Following J. D. Crossan, In Parables, 90, J. D. Hester, “Socio-Rhetorical,” 31, argues that the use of Ps 118 changes the conclusion of the story from one of revenge to one of triumph.

¹²⁸ J. Jeremias, Gleichnisse, 99.

¹²⁹ See C. Münch, Gleichnisse, 129.

¹³⁰ See A. Jülicher, Gleichnisse, II.402. Also R. Bultmann, Geschichte, 191.

¹³¹ Just like our present parable, this section of Mt attacks the Pharisaic tradition using the Scriptures. See W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, II.517.

¹³² The above imperative usages can be encapsulated in the one big picture of the fulfilment of the will and power of God “und ihre Verwirklichung in der Geschichte, die zu erkennen und angemessen zu interpretieren sind.” See C. Münch, Gleichnisse, 156.

4.4.2 THE CONCLUSION OF THE PARABLE

The conclusion of the parable, just like that of the Two Sons, falls under the parables that end with a question.¹³³ This question begins with *τί ποιήσει ...* (v.40b). As already noted, the fact that Mt allows the Jewish leaders to supply the answer to this question reveals the juridical nature of the parable. This is then confirmed by the notice that the Jewish leaders tried to arrest him (v.46). The conclusion also begins the application of the parable which is introduced with *διὰ τοῦτο* (therefore) and can be said to show the continuity between the narrative and the application.¹³⁴ This means that our parable has a deductive conclusion. But because of the absence of the comparative particle *ὅμοιος*, there is here no comparison between the *Bildhälfte* and the *tertium comparationis*. This again implies that what we have is a parable as against a simile. But it must be stated again that Mt does not make these formal distinctions. For him, these parables are historic allegories.

But Mt uses *διὰ τοῦτο* also in 24:44 (lacking in Lk 12:40).¹³⁵ In this case, the deductive particle implies that what has already been argued is the reason for what is about to be said.¹³⁶ This is also the case in our parable conclusion, where 21:43 harks back at vv.42 and 41 and refers the parable to the high priests and elders.¹³⁷ It could thus be concluded that the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to a fruit-bearing nation because of the lack of fruit of the leaders. In some cases however, the expression *διὰ τοῦτο* does not show a precise connection to the preceding argument as the following passages in Mt show 6:25; 12:31; 23:34.

4.5 CONCLUSION/LOOKING FORWARD

As already said, the Matthean parable of the Wicked Tenants is an allegory. Hence, the semantic word fields in it can reveal much about its metaphoric meaning in its Jewish background. For instance, the metaphor of fruit bearing belongs already in the OT and is always connected to the vineyard (already discussed in connection with the first parable). In the Wisdom Tradition, the one who bears fruit is always compared to the righteous one.¹³⁸ The Israelite prophets also reprimanded the people for not bearing the appropriate fruits.¹³⁹ This is also the case in extra-biblical writings of early Judaism.¹⁴⁰ The concept of fruit-bearing also has a connection to the concept

¹³³ For questions as signs of parables see R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 197; J. D. Crossan, "Wicked Husbandmen," 454.

¹³⁴ But see where Mt uses *διὰ τοῦτο* in two cases (13:52; 18:23) as part of parabolic introduction. See also 12:27.

¹³⁵ Cp. LXX Ex 19:15; 34:2

¹³⁶ Cp. Mt 14:2, where Herod thinks that Jesus is The Baptist come back to life *καὶ διὰ τοῦτο αἱ δυνάμεις ἐνεργοῦσιν ἐν αὐτῷ*.

¹³⁷ The presence of the introductory gloss can lead to the classification of v.43 as an independent logion. See R. Schnackenburg, *Gottes Herrschaft*, 167, who calls the introductory gloss „eine von Matthäus übernommene Formulierung.“

¹³⁸ Ex Ps 1:3; 92:13ff; Jer 17:7f.

¹³⁹ Cf. Isa 5:2-4; Jer 6:9-13; Mic 7:1, etc. There is also the concept of "the fruit of righteousness" (Prov 11:30), "fruit of the mouth" (Prov 12:14; 18:20), and "fruit of wisdom" (Sir 6:19; 24:12ff; 51:15). Cf. also Isa 3:10; Hos 10:13 and Prov 1:31.

¹⁴⁰ For e.g., 4 Ezra 3:20; 6:28.

of planting. This is especially evident in 21:33-34. It has a further connection with the vineyard. In the OT, God appears as the one who plants (Ps 80:9; Jer 2:21; Isa 5:2) and cares for the vineyard (Ps 80:10). Since the prophets always complain that the vineyard fails to bear fruit,¹⁴¹ it became an integral part of the judgement oracle against the people of God.¹⁴² The exchange in 21:41 and 21:43 between ‘vineyard’ and ‘the kingdom of God’ makes the connection between God and the vineyard stronger. This metaphoric connection is strengthened by the use of *κληρονόμος* and *κληρονομία* (21:38). In other places where Mt uses the verb *κληρονομέω* 5:5//diff Lk 6:20; 19:29//diff Mk 10:30; Mt 25:24//without par. it is always in an eschatological sense. This leads Münch to conclude that when one takes the metaphors of inheritance in the parable seriously, “dann besteht zum einen ein deutlicher futurisch-eschatologischer Akzent im Verständnis des Reich Gottes.”¹⁴³ It seems more appropriate, however, to argue that both the present and future aspects of the kingdom are in view in Mt’s narrative. But this is a conclusion that can only be assured in the next chapter.

Again the concept of *δούλος* is very regular in Mt’s parables, where it appears either as *dramatische Hauptfigur* (dHF) or as *dramatische Nebenfigur* (dNF). In the OT it is used as image for the pious¹⁴⁴ for Israel¹⁴⁵ for a great figure especially one of the patriarchs like Moses.¹⁴⁶ More especially, it refers to the prophets either as individuals or as a group.¹⁴⁷ The repeated sending and rejection of the *δούλους* in the parable gives the impression that Mt understands their significance in a special way. This is more so when attention is paid to the comments of 5:11 and 23:34-39 about the earlier persecution of the prophets. Although the OT is reticent about the murder of Prophets, some texts that hint at the persecution of the prophets include Neh 9:26; Hos 9:7-9; Jer 2:30. Steck has termed this concept “theologumenon vom gewaltsamen Geschick der Propheten.”¹⁴⁸ This *theologumenon* is also present in the extra-canonical book of Jubilees 1:12, in Josephus Flavius (Ant. 9:265-267; 10:38) and in some NT texts.

From the above, it could then be argued that with the inclusion of vv.34.36a.37.41.43, Mt employs the OT notion of God’s patience and the notion that the rejection of God’s message is the cause of the people’s punishment.¹⁴⁹ These

¹⁴¹ Cf. Jer 2:21; 8:13; Isa 5:2.4; 65:8, etc.

¹⁴² See Jer 8:12; 12:10; Hos 10:1. Some of the judgment oracles see God as the one who planted Israel in the land (Ex 15:17; 2 Sm 7:10; Isa 60:21; 61:3; Jer 32:41; 45:4; Am. 9:15).

¹⁴³ C. Münch, *Gleichnisse*, 190.

¹⁴⁴ Ps 19:12.14; 27:9; 31:17 etc;

¹⁴⁵ Especially in the prophet Isaiah (Isa 41:8f; 44:1-2.21; 45:4; 48:20) and the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 30:10; 46:27f).

¹⁴⁶ Ex 14:31; Num 12:7; Deut 34:5; Jos 1:1f.

¹⁴⁷ 1 Kgs 18:36; 2 Kgs 10:10; Isa. 20:10; Jer 25:4; Ezk 38:17; Am 3:7.

¹⁴⁸ O. H. Steck, *Israel*, 157-164. Some of the obvious reported cases of the murder of prophets include the relatively unknown Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada (2 Chr 24:20f) and Uriah (Jer 26:20). But the murder of prophets is common theme in the NT (cf. Mt 23: 31f; Acts 7: 52; Heb 11: 36-38; 1 Thes 2: 15).

¹⁴⁹ Cp. C. Münch, *Gleichnisse*, 204; O. H. Steck, *Israel*, 66-80. These ideas are captured in 2 Kgs 17:7-20; Jer 7:25ff; 2 Chr 36:14-16.

show how the parable is deeply rooted in its Jewish background.¹⁵⁰ In this connection, once the metaphors behind the concepts of vineyard, the tenants, slaves, and the son are identified, it is then easy to identify the intention of the parable especially in its Matthean version.¹⁵¹ But if these metaphors are not explored, then the parable could be reduced to a Christological debate aimed at the readers or hearers¹⁵² or would continue to be an enigma to parable interpreters.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ This represents the idea of such scholars like C. W. Hedrick whose central argument in his book *Parables as Poetic Fictions: The Creative Voice of Jesus*, (Peabody, 1994), is that the parables were non-referential “poetic fictions” that reflected the social world of the first century.

¹⁵¹ W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.176f argue that “our parable and its interpretation combine the traditional motif of the rejection and even murder of the prophets with the traditional metaphor of Israel as God’s vineyard. What is new is the joining of the two themes in the service of Christology: the rejection of Jesus is the climax in the story of rebellion against Israel’s God.” In this connection Jeremias offers this precise conclusion that in the allegorical meaning of the parable, the vineyard is clearly Israel, the tenants are Israel’s rulers and leaders, the owner of the vineyard is God, the messengers are the prophets, the son is Christ, the punishment of the husbandmen symbolizes the ruin of Israel while the ‘other people’ are the Gentile Church. J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 74. But it seems helpful to note that in the LXX, the word *δεσπότης* is used for God (Gen 15: 2.8; Jos 5: 14; Isa 10: 33 etc), while the word *οικοδεσπότης* does not occur.

¹⁵² Although the assertions of Fowler may be an over-statement, but his statements about the aim of the Gospel writers should be taken note of. In the case of Mk, he writes that the Gospel writer’s chief concern is not the fate of either Jesus or the Twelve in the story but the fate of the reader outside the story. R. M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*, 79.

¹⁵³ K. Snodgrass has described our parable as “an enigma to modern interpreters.” *Wicked Tenants*, 1. J. Ernst has earlier spoken of its mysterious character. *Der Weg Jesu*, 401.

CHAPTER 5
Mt 21:33-46: BACKGROUND AND MT'S INTERPRETATION

As I said in the previous chapter, the parable of the Wicked Tenants has been described as “the most difficult of the parables.”¹ Because of this it has received many treatments ranging from its classification as a full-scale allegory² to a downright rejection of any metaphoric elements in the parable. But it appears that the difficult nature of the parable arises from the fact that its interpretation has been based on two broad interpretive methods. On the one hand it can be interpreted in relation to its context in the wider Matthean pericope in which it can be called an allegory,³ or parable.⁴ This interpretation takes into cognisance the parable's apparent allusion to the Vineyard Song of Isa 5:1-7. On the other hand the parable can be interpreted divorced from its genre and context in the narrative. This approach leads to varied identifications of the elements in the parable and inevitably to myriad conclusions as we shall come to see.⁵ Though the comments of Taylor that “no allegorical significance belongs to the hedge, the pit, the winepress, the tower, the other country,⁶ the fruit, the exterior of the vineyard”⁷ may be true in some perspective, the question must be posited whether the non-allegorical function of an element or some elements in a parable means that none of the elements in the parable has representational significance. Consequently, the main line of argument of this section can be spelt out in these lines: “the significance that an item has, will have to be adequately based in the story itself and neither imposed from the outside nor removed without adequate grounds, but that an item may carry some significance is to be expected.”⁸

¹ C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 96.

² But see Stern's contention that “virtually all modern critical scholarship about the parables has proceeded from the nearly dogmatic position that the literary form of the parable is not allegorical.” D. Stern, *Parables*, 45.

³ So A. Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden I*.115f; II, 405; J. Wellhausen, *Markus*, 93; R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 191; E. Klostermann, *Markus*, 120; E. Lohmeyer, *Gleichnis*, 244; W. G. Kümmel, *Gleichnis*, 210; E. Haenchen, *Der Weg*, 396f; J. D. Crossan, *In Parables*, 86ff; M. Black, *Gleichnisse*, 273-5; C. E. B. Cranfield, *Mark*, 367.

⁴ So C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 97; V. Taylor, *Mark* 472f; J. M. D. Derrett, *Law*, 308; E. Linnemann, *Gleichnisse*, 17.

⁵ C. A. Evans, *Mark* 8:27-16:20, 224 comments that “having taken the parable out of its Markan/Synoptic context, these interpreters have no idea what the parable originally meant.” For example the parable has been seen as 1. a parable of a foolish and usurious landowner (J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 106-48); 2. a parable about the possible tragic fate of the kingdom (B. B. Scott, *Parables*, 253); 3. a tragic parable of the immoral choices of the tenants (J. D. Crossan, *In Parables*, 93).

⁶ For M. Hengel, “Gleichnis,” 22f, “das die Parabel über das Faktum der “Abreise” des Domänenherra hinaus keinerlei nähere Angaben mehr macht ist, ein typisches Beispiel für die auch sonst zu beobachtende Breviluquenz und Inkonzinnität der palästinischen Gleichniserzählung überhaupt.”

⁷ V. Taylor, *Mark*, 472. This is a welcome reaction to the medieval allegorization of the individual elements in the parable where the hedge built around the vineyard was understood as the help of the angels, the tower as the Temple, etc. See S. L. Wailes, *Medieval Allegories*, 147-53.

⁸ K. Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 26.

Meanwhile just as I argued with regard to the first parable of the trilogy, one would not expect here a clear-cut distinction between parable and allegory.⁹ And since it has been shown that Mt used Mk as the source of this parable, there would be no need to aim at a reconstruction, since the redactional work of Mt on this parable has already been done in the previous chapter. But in all, it must be said that Mt read this story as an allegory and it has to be understood as such.¹⁰ However, the cultural background of the parable is a pointer to its historic kernel.

In determining the cultural and literary background to the Matthean parable of the Wicked Tenants, I will try to show the relationship both in form and content between this parable and some contemporary Jewish secular and OT texts. Here the already-mentioned Isaian Song of the Vineyard and its reception would be of tremendous value. So also are the Targum Jonathan and the document 4Q500 which all seem to exegete this song.¹¹ I would then show how the Matthean parable of the Wicked Tenants falls into the long history of the interpretation of the Isaian Song of the Vineyard.¹²

5.1 CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The parable of the Wicked Tenants takes up the central theme of the parable of the Two Sons, namely, work in the vineyard. This continuum seems to be based on the fact that viticulture was very central to Palestinian thought and life from very ancient times.¹³ But the present parable introduces the additional themes of leases between tenants and vineyard owners and the tensions and conflicts between these two parties, themes that are consonant with contemporary viticulture. S. R. Llewelyn¹⁴ has provided this contract agreement from the region of Theadelphia in Egypt dated to the 16th of September in the year 44 A. D.

*Μ η'(νός) Σ ε'(βαστοῦ) ιθ
 ὄφ(εἰλει) (ὀβολούς)ε Ἔτους πέμπτου
 Τιβερί[ου Κλαυ]δίου Καίσαρο[ς]
 Σεβαστοῦ Γερμανικοῦ Αὐτοκράτορος
 μηνός Σεβαστοῦ ἐν[εακαιδε-] κάτη
 ἐν δε(α)δελαφία τῆς δεμίστου Μερίδος
 τοῦ Ἀ[ρσινο-] εἴτου νομοῦ.
 Ἐμίσθωσεν Ἡράκλεια Χάρητος
 ὡς [(ἐτῶν)] Ἐΐκοσι δύο οὐλήι*

In the mon(th) of Se(bastos) 19 he
 ow(es) 5 (obols). In the fifth year of
 Tiberi[us Claud]ius Caesar [Augustus]
 Germanicus Imperator, in the month of
 Sebastos On the nine[teenth day] in
 Theadelphia in the dstrict of Themistos
 of the A[rsiñoite] nome.
 Herakleia, daughter of Chares, about
 twenty-two years of age] scare to the left

⁹ So also U. Mell, Die "anderen" Winzer, 74-77.

¹⁰ Flusser has commented that "wenn man die Typologie vom Gleichnis von den bösen Winzern wegnimmt, dann verliert das Gleichnis sein Rückgrat." D. Flusser, Die rabbinische Gleichnisse, 125f.

¹¹ The study of this fragment is based on the reconstructions of M. Baillet, Qumran Grotte 4 III, 78f; J. M. Baumgarten, "4Q500," 1-6; and G. J. Brooke, "4Q500 1," 268-294.

¹² It is good here to reference the conclusion of Mell that any version of the parable that does not contain the references to Isa 5:1-7 LXX would be an unintelligible torso of a text. U. Mell, Die "anderen" Winzer, 82.

¹³ See A. Feldman, Parables and Similes, 125.

¹⁴ S. R. Llewelyn, "Self-Help and Legal Redress," 86-88.

μῆλωι ἀριστερῶι Μετὰ κ[υρίου τοῦ] ἑαυτῆς
 ἀνδρὸς Ἀπολλωνίου Ἰσιδώρου [ὡς ἐτῶν τ]ριά
 κοντα τριῶν οὐλῆι ὄφρυι ἀριστερᾷ Αὐνῆ
 Ἀρθώτου Πέρση τῆς ἐπιγονῆς ὡς ἐτῶν
 εἴκοσι πέντε οὐλῆι ὑπὸ ὄφρυι ἀριστερᾷ τὸν
 ὑπάρχοντα αὐτῆ περι Θεαδέλφειαν
 κλῆρον κατοικικὸν ἀρουρῶν ἕξ ἢ ὅσαι ἐὰν
 ὦσι ἐν μιᾷ σφραγεῖδι. Ἡ μίσθωσις ἦδε.
 εἰς ἔτη τέσερα ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος πέμπτου
 ἔτους Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ
 Γερμανικοῦ Αὐτοκράτορος, ἐκφορίου τὸ μὲν
 πρῶ[τον] ἔτος ἐκάστης ἀρούρης, σὺν
 ἧ λήμψεται ὁ μεμισθωμένος πυροῦ ἀρτάβης
 μιᾶς, πυροῦ ἀρταβῶν πέντε, ἐπὶ δὲ τὰ λοιπὰ
 ἔτη τρία κατ' ἔτος
 ἐκάστης ἀρούρης, σὺν αἷς λήμψεται ὁ
 μεμισθωμένος σπερμάτων πυροῦ ἀστάβης
 μιᾶς, πυροῦ ἀσταβῶν ἕξ, καὶ θαλλῶν κατ'
 ἔτος ἄρτων ἀρτάβης μιᾶς, πάντων δὲ τῶν
 ἐκφορίων κατ' ἔτος μέτρῳι δρόμῳι
 τετραχοινίκῳ Θεσαυροῦ Καισίου
 ἀνυπολόγως παντὸς ὑπολόγου καὶ ἀκινδύνως
 παντὸς κινδύνου. Τὰ δ' ἔργα πάντα τοῦ
 κλήρου τοὺς τε χωματισμοὺς καὶ ποτισμοὺς
 καὶ βοτανισμοὺς καὶ τῶν ἄλλων γεωργικῶν
 ὑπουργιῶν πάντα ἐπιτελείτω ὁ μεμισθωμένος
 κατ' ἔτος ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καὶ ἀναπαύσεται
 κατ' ἔτος τὸ ἥμισυ μέρος τοῦ κλήρου
 χόρτωι ἢ ἀράκῳι εἰς κατάβρωμα
 καὶ κοιτασμὸν προβάτων.
 Μὴ ἐξέστωι οὖν τῶι μεμισθωμένῳι
 ἐντὸς τοῦ χρόνου προλειπεῖν τὴν μίσθωσιν
 ἄλλῳι, τὰ δὲ κατ' ἔτος ἐκφόρια ἀποδότωι ὁ
 μεμισθωμένος τῆι Ἡρακλείᾳ ἐν [μηνί
 Παῦνι ἐν τῆι κώμῃ], καὶ
 μετὰ τὸν προκείμενον χρόνον παραδότωι
 ὁ μεμισθωμένος τῆι Ἡρακλείᾳ τὸν κλῆρον
 [κ]αθαρὸν ἀπὸ θρύου καλάμου ἀγρώστεως
 δεισῆς πάσης. Ἐὰν δὲ τι τούτων
 παρ[αβ]ῆι [ὁ μεμ]ισθωμένος ἀποτεισάτω
 τὰ τε βλάβη καὶ τὰ δαπανήματα δειπλᾷ
 καὶ ἐπίτειμι ο(ν) χαλκ(ου) [(ταλ.)] ε,
 τῆς πράξεως οὔσης τῆι Ἡρακλείᾳ ἕκ τε
 τοῦ μεμισθωμένου καὶ

cheek with her husband Apollonios, son
 of Isidoros, [about th]irty-three [years of
 age], scare to left eyebrow, [acting as
 guardian], has leased to Aunes, son of
 Harthotos, Persian of the descent, about
 twenty-five years of age, scare under left
 eyebrow her catoecic estate about
 Theadelphia of six arouras or as much as
 they are in one parcel. This is the lease:
 for four years from the present fifth year
 of Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus
 Germanicus Imperator, at a rent paid in
 kind for the first year for each aroura,
 with which the lease will take one artaba
 of wheat (for seed), of five artabas of
 wheat, and for the remaining three years
 yearly for each aroura, with which the
 lessee will take for seed one artaba of
 wheat, of six artabas of wheat, and at an
 annual gratuity of one artaba of bread,
 and all the rents in kind annually (being)
 at the four-*choinikes* measure of Kaisios'
 granary, free from every liability and
 safe from every risk. All the workings of
 the estate-the maintenance of dykes,
 watering, weeding and the other
 agricultural duties-let the lessee annually
 perform all these at his own expense and
 he will cause a half part of the estate to
 lie fallow annually with grass or
 chuckling for the feeding and folding of
 sheep. Therefore, let it not be lawful for
 the lessee within the period to abandon
 the lease to another and let the lessee pay
 the annual rent in kind to Herakleia in
 [the month of Pauni in the village,] and
 after the aforesaid period let the lessee
 return to Herakleia the estate clear of
 rush, reed, grass and all slime. If the
 lessee transgresses any of these
 (conditions), let him pay both the
 damages and the expenses twofold and a
 penalty of 5 bronze talents, the action for
 recovery being to Herakleia and from the

βεβαιούται τὴν μίσθωσιν καὶ ἀπὸ
δημοσίων. Ἡ συγγραφή κυρία
κ(υρία)...

lessee, and let Herakleia guarantee the
lease also with the public officials. The
agreement is valid...

Although this contract agreement comes from Egypt it has to be accepted that the difference between it and such contracts in Palestine would not be much by the time of Jesus. In this contract, the rent was to be paid in kind and varies from year to year. In the first year Aunes was to pay five artabas per aroura and six artabas per aroura in the following years.¹⁵ The lessee also has the obligations not to abandon the lease before it expires.¹⁶ But significant differences between this contract and the parable appear in the areas of the tremendous care shown to the parabolic vineyard and the lack of details concerning the type of rent to be paid by the tenants in our parable.¹⁷ The only note of payment is the v.34 where the vineyard owner demands *τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτοῦ*. This payment is also different from the above contract since it demands the whole fruits of the vineyard.

Similar contract agreements from before and after the time of Jesus give valid information to this type of arrangement and show a continuity of such contracts in its Palestinian milieu.¹⁸ The contracts show a real historic crux of the parable of the Wicked Tenants, especially in detailing the amount of care due to the vineyard by the tenants and an implied legal action on the part of the vineyard owner when necessary.¹⁹ This leads to the importance of the study of the historical background of the parable for its proper understanding. The implication is that Jesus could have narrated a story with some historical kernel pointing to the tense economic conditions prevalent in Palestine since the time of Judas the Galilean.²⁰ Although the dominant land tenure pattern was independent family holdings,²¹ there is also evidence of the fact that extensive estates in the eastern part of Esdraelon and Beth Shean were in royal hands during this era.²² Private individuals owning land estates are also mentioned in the persons of John of Gischala,²³ Flavius Josephus,²⁴ and

¹⁵ Ibid., 88.

¹⁶ For a full analysis of this and similar contracts see Ibid., 88f. Some of the laws binding on the tenant have been analyzed in J. M. D. Derrett, *Law*, 292-95. For the terms to which a tenant was subject to when leasing agricultural land especially in ptolemaic and Roman Egypt see D. Henning, "Arbeitsverpflichtungen," 111-31.

¹⁷ For further information about lease agreements in the ancient World see B. P. Grenfell/A. S. Hunt (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 15-25. For the possibility of possessing vineyards in distant places see A. Fieldman, *Parables and Similes*, 128. See also the discussion in C. A. Evans, *Jesus and his Contemporaries*, 384-90

¹⁸ P. Oxy. 1631. For the text and commentary of this papyrus see B. P. Grenfell/A. S. Hunt (eds.), *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 15-25. See also M. Hengel, "Gleichnis," 1-40; C. A. Evans, in *Jesus and his Contemporaries*, 383 has listed a lot of documents and books illustrating similar contract agreements.

¹⁹ For objections to the realism of the parable see E. Lohmeyer, *Markus*, 244-247; B. T. D. Smith, *Parables*, 22 and 224; G. V. Jones, *Parables*, 93; E. Klostermann, *Markusevangelium*, 122.

²⁰ Cf. C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 97.

²¹ Cf. R. Horsley and J. Hanson, *Bandits*, 59.

²² Cf. S. Safrai/M. Stern, *Jewish People*, 2. 634. Herod's practice of land accumulation and confiscation is also recorded. Cf. S. Freyne, *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels*, 165.

²³ Cf. C. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History*, 1.270.

Eleazer ben Harzum.²⁵ During this period a large part of Palestine may also have been under the control of foreign landlords.²⁶ It has also been shown that the possession of vineyards both near home and in foreign lands is a part of the people's life in rabbinic times.²⁷ Again the fact that a vineyard owner can employ the services of hired labourers in his farm is this recorded vineyard owner's complaint that he spent much time looking for workers during the harvest period "weil alle gleichzeitig Weinlese hielten."²⁸ The employment of hired labourers is also narrated in the parable of Mt 20:1-16.

But an apparent unrealistic twist to the parable of the Wicked Tenants is the unmotivated violence of the tenants. Yet Josephus provides a succinct account of how the Israelites mocked and eventually killed the heralds of Hezekiah who invited them for the feast of unleavened bread in Jerusalem.²⁹ Also the OT provides evidence of violence and taking possession of another's vineyard in 1 Kgs 21:1-16. Just like in the parable of the Wicked Tenants (Mt 21:38b.d), this OT passage uses the word *κληρονομία*³⁰ to refer to actual inheritance as well as to a forceful possession of another's property. Again, the tension involved in our parable between the vineyard owner and the tenants is corresponded in many rabbinic parables. Although these rabbinic sources are of late date, they bear witness to the currency of thought prevalent in the Jewish milieu.

The following parable refers to the efforts to collect taxes from a certain province: "This may be compared to the case of a province which owed tax arrears to the king who sent a collector of the (king's) treasury to collect (the debt). What did the people of the province do? They rose and mulcted him and hanged him. People said: woe to us, should the king become aware of these things. That which the king's emissary sought to do to us, we did to him."³¹

²⁴ Josephus, Life 422 and 429.

²⁵ Cf. J. Jeremias, Jerusalem, 99. But this is not enough to suggest, as J. D. Hester did, "Socio-Rhetorical," 36f that by the use of *οἰκοδεσπότης* "the speaker is referring to a member of one of the ruling or aristocratic classes," and that tenant farmers refer to "landless peasants who have lost their land to increasing debt."

²⁶ Cf. C. H. Dodd, Parables, 125f. This agrarian situation led J. D. Hester to suggest that the parable "seeks to direct the attention of the audience to the circumstances of the situation of the tenant farmer, and is thereby drawing upon the generally known economic institution of 'sharecropping'. These peasant farmers who may have lost their lands due to harsh conditions found themselves lucky if they could become tenants in what was once their own land. His reading led him to conclude that Jesus was addressing the plight of these poor tenants in this parable. See his article "Socio-Rhetorical," 27-57. But it remains to be proved that this is the intention of the parable.

²⁷ This is witnessed in the following parable attributed to Rabbi Simeon b. Halaftha: "unto what may this be likened? Unto one man living in Galilee and possessing a vineyard in Judea, and another living in Judea and owning a vineyard in Galilee. He who dwelt in Galilee used to go to Judea to hoe his garden and the one from Judea went to Galilee to hoe his..." See A. Feldman, Parables and Similes, 128.

²⁸ Quoted by F. Avemarie, "Jedem das Seine?" 465.

²⁹ Josephus, Ant. 9:264-67. Plutarch also reports how the Spartans killed the messengers of king Xerxes of Persia. But at the direction of an oracle two Spartans freely went to the king to be killed in whatever way he willed. But the king sent them free because of their bravery.

³⁰ Cf. 1 Kgs 21:3.15.16.18.

³¹ Midrash Rabbah on Leviticus, XI.7.

If it is true that “one of the most curious features of the Jewish law was its tenderness to robbers,”³² then it was not always easy for the plaintiff to recover his property since actual possession is in favour of the defendant and only in exceptional cases was the defendant made to prove his title.³³ This could be at the background of the tenants’ supposition that by killing the son they would possess the vineyard.³⁴ Consequently, the parable, together with the depicted violence, and the following contrasts (vineyard- another land; owner-tenants; sending-violence) would not be very strange in the ears of a second Temple Jew.³⁵ Hence, as suggested by Dodd and many others, our parable is far from being an artificially constructed allegory. But this does not mean that it is in its main lines natural and realistic in every way.³⁶ The sending of the son after the fate of the servants is, to say the least, exceptional.³⁷ The improbability of the account in a realistic vein has also been pointed out by many scholars.³⁸ The above arguments lead to the insightful note by Snodgrass that the argument that the story is culturally understandable does not mean that it tells of an everyday occurrence. This is because stories are told when something unusual happens. Hence “the discussion about cultural factors is merely to determine whether the parable constructs a believable narrative world or whether it would require so much of first-century hearers that it would have sounded like science fiction.” Snodgrass then rightly concludes that “the story would have been unexpected, possibly even shocking, but it fits in the first-century Palestinian narrative world.

³² See J. M. D. Derrett, *Law*, 304.

³³ See S. Safrai and M. Stern, *Jewish People*, 2.523.

³⁴ For other reasons informing this idea see K. Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 38; J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 72-74; J. M. D. Derrett, *Law*, 300f.

³⁵ For more parables dealing with landowners and their tenants in the Jewish world, see I. Ziegler, *Die Königsgleichnisse*, 255-58.296f.

³⁶ This is the position of C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 96. So also M. Hengel who cites a parable from Midrash Tehillim that could serve as a negative parallel to our parable thus: “die Sache gleicht einem Grundbesitzer, der sich gut gegen seine Pächter benahm und in der Stunde der Abrechnung sich großzügig zeigt. In der Zeit der Tenne ließ er ihnen die Reste der Tenne und in der Zeit der Weinlese ließ er ihnen die Reste der Kelter.” See “Gleichnis,” 24f. Hengel’s conclusion is that “die Bildhäfte der Parabel stellt in ihrer Urform ein im neutestamentlichen Palästina durchaus vorstellbares Geschehen dar.” 25.

³⁷ Cf. F. W. Beare, *Matthew*, 427. For him, the sending of more servants and then the son after the fate of previous emissaries shows that allegory has taken over verisimilitude. Pace U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.219.

³⁸ K. Snodgrass has listed many factors that militate against a realistic reading of the parable. The can be summarized thus: (i) in v.33, the use of the verb ἀποδημέω seems to suggest that the man planted the vineyard and left. This is strange since a man would not plant a vineyard and then leave it. Again a vineyard would not be given out immediately after construction since the first fruits come after five years. (ii) The behaviour of the tenants from v.35 seems improbable and unmotivated. (iii) It is also psychologically improbable that a man would repeatedly send slaves when they were repeatedly and progressively beaten. (iv) It is even more improbable that a man would send his only son. (v) There is no justification for the tenants’ belief that they would inherit the vineyard. (vi) It is questionable whether the owner could simply kill his tenants. (vii) It is unlikely that the owner would give the vineyard to others; rather, he would look after it himself. See his *Wicked Tenants*, 31.

Conflict over farming agreements were an all-too-common occurrence.”³⁹ His view has also won supporters⁴⁰ and opponents.⁴¹

But if our parable has relevance to its cultural milieu then the fruit of the first three years of the vineyard must be regarded as unclean, the fruit of the fourth year must be set aside as holy while the fruit of the fifth year could be enjoyed.⁴² Even without this biblical prescription, scholars have shown that a newly planted vineyard is usually unprofitable until the fifth year.⁴³ This could explain the owner’s going away. But however the details of the parable agree with Palestinian agrarian culture at the time of Jesus, the allegorical elements in the parable mean that the parable can only be understood from its allegorical take-off.⁴⁴ It is also from this stand-point that Mt understands it.

5.2 LITERARY BACKGROUND

Nonetheless, the most evident literary background of the parable, with its employment of many allegories, seems to be the Isaian Song of the Vineyard (5:1-7). The analysis and the history of the reception of this Song would be decisive in the interpretation of the Matthean parable of the Wicked Tenants.

5.2.1 Mt 21:33-46 AND THE RECEPTION OF ISAIAH 5:1-7

It has been rightly noted by Kloppenborg that “a key problem in the interpretation of the parable of the Tenants is whether Isa 5:1-7 is intergral to the fabric of the parable.”⁴⁵ It is overwhelmingly accepted that the Isaian Song of the Vineyard, just like the parable of the Wicked Tenants, is a juridical parable.⁴⁶ The connection between these parables is supported not only by the genre of the parables but also by

³⁹ K. Snodgrass, “Recent Research,” 197.

⁴⁰ The realistic nature of the parable and the fact of increasing landlessness among peasantry of Palestine at the time of the performance of the parable led Hester to assume that the speaker of the parable, by the use of *οἰκοδεσπότης* to refer to the man who plants a vineyard and lets it out to peasant farmers and goes away, must have at the back of his mind a member of one of the ruling or aristocratic classes. See his article “Socio-Rhetorical,” 36. Though he recognizes the fact that many city dwellers owned property outside the city and were not necessarily rich, he went on to imply that the trust of the parable is the contrast between aristocracy and peasantry. This type of take-off to the parable can have no other obvious conclusion than that arrived at by Hester when he summarizes that “at the end of the story it is the tenants who have become the authentic heirs of the promise of the possession of the land given by YHWH.” “Socio-Rhetorical,” 55. Against his thesis see U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.219, n. 19.

⁴¹ For contra arguments to the realism of this parable see A. Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden II*.402.406.

⁴² Cf. Lev 19:23f

⁴³ See for instance, J. M. D. Derrett, *Law*, 290.

⁴⁴ So also J. D. Crossan, “Wicked Husbandmen,” 454.

⁴⁵ J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 149. This view is supported by J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 68; R. J. Dillon, *Tradition History*, 18; G. A. Evans, *Parables*, 82-6; J. D. Crossan, “Wicked Husbandmen,” 452; C. A. Evans, *Jesus and his Contemporaries*, 394; R. D. Aus, *The Wicked Tenants*, 2.

⁴⁶ The classification of Isa 5:1-7 as a juridical parable has been defended by A. Graffy, “The Literary Genre of Isaiah 5,1-7,” 400-09; G. A. Yee, “A Form-Critical Study of Isaiah 5,1-7, 30-40; G. T. Sheppard, “More on Isaiah 5,1-7,” 45-47. For W. Schottroff the text is a fable. He, however, thinks that v.7 is “eine Anwendung...welche die...Fabel in eine Parabel...umschlagen lässt.” See his article “Das Weinberglied Jesajas (Jes 5,1-7),” 89.

the use of the vineyard motif and other motifs.⁴⁷ The clear relationship between the Isaian text and our parable led E. E. Ellis to suggest that Mt 21:33-44 resembles the oldest type of synagogue address where the speaker reproduces a part of the Scripture lesson for the day, illustrates it with a parable, and further explains his words with further biblical passage.⁴⁸ In this respect, the initial text would be Isa 5:1-2; vv.33-41 would be the exposition by means of a parable, joined to the initial text by the words *ἀμπελών* (vv.39.40.41) and *λιθοβολεῖν* (v.35; cf. Isa 5:2); vv.42-44 contain the concluding texts (Ps 118:22; Dan 2:34-5. 44-5) linked to the initial text by the catchwords *οἰκοδομεῖν* (v.42; cf. Dan 2:44) and *λίθος* (vv.42.44; cf. v.35).

Given that the LXX Isaian Song of the Vineyard, (probably dating to the second century BCE),⁴⁹ could be seen as an early witness of Jewish interpretation of this Song found in the MT of Isaiah, it might be logical to look at the septuagintal influence on the Matthean pericope. This influence seems already evident in the difference between the MT and the LXX of the Isaian Song of the Vineyard. These differences can be summarized thus: (i) In the MT, the protagonist of the story moves from the first person (v.1b) to the third person (vv.1b-2), back to the first person (vv.3-6), and finally to the first person (v.7). The LXX presented the story as a first-person discourse throughout except in v.1b where the third person is preserved.⁵⁰ (ii) In 5:2, the MT speaks of ‘digging’ (קוץ, a *hapax*) and ‘clearing of stones’ (לקל, used only here and in Isa 62:10 as privative) to which the LXX uses ‘he put a hedge round it’ (*φραγμὸν περιέθηκε*) and ‘he fenced it’ (*ἐχαράκωσα*).⁵¹ (iii) Again while the MT accuses the grapes of producing *רִשְׁעִים* (rotten grapes, a clear accusation to the vineyard),⁵² the LXX accuses it of producing *ἀκάνθας* (thorns). This production of thorns could be a veiled indictment on the tenants entrusted with the maintenance of the vineyard.⁵³ (iv) Finally the judgment against the vineyard in the MT is *וְאֶשְׂתֵּהוּ בְתֵהוּ* (I will make it a waste) as against the LXX’s *ἀνήσω τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου* (I will abandon my vineyard). This note of abandonment rather than destruction seems to lie decisively at the heart of the Matthean pronouncement as we shall come to see. If it is true that the aim of the LXX is to “negotiate a way between respecting the semantic integrity of the Hebrew and employing a koine Greek idiom intelligible to a Hellenistic Jewish audience,”⁵⁴ then the LXX version of the Song could be an early stage in the process of the interpretation of the Isaian Song of the Vineyard. This process is carried further by the synoptic adaptation of the parable to the LXX,⁵⁵ an adaptation that is most evident in the Matthean version.

⁴⁷ I. H. Jones, *Parables*, 373-75 argues that the details are intended to recall the Isaiah passage, not to have individual allegorical significance. But the great difference in the two texts is that in Isaiah it is the fruits that fail but here it is the tenants. In Isaiah, the vineyard will be destroyed, but here it would be given to a nation producing its fruits. But the echo of Isaiah’s text seems to be heard nonetheless.

⁴⁸ See his *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, 251f. See also H. Strack/P. Billerbeck, IV.173 who contend that this form of argument was current in the first century.

⁴⁹ Cf. Arie van der Kooij, “Isaiah in the Septuagint,” 513.

⁵⁰ See J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 157.

⁵¹ It has been argued that this editing “reflects agricultural practices in Hellenistic Egypt.” J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 166.

⁵² See Williamson, *Isaiah*, 319.

⁵³ So also J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 164. M. Hengel has also noted this difference. See his “*Gleichnis*,” 17.

⁵⁴ B. S. Childs, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah*, 4.

⁵⁵ I find this remark important even if the synoptic allusion to the LXX “took place as the Gospel tradition evolved from Aramaic into Greek” as noted by C. A. Evans, “How Septuagintal is Isa. 5:1-

It also appears that the Isaian Song has been exegeted by the Qumran community as evidenced in the fragment *peshet*⁵⁶ on Isaiah contained in 4Q162, consisting mainly of Isa 5:5b.6a.11-14.24c-25 and 29-30.⁵⁷ The main texts of this *peshet*, however, are 4QpIsa^b and 4Q500.⁵⁸ Several features of the fragment 4QpIsa^b seem to obviously refer to the Song of Isaiah. Some of these include the winepress (line 3: Isa 5:2), the planting (line 5: Isa 5:7), the delights (line 6: Isa 5:7) and the vineyard (line 7: Isa 5:1).⁵⁹ But the key text seems to be in col. i and its interpretation.

1) פרץ גדרו ויהי למרמס
 2) פשר הדבר אשר עזבם
 3) ד ואשר אמר ועלה שמיר

- 1) I bro]ke down its fence and it was for trampling
- 2) ...] The interpretation of the phrase is that he has forsaken them
- 3) ...] and as it says, But there shall come up briars.⁶⁰

The second line of this fragment interprets Isa 5:6 using the term עזבם (he has forsaken them) in line with the LXX's use of ἀνήκει. According to Kloppenborg, the word ἀνήκει is a technical term used in Ptolemaic papyri to designate land left untilled.⁶¹ Again, the use of the plural 'them' in this line cannot be referring to the vineyard which is in the singular and the removal of whose fence (גדרו) is referred to in the MT. Hence, the use of 'them' seems to refer to 'the men of Judah,' a fact clearly exposed in the Matthean parable (cf. 21:43.45). The implication is that the above text could belong to an early stage in the history of the allegorization of the Isaian passage. If this is the case, then Mt has followed the LXX in accusing those entrusted with the vineyard instead of accusing the vineyard itself. But Mt has changed the stress of the critique from the men of Judah to the leaders of the Jewish cult. This is shown in the placement of the answer on the lips of the Jewish leaders (21:41) and on the contrasting responses to Jesus by the leaders and the crowds in 21:46.⁶² The link to the Isaian text is further seen by the fact that Isaiah had earlier attacked the Jerusalem aristocracy who are misleading the people (cf. Isa 3:12-15).

Closely related to this text is 4Q500 which is another text contained in the *peshet* 4Q162. It has been reconstructed by Baumgarten thus:

7," 106; contra M. Hengel, "Gleichnis," 19 who observes that one must not see the septuagintal allusions in the NT as a later addition by the 'Hellenistic' community. It could as well be said that this allusion is consciously aimed at providing an allegorical aid to the interpretation of the Song of Isaiah. Cf. W. J. C. Weren, "The Use of Isaiah," 9-13; K. R. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 287f.

⁵⁶ The term *peshet* is used by scholars "to describe the free, creative, imaginative, and at times bold, even audacious, exegesis of the Qumran writings." See M. Black, *Christological Use*, 1.

⁵⁷ See Maurya P. Horgan, *Pesharim*, 86.

⁵⁸ These documents surely predate the NT. Cf. M. Baillet, *Qumran Grotte 4: III.78*. For a thorough analysis of these fragments see J. M. Baumgarten, "4Q500," 1-6 and G. J. Brooke, "4Q500 1," 268-94.

⁵⁹ See G. J. Brooke, "Shared Intertextual Interpretations," 42.

⁶⁰ Text and translation from J. M. Allegro, "More Isaiah Commentaries," 215.

⁶¹ J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 165.

⁶² For the role of the crowds in Mt's gospel see J. R. C. Cousland, *The Crowds*. Here, 222.

- (2) בכ[איכה ינצו ו
 (3) [יקב תירושכה [ב] נוי באבני
 (4) [לשער מרום הקודש]
 (5) מטעכה ופלגי כבודכה ב]
 (6) כפות שעשוועיכה
 (7) וכר[מכה

- 2)] may your [mulberry trees blossom and . . .]
 3)] your winepress [bu]ilt with stones [
 4)] to the gate of the holy height [
 5)] your planting and the streams of glory . . .]
 6)] . . . the branches of your delights . . .]
 7)] your [vine]yard.⁶³

In this text we find various connections between the vineyard and the temple. In the first instance ‘the watchtower (מגדל) from Isa 5:2 is here associated with the ‘gate of the holy height’ (לשער מרום הקודש). This connection with the Temple is strengthened by the remark that the vat of the winepress is built with stones. It appears conclusive that “what is in view is the ‘altar of stones’ (מזבה אבנים) of Deut 27,5 and the altar of the temple.”⁶⁴ In this respect, the passage has put on a cultic garment which predates the NT.⁶⁵ It is perhaps these considerations that led Brooke to conclude that “the allegorical character of the parable should not be downplayed as secondary and insignificant” since “the vineyard should not be understood solely in terms of real life situations in first-century Palestine, but in light of the scriptural allusion which rests behind its use as that was understood in contemporary Jewish texts, such as Q4500.”⁶⁶

Although these fragments may not have been the sources used by Jesus in the parable of the Wicked Tenants, or by the evangelist in reconstructing this parable, yet they definitely “show what exegetical traditions were current at the time of Jesus.”⁶⁷ This tradition also continued as witnessed in the association of the tower in Isa. 5 with the Temple as interpreted in the Targum Jonathan, 3 Baruch and Tosefta Sukkah 3:15. In the Targum of Jonathan, for instance, the tower of the vineyard becomes the Temple and the vine vat the altar. It therefore seems that the Targum links the destruction of the vineyard to the historical destruction of the Temple.⁶⁸

⁶³ See M. Baumgarten, “4Q500,” 1-6. Baumgarten also provides close parallels between this text and Isa. 5:1-7. See also G. J. Brooke, “4Q500 1,” 235-60.

⁶⁴ J. S. Kloppenborg, Tenants, 90.

⁶⁵ Cf. C. A. Evans, Jesus and his Contemporaries, 398-401. For the presence of clusters of vine around the gates of Herod’s Temple see Josephus, Jewish War, 5:210. The sight of these vines could have led Jesus to make this connection between the Temple and Isaiah’s song.

⁶⁶ G. J. Brooke, “4Q500,” 294.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 291.

⁶⁸ See P. Höffken, Probleme in Jesaja 5,1-7, 410. Also in the prologue to the Greek Apocalypse of Baruch, there seems to be an allusion to the Song of the Vineyard. We read these lines in 3 Baruch 1:2: *Κύριε, ἵνα τί ἐξέκαυσας τὸν ἀμπελῶνά σου καὶ ἠρημόωσας αὐτόν; τί ἐποίησας τοῦτο; καὶ ἵνα τί, Κύριε, οὐκ ἀπέδωκας ἡμᾶς ἐν ἄλλῃ παιδείᾳ, ἀλλὰ παρέδωκας ἡμᾶς εἰς ἔθνη τοιαῦτα, ὅπως ὀνειδίζοντες λέγουσιν· Ποῦ ἐστὶν ὁ Θεὸς αὐτῶν.*

This connection seems to be echoed at 21:41 and would be strongly seen in the next parable especially at 22:7.

All these examples point to the fact that the Vineyard Song of Isaiah has always been traditionally interpreted along allegorical lines as a reference to God's dealings with his people. If the above thesis is correct, then the genre and interpretation of the Isaian song of the vineyard would be a definite pointer to a correct analysis of the Matthean parable of the Wicked Tenants. Just like in the Synoptic parable, the speaker of the Isaian Song masks his intention by announcing in v.1 that he was about to sing a song (cf. also Isa 23:15-16 and 26:1), thus tricking his hearers to pass judgment. In v.7 it is apparent that the hearers have passed judgment on themselves. The implication is that the song of the vineyard is, just like the parable of the Two Sons and the Wicked Tenants, a juridical parable. These led U. Mell to rightly argue that "die literarischen und strukturellen Bezüge zu Jes 5,1b-7 LXX sind ursprünglicher und beabsichtigter Bestandteil einer Erzählstrategie, die es in der rezeptionskritischen Auslegung als Aktualisierungsprozeß des Jesajanischen Weinbergliedes zu beschreiben gilt."⁶⁹

The above insight is important as well as the already gained insight that Mt understands the parable as an allegory. That implies that a look into the Jewish imagery of the "vineyard," the "son," "the servants" and even the "stone" is indispensable to a correct understanding of the parable.⁷⁰ How, then, could the hearers have understood the metaphor of the vineyard?

5.2.2 THE VINEYARD AND ITS OWNER

At the end of the third chapter, I argued that the metaphorical use of "vineyard" in the parable of the Two Sons is not very evident and I pointed to the fact that the use of "vineyard" in the present parable leads to a different conclusion.⁷¹ Already, the parallels with Isa 5:1-7 have thrown some light to this hypothesis. Though, as already shown, some cultural issues like the agrarian situation of the Jews during the time of Jesus could colour the meaning of this parable, there is sufficient evidence in the OT for the use of "vine" and "vineyard" as a depiction of Israel. For instance, the Psalmist's "prayer of restoration" (Ps 80:8-9)⁷² says to God 'you brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out other nations and planted it in their land. You cleared a place for it to grow...' The vine in question here is definitely the people of Israel. In his

⁶⁹ U. Mell, *Die "Anderen" Winzer*, 82.

⁷⁰ But it is important to observe the caveat of Linnemann that "dass mancher Anstoß, der den Leser des Textes nachdenklich machen kann, dem Hörer nicht auffällt." E. Linnemann, *Gleichnisse Jesu*, 36f. This same argument has been fronted by C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 118: "We must put ourselves in the position of those, who heard Jesus speak, and who would find a clue to His meaning, if at all, in their own experience and within the field of their own knowledge."

⁷¹ This is contrary to J. Drury's contention that the contextual setting of this parable after that of the Two Sons makes it "abundantly clear to the hearer or reader that these three parables are about God's vineyard, Israel, from which he has a right to expect fruit-or abandon it." See his *Parables*, 96. On the use of referential confusion as a rhetorical strategy in parables see S. M. Bryan, *Jesus and Israel's Tradition*, 47-49.

⁷² On the other hand, K. Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 75, n. 14, argues that Ps 80:9-20 may be very significant to our parable.

threat to the people and their cult, the prophet Hosea (10:1) speaks about Israel in these words ‘the people of Israel were like a grape vine that was full of grapes. The more prosperous they were, the more altars they built.’ Isa 27:2-6 promises protection to the vineyard of God and punishment to its enemies unless they make peace with God. On the other hand, Jer 2:21 is a very sober note to the vineyard which was planted from the very best seed with the intention of bearing good fruits. But v.21b begins the jarring tone: ‘but look what you have become! You are like a rotten, worthless vine.’ If the above citations allude to the fact that the vine or vineyard symbolizes Israel, the text of Ezk 15:6 makes it explicit in these words: ‘now this is what the sovereign Lord is saying, ‘just as a vine is taken from the forest and burnt, so I will take the people who live in Jerusalem and will punish them.’ These texts are just representative but ultimately point to the conclusion that “vineyard” has become a stock metaphor for Israel.⁷³

On the other hand, following the connections already made between the parable and the Targum Jonathan, it might be correct to conclude that the vineyard imagery refers not to Israel as a whole but to the Temple and its cult.⁷⁴ But much depends, however, on a pre-NT dating of the Targum.⁷⁵ The identification of the vineyard with the Temple is already seen to be enhanced by the fact that 4Q500 uses language akin to Isa. 5:1-7 to describe the temple.⁷⁶

However, some OT texts (e.g. Ps 80: 9-20; 2 Kgs 19:30; Isa 3:14; 27:2f; 37: 31; Jer 6:9; Hos 14, 6-9) seem to point to the fact that the vineyard does not always refer to all Israel or its cult but to the remnant or elect of God with all the privileges of election.⁷⁷ But no matter the conclusion arrived at, the parable of the Wicked Tenants definitely talks about the actions of God and his people, using the imagery of the vineyard. The above submission is strengthened by the use of *οἰκοδεσπότης* to qualify the owner of the vineyard. In the other places in which the word occurs in Mt (10:25; 13:27.52; 20:1.11; 24:43) it is used to illustrate God’s action.⁷⁸ Also in our parable (21:40), the *οἰκοδεσπότης* is identified as the *κύριος* of the vineyard. This word has already been applied in the gospel for God.⁷⁹ It might thus be a strong argument to

⁷³ The imagery of a vineyard destroyed by shepherds is used to describe Israel in Jer 12:10; in Ezk 15:2 the prophet uses the imagery of a withered vine to describe Israel given over to fire and flame; also a vine that was once in flourishing condition is used of Israel in Ezk 19:10-14.

⁷⁴ Such is the conclusion of E. Lohmeyer, “Gleichnis,” 247; L. Gaston, No Stone on Another, 237; R. H. Gundry, The Use of the Old Testament, 44.

⁷⁵ For the dating of the Targum, see P. Churgin, Studies in Targum Jonathan, xiii-xvii. S. A. Kaufmann came to the conclusion that “the final Palestinian form of Targums Onkelos and Jonathan must...date between 70 C.E. and the fall of Bar Kochba [135].” Cf. his “The Job Targum from Qumran,” 326f. For the fact that Josephus follows the interpretations of the Targum Jonathan in his Antiquities cf. S. Rappaport, Aggada, xxif.

⁷⁶ See for instance, G. J. Brooke, “4Q500 1,” 268-94; J. M. Baumgarten, “4Q500,” 1-6. This is also the same conclusion arrived at by Evans who argues from evidence from several papyri to establish the realistic nature of the parable and its parallels in a number of rabbinic parables. C. A. Evans, Jesus and his Contemporaries,” 381-406.

⁷⁷ See also J. Schmid, Mark, 217.

⁷⁸ See D. A. Hagner, Matthew I.282.

⁷⁹ Mt 1:20.22.24; 2:13.15.19; 3:3; 4:7.10; 5:33; 7:21.22; 9:38; 11:25; 21:9

suggest the impossibility of Jesus using the image of the vineyard in this particular parable other than as a reference to God's dealings with Israel.⁸⁰ This imagery is strengthened by the coming together of other metaphors in the parable and by the Matthean intensification of them.

5.3 THE MATTHEAN PARABLE OF THE WICKED TENANTS

Mt's recession of this vineyard Song is already evidenced in his adaptation of his Markan source.⁸¹ As discussed in the previous chapter, his edition of his source shows his special allegorical interests.⁸² As well, a comparative analysis between LXX Isa 5:2//Mk 12:1//Mt 21:33 reveals Mt's proximity to the LXX text.⁸³ Mt's closeness to the LXX can be demonstrated by the fact that he does not follow Mk in changing the verb and corresponding object in three out of the four cases in the LXX. Mt copies only one of the reversed orders, thus remaining more faithful to the LXX. This nearness to the LXX may not be the work of a later redactor.⁸⁴

Not only is Mt more faithful to the LXX, he is also close to the MT of the Vineyard Song. W. J. C. Weren has adduced arguments to show Mt's closeness to the Masoretic text of Isa 5: 1-7 in the following ways: (a) the Hebrew text from Isa 5:7 contains a double word-play (טִפְסָם justice/תִּפְסָם bloodshed and הִקְדִּיטָּם righteousness/ הִקְדִּיטָּם cry of distress) which is imitated in neither the LXX nor the Targum, but we do find a counterpart in Mt 21:41 (κακῶς κακῶς).⁸⁵ (b) The verb קָלַס (to take away, to remove) in Targum Isa 5:5 corresponds to αἶρω in Mt 21:43. In the Targum, God says that he will take his Shekina away from Israel; in Mt Jesus declares that the kingdom of God will be taken away from the Jewish leaders (ἀφ' ἑμῶν) with whom he is talking. Mt 21:43 mentions "a nation that produces the fruits of the kingdom" similar to Isa 5:1-7. First the choice of the term ποιέω in Mt 21:43 links up with the frequent use of this verb in Isa 5:2.4b. Secondly, the moral orientation of Mt 21:43 is a development of the emphasis that is placed on correct moral behaviour (righteousness and justice) in Isa 5:7. Thirdly, Mt 21:43 says that the former tenants are replaced by a nation that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The reproach in Mt 21:43 that the expected yield has not materialized links up remarkably well with the complaint of the owner in Isa 5:2.4.⁸⁶ I find the play on the Hebrew sounds

⁸⁰ See P. Culbertson, *A Word Fitly Spoken*, 220f.

⁸¹ See also R. J. Dillon, "Tradition-History," 18.

⁸² Considering Mt's version of the parable, Jeremias writes "Matthäus (21,34-36) ist den Weg der Allegorisierung konsequent zu Ende gegangen. Die Klimax, die wir bei Markus and Lukas finden, ist völlig vernichtet...Matthäus denkt bei den beiden Sendungen an die früheren und späteren Propheten..." J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 60.

⁸³ This septuagintal closeness has already been observed by J. A. T. Robinson, "Wicked Husbandmen," 446.

⁸⁴ Porter has argued to the possibility of Jesus' use of the LXX in these words: "in light of the widespread use of Greek in Palestine even by Jews, as well as the use of Greek by Jews from outside of Palestine, and the evidence for the use of the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures even in Palestine...it is not so easy to dismiss the use of the Septuagint by Jesus as simply the result of the Gospel writers or later redaction. Many Jews, even of Palestine, may well have known their Scriptures only or predominantly in Greek." S. E. Porter, *Criteria for Authenticity*, 156.

⁸⁵ For the importance of the word 'righteousness' in the mouth of Jesus see U. Luz, *Matthäus I.211-13*.

⁸⁶ W. J. C. Weren, "The Use of Isaiah 5,1-7," 20f. This coheres with what Hays calls "allusive echo" which "functions to suggest to the reader that text B should be understood in light of a broad interplay

of the words justice/bloodshed, righteousness/cry of help particularly interesting. In them, “Isaiah resorts to the prophetic technique of asonance, using Hebrew words that are similar in sound but have a drastice contrast in meaning.”⁸⁷ This seems to be the moral of the parable in which the expectation of the vineyard owner sharply contrasts with the eventual yield.⁸⁸ It also serves the moral of the Matthean parable with its many contrasts.

But it should be added that the above considerations do not exhaust the points of contact between Isaiah’s Song of the Vineyard and the Matthean parable of the Wicked Tenants: right at the beginning, the LXX Isaian Song employs the expression ἀμπελῶν ἐγενήθη τῷ ἡγαπημένῳ as a translation of the phrase ...הַיְיָ הַיְיָ (cf. Isa 5:1b). If this expression is “a stereotyped idiom, comparable with English ‘once upon a time,’”⁸⁹ then we can securely find an extra identification between the two tales; they are not a piece of historical reporting. Again, Isa 5:2 and Mt 21:33a show that the owner has created excellent conditions for his vineyard, hence the expectation of a good harvest. This expectation contrasts sharply with the yield/the rendering of the yield (Isa 5:4//Mt 21:35). Furthermore, the hearers are invited to pass judgment (Isa 5:3//Mt 21:40).⁹⁰ The above arguments obviously lead to the conclusion that Mt intends the parable of the Wicked Tenants as an interpretation of the Isaian vineyard passage more than Mk. How then can this vineyard be transferred to another nation?

5.3.1 THE VINEYARD AND THE TRANSFERENCE OF THE KINGDOM

The argument so far tends towards the conclusion that the vineyard allegory is a referent to Israel. But when one accepts that the vineyard in our parable is an allegorical designation of Israel, a further problem arises, namely the problem of understanding the judgement saying of v.43, that is, how Israel could be taken and given to another ἔθνος.⁹¹ It should be born in mind that none of the other vineyard parables in Mt (20:1-16; 21:28-32) designates the nation of Israel. Again, the text of Isa 5:1-7 shows God’s anger with the vine that fails to bear the required fruit, while the parable of the Wicked Tenants is about a vineyard that probably yielded rich harvest whose tenants refused to render these fruits. The implication is that the

with text A, encompassing aspects of A beyond those explicitly echoed...” R. B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, 20. However, this caveat from Miscall should be noted: “the relationship between two texts is equivocal. It includes at the same time, both acceptance and rejection, recognition and denial, understanding and misunderstanding...To recognize that a text is related to another text is both to affirm and deny the earlier text. It is affirmed as a type of model and source, while it is denied by being made secondary to the latter text...” P. D. Miscall, “Isaiah,” 44.

⁸⁷ See E. A. Leslie, *Isaiah*, 32.

⁸⁸ R. H. Anderson has tried an English transliteration of this expression in these words: “he expected mishpat but saw mishpak, tsedakah but heard tseakah.” See his article, ‘Luke and the Wicked Tenants,’ 3.

⁸⁹ See H. G. Williamson, *Isaiah 1-27*, 339.

⁹⁰ But while the owner himself announces what he will do to his vineyard in Isa 5:5-6, Jesus allows his audience to pass the judgment (21:41).

⁹¹ If the stone allusion has the vision of Dan 2:44 in mind where the kingdom “will not be left to another people” then it might be logical to conclude with R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 430 that Mt 21:43 makes a deliberate contrast between the intransferability of the kingdom in Daniel with the Matthean notion of transfer.

traditional view of the vineyard as the house of Israel may not be applicable to the present parable in all respects. Hence the above view that the vineyard is either a figure for Israel or for the Temple needs some modification.

Perhaps, this modification is achieved when one notices that what will be taken away and given to others is not the vineyard but *ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ*. This seems to equate the vineyard with the kingdom of God. This notion of the taking of the kingdom finds some parallels in the OT.⁹² It could then imply that what would be taken away and given to others is “the special relationship to God which results from being his elect...”⁹³ However, the identification of the kingdom must be seen together with the identification of another *ἔθνος* to whom the kingdom would be entrusted. A. Saldarini finds in *ἔθνος* reference to a new group of leaders for Israel when he writes: “the ordinary meaning of *ethnos* that fits Matthew’s usage is that of a voluntary organization or small social group.”⁹⁴ He further contends that the *ἔθνος*-bearing fruit (21:43) is a new group of tenants or leaders of Israel who will give the owner his fruits at the right time. He concludes that the vineyard, which is Israel, remains the same, with the implication that in this parable sub-groups within Israel are blamed or praised.⁹⁵

This contention of Saldarini has to be proved against the facts both in the Hellenistic period and in the Matthean narrative. Perhaps the first remark would be that *ἔθνος* has a variety of meanings. It can mean “people” or “nation.”⁹⁶ It can also be used to designate a variety of specialized groups like trade-associations or guilds.⁹⁷ Mt employs both the singular and plural usages of *ἔθνος*.⁹⁸ The plural usage seems to refer to the Gentiles. But 21:43 represents one of the three singular usages of *ἔθνος* by Mt. The other two instances are both at 24:7. These singular usages manifest no special meaning apart from a reference to nation. A precise definition of this nation is not forth coming in the parable. But from a wider Matthean point of view, this transfer seems to have been hinted at through the favourable presentation of non-Jews both in the genealogy of Jesus (1:1-17), his infancy (2:1-12) and public life (3:9f; 8:10-12; 27:24f). This is again confirmed at his death by the confession of the pagan centurion (27:54). But according to Mt, those who compose this new *ἔθνος* must not be seen along ethnic lines. Rather they embrace all those who have accepted the message brought by Jesus.⁹⁹ The acceptance of this message is shown by the bearing of the corresponding fruits.

⁹² Cf. 1 Sam 15:28: ‘And Samuel said to Saul: Today the Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from your hand and will give it to a neighbour of yours who is better than you’; Dan 7:27: ‘And the kingdom and authority and their greatness and dominion over all of the kings under heaven God gave to the holy people of the most high, to rule an eternal kingdom, and all the powers shall be subjected to them and obey them.’

⁹³ K. Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 76. Even with this conclusion the parable charts the course of God’s dealings with his chosen people.

⁹⁴ A. J. Saldarini, *Community*, 60.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 60f. See also E. Lohmeyer/W. Schmauch, *Matthäus*, 315.

⁹⁶ See R. R. R. Smith, “*Simulacra Gentium*,” 50-77.

⁹⁷ See H. G. Liddell et al., *lexicon*, 480.

⁹⁸ For the plural usage by Mt see 4:15; 6:32; 10:5.18; 12:18.21; 20:19.25; 24:9.14; 25:32; 28:19.

⁹⁹ So also W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 91.

It is also possible that this singular usage is a function of Mt's allusion to LXX Dan 2:44.¹⁰⁰ This Danielic text, pointing to the ever-abiding nature of the kingdom, indicts only the leadership. However, the constituents of the indicted group in our parable and the new group to receive the kingdom are, unfortunately, not explicit, only that the latter are characterized by *ποιούντι τούς καρπούς* of the kingdom (v.43) and rendering its *καρπούς ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτῶν* (v.41). Important is also the choice of words in this verse. Unlike the vineyard that is leased (*ἐκδίδωμι*), the kingdom would be given (*δίδωμι*),¹⁰¹ yet with the expectation of an account of stewardship.¹⁰² The implication is that the nation to whom the kingdom is entrusted should not see itself as a faultless nation that has replaced the old Israel.¹⁰³ Hence, the description of the Church as 'a holy nation' (cf. 1 Pt 2:9) does not come into view here.¹⁰⁴ It might be right to postulate that "if Matthew had wanted to feature the displacement of Israel by the Gentiles, one would have expected *δοθήσεται τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ἃ ποιούσωσιν τούς καρπούς αὐτῆς*, with an arthrous plural, which had become virtually a technical term for Gentiles."¹⁰⁵ This means that our passage demands a new interpretation. It seems that this problem is obviated when the vine or vineyard imagery is applied to the remnant, especially to the issue of election with the accompanying rights and responsibilities.¹⁰⁶ This is the only way in which, for instance Jer 12:20 can be understood. Here, God accuses the shepherds of destroying his vineyard. This might also explain why what will be taken away from the leaders in our parable is not the vineyard but *ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ*.

Hence, the new *ἔθνος* is not an ethnic ethnos but an ethical one. It is not the gentiles as opposed to the Jews.¹⁰⁷ If Mt wanted to imply the gentiles he would have used *τοῖς ἔθνεσιν*. And if he wanted to mean the church as a sociological group he would have written *τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*.¹⁰⁸ At the heart of Mt's critique is thus the lack of fruit bearing on the side of the Jewish leaders. Hence, there is no hint whatsoever of a transfer of the Jewish privilege to the Gentiles.¹⁰⁹ But considering the wider Matthean narrative, the idea of the closeness of the gentiles to the kingdom more

¹⁰⁰ R. H. Gundry, Matthew, 430.

¹⁰¹ W. Trilling, Israel, 58 has posited the influence of the maxim at Mt 13:12 (*ὅστις γὰρ ἔχει, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ καὶ περισσευθήσεται· ὅστις δὲ οὐκ ἔχει, καὶ ὃ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ*) to account for the use of *δοθήσεται* instead of *ἐκδοθήσεται*.

¹⁰² See A. Ogawa, "Parables," 129.

¹⁰³ The conclusion that the Matthean community sees itself as the true Israel has been reached by such scholars as W. Trilling, Israel, 55-66; G. Strecker, Der Weg der, 111, 169; J. Schniewind, Matthäus, etc. Interestingly, D. C. Sim, Gospel, 148f thinks that the Matthean ethnos represents "either the Matthean community alone or Christian Judaism in general." This then excludes the Gentile Christians, a conclusion that is hard to accept in view of Mt's depiction of Jesus' openness to the Gentiles. I shall return to this point later. For C. S. Keener, the 'nation' refers to "the holy 'nation' of the new covenant just like Ex 19:5-6. See his Matthew, 515.

¹⁰⁴ Against W. Trilling, Israel, 61, and against Dillon, "Tradition History," 20 who argues that the *ἔθνος* to which the vineyard is given in our parable is the *ἔθνος ἅγιον* of 1 Pt 2:9.

¹⁰⁵ J. S. Kloppenborg, Tenants, 191.

¹⁰⁶ So also K. Snodgrass, Wicked Tenants, 75; J. Blinzler, Der Prozeß Jesu, 200; J. Schmid, Mark, 212.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. R. J. Dillon, "Tradition History," 20; J. Schmid, Matthäus, 305

¹⁰⁸ See U. Luz, Matthäus, III.226.

¹⁰⁹ D. R. A. Hare employs Pauline language in asserting that those rejected are "Israel according to the flesh". See his "The Rejection of the Jews," 38f.

than the Jews is not far-fetched (cf. Mt 8:12).¹¹⁰ Consequently, while the vineyard refers to the special relationship between God and his people Israel, the *ἔθνος* to whom the kingdom would be given could refer to the inclusion of non-Israelites. But this does not imply the rejection of the Jews.¹¹¹ We can thus conclude with Weren that: “Matt 21, 43 is not meant as a characterization of a particular, empirically definable group but describes the criterion that in the final judgment is applied to all groups. This means that the criticism levelled at the chief priests and the Pharisees also contains a word of warning to disciples of Jesus who are just as unproductive as they are.”¹¹² This conclusion is more explicit and seems to be carried forth in the parable of the Wedding Feast.

5.3.2 THE IDENTITY OF THE SLAVES

Perhaps the identification of our story as an allegory as well as Mt’s vocabulary has set the stage for a metaphorical understanding of the slaves of the vineyard owner. As the actantial analysis in the previous chapter has shown, the first encounter between the vineyard owner and the tenants after the initial handing over of the vineyard to the tenants, occurred at harvest time (*ὅτε δὲ ἤγγισεν ὁ καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν*), through the agency of the owner’s slaves. The analysis of Mt’s grammar (see chapter four) has revealed the evangelist’s use of *ἐγγίζω* to serve eschatological interests. Coupled to this is the strong connection between *καιρὸς* and *καρπός* in the narrative (vv.34.41). Who then are these *τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ* (vv.34.35) or these *ἄλλους δούλους* (v.36) sent by the householder?

The expression *τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ* recalls the LXX expression *οἱ δούλοι αὐτοῦ οἱ προφῆται*.¹¹³ If the vineyard refers to Israel or even to the privileges of election, then the tenants must be a reference to the leaders of the people. This is supported by the fact that the leaders realised that the parable was spurn against them.¹¹⁴ This in turn means that the sending of the slaves can be nothing other than a reference to the pre- and post-exilic prophets or at least a reference to a sort of divine representative.¹¹⁵ The fate of the slaves (*ὃν μὲν ἔδειραν, ὃν δὲ ἀπέκτειναν, ὃν δὲ ἐλιθοβόλησαν*) repeats the charge against Jerusalem’s treatment of the prophets sent to them *...ἢ ἀποκτείνουσα τοὺς προφῆτας καὶ λιθοβολοῦσα τοὺς ἀπεσταλμένους πρὸς αὐτήν...* (Mt 23:37). It is also a charge that recalls the fate of the followers of Jesus (Mt 5:11f). As already shown in the previous chapter, *λιθοβολέω* appears in the death of prophets.¹¹⁶ This has led many commentators to rightly ascribe to the identification of the slaves as the prophets sent

¹¹⁰ Cf. U. Luz, *Matthäus III.225*.

¹¹¹ For R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 430, “the believing Jewish crowds melt into the throngs of believing Gentiles to form the new group of tenant farmers.”

¹¹² W. J. C. Weren, “The Use of Isaiah 5,1-7,” 24.

¹¹³ Cf. 1 Kgs 14:18; 15:29; 2 Kgs 9:7.36; 10:10; 14:25; 17:13.23; 21:10; 24:2; Ezra 9:11; Isa 20:3; 44:26; 50:10; Jer 7:25; 25:4; 33:5; 29:19; Ezk 38:17; Dan 9:6.10; Amos 3:7; Zech 1:6.

¹¹⁴ C. G. Montefiore is representative of those who think that the tenants represent the whole of Israel since the prophets were sent to the whole nation. See his *The Synoptic Gospels*, I.275.

¹¹⁵ Cf. A. Weiser, *Die Knechtsgleichnisse*, 49-57; R. D. Aus, *The Wicked Tenants*, 37.

¹¹⁶ Cf. 2 Kgs 9:7; 17:13-14; 2 Chr 24:19-22; Ezra 9:10-11; Neh 9:26; Jer 7:25-26; Dan 9:6; Amos 2:11-12. Cf. the contribution of H. J. Schoeps, “Die jüdischen Prophetenmorde,” 126-143;

to Israel.¹¹⁷ This conclusion is given credence by the fact that we are dealing with traditional metaphors in this parable.¹¹⁸

The above identification of the slaves with the prophets and the identification of the tenants with the leaders do not conflict with the fact that the OT prophets were sent to the whole nation. But in addressing the nation, the prophets almost always directed their condemnation to the leaders. We are thus dealing with a critique of the Jewish leadership, not a rejection of Israel as a nation. The view of Overman is clear: "In no way does this passage...denote the rejection of Israel, or Jews. And it does not denote that Matthew understands his community as somehow separate from other Jews and from Israel. The people under scrutiny here, and those being judged by Jesus' words, are the leaders with whom he is contending."¹¹⁹ Although Overman seems to have overstated the view that Mt does not see his community as separate from Israel, he seems to be correct that Mt does not disparage the whole of Israel. This is made clear by the depiction of the contrasting reactions of 21:45. This is a submission that would appear clearer in the discussions that follow.

5.3.3 THE IDENTITY OF THE SON

The introduction of the son adds an important twist to the story¹²⁰ and it could be said that the son metaphor is the most widely conjectured metaphor in the whole parable. A catalogue can be made of scholars who have interpreted the son as a Jesus' self-referent,¹²¹ without referent at all,¹²² a symbol of forgiveness and goodness,¹²³ a Christological allegorising by the early Church,¹²⁴ a reference to John the Baptist,¹²⁵ an allusion to the conflict between Ishmael and Isaac,¹²⁶ or even a

¹¹⁷ For instance, H. Weder, *Gleichnisse*, 150; M. Black, "The Parables as Allegory," 282; W. Trilling, *Israel*, 64; E. E. Ellis, *Luke*, 233; K. Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 77-80; W. Carter, "Parables," 161. Also 4 Ezra 1:32-35 reports: "I sent you my servants the prophets, but you have taken and killed them and torn their bodies to pieces; I will require their blood of you, says the Lord. 'Thus says the Lord Almighty: Your house is desolate; I will drive you out as the wind drives straw; and your sons will have no children, because with you they have neglected my commandment and have done what is evil in my sight. I will give your houses to a people that will come, who without having heard me will believe. Those to whom I have shown no signs will do what I have commanded.'"

¹¹⁸ On the contrary, C. H. Dodd thinks that the servants are a mere vehicle in the narrative. see his *Parables*, 219.

¹¹⁹ J. A. Overman, *Church and Community*, 303. See also O. L. Cope, *Matthew: A Scribe*, 85f; D. J. Harrington, *Matthew*, 302-4; N. T. Wright, *The New Testament*, 76.

¹²⁰ In contrast to Van Iersel who thinks that the son is an accidental feature whose absence would not bring an important change. See "Der Sohn," 144f. Dodd has already observed that the inner logic of the story demands the sending of the son. C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 10, 40; Also M. Hengel, "Gleichnis," 30f.

¹²¹ H. F. Bayer, *Jesus' Predictions*, 109; C. L. Blomberg, *Interpreting The Parables*, 250f; J. H. Charlesworth, *Jesus' Concept of God*, 131-64; R. Fieldmeier, "Heil und Unheil," 7-9; R. H. Gundry, *Mark*, 686; J. D. Kingsbury, "Wicked Husbandmen," 643-55; J. Lambrecht, *Treasure*, 114f; R. H. Stein, *Luke*, 491f; N. T. Wright, "Jesus and the Victory of God," 178f.497.501.565f; B. H. Young, *Jesus the Jewish Theologian*, 215-222.

¹²² A. A. Milavec, *A Fresh Analysis*, 100-104; also A. A. Milavec, "Mark's Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen," 289-312, here 301-04.

¹²³ M. Petzholdt, *Gleichnisse Jesu*, 41, 44.

¹²⁴ U. Mell, *Die "Anderen" Winzer*, 114-15.

¹²⁵ This view proposed by Arthur Gray avoids three important problems with the identification of the son with Jesus 1. that it is incredible that Jesus, who had just refused to state the nature of his

reference to Isaiah.¹²⁷ These conjectures may be wide imaginations but to contend that ‘the son’ has no referent would put paid to any attempt to understand this parable. This is because of the importance of the son as the last emissary of the vineyard owner.¹²⁸

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the use of “son” or “son of God” designates a person with a special relationship with God. Though Wis. 2:10-20 depicts the righteous person as being mocked for calling himself “son of God,”¹²⁹ one cannot conclude with security that the title “son of God” signifies holiness. Rather closer to our parable is the filial address to the king in these words ‘you are my son’ (Ps 2:7). Also in this Psalm, the son is the Messiah which is so received in the rabbis.¹³⁰ If the parable is to be seen in the same light with the psalm, then the combination of the idea of installation (cf. 2 Sm 2:4) with the covenant recognition of son-ship (cf. 2 Sm 7:11-16) could give a political colour to the parable. This political garb assumes more clarity in the next parable of the trilogy. It has also been evidenced that “son of God” had messianic significance in pre-Christian Judaism especially in some Qumran scrolls.¹³¹

Instead of the notion that the introduction of the son is only motivated by the logic of the story,¹³² it should rather be argued that the image of the son can only be understood in a salvation-historic dimension.¹³³ In this regard, the “son” must then at least be a representation of a positive figure, perhaps Jesus himself.¹³⁴ The supposition that it refers to Jesus could be confirmed by the high priest’s question (Mt 26:63),¹³⁵ and the scorn of the passers-by (Mt 27:43) which was turned to a confession by the centurion (Mt 27:54). Therefore, the contention of Jeremias that for the mass of Jesus’ hearers “the messianic significance of the son could not be taken for granted, since no evidence is forthcoming for the application of the title ‘son of God’ to the Messiah in pre-Christian Judaism”¹³⁶ could be significant for his

authority (cf. Mt 21:27), should now disclose it openly; 2. incredible too is that Jesus would have disclosed to his opponents what he had never made know to his followers, that he was son of God; and 3. it is odd that Jesus would have alluded to his own death, still in the future, with a series of aorist verbs. For these arguments see A. Gray, “Wicked Husbandmen,” 42-52; D. Stern, Jesus’ Parables, 57-65; Parables in Midrash, 192-96. This could be supported by the fact that the question of authority and the preceding parable of the Two Sons have focused on the person and message of John. But since The Baptist was not murdered by the Jewish leaders, this supposition cannot be easily accepted.

¹²⁶ J. D. Levenson, *Beloved son*, 228.

¹²⁷ R. Aus, *Wicked Tenants*, 53-56. His arguments are based on rabbinic traditions.

¹²⁸ The importance of the son imagery led Snodgrass to suggest that our parable should be named “the parable of the rejected son.” See his *Wicked Tenants*, 109.

¹²⁹ See also J. H. Charlesworth who made a list from early Judaism showing the technical use of “son.” See his “Jesus’ Concept of God,” 131-64.

¹³⁰ See baraita, b. Sukka 52a, and 4Q Florilegium 1:11.

¹³¹ See C. A. Evans, “Dead Sea Scrolls and the Historical Jesus,” 549-51.

¹³² So C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 130.

¹³³ So A. Weiser, *Die Knechtsgleichnisse*, 52.

¹³⁴ For the argument that Jesus is implied in the image of the son see B. M. F. van Iersel, ‘Der Son,’ 144f; A. Weiser, *Die Knechtsgleichnisse*, 51; T. W. Manson, *The Teachings of Jesus*, 104.

¹³⁵ See J. Kingsbury, “Wicked Husbandmen,” 643-55.

¹³⁶ J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 72f. This argument has also been developed by W. G. Kümmel, “Gleichnis,” 130.

consideration of the historical Jesus. But in the context of Mt's gospel it seems to miss a vital point. Already the Matthean Jesus has shown the special filial relationship between him and God¹³⁷ and nothing prevents him from describing this special relationship with the pictures of son and the father.¹³⁸ And no matter what the original hearers of the parable may have understood by the metaphor of the son, Mt, no doubt, sees it as a reference to Jesus (cf. 3:17; 11:27; 16:16; 17:5). But since there is a close relation between the fate of the son and the rejection and vindication of the stone, an analysis of the stone quotation could lead to a better understanding of the identity of the son.

5.3.4 THE BUILDERS AND THE REJECTED AND EXALTED STONE

In v.42, Jesus appeals to the stone saying of Ps 118, a psalm celebrating the anticipated enthronement of the messiah of the house of David.¹³⁹ The implication of this saying is made clear with v.44 which seems inspired in content and grammar by Isa 8:14 and Dan 2:44.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps the first important remark about the stone-saying is that its relegation as a secondary addition to the parable may not be necessary since it serves as a proof text to the parable.¹⁴¹ This agrees with the notion that “stock images and common themes, complete with allusions to and sometimes formal quotations of Scripture, are the building blocks out of which Jewish parables of late antiquity were constructed.”¹⁴² With the stone saying of v.42, Jesus modifies the effect of the actions of the tenants from punishment to them (*κακούς κακῶς ἀπολέσει αὐτούς*), to vindication of the rejected stone (*οὗτος ἐγενήθη εἰς κεφαλὴν γωνίας*). This stone-saying, together with the application of the parable gives the key to understanding not only the identity of the son but also serves as key to the parable interpretation in line with the form of juridical parables which are “designed to overcome man's closeness to himself.”¹⁴³ The implication is that the builders who rejected the stone can be equated with the respondents to the question *τί ποιήσει τοῖς γεωργοῖς ἐκεῖνοις*; This compares well with the verdict of Nathan to David in 2 Sm 12:7.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁷ Cf. J. Jeremias, “Abba,” 11-65.

¹³⁸ So also T. W. Manson, *The Teachings of Jesus*, 104; M. Konradt, *Israel*, 189.

¹³⁹ Cf. S. Mowinkel, *Psalms*, 75ff; A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship*, 114-18.

¹⁴⁰ See U. Luz, *Matthäus III.217*. As already seen, the stone saying is delivered by Thomas as a separate logion (66). The absence of this stone allusion in the Thomistic version of the parable has led to the notion that Thomas delivered the most ancient form of the parable. See for instance J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse* 68-75; J. D. Crossan, *In Parables*, 92-95.

¹⁴¹ Brooke has argued that “the historical context portrayed suggests that the use of scripture in the pericope as whole is not the result of the creative work of the early church, but goes back to Jesus himself.” “4Q500,” 294. This conclusion has been arrived at by many scholars. See for example, C. A. Evans, “Jesus’ Parable of the Tenants Farmers,” 70; K. Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 96f; J. C. de Moor, “Targumic Background,” 79. See also M. Hengel, “Gleichnis,” 19.

¹⁴² C. A. Evans, “How Septuagintal,” 110

¹⁴³ U. Simon, “The Poor Man’s Ewe-Lamb,” 221. I have already quoted the opening verses of Simon’s definition of a juridical parable in the third chapter.

¹⁴⁴ See T. Aurelio, *Disclosures*, 199, who compares this parable with Nathan’s parable to David, concluding that while the meaning of the parable was explained to David, Jesus’ hearers were left in no need of explanation.

Great importance should be laid to the Psalm quotation since it seems to be an appropriate connection to Jesus' Temple actions.¹⁴⁵ Again, many exegetes have recognized in the parable of the Wicked Tenants the word-play between stone and son in their Semitic forms (בֶּן־אֶבֶן and אֶבֶן).¹⁴⁶ Also the Targum to the psalm interprets the stone rejected by the builders as 'the youth among the sons of Jesse.' It might be correct to argue that the word-play is built on a traditional imagery since the foundation stone of the tower of Hermas (Sim ix. 2 and 12), is the Son of God.¹⁴⁷ This word-play is most evident in the Hebrew language¹⁴⁸ but was also recounted in Greek by Josephus in his account of the siege of Jerusalem in these words: "watchmen were accordingly posted by them on the towers, who gave warning whenever the engine was fired and the stone in transit, by shouting in their native tongue, 'the son is coming', whereupon those in the line of fire promptly made way and lay down, owing to which precautions the stone passed harmlessly through and fell behind them."¹⁴⁹ Similar considerations like the ones above led Black to conclude that "the parable (or allegory) may be regarded as itself a *peshar* of the testimonia: it is a parable, that is to say, not of the Wicked Husbandmen but of the rejected 'Stone'='Son.'"¹⁵⁰ And since the whole trilogy of parables originated from a challenge to the authority of Jesus, it would not be wrong to refer to the 'stone' as a christological veil on the identity of Jesus.¹⁵¹

But who are these *οἰκοδομοῦντες* who rejected the *λίθον*? Although the term "builders of the Torah" is an honorary title for the scribes, and "builders" can also be used as a description for students,¹⁵² this question can easily be answered with reference to immediate context of the parable. Since the Jewish leaders are those with whom Jesus is contending in our trilogy, they are also the ones indicted in this parable. The implication is that they are also the unworthy tenants in the vineyard. F. F. Bruce has correctly seen the chief priests and their subjects as corresponding "not only to the tenants in the parable who misused the owner's servants and killed his son, but also to the builders in the oracle who rejected the stone which God had

¹⁴⁵ See N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 498f.

¹⁴⁶ See P. Carrington, *According to Mark*, 249f; M. Black, "The Use of the Old Testament, 12; K. Snodgrass, *Wicked Tenants*, 63f; esp. 113-18.

¹⁴⁷ See M. Black, "The Use of the Old Testament," 14. For other occurrences of the word-play in OT, cf. Ex 28:29; Jos 4:6.7.8.20.21; 1 Kgs 18:31; Lam 4:1-2; Isa 54:11-13; Zach 9:16.

¹⁴⁸ See the criticisms of A. J. Hultgreen, *Parables*, 363 and J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 85f.

¹⁴⁹ Josephus, *Jewish War*, 5:272.

¹⁵⁰ M. Black, "The Use of the Old Testament," 13. He grounds his argument on the fact that the son in our parable is described as *κληρονομός*, that is, heir for this is the traditional role of the son. At Zach 4:7, the chief corner-stone or headstone is interpreted as 'the stone of inheritance' (*λίθος κληρονομίας*) where *ha'eben har'osha* has been read as *'eben ha-jar'osh*. P. L. Culbertson, *A Word Fitly Spoken*, 226f has commented that by this word play, the Aramaic text can mean either "the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner," or "the lad which the sons of Jesse abandoned has become the chief of the leadership."

¹⁵¹ A. Plummer, *Matthew*, 296, argues that in vv.33-46, our parable indirectly answers the question of the Sanhedrin about the authority of Jesus. This authority is the authority of the father who sent him to them as he sent the prophets before him, while their rejection of him is the culmination of the rejection of the prophets by their predecessors. But see M. Lowe, "From the Parable of the Vineyard," 257-63 for whom the owner of the vineyard is God, the vineyard Israel, the tenants the authorities, and the son, as the last person whom the owner could send is John The Baptist.

¹⁵² H. Strack/P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, I.876; III.379

destined for honour.”¹⁵³ If it is true that *οἰκοδομοῦντες* is an honorary title for the scribes, this then explains the Matthean replacement of the addressees of the parables from *οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ* (21:23) to *οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι* (21:45), since the scribes are a branch of the Pharisees.¹⁵⁴ But it is also plausible that Mt does not aim at differentiating between the Jewish groups. No matter the specifications, they represent a front against Jesus and he refers this parable against them.

This, and similar considerations led Bayer to the insightful conclusion that “while *γεωργοί* in the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen conveys to Jesus’ audience a general concept of differentiation between Israel and a select group of rejectors (sic) of prophetic messengers, the reference to *οἰκοδομοῦντες* by means of the citation of Ps 118:22 polemically clarifies and specifies the identity of the *γεωργοί*: the tenants are primarily...the past and present rulers in Jerusalem...the focus nevertheless lies on the present generation of rejectors (sic).”¹⁵⁵ His argument is supported by the location of the Matthean parable of the Wicked Tenants within the long exegetical tradition of the Isaian Vineyard Song especially as evidenced in the Qumran community and the fact that the Qumran community branded their opponents as ‘scoffers in Jerusalem’¹⁵⁶ clarifying them as the ‘priests of Jerusalem’ who have led the people astray, while also condemning the large amount of money this people have accumulated.¹⁵⁷ One would not then be surprised that it was after this stone saying that the Jewish leaders realised that the parable was told against them. Hence, the tenants in the vineyard are the same builders who rejected the stone/son. They are also the ones who wanted to arrest Jesus after the parable (21:45f). They are the leaders of the Jewish people.

The importance of the tenants in our parable could be seen by the fact that only the *οἰκοδομοῦντες* exceeds the continuing activities of the *γεωργοί* in the parable.¹⁵⁸ The central role of the tenants led McKelvey to tag the parable “the parable of the disinheritance and destruction of the unfaithful husbandmen.”¹⁵⁹ And since Isa 5:1-7 has been shown to be essential part of this parable, the tenants, then, must be interpreted in the light of Isaiah’s indictment of Israel. However, the focus is on the leaders of Israel and the privileges of election. This in turn, means that the initial entrusting of the vineyard to the tenants (Israel) implies that this privilege is not permanent privilege, but a ‘loan’ that must be repaid by means of specific obligations and expectations.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ F. F. Bruce, “New Wine,” 232.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, III.268 for the almost muted view that all the scribes known to Mt were Pharisaic.

¹⁵⁵ H. F. Bayer, Jesus’ Predictions, 102f.

¹⁵⁶ L. H. Schiffman, Dead Sea Scrolls, 229.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 387.

¹⁵⁸ H. F. Bayer, Jesus’ Predictions, 99.

¹⁵⁹ R. J. McKelvey, New Temple, 66.

¹⁶⁰ J. Blank, Sendung, 15. The remarks of W. Herzog, Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed, (Louisville, 1994), that the original parable was aimed at expressing the plight of Jewish peasant farmers now exploited to work as tenants is very contentious.

What remains in our parable is to find out to what extent the transfer of the kingdom affects Mt's idea of the relationship of the message of Jesus to the nations. That is to what extent the message of Mt implies the incorporation of the nations in the economy of salvation. I will now elaborate some of the points I have previously hinted at.

5.4 MATTHEW'S GENTILE SUB-PLOT

Perhaps Mt's depiction of the Gentiles can give a clearer picture of his intended message especially with the notion of the transference of the kingdom to another *ἔθνος*. I will now try to see how Mt's portrayal of the nations (gentiles?) impacts on our trilogy. This includes especially the pericopes which reveal Mt's interest in the place of the Gentiles in salvation-history. This is important since although Mt uses the singular of *ἔθνος* in 21:43, he seems to present a document that implies the breakdown of ethnic barriers in his salvific story.

Perhaps it is important to observe the significance of beginnings in a narrative. Speaking about Mt and Lk, Derrett observes that reading the beginning prepares for "hearing the gospels as a whole."¹⁶¹ This idea has also been appreciated among ancient rhetorists¹⁶² and among many modern bible analysts.¹⁶³ Hence, Mt's opening could provide us with an aperture into his main aim in the Jesus' story.¹⁶⁴ From this perspective, the first instance where the nations are implied is the introduction of the Gospel as *βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ* (1:1-17). This title already evokes a lot. From the point of salvation history, Abraham could be seen here, just as his name implies, as the father of all, through whose name all the nations of the earth will be blessed (cf. Gen 12:1-3; 17:1-8).¹⁶⁵ On the other hand, the title "son of David" characterizes Jesus as the one in whom Israel will find blessing.¹⁶⁶ One could also see in the presentation of the genealogy of Jesus Mt's scheme of universalism¹⁶⁷ strengthened by the introduction of four women in the lineage. The point that by including Tamar (a Canaanite or Aramean),¹⁶⁸ Rahab (a Canaanite), Ruth (a Moabite), and Bathsheba (a Hittite) that Mt could be hinting at the salvation

¹⁶¹ J. D. M. Derrett, "Nativity," 81.

¹⁶² In Rhetoric 3.14.5-6, Aristotle sees the task of *προόμια* in forensic speeches as providing "a sample of the subject, in order that the hearers may know beforehand what it is about, and that the mind may not be kept in suspense..."

¹⁶³ An overview of current research has been provided by Moysés Mayordomo-Martin, in his book *Anfang*, 203-5.

¹⁶⁴ This is an appreciation of the "primacy effect" of narrative beginnings. For Mayordomo-Martin, narrative beginnings and ends act as a frame that allows the reader "die Perspektive des Textes einzunehmen und am Ende wieder aus ihr herauszutreten." *Anfang*, 204. In the case of Mt we see how this plays out in the great commission of 28:19f.

¹⁶⁵ For the argument that Mt uses Abraham to hint at Gentile inclusion within God's kingdom see J. S. Siker, *Disinheriting the Jews*, 187; M. Konradt, *Israel*, 286f.

¹⁶⁶ J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 47-48.

¹⁶⁷ See also W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 74 who argues from the evidence of the Targum to Psalm 89 to arrive at the universal importance of the genealogy.

¹⁶⁸ Tamar is called an Aramean in Jewish tradition. See R. Brown, *Birth*, 72.

of the Gentiles should be given great accent.¹⁶⁹ Also to be accentuated is the fact that these women are of questionable character¹⁷⁰ although Ruth seems to be an exception (cf. Ruth 1:6; 2:11; 3:10; 4:11). Thus, the genealogy sets the stage for what is to be experienced later in the Gospel and in the trilogy of parables, namely, the reversal of established expectations and the incorporation of Gentiles.¹⁷¹

It could also be said that Jesus' withdrawal to *Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν* (4:13-16),¹⁷² and especially his positive presentation of the centurion (8:5-13)¹⁷³ bear witness to the place of the nations in his scheme.¹⁷⁴ The withdrawal recorded in 4:13-16 is again recalled in 12:15-21 which is necessitated by the opposition of the Jews symbolized by *οἱ Φαρισαῖοι*. Mt presents this withdrawal as a fulfillment of the servant's song of Isa 42:1-4.¹⁷⁵ Finally, that he will announce God's judgment *τοῖς ἔθνεσιν* (12:18) and that in his name the nations will put their hope (12:20) is a pointer to the great commission of 28:19.¹⁷⁶ But the encounter with the pagan centurion brings out starkly the place of the nations in the history of salvation. The words of Jesus (8:10) contrasts the centurion to all in Israel with the stinging judgement that the children of the kingdom would be cast out into outer darkness, *ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων* (8:11-12; cp. 3:9; 22:13).¹⁷⁷ This kind of dire warning which is much in tone with Mt¹⁷⁸ actually distinguishes between the faith of the Gentile

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Luz, Matthäus, I.94-5; W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, I.171; M. Konradt, Israel, 25. This point is not diminished by the fact that Mt found Tamar and the wife of Uriah in 1 Chr. 2:4; 3:5. But see R. J. Bauckham, "Tamar's Ancestry," 314-20 who points out that in Gen. 38 Tamar is not actually said to be a Canaanite. But later Jewish tradition identifies her as a Gentile. Cf. Jub. 41:1-2; T. Jud. 10:1-2 and Philo's Virt. 221. The gentile status of Bathsheba has also been challenged by D. C. Sim, "The Gospel of Matthew and the Gentiles," 22. Cf. J. Nolland, "The Four (Five) Women," 535, n. 26.

¹⁷⁰ See R. E. Brown, Birth, 73f.

¹⁷¹ No less important in this regard are the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus. One of these circumstances is the visit of the *μάγοι* (2:1). Here, the incorporation of the gentiles is coupled with polemic against the Jewish leadership. The convocation of the Jewish leaders (*συναγαγὼν πάντας τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ*) occurs again in passages dealing with controversy with Jesus (cf. 22:34,41; 26:3,57; 27:16; 28:12). Their reaction, together with Herod, "*ἐταράχθη*" (2:3) is contrasted with the *ἐχάρησαν* of the magi (2:10). Cf. R. H. Gundry, Matthew, 26.

¹⁷² See D. C. Davies/W. D. Allison, Matthew, I.376,383; J. Gnlika, Das Matthäusevangelium, I.95,97; U. Luz, Matthäus, I.170f.

¹⁷³ But Mt does not present the nations in good light all the times. For instance, in 5:46-7, the parallel between *ἐθνηκοί* and *τελῶναι* shows the nations in a bad light; they are not to be imitated when it comes to forgiveness. Also 6:7-8,32 repeats the critic against the nations. In terms of prayers, they should not be imitated. Even their unending worries for daily needs are bad examples for the followers of Jesus.

¹⁷⁴ W. G. Olmstead, Trilogy, 77.

¹⁷⁵ The fact that Jesus healed on the Sabbath and approves the principle of mercy which goes beyond the law (12:7) could lead one to argue that the mission has already crossed the boundaries of the Jewish people.

¹⁷⁶ See J. P. Meier, The Vision of Matthew, 86.

¹⁷⁷ Since the parallel promise of Isa 43:5 talks of bringing home God's people from the east and the west, one could conclude that Mt sees the Gentiles as God's children from the beginning. But the fact that the *original* children of Abraham will be excluded (8:11-12) is "a word which speaks of damnation not as a certainty but as a prospect demanding repentance". D. C. Davies/W. D. Allison, Matthew, II.31.

¹⁷⁸ See Jeremias, Jesus' Promise, 46-51.

centurion and that of Israel¹⁷⁹ and may signal a preliminary stage to the universality of the kingdom.¹⁸⁰ Hence, “in this messianic age, a gentile can be a beneficiary provided he has faith as in the case of the centurion.”¹⁸¹

However the privileges of Israel seem to be re-emphasized in 10:5-6.14-15.18 which begins with a total (but temporary) prohibition of the mission *εἰς ὁδοὺς ἐθνῶν* and even to the Samaritans (a prohibition not found in Mk and Lk).¹⁸² As a pointer that the prohibition of this mission is only temporary, the disciples will not only be persecuted in synagogues, they ‘will be brought to trial before rulers and kings, to tell the Good News to them *καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν*’ (v.18). Hence the ministries to the Jews and to the Gentiles are not mutually exclusive.¹⁸³

But while it seems that Jesus’ mission is to Israel (cf. 10:5f), the pericope of 15:21-28 shows a Gentile woman coming to Jesus. Mt’s description of the woman as *γυνή Χανααία* evokes OT images concerning the principle enemy of God’s people.¹⁸⁴ The location of this pericope in our narrative gives it more significance. While the Jewish leaders offer hypocritical worship (15:7-8) and false teaching (15:9), while they are scandalized by Jesus’ teaching (15:12) and perversely blind (15:14), and while the disciples remain dull and without understanding (15:16), the Canaanite woman sees that Jesus is the Son of David (15:22),¹⁸⁵ bows before him in homage (15:25) and refuses to be scandalized by Jesus’ steadfast focus upon Israel (15:24-27).¹⁸⁶ The statement by the woman (15:27), betrays Mt’s intention. He aims to admit Israel’s salvific primacy but indicates the centripetal movement of the Gentiles towards Jesus.¹⁸⁷

If the above-analyzed passages point to the universal mission, then 24:9-31 makes this mission explicit. Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem (23:38f) and separation from the

¹⁷⁹ Although M. Konradt, *Israel*, 218-24 argues contrarily. For him the pericope should be taken as a warning to Mt’s community.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. S. Brown, “The Matthean Community,” 196.

¹⁸¹ G. Tisera, *Universalism*, 210.

¹⁸² For the injunction as temporary see M. D. Hooker, “Uncomfortable Words,” 363. For the prohibition as a geographical prohibition see R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 185; C. S. Keener, *Matthew*, 315f; M. Konradt, *Israel*, 85.

¹⁸³ J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II.363. But at 11:20-24, the comparison between Gentile and Israelite cities takes a starker form. Even miracles received are no guarantee to salvation. The fact that Peter comes from Bethsaida cannot save it. In all, the Gentile nations, though bad, are considered morally better in comparison with the Israelite cities.

¹⁸⁴ See W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, II.547.

¹⁸⁵ For the use of the title ‘son of David’ as the woman’s recognition that Jesus is the Messiah of Israel see R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 311; U. Luz, *Matthäus* II.434.

¹⁸⁶ For the fact that the word *κῖων* is normally used derogatorily and can be applied to the gentiles see Pedersen, “*κῖων*,” *EWNT* II.822; M. Konradt, *Israel*, 67.

¹⁸⁷ But in the unparalleled saying of 18:17 Jesus declares that the unrepentant brother (and sister?) is to be treated like a Gentile and a tax collector. What immediately comes to the mind here is that the parallel between Gentile and tax collector implies a pejorative use of these terms. But from a wider Matthean narrative this may not be so since the tax collectors and sinners will eventually precede the Jewish leaders on the way to the Kingdom (21:32). However, 20:24-28 uses *οἱ ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν* as negative examples not to be emulated. They have become just like the Jewish leaders—they lord it over their subjects.

Temple (24:1)¹⁸⁸ leads to the inclusion of πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν among those who will persecute Jesus' followers (24:9). Since this Good News about the kingdom will be preached through the entire world as a witness πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (24:14), I don't think one should restrict 'the nations' here to the Gentiles.¹⁸⁹ Rather one finds, for the first time in Mt, an explicit announcement of the universal mission of the followers of Jesus. Little wonder then that the angels 'will gather his chosen people from one end of the world to another' (24:31).¹⁹⁰ Hence, what the reader has been suspecting from the beginning comes to the fore, namely, that God has his elected ones in all parts of the world. This election is shown through the doing of fruits worthy of repentance and not based on ethnic lines. The above view seems to be confirmed by the events of 26:6-13, which record the anointing of Jesus in Bethany. The concluding statement of Jesus is that what this nameless woman has done will be told in memory of her wherever this Gospel is preached ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ. It therefore makes sense to include πάντα τὰ ἔθνη at the last judgement (25:32) since the message has been preached to them. This last judgement which expresses a universal concern is a Matthean scheme¹⁹¹ and shows that what determines entrance into the eschatological kingdom is not belonging to a privileged race or cult but the doing of deeds of mercy (cf. 9:13; 12:7) and love (cf. 5:3-12; 22:40).¹⁹²

Finally in the passage of 28:16-20, one encounters the universal charge to evangelization. It might be important to note that this charge was given from no other place than from 'Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν' which has earlier served as a place of refuge (2:22), a place of withdrawal (4:12.15), a place of Jesus' activity (4:23), and as the place of transition to Judea (19:1). In the present case, Galilee serves as the place of commissioning, where the resurrected Jesus inaugurates his universal reign with a universal mission.¹⁹³ And the implication is that the nations will take part in salvation.¹⁹⁴ It could thus be concluded that this mission to all nations is another feature of eschatology just like the limited mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:5-6; 15:24).¹⁹⁵ This implies that the charge to universal mission is a summation of the entire Matthean scheme.

¹⁸⁸ Unlike Mk's simple notice that Jesus left the Temple (ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ, Mk 13:1), Mt seems to imply this separation (ἐξελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ ἐπορεύετο, Mt 24:1).

¹⁸⁹ So also G. Tisera, *Universalism*, 249.

¹⁹⁰ See Dan 7.

¹⁹¹ J. R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parables*, 14.

¹⁹² Although the word ἔθνος did not appear in the passion narrative, the efforts Mt makes to excuse the pagan governor, Pilate from culpability in the death of Jesus is noteworthy. This is strongly contrasted with the reactions of the Jews. Mt carefully includes the insults of the passers-by (27:40), of the chief priests and the teachers of the law and the elders (27:42-43), and even of the bandits (27:44). On the other hand, when the pagan officer and the soldiers with him saw all the signs that accompanied the death of Jesus, they uttered 'he really was the Son of God' (27:54). Set over and against each other, the words of insult of the leaders and the passers-by have become words of confession for the soldiers. But instead of concluding that the christological confession of the soldiers implies exclusion of the Jews from a realization of the person of Christ, the women disciples (most probably all Jews), still stand not far from the cross (27:56).

¹⁹³ See J. P. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 37f.

¹⁹⁴ J. P. Meier calls it a "proleptic parousia." See his *The Vision of Matthew*, 37f. See also Gundry, *Matthew*, 595.

¹⁹⁵ See C. K. Barrett, "The Gentile Mission," 69.

Perhaps one can summarize Mt's story as one that anticipates the inclusion of the pagans in the eschatological banquet (1:1-7; 2:1-12; 4:12-16) while asserting that those who do not heed the call would not be saved just by ethnic claims (3:7-10), and in fact would be cast out (8:11-12; 21:43). This is true if the identification between nation (21:43) and gentiles is correct. But even if this identification is not correct in all respects, yet the door has been opened for the universal mission where all can become disciples and be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (28:16-20). Yet this mission that incorporates all does not preclude judgement (22:11-14).

5.5 CONCLUSION

From the fore-going arguments, it might be necessary to make a clear distinction between the conclusions of scholars who have approached this parable from a consideration of the historical teaching of Jesus. It is such a study that led Jeremias to conclude that our parable "will, wie so viele andere Gleichnisse Jesu, die Darbietung der Frohbotschaft an die Armen rechtfertigen."¹⁹⁶ On his part Dodd argues that the aim of the parable was for Jesus to show the Jewish leaders that he has discovered their murderous intent and to speak God's judgement against them.¹⁹⁷ It has also been argued that the parable is a tragic parable of the immoral choices of the tenants,¹⁹⁸ as a parable of a foolish and usurious landowner,¹⁹⁹ as a parable about the futility of violence on the part of the wronged tenants,²⁰⁰ or as a parable about the potentially tragic fate of the kingdom, since "the owner's fate may be that of his son."²⁰¹ However, these are conclusions not based on considering the parable in its Matthean context.

Since it has been shown that the parable makes no clear allusion to the problem of rich and poor in Mt's narrative, it seems appropriate to conclude that the meaning of the parable of the Wicked Tenants becomes clear once it is interpreted within its literary context. This background coheres with a traditional exegetical history of the Isaian Song of the Vineyard. But divorced from this context, one is cut in a labyrinth of intellectual ideologies. It is a consideration of the context that furnishes an appropriate interpretation of the parable, namely, that the parable has been an allegory from the start and that this allegorical tendency has been intensified by Mt. But it is not an allegory of God's rejection of the Jews and the Gentiles' acceptance of Jesus. This has been shown by the fact that the parable does not identify the tenants with the Jews but with the Jewish leaders. Again, the conflict in our pericope is between Jesus and the leaders and not with the Jewish people as a whole. This

¹⁹⁶ J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 74. J. A. T. Robinson has already challenged this view. See his "Wicked Husbandmen," 444.

¹⁹⁷ C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 101.

¹⁹⁸ J. D. Crossan, *In Parables*, 93.

¹⁹⁹ J. S. Kloppenborg, *Tenants*, 348-53.

²⁰⁰ W. R. Herzog, *Parables*, 98-113. This view seems to be shared by E. Jane/R. R. Newell, "Wicked Tenants," 226-37.

²⁰¹ B. B. Scott, *Parables*, 253.

conflict bothers on the question of authority. Furthermore, it is not the vineyard that is judged in our pericope but the tenants in charge of the Vineyard. Finally, the pericope Mt 21:18-22 has already connected the Temple with fruit-bearing and the issue of authority. The sending of *τοὺς δούλους αὐτοῦ* by the householder *ὅτε δὲ ἤγγισεν ὁ καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν* so as to collect *τοὺς καρπούς αὐτοῦ* (v.34) is then a reference to the demand of good work.²⁰² It might then be fair to conclude that the statement ‘the kingdom of God will be taken from you’ is applied to the Jewish leaders while the new “people” refers to those who have produced the required fruit, consisting of Jews and Gentiles.²⁰³ This is so since the trilogy is framed by argument between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. It is the production of the required fruit that furnishes one with the requisite authority to enter into the kingdom of God. Hence, what we have is a parable that effectively answers the question of authority posited in 21:23.²⁰⁴

It can thus be rightly concluded that the parable gets a greater accent as an attack against the Jewish leaders in Mt than in Mk since Mt has built it into a trilogy. In the words of Olmstead, in Mt, “Jesus’ parables are no longer merely against the Jewish leaders, as in Mark; they are about them. They not only condemn them; they portray them. They are the disobedient son, the murderous tenants, the builders who reject the stone of God’s choice and so evoke his judgment.”²⁰⁵ Consequently, just like the parable of Two Sons it is misguided to interpret the parable of The Wicked Tenants as though it concerns ethnic relations.²⁰⁶

The above conclusion is especially accurate when we see the parable as belonging to the final days of the ministry of Jesus and as reflecting the fact that Jesus regards himself as God’s final messenger to the effect that rejecting him means a final rejection of God.²⁰⁷ The implication is that in the person of Jesus the kingdom has drawn near. Hence, his rejection by the leaders of the so-called people of God is simultaneously a rejection of the reign of God. Thus the death of the son in the parable is not a prophecy or passion prediction by Jesus, but arises from Jesus evaluating the situation in view of his conflict with official Judaism.²⁰⁸

²⁰² See also D. A. Hagner, Matthew II.620.

²⁰³ So also R. T. France, Matthew, 816; contra D. C. Sim, Gospel, 148f, who thinks that Mt’s use of *ἔθνος* refers to “either the Matthean community alone or Christian Judaism in general.” Although D. R. A. Hare supports the view that the ‘nation’ to whom the kingdom will be transferred is the church, he correctly contends that “the church, for Matthew, is neither Jewish nor Gentile but a “third race” that transcends the old distinction.” See his Matthew, 249.

²⁰⁴ According to E. Wendling, the parable supplies “die Antwort auf die Frage nach der Vollmacht Jesu, allerdings in Rätselform, die aber von den Gegnern verstanden wird.” Entstehung, 152.

²⁰⁵ W. G. Olmstead, Trilogy, 149. See also J. Jeremias, Gleichnisse, 128.

²⁰⁶ See W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, III.189f.

²⁰⁷ This corresponds to Jesus’ self-evaluation in Q 11:31f; 12:49; 16:16; Mk 10:38f; Lk 13:31-33. But U. Luz, Matthäus, III. 220 contends that if the above thesis is correct, our parable would be the only parable “in der Jesus sein eigenes Wirken zum Thema machte.” See also C. H. Dodd, Parables, 98.

²⁰⁸ See H. Weder, Gleichnisse, 157. Against this view, J. E/R. R. Newell, arguing from the standpoint that the point of comparison between the parable and the situation in Jesus’ day is between the Zealots and the tenants, conclude that the parable is not a Christological allegory in which Jesus speaks of himself as the Son of God, nor is it designed to show the fate of the opponents of Jesus. See their article “Wicked Tenants,” 236. This conclusion overlooks the working together of all the stock metaphors which are very important in the parable.

But I must mention that the arguments that Jesus would not have made use of allegory or that the parable manifests a strong pre-Easter confession are not strong enough not to treat the parable as a parable from Jesus. Indeed our parable supports the idea that if a feature is characteristically within and relatively distinct of the Jesus tradition, then its presence is most likely explained by the fact that it goes back to Jesus.²⁰⁹ But the actual situation in which this parable and the whole of the trilogy arose will form the crust of the last chapter of this work.

²⁰⁹ See J. D. G. Dunn, *A New Perspective*, 70.

CHAPTER SIX
MT 22:1-14: LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS AND MT'S USE OF Q

6.1 LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

6.1.1 STRUCTURE

The final parable in this closely knit trilogy speaks again concerning lack of response on the part of those initially entrusted with the call. This is made explicit by the use of *καλεῖν* (vv.3f and 8f). And as in the preceding parable of the wicked tenant farmers, again there is reference to the killing of servants. But the present parable expressly includes the killing of those who killed the servants and the destruction of their city. Having shifted attention from the Jewish leaders' intended action against Jesus (*ζητοῦντες αὐτὸν κρατῆσαι*) and their being held back because *έφοβήθησαν τοὺς ὄχλους* (21:46), to the address of Jesus to this same leaders (22:1), the parable takes up the motif of the son (cf. 21:28.37.38), the motif of the kingdom (cf. 21:31.43) and the motif of sending (21:28.30.34.36.37) and violence (21:35.36.39) that already characterise the preceding parables of the Two Sons and the Wicked Tenants. From these correspondences, one expects that the themes of the previous parables are to be developed in the present one.¹ But rather than a summons to work in the vineyard of the first parable or to render the fruits of the vineyard of the second parable, the third parable of the trilogy presents a summons to attend a marriage banquet and the wearing of the appropriate marriage garment. And unlike the son of the preceding parable, the son plays no narrated role in the present parable.²

The parable begins with an editorial comment, namely, *καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν εἶπεν ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς λέγων* (v.1). This comment (especially the mention of *ὁ Ἰησοῦς*³ and the addition of *πάλιν*), shows that the parable is to be taken as a continuation of the previous parable that ends in 21:46.⁴ From v.2, the introduction brings in the element of similitude absent in the other parables of the trilogy (*ὁμοιῶ*). It also gives the theme of the parable. Here, the kingdom of God is compared to a wedding feast prepared by a king for his son. Beginning from v.3, the efforts of the king to get those invited (*τοὺς κεκλημένους*) to the wedding feast (*εἰς τοὺς γάμους*) are narrated together with the responses of the invitees. Since v.3b shows that the guests were unwilling to come (*καὶ οὐκ ἤθελον ἔλθεῖν*), a second message was sent out to this same group but with more urgency (v.4). This urgency is shown by the inclusion of items on the menu and with the final injunction *δεῦτε εἰς τοὺς γάμους* "come to the wedding." There is much personal touch to this invitation.⁵ This is shown by the use of the personal pronoun (*μου*). Despite this urgency and personal appeal, the response to the invitation is that some of the members of this group made light of the

¹ Cf. W. Carter, "Parables," 169.

² For the view that the role of the "son" in the parables of the trilogy continually diminish, see H. Frankemölle, *Matthäus II.340*. J. Nolland has indicated that the role of the son is no more than to mark the particular importance of the occasion. *Matthew*, 885f.

³ For the use of 'Jesus' as a reminder to the audience of Jesus' God-given mission to manifest God's saving presence, see W. Carter, "Parables," 169.

⁴ It seems that Jesus uses this parable as answer to the Jewish leaders' action. This view has been exposed by J. Gnlika, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II.233. So also H. Frankemölle, *Matthäus II.340*.

⁵ Cf. L. Schottroff, *Gleichnisse*, 56.

invitation (v.5) and went away (*ἀμελήσαντες*),⁶ while the rest turned violent, killing (some of) the servants (v.5). This violence received a reprisal from the king who killed the murderers (*τούς φονεῖς*) and burned their city (v.7).

As the narrative progresses, there seems to be a break between vv.7 and 8. This break is marked with the emphasis introduced by *τότε* (v.8) and a historic present.⁷ It is also made clear by the fact that while vv.3-7 deal with the first and second set of invitations to the same guests who refuse and some of whom acted violently, vv.8-13 deal with a second set who accepts. V.7, that is, the king's killing of the murderers and the destruction of their city through the agency of his soldiers (*τὰ στρατεύματα*⁸ *αυτοῦ*), seems to represent the king's reaction to the death of his servants. This is followed by an explanation of the need for a fresh invitation since *οἱ δὲ κεκλημένοι οὐκ ἦσαν ἄξιοι* (v.8), and the actual sending of this invitation to all (v.9). These two verses echo the motif of replacement and seem to be at the heart of the parable and the whole trilogy.⁹

The conclusion of the first major segment of the parable with *ὁ γάμος* (v.10), introduces the next section with a fresh mention of the organizer of the wedding banquet (*ὁ βασιλεὺς*). In this verse, there is a narrated execution of the slaves' tasks unlike in vv.3 and 4 where the execution is taken for granted. But the issue of the personal response of the invited guests seems to have receded to the background.¹⁰ But instead of an invitation (*καλέω*) the slaves actually gathered (*συνήγαγον*) the good and bad so that the wedding (*ὁ γάμος*)¹¹ was filled (v.10). The action of the servants (*συνήγαγον πάντα οὓς εἶρον, πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς*) could be said to have answered the injunction (*καὶ ὅσους ἐὰν εὔρητε καλέσατε εἰς τοὺς γάμους*). The result of this invitation is that the banquet hall was filled with *πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς*.¹²

It could be that the mixture of the good and the bad naturally foreshadows the action of the king who came (*εἰσελθὼν*) to inspect the *ἀνακείμενοι* (v.11).¹³ It seems that the interest of the king is no more on the *γάμος* but on the *ἔνδυμα γάμου* (wedding garment, vv.11-13). This is shown by his focus on the man without the proper wedding garment. His question to this man received no answer (v.12). Hence the command of the king that the man should be punished (v.13). This guest's punishment was that of being thrown to the outer darkness where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth (v.13).¹⁴ This punishment will be carried out no longer by the slaves of the king (cf. vv.3.4.8) but by his servants. The text then concludes

⁶ This word is a Gospel hapax, occurring only again in Heb. 2:3.

⁷ Cf. J. Nolland, Matthew, 887f.

⁸ The mss D f¹ it sy^c bo^{pt} have the singular *τὸ στρατεύμα αὐτοῦ*, 'his army.'

⁹ Cf. J. Nolland, Matthew, 889.

¹⁰ Cf. Ibid., 888.

¹¹ The word *γάμος* means wedding banquet. But the mss a B* L have *νυμφών*, 'wedding hall.' B. M Metzger has described this change as "an Alexandrian correction" that aims at avoiding the awkwardness of referring to a banquet as filled." See his A Textual Commentary, 47.

¹² Mt 22:10 can be seen as an introductory or closing verse. See S. V. Tillborg, Jewish Leaders, 62.

¹³ The use of *ἀνάκεισθαι* seems to establish a thematic relation with 9:9-13. This is a point already raised by J. Nolland, Matthew, 889. I will develop this thematic resonance in the next chapter.

¹⁴ Does the mention of outer darkness imply that the meal which probably started in daytime is now ending at night?

with a logion about the many that are called and the few that are chosen (v.14).¹⁵ On a purely literary level, one would not be wrong in classifying the parable as a classical tragedy.¹⁶

Basically, the pericope is made up of one parable,¹⁷ divided into two segments, namely, the segment involving the invited guests (22:1-10), and the segment concerning the required wedding garment (22:11-13), plus a final logion (22:14).¹⁸ The fact that Mt wants the parable to be seen as a single parable is reflected in the fact that he allows the protagonist of the story to remain the same in the two sections. While the first section refers to attempts to get guests to come to the feast, including the command to get even the unprepared (both good and bad) and concludes with the remark that the wedding was filled with guests, the section concerning the required wedding garment mentions the inability of a guest picked from the road side to get the proper robe. This is in turn followed by a separate logion (v.14) which can be said to be a commentary by the narrator.¹⁹ The structure could be shown thus:

The narrative commentary (22:1)

The invited guests (22:2-10)	actant	action
Introduction with ὁμοιῶ (22:2)		
First invitation (22:3a-b)	king	invitation
First response (22:3c)	guests	rejection
Second invitation (22:4)	king	invitation
Second response (22:5-6)	guests	rejection + violence
Reaction (22:7)	king	destruction
Third invitation (22:8-9)	king	invitation
Response (22:10)	guests	acceptance

¹⁵ It seems that v.14 is Jesus' commentary to his listeners at the end of the parable. But it appears difficult to classify v.13d either as a commentary by Jesus (cp. Mt 13:9) or as part of the parable (cp. Mt 25:30). For W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, the whole of vv.13c-14 form the commentary to the parable. Matthew, III.193. For J. Gnilka, "die Sentenz in V 14 steht schon außerhalb der Geschichte, ist aber für deren Verständnis im Sinn des Mt von Bedeutung." Das Matthäusevangelium, II.234.

¹⁶ For Aristotle, the most important aspect of a tragedy is the connections between the different happenings. See his Poetic, VI (1449^b 21ff.).

¹⁷ For J. Jeremias, Gleichnisse, 62f. 93, Mt has joined two parables together, all dealing with meals: the parable of the invitation of the uninvited guests (22:1-10) and the parable of the guest without garment (22:11-13). He concludes that Mt eliminated the introduction to the second parable, thereby fusing the two into one. For T. W. Manson, The Teaching of Jesus, 35.83, Mt combined two parables because of similar content and setting.

¹⁸ K. Snodgrass contends that our narrative "may reflect two separate parables that have been joined." Stories with Intent, 299f. D. J. Harrington seems to have over-simplified issues with his supposition that the parable has two parts: the invitations (22:1-10) and the ejection (22:11-13), while the final saying (22:14) sums up the whole parable. See his Matthew, 307. It could rightly then be asked how the expression πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσὶν κλητοὶ ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοὶ would be a fitting conclusion to a parable where at the end all but one are chosen.

¹⁹ See, for example, U. Luz, Matthäus, III.231. He however adds, "nur das merkwürdige *πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς* in V 10, das die Leser/innen dort noch nicht aufschlüsseln können, läßt eine Fortsetzung erwarten."

The wedding garment (22:11-13)

Inspection and question (22:11-12b)	king	question
Response (22:12c)	guest	silence
Reaction (22:13)	king	punishment

A final logion (22:14)

The structure above shows that the parable is composed of a series of actions and reactions. Just like in the parable of the Wicked Tenants, the positive actions of the king in our present parable are met with the negative reactions of the invited guests. This is the impression one gets between vv.3-6. But from v.7 the actions of the king begin to parallel the negative responses of the guests. For instance, the unexplained rejection of the king's invitation by the invitees (v.3b), and the apparently unprovoked mishandling and killing of his servants (v.6), are paralleled by the destruction of the murderers and the burning of their city (v.7c-d). This destruction is then followed by the extension of the invitation to the good and bad who accept (vv.9-10). Only in v.7 is the narrative silent over the reactions to the king's destruction of the city.

This action-reaction dialectic is carried on in the section about the proper wedding garment (vv.11-13).²⁰ We see in v.12a, the action of the king in the form of a question (*ἔταῖρε, πῶς εἰσῆλθεις ὧδε μὴ ἔχων ἕνδυμα γάμου;*); the reaction of the guest is in the form of silence (*ὁ δὲ ἐφίμωθη*); but the further action of the king, punishment (*δήσαντες... ἐκβάλετε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον*) receives no narrated reaction. Perhaps this lack of reaction to the king's punishments shows his centrality and might over the guests. However, the essential position of the king in the narrative is made more explicit through the syntax and semantics of the text.

6.1.2 SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

Virtually every comment already made concerning the linguistic properties of the two previous parables, especially the extensive use of verbs also applies to the present parable (here 51 times). The verbs in this parable centre on "calling/inviting," "sending," "going," "saying" and "killing/destroying." This parable makes a broad use of the coordinating conjunctions *καί* (15 times) and *δέ* (8 times). The implication is that the text is of a simple style. It also makes a wide use of the possessive pronoun *αὐτοῦ/μου*, with reference to the king (6 times). This wide use of pronouns and the explicit mention of the word *βασιλεὺς/βασιλέως* (4 times), place the king at the centre of the story. Furthermore, whole sections (vv.4.8-9.11-12.13) are dominated either by the actions of the king or his direct speech. This underscores the central importance of the king. Luz captures the position of the king well: "Der König ist in der ganzen Geschichte die einzige bestimmende Person. Nur er spricht; es gibt keine Dialoge. Abgesehen von V 5f und 10 besteht die Geschichte nur aus seinen

²⁰ J. Jeremias thinks that these verses demonstrate that the church applies the parables to her concrete situations. *Gleichnisse*, 63. I shall return to this point in the last chapter.

Handlungen bzw. Befehlen...Es gibt also keine Nebenfiguren, die durch die ganze Geschichte hindurch eine Rolle spielen.”²¹

The syntactical structure of the pericope provides some interesting parallelisms. The parallels are particularly evident between vv.3 and 4. The two-fold sending of servants to call the invited guests employ the same verb, *ἀπέστειλεν*, and direct object, *δούλους*. The two-fold actions of the king (sending) are paralleled by the two-fold rebellious actions of the guests (*οὐκ ἤθελον ἐλθεῖν* and *ἀπῆλθον*). This opposition to the king is first shown in the interactions between v.3a and v.3b. The clause of v.3a shows the command of the king beginning with *καὶ ἀπέστειλεν*. In the same way, v.3 begins with *καί* but concludes with *οὐκ ἤθελον ἐλθεῖν* as an expression of unwillingness. In the same way, v.4a shows the repeated invitation of the king with the use of *πάλιν ἀπέστειλεν*. This invitation is again rebuffed by the use of *οἱ δὲ ἀμελήσαντες* to express the actions of the potential guests (v.5a). The use of the imperfect tense could be a grammatical ploy to emphasize this repeated unwillingness to honour the feast.²² Not only do the parallel constructions mirror the previous parables, they also repeat some of the very words already encountered. For example, in the clause of v.3c (*καὶ οὐκ ἤθελον ἐλθεῖν*) there seems to be a deliberate attempt to echo the response of the first son in 21:29.

The three clauses in v.4c-e which describe the readiness of the banquet are introduced with *ἰδοὺ* and end similarly, in syntactic parallelism thus: my dinner is prepared (*τὸ ἄριστόν μου ἡτοιμάκα*), my oxen and fatlings are slaughtered (*οἱ ταῦροί μου καὶ τὰ σιτιστὰ τεθυμένα*) and everything is ready (*καὶ πάντα ἔτοιμα*). But the parallelism is broken in the last clause by the absence of *μου*. Also the remark of v.5b (*ἀπῆλθον*) seems to be an assimilation to 21:29.30. The shameful treatment and killing of the king’s servants seem also to echo 21:35-36. Another clue to finding assimilation to the parable of the tenants is in the parallel construction of v.5c and d: *ὅς μὲν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον ἀργόν* and *ὅς δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμπορίαν αὐτοῦ*, which seem to respond to *ὄν δὲ ἀπέκτειναν*, *ὄν δὲ ἐλιθοβόλησαν* of v.35.

The three actions of some of the invited guests in v.6 (*κρατέω*, *ὕβριζω* and *ἀποκτείνω*) again employ the principle of *regel de tri* already seen in the previous parable. On the reverse side, these three actions of the guests are matched by the three-fold actions of the king and his soldiers in the very important v.7, with its concept of a short warfare.²³ These actions are shown by the words *πέμπω*, *ἀπόλλυμι* and *ἐμπίπτωμι*. This concept of destruction again links the present parable with the preceding two parables.²⁴ It can thus be stated that the judgment declared in 21:41b has been carried out in 22:7.

²¹ U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.231. See also D. O. Via, “The Relationship of Form to Content,” 181; W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.194; J. Gnlika, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II.234.

²² So also D. A. Hagner, *Matthew*, II.629.

²³ Mt’s addition of 22:7 has been termed by many commentators as *vaticinia ex eventu*, that is, prophecy after the event, a clear reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and used it to date the Gospel of Matthew. For instance, C. H. Dodd, “The Fall of Jerusalem, 47-54; Gundry, *Matthew*, 599-609; E. E. Ellis, “Dating the New Testament,” 487-502; A. von Harnack, *Date*, 134.

²⁴ Allen has argued that the two-fold sending of the servants serves as a link between the parable of The Wedding Feast and the parable of The Tenants. For him, by adding 22:6-7, “the editor has adapted this, and brought it into line with Mk’s parable of the Husbandmen, and the preceding parable

Another syntactic parallel construction is to be seen in the logion of v.8b-c. This negative parallelism shows the contrast between the readiness of the feast and the unworthiness of the invited. While the marriage feast is ready (*ἔτοιμός ἐστιν*), those invited were not ready (*οὐκ ἦσαν ἄξιοι*). A negative parallelism can also be noticed in *πονηρούς τε καὶ ἀγαθούς*, (v.10). Moreover, the *ἐξέρχομαι* of the servants (v.10a) is antithetically parallel to the *εἰσέρχομαι* of the king (v.11a). Finally, the parallelism of the concluding logion (v.14) is very striking in the clauses *πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν κλητοὶ* and *ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί*.

The last lines of the parable, thus justify the exclusion of the man without the proper wedding garment just like v.8 which has already justified the invitation of new guests. It is only in these two verses that the aorist tense is replaced by the historic present in the entire story (v.8.12) where the king proclaims a negative judgment on his opponents. The punishment to the man without the wedding garment could be another literary ploy to shock the expectations of the listeners, since in the Jesus' corpus the man without the garment should have stayed.²⁵ The contrast between hearers' expectation and speaker's explanation already seen in the two previous parables is again accentuated.

Apart from the numerous themes like *δουλός* and repeated use of the word *ἀποστέλλω* which the present parable shares with the preceding parable of the Wicked Tenants, it also employs two themes that have become fixed metaphors in the Jewish world (*βασιλεύς* and *γάμος*). As already seen in previous chapters, the concept of God as king is present in many OT²⁶ and NT²⁷ texts. There are also numerous king meshalim in the rabbinic tradition.²⁸

The oppositions in the parable are seen in the contrast between the joyful wedding celebration and the punishment meted out to those who killed the king's servants (v.7) and to the man without the proper garment (v.13). Also the invitation granted to different potential guests (vv.3.4.9), is contrasted with the rejection by the first and second set of invited guests (vv.3c.5-6). Furthermore the readiness of the wedding (v.8b) is contrasted with the unworthiness of the invited guests (v.8c). But at the end, the marriage feast was celebrated, despite all oppositions.

The above analysis shows the careful construction of the parable in the first gospel. But to what extent has the Matthean theology and paraenetic interest influenced the production or reproduction of this parable? The question as to the source of the parable is what I will now explore.

of the Two Sons. The Jewish nation in the person of its rulers had refused to listen to God's call to repentance (21³²), had rejected the Messiah (v. 39), and had neglected the summons to the marriage feast (v. 22⁵). Consequently, judgment upon them was at hand." W. C. Allen, *Matthew*, 235.

²⁵ B. B. Scott, *Parables*, 174. See also D. Patte, *Matthew*, 301.

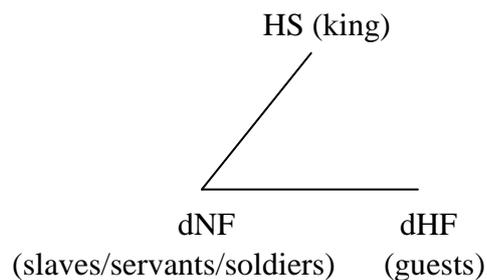
²⁶ Cf. Isa 6:5; Ps 24:7-9; 29:9. In the post-exilic time, the concept of "king" was applied to God as the present ruler (cf. Ps 93; 2 Chr 9:8). But some passages also hope for the future reign of God as king (for e.g., Isa 24:3; 33:17-22; Zach 14:9, etc.).

²⁷ 1 Cor 4:8; Rev 11:7; 19:6.

²⁸ These meshalim have been fully treated in the monumental work of D. Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, 19ff.

6.2 ACTANTIAL ANALYSIS

The last parable of our trilogy bears a very close relationship with the previous parable of the Wicked Tenants not only in vocabulary but also with regard to the actants and their actions. In terms of the crisis-reaction-denouement schemata of the parables, one is to see the first invitation to the banquet as the crisis, the refusal to come to the banquet as the reaction while the invitation of secondary guests is the denouement.²⁹ Although it is only in the logion of the wedding garment (which will be later shown as redactional) that the king acts personally, yet, his presence can be felt throughout as the only one who speaks and commands: he is the one who prepares the *γάμος* for his son, he sends out the invitations; he commands the destruction of the murderers; inspects the assembled guests and commands the excommunication of the poorly clad guest. Even the groom, his son (the prince) neither acts nor speaks. This qualifies the king as the HS. The delegated role of the slaves, soldiers and servants on the one hand in realizing the intention of the host and the revolutionary actions of the guests on the other mark them out as dNF and dHF respectively. In the parable there is no direct contact between the king (HS) and the first and second set of invited guests (dHF). Rather, the servants/soldiers (dNF) act as the point of contact between the dHF and the HS. The schema appears thus:



The identification of the host as the central figure in the parable means that the parable must be read from the stand-point of the king.³⁰ Already the central position of the king has been shown in the linguistic analysis.

6.3 SOURCE CRITICISM: MT 22:1-14 AND MT'S USE OF Q

As already pointed out, the third and final parable of our trilogy (Mt 22:1-14), takes over several motifs from the previous two parables. But unlike the parable of the Two Sons that is clearly from Mt's special source and the parable of the Wicked Tenants that has a Markan source, it is not easy to locate the tradition behind the Matthean parable of the wedding feast. This parable is comparable to that of Lk 14:15-24 and the logion of Thomas 64. It has been argued that Mt could have presented, in this parable of the Wedding Feast, a variant of Lk's and Thomas's

²⁹ See the analysis of R. W. Funk, "Struktur," 235.

³⁰ This corresponds to one of the regularities of folk tales, which tends to centre on the hero. See A. Bihari-Andersson, "Time and Space," 94.

parables of the Great Banquet or a different parable altogether.³¹ However, the differences between these three parables can be seen not only in the redactional words of the different narratives but also in their different contexts. While Mt's parable is a continuation of the discussion between Jesus and the Jewish leaders that started in 21:22, and here continued with *καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν εἶπεν ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς λέγων* (22:1), Lk's parable of the Great Feast was told in the context of a meal in the house of a leading Pharisee,³² while that of Thomas has no context. But no matter the variegated nature of the narratives, the basic idea in the various accounts is a banquet whose initial invitees were not ready to attend, a refusal with negative consequences.

The text of the gospel of Thomas logion 64 reads: 1. "Jesus said: A man had guests, and when he had prepared the dinner he sent his servant to summon the guests. 2. He came to the first; he said to him: My master summons thee. 3. He said: I have money with some merchants. They are coming to me in the evening. I will go and give them orders. I pray to be excused from the dinner. 4. He went to another; he said to him: My master has summoned thee. 5. He said to him: I have bought a house, and they ask me for a day. I shall not have time. 6. He came to another; he said to him: My master summons thee. 7. He said to him: My friend is about to be married, and I am to hold a dinner. I shall not be able to come. I pray to be excused from the dinner. 8. He went to another; he said to him: My master summons thee. 9. He said to him: I have bought a village; I go to collect the rent. I shall not be able to come. I pray to be excused. 10. The servant came, he said to his master: Those whom thou didst summon to the dinner have excused themselves. 11. The master said to his servant: Go out to the roads. Bring those whom thou shall find, that they may dine. 12. The buyers and the merchants [shall] not [enter] the places of my Father."³³

As the text above shows, the version of Thomas has some modest agreements with that of Mt. Apart from the overall picture of a master who summons guests to his banquet and the refusal of all these guests to attend, there is the verbal parallel of the use of business/merchandise (Mt 22:5//GThom 64:3) as one of the basis for not honouring the invitation. There is also the verbal agreement between Mt 22:9 and GThom 64:11 where the host sent his slave (Mt: slaves) to invite secondary guests. However, numerous substantial connections exist in the Lukan and Thomistic versions that some scholars have argued that the two preserved a more primitive form of tradition which Mt has strongly edited.³⁴ On the other hand, it could also be

³¹ See U. Luz, *Matthäus III.232f* who provides a list of some exegetes in the ancient Church who think that the parables in Lk and Mt are different parables spoken by Jesus at different times rather than two variants of the same parable. Funk asks: "is it not likely that Jesus spoke a given parable on a number of occasions and in different contexts, adapting it each time, perhaps, to the circumstances." R. W. Funk, *Language*, 163; see R. C. Trench, *The Parables of Our Lord*, 184.208; see also C. S. Keener, *Matthew*, 517.

³² Lk alone provides information about Jesus eating with Pharisees which helps him in constructing anti-Pharisaic speeches. Cf. Lk 7:37-50; 11:38-54; 14:2-24.

³³ Brill translation of the Gospel of Thomas in English by Schoedel et al.

³⁴ This is the conclusion of G. E. Sterling, "Two or Three," 110. For U-K, Plisch, Thomas has redacted a version of a dominical parable which is independent of the synoptic gospels. See his *Das Thomasevangelium*, 169. So also R. Nordsieck, *Das Thomas-Evangelium*, 251. For W. Schrage, the

said that GThom has redacted the parable he found in Lk and Mt. Since I have already argued that his Gospel is of later date³⁵ and as a deallegorizing tendency,³⁶ it is logical that his parable would correspond more with Lk than with Mt due to the more developed allegorical bent of Mt's parable. But it seems plausible to conclude that the parable that narrates the invitation to a feast has some basis in a common tradition which the various evangelists have received. They redacted this tradition to emphasize their various theological interests and tendencies. For example, Mt underscores his allegorical interest by the addition of vv.11-14 while GThom shows his Gnostic bent by the addition of v.12.³⁷ This conclusion would later be highlighted. But it remains to show the nature of this tradition from which the evangelists derived their various narratives.

Though some modern exegetes have also tried to read the versions of Mt and Lk as two different parables,³⁸ my take-off is that the two narratives have a Q source. The following analysis will show the different visions of Mt and Lk in their redaction of this parable.³⁹ Before I look at the differences, I will set out the agreements between Mt and Lk in a summary form.

6.3.1 AGREEMENTS BETWEEN MATTHEW AND LUKE

The introductory sentence employs *ὁ ... εἶπεν* (Mt 22:1//Lk 14:16). However, the combination of *ἀποκριθεὶς* and *εἶπεν* appear often in Mt.⁴⁰ The beginning of the parables names the principal actor *ἀνθρώπων/ἀνθρωπός* (Mt 22:2//Lk 14:16). But while Mt varies his typical introductory formula (*ὡμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπων*),⁴¹ Lk uses *τις* as he normally does.⁴² The Matthean use of the dative *ἀνθρώπων* is informed because of his introduction. The preparation of the feast employs the word *ποιεῖν* (Mt 22:2//Lk 14:16). But while Mt uses the aorist *ἐποίησεν*, Lk uses the imperfect *ἐποίει*. Since *ἐποίει* often appears when Lk begins a new section, it seems that Mt has preserved the original Q word.⁴³

The two evangelists report the invitation of guests to the feast (Mt 22:3.4//Lk 14:17). But in this invitation, the handling of the slaves is very different in Mt and Lk. In contrast to Lk's single slave who is sent (Lk 14:17), Mt uses the plural *τούς*

agreements between Thomas and the synoptic gospels is not enough to warrant a dependenc of Thomas on the synoptic texts. See his *Verhältnis*, 134f.

³⁵ See also F. Hahn, *Studien*, I.337, n. 2.

³⁶ The lack of allegorical elements is not enough proof that Thomas' version is more primitive than the synoptic version. See also A. Lindemann, "Zur Gleichnisinterpretation," 231.

³⁷ See P. H. Ballard, "Reasons," 348. U. Luz sees GThom's version of the parable as "eine klassische gnostische Rezeption der Gastmahl-Parabel." See his *Matthäus*, 235. For the general relationship between GThom and the synoptic gospels see W. Schrage, *Verhältnis*, 2-27.

³⁸ R. T. France, *Matthew*, 821, has suggested the need "to read Matthew's story on its own terms, and in its own literary context, than to look for its meaning primarily in terms of how it differs from Luke's." Also R. J. Bauckham, "Royal Wedding Feast," 482-88, has argued on the importance of respecting the "narrative integrity" of the parable in its Matthean version.

³⁹ It has been argued that "to follow the various performances of this parable is to experience in miniature their different visions." B. B. Scott, *Parable*, 161.

⁴⁰ This combination is seen Mt 41 times. Cf. H. T. Fledderman, *Q*, 723.

⁴¹ Cp. 13:24; 18:23; 25:1.

⁴² Cf. J. C. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae*, 22.

⁴³ Cf. H. T. Fledderman, *Q*, 724. He sees Mt's *ἐποίησεν* as reflecting the original Q verb.

δούλους αὐτοῦ (v.3), which agrees with his pluralizing of the slaves in 21:35.36 and favours the allusion either to the OT prophets or the messengers of Jesus. Mt's use of the plural δούλους is secondary⁴⁴ since it seems to be an allegorizing of the slaves. And apart from conforming the invitation to the previous parable of the Wicked Tenants (cf. 21:34.36), Mt's narrative is informed by his introduction and shows the fact that a king would normally have many servants at his disposal.

Mt's invitation of the guests uses καλεῖν (Mt 22:3.9) which Lk has already used in the introduction (Lk 14:16). This word then seems to come from Q.⁴⁵ The invited guests are identified as κεκλημένοι (Mt 22:3.4.8//Lk 14:17). But here, Mt obscures the Lukan two-fold invitation where those who have been invited were called τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦ δείπνου. It is difficult to determine whether the definite mention of the time of the feast is a Lukan addition or already contained in the Q source.⁴⁶ If Mt intends to obscure the hour of invitation, one could decipher here the call to watchfulness because of the uncertainty of the hour of the master's demands. That means that the symbolic nature of the feast seems to be at the background in Mt. He seems to have heightened its salvation-historic dimension. This may have been influenced by the fact that the perfect passive participle of the word καλέω is a technical term for the people of God.⁴⁷ He also omits the Lukan direct speech to the guests. Instead, a direct speech is re-introduced in Mt 22:4 which shares only one word (ἔτοιμά) with Lk. (Lk 14:17). However, Lk's use of the infinitive εἰπεῖν τοῖς κεκλημένοις seems to be the wordings of Q. This is confirmed by Mt's application of the same infinitive construction in the second sending of the slaves.

That the food for the feast has been prepared is shown by the words ἔτοιμα or its cognate (Mt 22:4.8//Lk 14:17). Since the word δεῦτε is Matthean,⁴⁸ it could be said that the Lukan ἔρχεσθε and the ὅτι-clause preserve the original command in this verse. This is shown by the fact that Mt's καλέσαι τοὺς κεκλημένους seems awkward. But Lk's second temporal expression ἤδη seems to be his replacement of the original πάντα preserved in Mt.⁴⁹ The word ἀγρός (Mt 22:5//Lk 14:18) links the reasons for not coming to the feast in both versions. For Mt the going into the ἀγρόν serves as the summary reason for not attending the feast by the first group of guests while Lk includes it in the actual excuse of the first guest.

In both accounts, the anger of the host is described as ὀργίζεσθαι (Mt 22:7//Lk 14:21) which means the word is contained in Q.⁵⁰ There is direct speech of the host

⁴⁴ Cf. R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 183; J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 65f; S. Schulz, Q, 394.

⁴⁵ So also H. T. Fledderman, Q, 724; contra E. Haenchen, "Das Gleichnis vom großen Mahl," 135-155, here 147. For Haenchen, καὶ ἐκάλεσεν πολλούς is composed by Lk. This view is supported by S. Schulz, Q, 393.

⁴⁶ Lk has added other temporal determinants in Lk 1:10; Acts 3:1. For the use of ὥρα with a genitive expression as Lukan see H. T. Fledderman, Q, 725. But it has also been suggested that the temporal clause is contained in the Q invitation. See S. Schulz, Q, 394; undecided, Robinson et al, *Critical Edition*, 432.

⁴⁷ See K. L. Schmidt, "καλέω," ThWNT III.490. See also Tob 9:5; Jn 2:2; Rev 19:9 for the use of καλέω + γάμος.

⁴⁸ See U. Luz, *Matthäus*, I.38; S. Schulz, Q, 394.

⁴⁹ Cf. H. T. Fledderman, Q, 726.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 731.

to his servant/s in both accounts (Mt 22:8f./Lk 14:21.23). However the commands are basically different. Again Mt's introduction of v.8 with τότε λέγει manifests his style.⁵¹ The Matthean verse is necessitated by the fact that the king has to enter the picture again and speak after the injunction of v.7 has been carried out.⁵²

The unworthiness of the Matthean guests is made particularly bleak by the fact that the γάμος is already prepared and by their killing of the servants. Because of the following declaration: οἱ δὲ κεκλημένοι οὐκ ἦσαν ἄξιοι, Mt's verse can be related to 3:8 where the Jewish leaders were commanded by John to 'do' (ποιήσατε) fruits (καρπὸν) worthy (ἄξιον) of repentance. If this relation is correct, then one sees a further link with the applications of the parable of the Two Sons (21:32) and of The Tenants (21:43). This relation implies that the preaching of The Baptist was not heeded.⁵³ The word ἄξιος has also been used by Mt for those who receive Jesus' messengers (10:11-13), and for disciples sent on mission (10:37-38).

In narrating about the secondary guests, certain words are again shared. Some of the guests are to be picked from εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς (Mt 22:10//Lk 14:23). Mt's use of ἐξελεθόντες (22:10a) seems to confirm Lk's imperative ἐξελεθε εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς as preserving the Q command. The bringing in of the secondary guests uses σύν- or εἰσάγειν (Mt 22:10//Lk 14:21). Since Q has used this verb in two other places in combination with εἰς (Q 3:17; 12:24), Mt must have preserved the original Q word.⁵⁴ Finally the reason for the action of the host is introduced with the γὰρ clause (Mt 22:14//Lk 14:24).⁵⁵ This causal clause seems to be contained in Q as shown by Mt 18:13 and Lk 19:26.

The above analysis could give the impression that both evangelists found the parable in their common Q tradition and reshaped it. This is the contention of Swaeles who argues that everything points to a common source, preceding our two redactions, which Mt and Lk have utilized each in his own way.⁵⁶ However the following arguments show the wide range of differences between the two accounts. I will concentrate on the Matthean version of this parable so as to show how it reflects Mt's diction and theology. The Lukan version serves as a proof-text.

⁵¹ Mt 16; Mk 0; Lk 1.

⁵² See S. V. Tilborg, Jewish Leaders, 62.

⁵³ Notice the use of the past tense ἦσαν.

⁵⁴ Cf. H. T. Fledderman, Q, 733. Although S. Schulz, Q, 397 accepts that Mt preserves the more original version, he sees certain elements that detect the hand of Mt. These include the numerous number of the slaves and the use of the verb εἰσάγειν which occurs 17x traditionally in Mt but 6x redactionally.

⁵⁵ See A. Weisser, Die Knechtsgleichnisse, 59; A. von Harnack, Sprüche, 83. For other correspondences see W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, III.194, n. 4.

⁵⁶ R. Swaeles, "L'orientation ecclésiastique," 671. Other scholars who accept a Q tradition include A. Jülicher, Gleichnisreden, II.407-433; R. Bultmann, Geschichte, 189; W. Trilling, "Überlieferungsgeschichte," 251-65; S. Schulz, Q, 391-398; H. T. Fledderman, Q, 730-35. Against a Q source, see A. Harnack, Sprüche, 84.

6.3.2 THE MATTHEAN REDACTION

The Matthean redaction in this parable can easily be identified in the introduction of the parable (v.1), the second sending of the slaves (v.4), the mishandling and killing of some of these slaves (v.6), the king's destruction of the city (v.7), the description of the secondary guests (vv.9-10) as well as the whole of vv.11-14. To be seen as Matthean redaction is also the removal of the Lukan excuses from the lips of the invited guests (cf. Lk 14:18-20). The rest of the Matthean narrative can be seen from the light of stylistic modifications of his Q source.

6.3.2.1 The introduction

Following the development of the dialogue between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in the preceding parable, the first sentence *καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν εἶπεν...* (22:1)⁵⁷ could be seen as a response to the actions of 21:45-46,⁵⁸ where the Jewish leaders wanted to arrest Jesus. This is different in Lk where Jesus' reply (*ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῷ*) is to an enthusiastic announcer of beatitude to those who partake in the meal of the kingdom.⁵⁹ Mt's prologue is also an introduction that complies with one of the standard parable formulae about the kingdom of God.⁶⁰ The words *ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν* are also favourite Matthean words.⁶¹ The addition of 'Jesus' makes for a Christological emphasis characteristic of Mt.⁶² Again while Lk's Jesus addressed the parable to a single person "*εἶπεν αὐτῷ*," Mt uses *εἶπεν αὐτοῖς*, making the addressees yet the Jewish leaders with whom he is contending. The use of *πάλιν* by Mt joins the present parable to the previous two.⁶³

The expression *ὡμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ βασιλεῖ* repeats exactly the words of Mt 18:23, introducing the story of the unmerciful servant. The first five words (*ὡμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν*) recall 13:24b, the introduction to the parable of the weeds. Given the statistics on the verb, *ὡμοιώθη*,⁶⁴ *ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν*,⁶⁵ are

⁵⁷ Mt combines *ἀποκριθεὶς* and *εἶπεν* 41 times. The presence of *καὶ* instead of *δέ* led S. V. Tilborg to argue that the introduction is not Matthean. Jewish Leaders, 51f.

⁵⁸ So also W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, III.197, n. 23; J. Gnllka, Das Matthäusevangelium, II.233. Contra, I. H. Jones, Parables, 400. For him there is nothing contextual to which *ἀποκριθεὶς...εἶπεν* responds.

⁵⁹ See U. Luz, Matthäus, III.233 who provides the insight that Lk's parable is placed in a context where only 14:26f.34 can be ascribed with certainty to Q.

⁶⁰ Cf. 13:24; 18:23. Also the Lukan *μακάριος* and *βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ* (14:15) seem to reflect a traditional material. Cf. S. Schulz, Q, 392.

⁶¹ Mt 41; Mk 5; Lk 25. But *ἀποκριθεὶς* (Mt 43; Mk 14; Lk 33). And *ἀποκριθεὶς* + finite participle (Mt 6; Mk 1; Lk 1). For the view that the introductory verse is pre-Matthean see I. H. Jones, Parables, 400.

⁶² So R. H. Gundry, Matthew, 432. The argument is based on the fact that Mt inserts the word 'Jesus' 80 times to common traditions and includes it 12 times in peculiar passages.

⁶³ The use of *πάλιν* before finite verb (Mt 7; Mk 2; Lk 1).

⁶⁴ Mt 3; Mk 0; Lk 0. Cf. also R. Bultmann, Geschichte, 189; S. Schulz, Q, 392. But Lk 13:20 indicates that *ὡμοιώσω τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ* appears at least once in Q (cf. also Lk 6:47-49; 7:32; 12:36; 13:18.19.21), all with *ὅμοιος* + dative introducing a parable. Mt sometimes introduces a kingdom parable with the aorist passive (13:24; 18:23; 22:2) and at other times with the future passive, *ὡμοιωθήσεται* (7:24.26; 25.1). See W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, II.411 think that the aorist is likely used when the emphasis is upon what the kingdom has already become, while the future is used when the consummation is the principle focus. See also D. A. Carson, "The *ὅμοιος* Word-Group," 277-82.

⁶⁵ Mt 32; Mk 0; Lk 0.

Matthean while ὅστις occurs often in Mt.⁶⁶ Instead of the Lukan impersonal τις Mt has βασιλεύς.⁶⁷ The occurrence of βασιλεύς in Mt's narrative is also overwhelming.⁶⁸ It should then be taken that Mt has allegorized the original Q ἄνθρωπος τις to βασιλεύς.⁶⁹ These instances 13:45; 20:1; 21:33 (diff. Mk 12:1); and 22:2 (diff. Lk 14:16) point to a Matthean tendency to specify the ambiguous ἄνθρωπος at the beginning of parables with an appositional noun,⁷⁰ a tendency already seen in 21:33. However, Lk later identifies the host as οἰκοδεσπότης (v.21), a reintroduction of the Matthean term (Mt 21:33) which Lk initially omitted. The householder who made a wedding feast for his son links our parable with 25:1-13 (the parable of the ten virgins), while the mention of 'son' takes the mind back to the two previous parables of the trilogy.

On the other hand, the Matthean ἐν παραβολαῖς, while he gives only one parable, has led some scholars to discern an early tradition in which there was a cluster of parables.⁷¹ And whenever Mt reports that Jesus spoke ἐν παραβολαῖς it is always used to introduce parables against Israel.⁷² The fact that the introduction has no Lukan parallel and contains many words that could be ascribed to Mt makes it explicit that the introduction has a heavy print of Matthean redaction if not creation. If one considers the Lukan version, in which the host is a householder, as the more original version of the story, and considering David Stern's conclusion that king-meshalim are one of the "literary creations of midrash and of the occasions on which it was customarily practiced,"⁷³ it would not be difficult, then to accept that Mt furthers the art of meshalim in this parable through his addition of the king as host.⁷⁴

In the introduction there is also substantial difference in the nature of the feast about to be celebrated. While Mt's host prepared a γάμος for his son, Lk's host prepared δεῖπνον μέγα. The word γάμος⁷⁵ shows the hand of Mt while δεῖπνον can be ascribed to Lk.⁷⁶ If the original Q feast is a δεῖπνον (evening meal) which has been changed to γάμος by Mt⁷⁷ he could be metaphorically referring to the eschatological

⁶⁶ Mt 29; Mk 4; Lk 21; Acts 24. It appears 7 times in Mt as redactional. Cf. S. Schulz, Q, 392, n. 118.

⁶⁷ Lk is probably the composer of his vv15-16. So also R. Bultmann, Geschichte, 113; S. Schulz, Q, 392.

⁶⁸ Mt 23; Mk 12; Lk 11.

⁶⁹ Cf. J. Jülicher, Gleichnisreden II.431f; S. Schulz, Q, 393. The designation ἄνθρωπος τις seems to be more typical for parables and is also used in the Q- parables of the Lost Sheep (Lk 15:4) and the Lost Drachma (Lk 19:12).

⁷⁰ W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, III.198, n. 25 wonder whether the numerous use of 'king' in rabbinic parables imply that Mt has a rabbinic influence. The use of βασιλεύς in parables: Mt 7; Mk 0; Lk 1.

⁷¹ This view has been held by I. H. Jones, Parables, 400. See also F. W. Beare, Matthew, 434 and R. H. Gundry, Matthew, 432f.

⁷² Cf. 13:10.13.34f.

⁷³ D. Stern, "Rhetoric," 276.

⁷⁴ See also C. S. Keener, Matthew, 517. W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, III.198. n. 25 tend to accept that Mt's inclination to insert kings into parables reflects a rabbinic environment.

⁷⁵ Gundry clarifies that γάμος often occurs in an idiomatic plural because of the duration of festivities. R. H. Gundry, Matthew, 434. See also E. Stauffer, "γαμέω," ThWNT I.646. For the view that the plural and singular usages have no difference see D. A. Hagner, Matthew II.629; BDAG, 300.

⁷⁶ γάμος (Mt 5; Lk 1); δεῖπνον (Mt 0; Lk 2). But a look at Lk 14:8 (ἔταν κληθῆς ὑπό τινος εἰς γάμου) indicates that the Matthean material could have a common Q tradition with Lk.

⁷⁷ This is the contention of T. H. Fledderman, Q, 724; S. Schulz, Q, 393. Cp. Also J. Jeremias, Gleichnisse, 65f

banquet (see Rev 19:7.9) or subtly creating the chance for the short warfare which, as already shown, is a Matthean addition (v.7). On the other hand, Lk seems to have added *μέγα* to Q.⁷⁸

6.3.2.2 Second sending of slaves

Mt first reports that the first invited guests responded negatively (v.3). With the words *καὶ οὐκ ἦθελον ἐλθεῖν* Mt could be creating here a resonance with the first son of 21:39 and the tenants of 21:35-36 who failed to match their words with the appropriate action.⁷⁹ The Matthean *καὶ οὐκ ἦθελον ἐλθεῖν* is also the response of Jerusalem to the call of Jesus in 23:37. Because of this negative reaction, Mt then refers to the sending of *ἄλλους δούλους* (v.4). This doubling of the invitation, absent in Lk, seems to assimilate the story more closely to that of the preceding parable were the same words *ἄλλους δούλους* are used (cf. 21:36). In the king's message to his servants, Mt uses the imperative *εἶπατε* to announce the urgency of this command.⁸⁰ The king's direct words to the other servants "*ἰδοὺ τὸ ἄριστόν μου ἠτοιμάκα, οἱ ταῦροί μου καὶ τὰ σιτιστὰ τεθυμένα...*" have no Lukan parallel.⁸¹ This elaboration seems to be an unfolding of Q's *πάντα ἔτοιμα ἔστιν*.⁸² The words *ἄριστον*, *ταῦρος* and *θύω* are all Matthean hapax while *σιτιστός* is a NT hapax. Since *ἄριστον* refers to meal early in the day, the addition of v.7 seems to have already been pre-programmed. That is, Mt has changed the meal from *δειπνον* to *ἄριστον* so as to make room for the short warfare which he will later insert. However, the combination of *σιτιστός* and *θύω* could hark back to the Lukan parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:23.27.30).⁸³ This link to the Lukan tradition is strengthened by the fact that the response of the first invited guests resonates with the response of the elder son at the news of his brother's return, namely, *καὶ οὐκ ἠθέλην εἰσελθεῖν* (Lk 15:28). As already indicated Mt could have had the same tradition with Lk from which our evangelist fashioned the parable of the Two Sons.⁸⁴ If this tradition is an oral pre-synoptic tradition, then it is understandable how the various evangelists can reformulate them in these various fashions. However, at 22:4, Mt connects the readers again with the parable of the tenants with the word *δεῦτε* (cf.v.38). Furthermore, characteristic Matthean is the triadic parallelism of this verse (subject + verb; dual subject + verb; subject + verb).

6.3.2.3 The absence of excuses

Mt's statement, in v.5 "this one went to his field, that one to his business," in comparison with Lk's longer description of the invited guests' excuses (Lk 14:18-20)

⁷⁸ Lk has introduced *μέγας* in these places Lk 4:33/Mk 1:23; Lk 4:38/Mk 1:30; Lk 5:29/Mk 2:15; Lk 8:37/Mk 5:17; Lk 9:48/Mk 9:37; Lk 19:37/Mk 11:9; Lk 21:11bis/Mk 13:8; Lk 23:23/Mk 15:14.

⁷⁹ This is also the conclusion of W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, III.199.

⁸⁰ Cp Lk's use of the infinitive *εἰπεῖν* (14:16).

⁸¹ For these words as a Matthean redaction see H. Weder, Gleichnisse, 180; Undecided J. Gnllka Das Matthäusevangelium II.235f; W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew III.200. But see Prov 9:2 and 1 Kgs 1:9

⁸² Cf. T. H. Fledderman, Q, 726.

⁸³ They could also reflect Mt's love for the OT (cf. 2 Sam 6:13; 1 Kgs 1:9).

⁸⁴ See also R. H. Gundry, Matthew, 435.

could be seen as characteristic Matthean abbreviation.⁸⁵ In narrating the excuses, Lk seems to have preserved the original structure of the parable, that is, with excuses⁸⁶ which Mt does not consider important for his salvation-historic narrative.⁸⁷ The Lukan vividness corresponds to the style of the parables⁸⁸ while the presence of three excuses seems to be in accordance with oral storytelling which prefers a triadic pattern.⁸⁹ However a closer look reveals that the third excuse reflects a Lukan creation due to his ascetic view, especially his critique on marriage as not being appropriate for those worthy of eternal life.⁹⁰ The picture created is that the Matthean guests simply ignored the message with no intention of giving excuses. They simply went away (*ἀπῆλθον*), an assimilation to 21:29.30.⁹¹ The Matthean use of *ἴδιον*⁹² to describe the *ἀγρόν* to which one of the invited guests went could indicate long ownership. Therefore, unlike the Lukan prospective guest who just bought a field, this man had no pressing need to visit his field at this time. This, plus the lack of excuses by the guests can lead to the conclusion that Mt seeks to intensify the guilt of the invited guests.⁹³ This is also the conclusion of Davies and Allison who argue that with Mt's abbreviation "every note of politeness is absent and the lame excuses...are gone. Guilt has been heightened."⁹⁴ Meanwhile, as already indicated in the first chapter, Mt uses this parallel construction *μέν...δέ...δέ* to further assimilate our parable to the parable of the tenants (cf. 21:35).⁹⁵

The word *ἐμπορία* in this verse appears only here in the NT. But the adjective *ἐμπορος* has been used in Mt 13:45. The notorious *λοιπός* who killed the king's slaves also appears as a plural subject in Mt 27:49 (cf. 25:11) and the action they took (*κρατέω*), already seen in 21:46 will occur again in the passion narrative (26:4.48). The shameful treatment and killing of the king's slaves echoes 21:35-36 and once again points to the fate of the prophets as argued in the previous chapters. Since the servants are now murdered in Mt, the Lukan reporting of their message to their

⁸⁵ The Lukan excuses seem to be derived from the context of the holy war of Deut 22, while the mention of field, jokes of oxen, and wife follow the teaching of Prov 24:27. See the analysis of J. M. D. Derrett, *Law*, 125-55 and I. H. Marshall, *Luke*, 588f.

⁸⁶ Cf. I. H. Marshall, *Luke*, 588; U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.235; H. T. Fledderman, *Q*, 727; G. E. Sterling, "Two or Three," 105f. On the other hand, S. Schulz, *Q*, 395 thinks that Lk's version is a secondary elaboration. So also A. Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden II*.420.

⁸⁷ Cf. J. Gnlika, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II.235. See J. Fitzmeyer, *Luke*, II.1052, for the notion that these excuses manifest different allegorizations by the different evangelists.

⁸⁸ Cf. J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 176f. G. E. Sterling has argued that "the collapse of the excuses to actions makes it possible for Matthew to accentuate the final response of physical abuse." "Two or Three," 102.

⁸⁹ Cf. B. B. Scott, *Parables*, 167; E. G. Sterling, "Two or Three", 104. For E. Linnemann, the excuses were meant to convey the idea that the guests would come late to the feast. Cf. *Gleichnisse Jesu*, 95. This interpretation has rightly been criticized by G. E. Sterling, "Two or Three," 108.

⁹⁰ Consider Lk's re-writing of the Markan tradition in Jesus' answer to the Pharisees' question about the resurrection (Mk 12:25//Lk 20:35). While for Mk (and Mt) there is no marriage in the new world, this asceticism begins for Lk already in this world. Also Robinson et al, *Critical Edition*, 436 question the original existence of the third excuse in Lk's account.

⁹¹ The word *ἀπῆλθον* is also redactional in Mt (Mt 35//Mk 23//Lk 20). See U. Luz, *Matthäus*, I.36.

⁹² The word *ἴδιον* is another Matthean favourite (Mt 6; Lk 0).

⁹³ See R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 435.

⁹⁴ W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.200.

⁹⁵ This parallel construction is dear to Mt (Mt 15; Lk 1).

master (Lk 14:22) is naturally omitted by Mt. This led also to the omission of the Lukan second sending out of the servant with instructions to compel the guests to enter (Lk 14:22-23).

But it seems that the excuses of the Lukan guests are somehow paralleled, albeit negatively intensified, by the snubbing of the Matthean guests since the excuses all concentrate on the prospective guests' personal economic interests. If one were to compare the actions of the invited in the two accounts, then it appears that the one who went to his own farm in Mt parallels the one who bought a new farm in Lk; the one who went to his business in Mt parallels the one who bought five jokes of oxen in Lk; while the *λοιποὶ*⁹⁶ who seized the king's servants replaces the Lukan excuse offered by a single servant that he cannot come for the feast because he is newly married. This is a comparison that overwhelmingly heightens the guilt of the Matthean guests. It also conforms the parable to the preceding.⁹⁷ However, the divergence in the third excuse of the Lukan guests and the action of the Matthean *λοιποὶ* shows that this third action should be ascribed to the respective evangelists.

6.3.2.4 The fate of the slaves and consequence

Entirely absent in Lk, and most likely a Matthean addition to Q is the much-debated and seemingly unmotivated killing of the king's slaves (v.6), the sending of the soldiers, the destruction of those who had killed the king's slaves (*τοὺς φονεῖς ἐκείνους*), and the burning of their city (22:7) as a reaction to v.6.⁹⁸ A lot of factors speak for these verses as a Matthean redaction.⁹⁹ First, this verse is absent in Lk. Again, many of the words used to describe the king and his actions in this verse bear heavily Matthean language. These include: *βασιλεύς*,¹⁰⁰ *ὀργίζω*,¹⁰¹ *πέμψας*,¹⁰² *ἀπολύω*,¹⁰³ and *φονεύς/φονεύω*.¹⁰⁴ But *πόλις* is not peculiar Matthean,¹⁰⁵ while *ἐμπύμπρημι* is a Matthean hapax.

Again the motif of killing of the slaves has already been reported (21:35). But in the present parable, *κρατήσαντες* replaces *λαβόντες* while *ὑβρίσαν* summarizes *ἔδειραν*

⁹⁶ The use of *λοιποὶ*: Mt 2; Lk 1.

⁹⁷ For T. H. Fledderman, Q, 727, Mt's brief account presupposes Lk's elaborate presentation.

⁹⁸ The acceptance of these verses as secondary has been held by the majority of scholars. Cf. A. Harnack, *Spüche*, 83f; Wellhausen, *Matthäus*, 111; R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 189; J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 65f; E. Linnemann, *Gleichnisse*, 99ff; S. Schulz, Q, 396, etc. For C. F. Evans, Luke, 573 Mt's version ceases here to be a parable. After a survey of the traditional arguments ascribing Mt 22:6-7 to the redactor, S. V. Tillborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 61, asks how a clever redactor who harmonised Mt 21:28-32.34-36 with 22:3-5 has become so clumsy in 22:6. He comes to the conclusion that the three parables of Mt 21:28-32.33-46 and 22:1ff were already connected with one another in the tradition used by Mt. This is a conclusion that does not explain the tension introduced by v.7.

⁹⁹ Cf. J. D. Crossan, *In Parables*, 71 who argues that vv.6-7 could not have been part of the original parable, asking for the rationale behind such violence in declining a dinner invitation and the probability of sending a punitive expedition while the dinner grows cold.

¹⁰⁰ This is already seen in v.1 of the present parable and occurs Mt 22; Mk 12; Lk 11.

¹⁰¹ We have this note already in 18:34.

¹⁰² Mt 4; Mk 0; Lk 0.

¹⁰³ Mt 19; Mk 12; Lk 13.

¹⁰⁴ Mt 6; Mk 1; Lk 1.

¹⁰⁵ Mt 27; Mk 8; Lk 39.

and ἐλιθοβόλησαν. It seems that the κακοί of 21:41 have become φονεῖς.¹⁰⁶ Mt alone describes the Jewish leaders as φονεύω (cf. 23:31.35). As indicated above and in the previous chapter, it seems that Mt has changed the δεῖπνον of Q to ἄριστον so as to make room for a short warfare in this verse. This is irrespective of the argument of Madson that “der Zorn des Königs ist unter diesen Umständen ein selbsterständliches Phänomen.”¹⁰⁷ However, the pluralizing of the λοιπός who killed the slaves accords with the plurality of the murderous tenants (οἱ γεωργοὶ 21:36) while their destruction seems to fulfil the judgment of 21:41.

And from a reading of the whole Matthean narrative a host of coherencies emerge. Already, Jesus had condemned this generation (11:16; 12:41.42) for refusing to believe in his words and actions. The effect of this rejection has also been parabolically espoused in the previous two parables of the trilogy especially in 21:41.43. Taken together with the charge of Jesus against the Jewish leaders (23:29-33), Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem (23:37-38) and the gloomy griever over the Temple (24:2) that will take place before this generation passes away (24:34), one sees an unbroken seam in the narrative, namely, the gloomy fate that awaits Jerusalem, especially its leaders. The connexion is made secure by the fact that the King responded as though those who killed his servants are rulers of the city. But rather than Mt’s elaborate destruction, Lk’s note of judgment is found only at the end of the parable, with the words “for I tell you that none of these people who were called will taste of my banquet” (Lk 12:24).

6.3.2.5 The secondary guests

In Mt 22:9f//Lk 14:21.23 some words (τὰς, καὶ, ἐξελθόντες/ἔξελθε and εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς) are shared and apparently show that the same thought seems to be expressed since they both narrate the gathering of willing guests. But there are substantial deviations in the two accounts.¹⁰⁸ This second invitation must be seen as an extension of allegory in the parables. The Matthean insertion of οὖν (v.9) expressly makes the unworthiness of the invited guests the reason for the invitation of a new set of guests.¹⁰⁹ The words πορεύεσθε and οὖν, occur together again in Mt 28:19 and are characteristic of Mt.¹¹⁰ Again ὅσους ἐὰν is Matthean,¹¹¹ while διεξόδους is a NT hapax.¹¹²

Though Mt’s redaction and the insertion of ὅσους ἐὰν εὗρητε can be seen as a characteristic Matthean abbreviation,¹¹³ the combination of πορεύεσθε and πονηροὺς τε

¹⁰⁶ See S. V. Tilborg, Jewish Leaders, 62.

¹⁰⁷ I. K. Madson, “Zur Erklärung,” 104.

¹⁰⁸ These deviations have led some scholars to the conclusion that both reports of a second invitation are secondary. Cf. A. Jülicher, Gleichnisreden II.423; A. Harnack, Sprüche, 84; J. Jeremias, Gleichnisse, 61; S. Schulz, Q, 396; J. Gnllka, Das Matthäusevangelium, II.235.

¹⁰⁹ Hence, v.9 is a result of the statement in v.8. The inferential at 22:9 is characteristic Matthean: Mt 57x; Mk 5x; Lk 31x. W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, I.80 have argued that the frequency of conditional, explanatory, and inferential conjunctions in the Gospel reflects an orderly mind and implies that Mt was well versed in the art of argumentation.

¹¹⁰ Cf. O. Steck, Israel, 309; S. Schulz, Q, 397.

¹¹¹ Mt 5x; Mk 2x; Lk 1x.

¹¹² For this word as a Matthean addition and an indication of the mission to the nations see S. Schulz, Q, 397.

¹¹³ For the argument that Mt is closer to Q in this verse see W. Braun, Feasting and Social Rhetoric, 81, n.53.

καὶ ἀγαθούς (Mt 22:10) could point to an ecclesiological interest (cf. 7:17; 13:38.49).¹¹⁴ Mt omits Lk's classification of the secondary guests as *πτωχοί, ἀναπίρροι, τυφλοί* and *χωλοί* instead classifying them as *πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθούς*. Thus, while Mt's guests are marked morally, Lk seems to present economic and social descriptions of his guests.¹¹⁵ Word statistics also prove that the clause of v.10 (*πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθούς*) should be seen as editorial.¹¹⁶ Furthermore the words *τε καὶ* are redactional in 27:48, while the words *πᾶς* and *συνάγω* are characteristic.¹¹⁷ Moreover, in v.10 Mt borrows a lot of words from previous verses (*καλέσατε εἰς τοὺς γάμους/v.3; δούλους/vv.3.4; ἐκείνους/v.7; εὐρίσκω/v.9*). The invitation of *πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθούς* (v.10) seems to set the stage for the insertion of vv.11-14 which is surely an allegorical extension of the parable.¹¹⁸ Conceptually close to v.10 is the parable of The Dragnet (13:47-8), where the distinction between *πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθούς* is in view. The net thrown into the sea gathers (*συνάγω*) both good and bad fish. And when the net is full (*πληρώω*), these are to be separated.¹¹⁹ There is no doubt that Mt thinks of the situation of his community in both parables.¹²⁰

6.3.2.6 The logion about the wedding garment

Vv.11–12 find no parallels in Lk and seem to have been added by Mt from his special source. Here, invitation gives way to inspection and makes Mt's interest in ethical demands stark.¹²¹ This ethical interest has already been shown in the special saying of 5:17 and in the reworking of Mk 7:19//Mt15:17 where Mt removed the phrase *καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα*. Moreover, the use of the nominative participle in v.11 (*εἰσελθών*), typifies Mt's style.¹²² The word *ἔρχομαι* has been used for going into the kingdom of heaven (Mt 5:20; 18:3) while the word *θεάσασθαι* appears in the unique material of 6:1 and as an insertion in 23:5. Friend (*ἑταῖρε*) is redactional in 26:50 and appears in the unique material of 20:13. The overwhelming Matthean redaction in these verses is further seen in the employment of numerous words present here as insertions in common traditions.¹²³ Also the word *γάμους* has already

¹¹⁴ This view is also shared by J. Gnllka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II.236.

¹¹⁵ The social implications of the Lukan descriptions have been analyzed by J. B. Green, *New Testament Theology*, 79-84. For Lk's description of the secondary guests as a powerful portrait of destitution see W. Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 82.

¹¹⁶ *Πονηρός*: Mt: 26; Mk: 2; Lk: 13: *ἀγαθός*: Mt: 7; Mk: 0; Lk: 2. This could also be a reflection of Mt's interest in ethics. Lk's interest in the poor and outcasts also mean that his description of the secondary guests could as well be redactional.

¹¹⁷ However, v.10b-13 can be seen as part of a traditional parable because of numerous parallels in rabbinic literature. See P. Fiebig, *Gleichnisreden*, 17-27; H. Strack/P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 1.878f.

¹¹⁸ Cf. A. Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden II.423*; Wellhausen, *Matthäus*, 111; S. Schulz, *Q*, 397.

¹¹⁹ J. Jeremias has already shown Mt as the author of the parables in this section of Mt's Gospel. See his *Gleichnisse*, 79ff. See also G. Künzel, *Gemeindeverständnis*, 125-34.

¹²⁰ See C. W. F. Smith, "Mixed State," 154. He writes: "here the evangelist is probably adapting the work of the preacher in the early church."

¹²¹ For W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.203-4, v.11 allegorically describes the last judgement and extends to those within the church.

¹²² See D. Sim who notifies us that "Matthew likes to use the nominative participle to link a tradition with the material which precedes it." "Matthew 22:13a and Enoch 10.4a," 3-19; here 8; see also R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 439.

¹²³ These include: *ἐκεῖ* (16x), *ἄνθρωπον* (35x), *ἔνδυμα* (6x).

been seen in vv.2.3.4.8.9.10. The lack of response of the man without the proper wedding garments echoes the lack of response of the first invited guests and is again echoed by the silencing of the Sadducees (see v.34). Therefore, the vocabulary results and stylistic considerations of vv.11-12 can lead to the conclusion that “they are replete with Matthew’s typical diction and style and contain no words which cannot be ascribed to his hand.”¹²⁴

The same can also be said with regard to the remaining verses of the parable. The mention of βασιλεύς (v.13) harks back to vv.2.7.11. The use of ὁ βασιλεύς in 22:13 as the subject of εἶπεν could reveal the hand of Mt’s. As already said, this is consistent with his tendency to specify the subject of a verb.¹²⁵ The judgment pronouncement of this verse finds a close parallel with that of Mt 8:12 in reference to ‘the sons of the kingdom.’ Here, there is a word for word conformity with that passage in the punishment of casting εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων. This expression is repeated in 13:42.50; 24:51; 25:30, though with some modifications.¹²⁶ But it must be noted that in this judgment oracle, Mt suddenly switches from δοῦλος (cf. vv.3.4.8.10) to διάκονος (v.13) as those who carry out the king’s orders.¹²⁷ Mt has already used διάκονος in the unparalleled eschatological parable of The Tares (13:24-30). Also the explanation of this parable of The Tares makes use of words present in this current verse of the wedding feast. For example: δῆσατε and βαλοῦσιν. I will later show how important this verse is in the allegorical interpretation of the parable.

Finally the whole of v.14 is absent in Lk and seems to have meaning only in reference to the rest of the parable. For instance, the κλητοὶ resembles the κεκλημένοι (vv.3.4.8.9), while the γὰρ clause¹²⁸ shows that v.14 supplies the answer as to why there would be weeping and grinding of teeth (v.13). Finally, the parallelistic structure of the two clauses of this verse (πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν κλητοὶ ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί) is in tandem with Mt’s construction.¹²⁹ Further indications to a Matthean hand include the relation between 22:14 and 7:13-14. While 7:13-14 mentions the πολλοὶ who take the wide gate leading to destruction and contrasts them with the ὀλίγοι that follow the way to life, in 22:14 the πολλοὶ who are called are contrasted with the ὀλίγοι who are elected.

The conclusion, then, is that our parable has a Q source but manifests a heavy Matthean influence, an influence that distinguishes it strongly from the Lukan narrative.¹³⁰ These differences are most evident in vv.11-14. The clear-cut differences in the two accounts led Haenchen to posit that moving from Mt’s version to that of Lk is like the movement from a labyrinth to a park.¹³¹ However, though the

¹²⁴ D. Sim, “Matthew 22:13a,” 9.

¹²⁵ See further E. P. Sanders, *Tendencies*, 152-54.

¹²⁶ The use of ἐκβάλλω: Mt 28; Mk 18; Lk 20: εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον: Mt 3; Mk 0; Lk 0.

¹²⁷ For this change as evidence of later hand, see J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 62.

¹²⁸ The use of γὰρ: Mt 126; Mk 64; Lk 97.

¹²⁹ See W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, I.94.

¹³⁰ For the argument that Mt made use of oral tradition rather than Q in Mt 22:1-10 see A. Harnack, *Sprüche*, 84; W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.194

¹³¹ E. Haenchen, *Das Gleichnis vom Grossen Mahl*, 143. But it is possible that Mt transformed the parable to that of a marriage feast prepared by a king for his son so as to heighten the importance of

hand of Mt is overwhelming in his version of the parable, the analysis above shows his reworking of his Q source. This redaction is highlighted by the overwhelming presence of definite tenses and contradictions.¹³²

6.3.3 TENSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

Perhaps the first notable tension in the story occurs in v.6. Having introduced the negative reactions of the invited guests with the ὅς μὲν-ὅς δέ construction (v.5), then the collective οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ comes as a surprise to the reader.¹³³ It is then interesting to note what these λοιποὶ did: Instead of going away to their businesses just like the others, they took the servants, treated them spitefully and killed them (for inviting them to the feast)? This report seems to be an after-thought.

There seems to be another tension in v.7. Mt tells us that the king had time to send his servants on a military expedition while the food already prepared (v.4) cools down. On a purely literary level, the comments of Tilborg that vv.6-7 come from the hands of a clumsy interpolator, a different hand also responsible for the redaction of vv.3-5 seem to be correct.¹³⁴ But in the present verse, the break in thought is very evident. It is clear that were v.8 (the invitation of secondary guests) to follow direct from v.7a (the anger of the king), the parable would have appeared better as an understandable close-knit unit.¹³⁵ Hence the introduction of the war expedition must be seen as a later addition. And immediately after this short warfare, the parable reintroduces the (killed?) slaves and then a change of tense in v.8. The use of the present τότε λέγει (already shown to belong to Mt's beloved vocabulary), as against the overwhelming use of the aorist in the parable, could be suggestive of a latter hand.

This tension has led many exegetes to contend that Mt seems to have destroyed verisimilitude and forced attention away from story (what happens) to discourse (what the story means). Commenting on these actions Lambrecht writes: "such conduct is completely out of proportion. The narrative, as it were, springs open. The hearers cannot but look for an allegorical sense."¹³⁶ It is then correct to argue that centre of the story has been taken over by the paraenetic needs of the Matthean community with the insertion of v.7.¹³⁷ It has also been argued that "this apparent motiveless killing is one of the signs

the response to it. So also R. A. Batey, *Nuptial Imagery*, 43. W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison think that Mt's version of the story is more removed from the original and from the real world. *Matthew*, III.196.

¹³² Cf. chapter one for the presence of parallels in this parable. See also W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.193.

¹³³ Cf. U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.232:

¹³⁴ S. V. Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 61.

¹³⁵ See also A. Ogawa, "Paraboles," 140. This verse makes sense if it is seen as the conclusion of the first part of the parable and as a link to the previous parable. See W. Trilling, "Überlieferungsgeschichte," 254f.

¹³⁶ J. Lambrecht, *Treasure*, 132.

¹³⁷ B. B. Scott, *Parable*, 162. See also R. J. Dillion, "Tradition History," 11; G. Strecker, describes this verse as "eine sichtbarer Ausdruck der schon vollzogenen Verwerfung". *Der Weg*, 117. See also J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 6. n. 4. The attempt by K. H. Rengstorf to see in vv.6-7 a borrowing of an ancient *Kriegsführung*-schema without any historical reference has not received much positive appeal. See his article "Die Stadt der Mörder," 106-129.

that a historical allegorical interest has superseded a concern with realism in the narrative.”¹³⁸ Consequently, the events which the parable describes could reflect the catastrophe of 70 AD., when large parts of Jerusalem were destroyed by the Romans.¹³⁹ This submission will have important roles to play in the later part of the work.

Again, the reference to the filling up of the hall with guests could be an indication that the parable of the wedding banquet probably concluded originally with v.10.¹⁴⁰ If this is the case, Mt has then added a brief parable to this (vv.11–13), which makes a different point altogether. It is to be wondered how somebody picked up from the road side unprepared (cf. v.9) could have come with the proper wedding garment as requested by the king (v.12). But seen in relation to the co-text of the parable, the apparently surprising command to the servants in v.13 (*δήσαντες αὐτοῦ πόδας καὶ χεῖρας ἐκβάλετε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον*) as punishment for unpreparedness to a guest picked from the roadside already finds its pair in the apparently contradictory cursing of the fruitless fig tree whose time, according to Mk 11:13, was not ripe to bear fruits (21:19).¹⁴¹ But the fact that Mt removed the Markan remark that it was not the time of the fig (*ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς οὐκ ἦν σύκων*) could be an indication that there is no excuse for lack of fruit in Mt’s mind. The motif to be prepared at all times is once more extolled. This is indicative that a latter hand is aiming at a harmonization of Mt’s theology.

A certain tension exists between the two panels of the story, that is, vv.1-10 and vv.11-13. Instead of the progressive invitation to the feast which characterises the first section of the story, the second panel focuses on the inspection of the king concerning the required wedding garment. This motif of the garment coupled with the change from *δούλος* to *διάκονος* seems to be an unexpected appearance¹⁴² and could posit a Matthean redaction of another parable already present in his special tradition.¹⁴³ This redaction has altered the stress of the parable to serve the needs of Mt. This is shown by the fact that while the first part of the parable seems to have a polemic intent, the second part bears strong paraenetic bent.¹⁴⁴ Finally, the tensions in the parable are compounded by the contradiction present in v.14, closing with “but few are chosen” in a story where apparently only one of the guests was not chosen.

The above arguments can be encapsulated in the verdict of Trilling concerning Mt’s version of the parable: “es fehlt ihm der einheitliche literarische Stil, die

¹³⁸ F. H. Borsch, *Many Things in Parables*, 48.

¹³⁹ See Josephus, *Jewish War* 6:353-55, 363-64, 406-8, for a treatment of the Jewish war and D. C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 33-40 for a wider treatment of Mt’s imperial context.

¹⁴⁰ So also U. Luz, *Matthäus III.231*.

¹⁴¹ The apparent inconsistencies in the parable led J. Lambrecht to suggest that Mt’s account of the parable should be ignored. See *Treasure*, 128. A similar view is expressed by A. Vögtle, *Gott und seine Gäste*, 81.

¹⁴² So also A. Ogawa, “Paraboles,” 140. His conclusion is that Mt has combined two parables present in his special.

¹⁴³ So also Cf. J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 62; R. Rubinkiewicz, *Eschatologie*, 104; J. Gnllka, *Matthäus*, II.236-37. But it could be argued that if Mt redacted an already present parable, he could have smoothed out these rough edges. See D. Sim, “Matthew 22.13a and Enoch 10.4a,” 7-8.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. W. Trilling, “Überlieferungsgeschichte,” 253-54.

einheitliche Aussagerichtung, die Indienstnahme für einen lehrhaften Zweck.”¹⁴⁵ It is thus safe to assume that the additions by Mt make his readers aware that perhaps he wants the same message of the reversal of expectations to run through the three parables of our trilogy. And in this search for harmony, he made use of his beloved vocabulary to increase the allegory and parallelism found in the traditional parable,¹⁴⁶ leading to the appearance of certain tensions and contradictions.

With regard to the transmission of the parable of the Wedding banquet, Dillon has distinguished three layers. For him, the basis underlying Mt 22:1-14 is a wedding celebration whose moral was to inculcate the fact of salvation history. But since Israel failed to respond positively in accordance to its election, another group was called in its place. In the second stage, Mt transformed this original parable by the addition of the parable of the wedding garment Mt 22:11-14 which accounts for the change of the host into a king and the original meal into a marriage feast. That means that the meaning of the parable has changed from a transfer of invitation to the issue of worthiness in the chosen community. The final stage of the redaction accomplishes the polemization by the addition of vv.6-7. At this stage, the parable is also conformed in language and structure to the previous parable of the Wicked Tenants. Then the three parables are brought together as a united front against the Jewish leaders.¹⁴⁷

6.4 A POSSIBLE RECONSTRUCTION

Although it is difficult to reconstruct with certainty the exact words of the dominical parable behind Mt’s text, perhaps a combination of the two synoptic accounts would lead to a story that could be closer to the original form of the parable than any of the extant texts. When all the details identified as redactional are removed, the story could be graphically presented thus:

Mt	Q
v.1 And answering again...	
	Jesus said to them: the kingdom of God is like a man who prepared a [big] feast and invited many. And he sent his slave [at the time of the banquet] ¹⁴⁸ to say to those who had been invited ‘come, for all is now ready.
v.3b And they did not want to come. v.4 Again, he sent forth other servants...	
	The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.’ Another said, ‘I

¹⁴⁵ W. Trilling, “Überlieferungsgeschichte,” 253.

¹⁴⁶ U. Luz argues that the parable goes back to Jesus. See his Matthäus III.236.

¹⁴⁷ R. J., Dillion, “Tradition History,” 1-42.

¹⁴⁸ For H. T. Fledderman, Q, 735, the clause τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦ δείπνου does not belong to the Q parable.

	have bought five York of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.’
v.6 And the remnant took the servants, and mishandled them and killed them.	
	And the slave reported this to his master. And the householder was annoyed .
v.7 And he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. v.8 Then he says to his servants, ‘the wedding is ready, but the invited were not worthy.’	
	And he said: ‘go outside to the streets and bring those whom you may see that my house may be filled.’
vv.11-14 And when the king came in to see the guests he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment: And he said to him, friend, how did you come in here not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then the king says to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness; Where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.	

The above reconstruction removes the many Mattheanisms in our parable and makes it a plausible everyday possibility.¹⁴⁹ The conclusion, therefore, is that the Matthean parable of 22:1-14 is a Matthean adaptation of his Q source to the service of his theology.¹⁵⁰ When seen as a different account of the same parable in Lk 14:16-24, then we could see in Mt’s redaction an extension of allegory and of polemics against the Jewish leaders just as in the Wicked Tenants, as well as the harmonizing of the parable not only to the previous two parables of the Two Sons and the Wicked Tenants, but also to the parable’s micro-context in particular and the Matthean macro-context in general. In order to construct a trilogy, Mt created the parable of the Two Sons from some sayings found in his tradition, modified the Markan parable of the Wicked Tenants and added vv.4.6.7.11-14 to the Q parable of the Great Feast.

¹⁴⁹ This reconstruction agrees principally with that given by B. B. Scott, *Parables*, 169-72.

¹⁵⁰ The argument for the written or oral nature of Q has been adequately argued by J. S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q*, 42-47.

He then brought them together as a three-pronged unit against the Jewish leaders. This accords with Mt's love for trilogy.

6.5 MATTHEW'S LOVE FOR TRILOGY

One of the main characteristics of the Gospel of Mt is the vast use of numbers. Our trilogy of parables expresses in full Mt's love for the number three or the use of triads. Perhaps the most significant interest of Mt's in this section of his Gospel is to present a trilogy of parables. This agrees with the view of Allison that the pervasiveness of triads in Mt is one of the foundation stones, apart from the five major discourses, upon which future analysis of the Gospel must build.¹⁵¹ These triads can be seen all over the gospel. I name a few examples: the genealogy employs the 3 times 14 scheme to announce the lineage of Jesus (1:2-17); the panel of 1:18-2:23 narrates three appearances of God's angel to Joseph; there are three divisions of the Sermon on the Mount (5:17-48; 6:1-18; 6:19-7:12); the Lord's prayer has three thou petitions (6:9c-10) and three we petitions (6:11-13); he takes up the Jewish triadic piety of almsgiving, prayer and fasting (6:1-17); there are three eschatological parables in ch.25 viz, the parable of the Ten Virgins (25:1-13), the parable of The Talents (25:14-30), and the parable of The Sheep and Goats (25:31-46); the passion story narrates three denials of Peter (26:69-75) and three questions of Pilate (27:17-23).¹⁵²

However, the most significant Matthean triad similar to our trilogy is the one that appears also in the trilogy of parables in ch.13. Each of the parables in ch. 13 (13:44.45.47) is uniquely Matthean. But the first of these triads (13:24-30.31-32.33) seems to be more significant to our study because of its compositional resemblance to the trilogy of 21:28-22:14. Olmstead has articulated these resemblances: "In both triads the first parable is unique to Matthew (13.24-30, cf. 21.28-32). Again, in both triads the second parable already stood at the corresponding place in the Markan narrative (13.31-32, cf. 21.33-46); both Matthew and Luke include it. Again, in both triads, the third parable is absent from Mark, but Luke includes a parallel in a different context (13.33, cf. 22.1-14). Probably, then, the same hand is responsible for the formation of both triads."¹⁵³ This use of number places the author in the Jewish world.¹⁵⁴ Not only does the above quotation encapsulate the points already discussed, it also goes a long way in foreshadowing what is still to come in the later part of the next chapter, namely, Mt's root in Judaism. Meanwhile I will investigate the frames of the present parable which serve as its genre signals.

¹⁵¹ D. C. Allison, "Structure," 423-45; W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew I.61-67; 86f.

¹⁵² For a long list of the use of the number three in Mt see W. C. Allen, Matthew, lxv.

¹⁵³ W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 37. It is also to be noted that in Mt's sending of the emissaries, there are in fact three episodes. Unlike in Mk where the owner of the vineyard sends one slave, then another, then another, then many others, then his son, in Mt, the householder sends several servants, then other servants more than the first, then his son. This is in complete accord with Mt's love for triad. The addition of v.35 (stoning) completes a triad of beat, kill, stone.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, I.86.

6.6 THE FRAMES OF THE PARABLE

The parable of the Wedding Feast by Mt seems to have clear cut units. After an editorial commentary, notifying the reader that Jesus is continuing his arguments against his opponents *ἐν παραβολαῖς* (v.1), Jesus introduces the parable as a kingdom parable (v.2) employing the comparative particle *ὁμοίως*. From v.3-10 the parable is narrated with its violence, counter-violence and murders and seems to have reached its climax with the filling of the hall. If the climax is reached in v.10, then vv.11-13 can be seen as the anticlimax while v.14 serves as the application with the words *πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν κλητοὶ ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί*. Hence, to be examined as frames of the parable are (1) the introduction (v.2a) and (2) the conclusion (v.14). The investigation of the parable proper will involve a study of the metaphors in their cultural milieu and how they are employed in the narrative. This will form the crust of the next chapter.

6.6.1 THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PARABLE

For the first time in the trilogy, the Matthean favourite expression *ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν* appears in the introduction to the third parable (22:2a), replacing the two previous occurrences of *ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ* (21:31.43). This sudden change could be a narrative ploy to draw the attention of the hearers/readers to something new. Since Mt does not avoid the use of *ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ* it can be stated that his use of *ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν* is not to be seen as the Jewish practice of avoiding the mention of God's name.¹⁵⁵ Rather he seems to apply *ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν* as an expression of the universal dominion of God over the whole universe.¹⁵⁶

Though more important for our investigation is that just like the majority of the rabbinic parables, the parable of the Weeding Feast falls into the group of parables with a dative introduction, the Aramaic 1^e. In this regard, the introduction to our parable corresponds to the short form of the dative, with the words *ὁμοιωθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ βασιλεῖ*, (Mt 22:2a).¹⁵⁷ Majority of the rabbinic parables begins with this formula. When they begin thus, this can be translated with "Ein Gleichnis. Einem König, der..."¹⁵⁸ This dative introduction could also begin with a question like *πῶς ὁμοιωσωμεν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ*, (Mk 4:30).

Other synoptic parabolic introductions that fall into this group are *ὡς*,¹⁵⁹ *ὡσπερ*,¹⁶⁰ *ὁμοιωθήσεται*,¹⁶¹ *ὁμοίως ἐστίν*.¹⁶² All these examples have the aramaic 1^e at the background and have to be interpreted as

¹⁵⁵ Some of the following scholars who see Mt's use of "kingdom of heaven" as a circumlocution for the divine name include: R. Schnackenburg, *Matthäus*, I.41; J. Schniewind, *Matthäus*, 23; F. Filson, *Matthew*, 32; F. W. Beare, *Matthew*, 33. The difference has also been seen as the influence of Mt's tradition. Cf. P. Gaechter, *Matthäus*, 678.686; W. Grundmann, *Matthäus*, 463.

¹⁵⁶ This is the conclusion arrived at by G. Vanoni/B. Heininger, *Das Reich Gottes*, 103; A. Kretzer, *Herrschaft*, 25f. It has also been argued that the different usages are a result of the context of the narrative. See R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 430. For a survey of other reasons adduced for the different uses of *ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ* and *ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν* by Mt see J. C. Thomas, "The Kingdom of God," 136-146.

¹⁵⁷ See also Mt 13:24; Mt 18:23.

¹⁵⁸ H. Strack/P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, II.8. The English translation would be "the parable of a king who..." But this does not bring out clearly the dative sense in the sentence.

¹⁵⁹ See Mk 13:34

“it is compared to...” instead of “it is like...” Hence the introduction *ὁμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπων βασιλεῖ* should not be seen as likening the kingdom of heaven to a king but comparing the kingdom of heaven with the story that is about to unfold, the parable of the Wedding Feast. This consideration led Jeremias to conclude: “in allen diesen Fällen ergibt sich das Richtige, wenn man sich erinnert, daß dem griechischen *ὁμοίός ἐστιν* ein aramäisches 1^e zugrunde liegt, das mit ‘es verhält sich...wie mit...’ übersetzt werden muß.”¹⁶³ Consequently, the kingdom of God is not like a king but like the events depicted in the parable.

It is also to be remarked that Mt employs this dative introduction more than his synoptic mates. It appears in Mk three times,¹⁶⁴ in Lk six times,¹⁶⁵ but in Mt fifteen times.¹⁶⁶ Some of these Matthean parabolic introductions are formed in the aorist passive *ὁμοιώθη* (13:24; 18:23; 22:2) and the future passive *ὁμοιωθήσεται* (7:24.26; 25:1). Since only Mt knows this form of passive introduction of the parables in the NT,¹⁶⁷ it can then rightly be concluded that the introduction to our parable “handelt sich also um eine Einleitungsformel, die Matthäus liebt, und es muß mit der Möglichkeit gerechnet werden, daß er sie im einen oder anderen Fall zugesetzt hat.”¹⁶⁸ It could also mean that Mt attaches much importance to it.¹⁶⁹

6.6.2 THE CONCLUSION OF THE PARABLE

Just like the conclusion of the parable of the Two Sons (21:32), the conclusion of our parable (22:14) belongs to the *γάρ* conclusions. Hence, the expression *πολλοὶ γάρ εἰσιν κλητοὶ ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί* justifies the narrated story in the fact that not all those invited will eventually be chosen. However, when closely observed, this application cannot be key to the interpretation of the original parable since *πολλοὶ εἰσιν κλητοὶ* does not correspond to the first invited of whom none is found worthy nor does *ὀλίγοι ἐκλεκτοί* correspond to the second set of invitees of whom only one man was thrown out of the wedding hall. Since the number of those still left to enjoy the banquet feast far outweighs the singular man thrown out, one naturally expects that *οἱ ἐκλεκτοί* should still be *πολλοί*. This and similar observations led Jeremias to classify the ‘application’ of the parable under the parables without interpretation which are given a secondary application by the evangelists.¹⁷⁰ This observation is of much

¹⁶⁰ See Mt 25:14.

¹⁶¹ See Mt 7:24.26; 25:1.

¹⁶² See Mt 13:31.33.44.45.47.52; 20:1; Lk 6:49; 12:36.

¹⁶³ J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 86.

¹⁶⁴ Mk 4:26.31; 13:34 (always with *ὡς*).

¹⁶⁵ Lk 6:48.49; 7:32; 12:36; 13:19.21 (either *ὁμοίός ἐστιν* or without copula *ὕμεις ὅμοιοι*)

¹⁶⁶ Mt 11:16 (*τίνι δὲ ὁμοιώσω τὴν γενεάν ταύτην; ὁμοία ἐστὶν + dative*); 13:31.33.44.45.47; 20:1 (*ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν + dative*); 13:52 (*πᾶς γραμματεὺς μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν ὁμοίός ἐστιν + dative*); 13:24; 18:23; 22:2 (*ὁμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν + dative*); 7:24.26 (*ὁμοιωθήσεται + dative*); 25:1 (*τότε ὁμοιωθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν + dative*); 25:14 (*ὥσπερ*).

¹⁶⁷ C. Münch, *Gleichnisse*, 135.

¹⁶⁸ J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 87.

¹⁶⁹ For more discussion on the significance of these varied verb forms see J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 101; A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 835; D. A. Carson, “The *ὁμοίος* Word-Group,” 277-82.

¹⁷⁰ J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 89-94.

importance in locating the *Sitz im Leben* of the parables as intra-community instruction of the early church or apologies against opponents.

The effect of these later additions is that the applications given to some of the parables are at a tangent with the core of the stories. The above point is concretized by the following applications of the parables by Mt: Mt 20:16 (οὕτως ἔσονται οἱ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι καὶ οἱ πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι); Mt 25:13 (γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἶδατε τὴν ἡμέραν οὐδὲ τὴν ὥραν); Mt 25:29 (τῷ γὰρ ἔχοντι παντὶ δοθήσεται καὶ περισσευθήσεται· τοῦ δὲ μὴ ἔχοντος καὶ ὃ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ).¹⁷¹ The above applications, when closely observed, show a strong Matthean tendency to stress eschatological promises, treats and warnings.¹⁷² But more important is the undisputed fact that most of these applications do not match the *Bildhälfte* of the parables. This is also evident in Lk in the parable of the untrustworthy servant (Lk 16:1-13). The evident tension between the master’s praise of the steward (Lk 16:8) and the implied dishonesty of the steward (Lk 16:10) is compounded by the introduction of service to two masters (Lk 16:13) as the application of the parable, a motif that is foreign in the narrated story.

This is a strong argument in seeing the applications of the parables as a secondary addition and in locating them in the Kerygma of the early Christian movement. This gives credence to the observation that Mt 22:14 is foreign to the parable in which πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσιν κλητοὶ does not correspond to the man sent out of the wedding hall nor does ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοὶ correspond to the many that still remain inside. However, this apparent tension is mitigated with the observation that the πολλοὶ and the ὀλίγοι could be comparative Semitisms. That is, they are used in the parable “as correlative comparatives to mean ‘more numerous’ and ‘less numerous.’”¹⁷³ If this is the case, πολλοὶ is a universalism meaning “everyone,” corresponding to the invitation of v.9, while ὀλίγοι means “fewer than,”¹⁷⁴ that is, not everyone. This observation has great implications for the interpretation of the parable as we shall see in the next chapter.

6.7 CONCLUSION

The qualification of the host as a king surely places him at a high level on the societal cadre in the mind of the hearers. Though the narrative is silent on his moral probity, one can infer that the wedding party organized by the king is nothing in the realm of the absurd, that is, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with his throwing a banquet. But it seems that all is wrong with the failure of the guests to respond to this invitation positively. The fact that no reason is given for this refusal (unlike in Lk), means that already the narrative is moving the hearer/reader to sympathy with the king.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Other synoptic examples include Lk 5:39; Lk 11:10; Lk 12:21; Lk 12:48b; Lk 13:30; Lk 16:10; Lk 16:13; Lk 18:14b.

¹⁷² So also J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 95.

¹⁷³ B. F. Meyer, “Many (=All) Are Called,” 95. Other passages in Mt that exhibit this comparative correlation include Mt 7:13-14; Mt 24:21-23.

¹⁷⁴ B. F. Meyer, “Many (=All) are called,” 89-97; J. Jeremias, “πολλοὶ” *ThWNT* VI.541-42.

¹⁷⁵ Powell has argued that the protagonist is usually one character with whom the reader experiences some degree of empathy. M. A. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 57.

However, an understanding of the real meaning of the parable and the impact it is supposed to have on the receivers, demand an understanding of the Greco-Roman idea underlying the parable. This is important because although Mt used his characteristic language, he has also employed contemporary metaphors like “king,” “son,” “slaves/servants” and “wedding feast,” metaphors which will not miss the attention of a discerning Jew of the second Temple period. I will thus proceed by investigating the effect or effects these metaphors were supposed to generate in the addressees. The investigation will also focus on how Mt has tried to use these traditional metaphors for the paraenetic needs of his community.

CHAPTER SEVEN
MT 22:1-14: BACKGROUND AND MATTHEW'S INTERPRETATION OF THE
PARABLE

Just like the previous two parables of the trilogy have shown, the parables of Jesus are realistically grounded in the narrative world in which they occur. Although the various evangelists have introduced different grades of allegory to their respective narratives, there is still the need of obtaining cultural information at the time of Jesus that could lie at the root of the parable. Though surely fictive, the present parable of the great Feast describes a scene or series of scenes that would not be entirely foreign to contemporary Jewish ears. As the Q parable of the great feast in the previous chapter has shown, what we have before us is a dominical parable which our two evangelists have fashioned differently to serve their salvation-historical needs. On the level of the Q parable, the obvious background picture is a feast (*δεῖπνον*) which a householder prepared, probably for his friends and acquaintances. Already the NT has provided similar account of the *δεῖπνον* which Herod made for the great and mighty in his kingdom (cf. Mk 6:21). But surprisingly all the prospective guests in our present parable failed to honour the invitation to attend the feast. This is an extra-ordinary twist to the story that gives way for the tensions that developed between the householder and his invited guests. Therefore, the first problem that confronts any attempt to give the parable a realistic bent is the nature of invitations to feasts in antiquity. Again, what would be the implication of refusal to honour invitations to feasts?

To some extent the above comments are also true for the Matthean parable of the Wedding Feast¹ which will take a greater part of this chapter. Due to the paucity of materials relating to feasts during the time of Jesus, recourse to some ancient writings, the OT, the NT and, to some extent, early Jewish rabbinic sources is of utmost importance. Already David Stern has provided numerous rabbinic parables whose opening verses deal with a king who builds a wedding chamber for his son.² The implication is that the many apparent fictions and contradictions contained in the parable may not have been so in the ears of its first hearers. This strengthens the above remark for the need to visit the historical and cultural background of our text so as to place ourselves as far as possible in the position of Jesus' original listeners

¹ In this context it is wrong to accept that "gamos is the name, in its primary significance, not of a ceremony, but of the sexual act itself-without which the marriage is not consummated, actual." This is the supposition of J. Redfield, "Greek wedding," 188; It is also inadequate to see 'γάμος' as only copula carnalis. See A. R. W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens*, 7.

² D. Stern, "Rhetoric," 278-81. Some of these parallels are contained in such rabbinic parables as b. Sabb. 153a; b. Sukk. 29a; t. Sukk. 2.6; t. Sanh. 3.9; Sem. 8.10; Sifre Deut. 53; Midr. Pss. 4:11; 25:9; Eccles. Rab. 3.9.1; 9.8.1. Despite their uncertain dating, R. Zimmermann has used rabbinic texts to reconstruct the Jewish marriage rites and sequence. See his *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 230-40. Another ancient parable that shares the same motif of a king's invitation of guests to his son's wedding feast is the parable of the lame man and the blind man in the Apocryphon of Ezekiel. For a detailed analysis of this Apocryphon see J. R. Mueller, *Apocryphon of Ezekiel: A Critical Study*, JSP.S 5 (Sheffield, 1994) and R. Baukham, "Wedding Feast," 471-88.

and Mt's original readers. How does our parable depart from the normal norm of invitation to feasts in antiquity?

7.1 INVITATION TO FEASTS IN ANTIQUITY

The report that the householder sent his slave to call the prospective guests τῇ ὥρᾳ τοῦ δείπνου raises the question whether it is right to accept that the parable tells of a host who decides on a sudden dinner³ or whether we have a customary mode of invitation in this parable in which the invited are reminded of the feast when πάντα ἔτοιμα? Crossan thinks that the first option “is a perfectly everyday possibility but it results in a most paradoxical vision: all expected guests are absent and only unexpected guests are present.”⁴ In support of the second option that the invitation when the dinner was already prepared is a reminder, Davies and Allison infer that the expression ‘καλέσαι τοὺς κεκλημένους’ refers not to an invitation but to a notice that an occasion for which invitations have already been issued is about to begin,⁵ that means in effect, a two-fold invitation. For some exegetes this is apparently the normal case for formal dinners. While for a spontaneous dinner, on the other hand, “invitations were often given on the same day, and by the host in person, who sought out, in the market-place or the gymnasium, those whom he desired to invite.”⁶ This seems to be the case in the feast celebrated for the converted tax-collector, Levi (Mk 2:15; Mt 9:10; Lk 5:29).⁷ If the above citation is true, and if the comparison with the story about Levi shows that our parable departs from the informal mode of invitation, then the calling of those invited in our parable, through the agency of the householder's servants, makes the invitation a formal one and hence two-fold.⁸

It then appears that the parable portrays a social custom where the householder had already given the guests an initial invitation while the guests on their part promised to honour the call. If this is the case, then “the second invitation in the parable is merely to inform them that the dinner is now ready.”⁹ To this Derrett remarks: “invitations were circulated so that people would hold themselves in readiness, and later a notice was sent round when the meal was ready—the unpredictability of oriental arrangements rendering this method necessary...”¹⁰ This

³ This is the impression one gets from the account in Thomas' Gospel.

⁴ J. D. Crossan, *Other Gospels*, 51

⁵ W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.199.

⁶ W. A. Becker and H. Göll, *Charicles*, 315.

⁷ While Mt and Lk make it clear that the celebration was in the house of Jesus and Levi respectively, the version of Mk is not clear in whose house the feast was celebrated. The important factor however is that we have a feast that seems to be impromptu and which seems to be narrated to serve the intention of the various evangelists.

⁸ This point has already been noted by W. Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 101.

⁹ C. S. Keener, *Matthew*, 519. If it is a wedding banquet, it could be that the first invitation was issued between the time of betrothal and the nuptial ceremony which could last one year. See R. Batey, “Paul's Bride Image,” 178; R. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 236.

¹⁰ J. D. M. Derrett, *Law*, 138, n. 2. This is concretized in Plutarch's *Septem sapientium convivium* 147E where he asks: “do you not honestly believe that, as some preparation is necessary on the part of the man who is to be host, there should also be some preparation on the part of him who is to be a guest at the dinner”? The answer to this question must definitely be yes. This preparation on the part of the guest could take into consideration the reciprocity involved in such a dinner and the wedding garment required, a point I will return to later.

unpredictability is coupled with the gaping social stratification of the Greco-Roman world between rich and poor. Hence, it has been argued that “the time between invitations would allow opportunity for potential guests to find out what the festive occasion might be, who is coming, and whether all had been done appropriately in arranging the dinner. Only then would the discerning guest be comfortable showing up.”¹¹ However, Philo contrarily attests that those who throw banquets “do not send out the summons to supper till they put everything in readiness for the feast.”¹²

However, the fact that not every member of the householder’s society was invited to the feast adheres to a strict sense of social segregation in the Greco-Roman world. This is important in a society where “snobbery, sycophancy, and humiliation...lurk menacingly in the background.”¹³ The importance attached to dinner invitations led Lucian to the conclusion that “nobody invites an enemy or an unknown person nor even a slight acquaintance to dinner.”¹⁴ This thinking is accentuated by Plutarch who criticizes the Roman practice of allowing uninvited guests to be brought by those invited as this could lead to a congregation of ‘different and incompatible types’ which could be a threat to the circle of *σύνδειπνοι*.¹⁵ This supposition seems to echo a laid-down rule or at least a commonplace etiquette for invitation to dinners in the Hellenistic milieu,¹⁶ in which the list of guests is drawn up according to bonds of friendship (*φίλος*), familial ties (*ἀδελφός*), similar affiliations (*συγγενής*), or economic status (*πλούσιος*), with the hope that those invited can reciprocate in kind (*ἀνταπόδομα*).¹⁷

The importance of hospitality in the oriental mind-set in which the parable plays out is very important in understanding the significance of refusal by the invited guests to attend the feast. In this oriental setting, “hospitality is a function of social cohesion. In turn those who are able to entertain do so, and their equals are expected to accept as a matter of duty, and to reciprocate.”¹⁸ This hospitality is made starker in a society in which “food dealings are a delicate barometer, a ritual statement as it were, of social relations, and food is thus employed instrumentally as a starting, a sustaining, or a destroying mechanism of sociability.”¹⁹ The invitation to dine is thus an invitation to furtherance of this social cohesion. Consequently, by their refusal, the guests seem to have deviated from this norm of hospitality and insulted the host.

¹¹ R. Rohrbaugh, “The Pre-Industrial City in Luke-Acts,” 141.

¹² Philo, Op. 78

¹³ See O. Murray, “The symposium as Social Organization,” 196-98.

¹⁴ De Parasito, 22. J. H. D’Arms, “The Roman Convivium,” 314f.

¹⁵ See his *Moralia* 706F-10A. See also his *Quaest. Conv.* 708D, quoted in W. Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 55f.

¹⁶ For example, N. R. E. Fisher, “Roman Associations,” 1205. He writes about the dinner clubs at the time of Cicero thus: “the social and political functions of these convivialities and exchanges of hospitality were very great. They developed and cemented reciprocal and equal friendships among the top elite in Rome and other oligarchies. See also O. Murray, “Symposium,” 39-50.

¹⁷ See W. Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 56f. However, there could be other reasons for gaining invitations to a dinner party. See Xen. *Symposium* 1.15.

¹⁸ J. D. M. Derrett, *Law*, 138.

¹⁹ M. D. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 215.

This is very acute in a society where the members knew each other intimately and interacted with one another almost on a daily basis.²⁰

Hence, the first invited guests must be close allies of the householder. It is thus a given that they belong to the highest echelon of the society. This is clearly the idea the Lukan narrative criticises (cf. Lk 14:12-14), a pericope that follows on the heels of the summons to humility (Lk 14:7-11 par Mt 23:12).²¹ But since Mt has a different setting and intention, his accent seems to be on the supposed moral probity of the first invited. Consequently, the inability of the first invited guests to honour the invitation and the invitation of *πονηρούς τε καὶ ἀγαθούς* could have, at its background, the exclusion of the supposedly righteous and the inclusion of the moral outcasts in the economy of salvation. It again justifies Jesus' table fellowship with sinners and tax collectors (Mt 9:10-13).²² This conclusion has already been arrived at in the previous chapter. This shows that the Matthean performance of the parable follows a clear allegorical line which the following segment will now try to highlight.

7.2 THE MATTHEAN REDACTION

Our foregoing analysis has shown that one of the most prominent redactions Mt made to the parable of the great feast is his transformation of the feast into a wedding celebration for a king's son. According to the OT, the wedding feast normally begins with the leading home of the bride from the father's house to the house of the groom in a large retinue (1 Macc 9:37-39). The bride is sent off from the father's house with blessings (Gen 24:60; Ruth 4:11f; Tob 10:11f).²³ But the main celebration of the wedding which is in the house of the groom lasts between seven days (Gen 29:27; Jdg 14:12) to fourteen days (Tob 8:19f; 10:7). As reported in Jn 2:1-11, wine seems to play an invaluable role in Jewish wedding celebrations. On the wedding day proper, the father of the bride blesses the bride over a cup of wine.²⁴

The above details seem not to be of interest to Mt. Rather he notes that the feast is the wedding feast of a king's son (v.2). As already seen, he adds the second sending of the king's slaves to call the invited (v.4), the killing of the king's slaves (v.6)²⁵, the destruction of the murderers and burning of their city (v.7), the calling of the good and the bad (vv.9-10), the inspection of the king during the wedding celebrations (v.11) and the punishment of the man without the wedding garment

²⁰ See J. Ober, *Mass and Elite*, 31.

²¹ On the reverse side, the shame of being left out in the company of those invited is spelt out in this complain of Hetoemocles against Aristaenetus in Lucian's symposium: "How I feel about dinning out, my whole past life can testify; for although everyday I am pestered by many men much richer than you are, nevertheless I am never forward about accepting, as I am familiar with the disturbances and riotous doings at dinner-parties. But in your case and yours only I think I have reason to be angry, because you, to whom I have so long ministered indefatigably, did not think fit to number me among your friends: no, I alone do not count with you, and that though I live next door. I am indignant..." *Symp.* 22.

²² See U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.237.

²³ For the possibility that some form of elaborate celebration may have existed in the bride's parent's house see R. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 237.

²⁴ See M. Ebner/B. Heiningen, *Exegese*, 401; R. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 238.

²⁵ For more discussion see I. K. Madson, "Zur Erklärung," 104.

(v.13). Finally, the language of v.14 seems to be the summation of the whole monologue. In this connection it might be necessary to devote some lines to the episode of the man without the wedding garment.

Although these additions definitely point to Matthew's allegorical mind-set, some exegetes still try to chisel out some historical motifs from them. For instance, One of the many texts which have some resemblance to the treatment of the king's messengers in Mt's parable is this passage from Josephus: "He (king Hezekiah) also sent to the Israelites, and exhorted them to stop their present way of living, and return to their ancient practices, and to worship God, for that he gave them permission to come to Jerusalem, and to celebrate, all in one body, the feast of unleavened bread; and this he said was by way of invitation only, and to be done of their own goodwill, and for their own advantage, and not out of obedience to him, because it would make them happy. But the Israelites, upon the coming of the ambassadors, and upon their laying before them what they had in charge from their own king (*βασιλέως*), were so far from complying therewith, that they laughed the ambassadors to scorn, and mocked them as fools: as also (*ὁμοίως*) they affronted the prophets who gave them the same exhortations, and foretold what they would suffer if they did not return to the worship of God, insomuch, that at length they caught them, and slew them (*αὐτοὺς ἀπέκτειναν*); nor did this degree of transgressing suffice them, but they had more wicked contrivances than what have been described: nor did they stop before God, as a punishment for their impiety, brought them under their enemies..."²⁶

This text which Josephus has taken from the context of the invitation to the Jewish Passover as recorded in 2 Chr 30:1-11 adequately documents the scorn meted out to the messengers of king Hezekiah. But unlike the Matthean allegory, some of those invited to this feast actually attended the Passover (cf. 2 Chr 30:11). Also, as noted in chapter five of this work, the killing of prophets which Josephus mentioned above is not explicitly narrated in the OT. Finally, Josephus sees the act of snubbing of the king's messengers and killing of God's prophets as reasons for handing the Israelites to their enemies. From a historical point of view, this punishment can be nothing than the destruction of Jerusalem which Mt also refers to in his allegory. This and similar considerations led Keener to conclude that "even in less dramatic circumstances, Jewish people could envisage a king avenging his honor by executing those who insulted him by scorning his invitation to eat."²⁷ Hence, the original hearers of the parable could have marveled at the impudence of the invited guests

²⁶ Josephus, Ant. 9:264-66.

²⁷ C. S. Keener, Matthew, 520. Even more dramatic than the Matthean presentation is this parable form Midrash Rabbah on Ex 12:19: "God was like a king who made festivities in honour of his son and slew his enemies. The king then announced: 'He who rejoices with me may come to the festivities of my son, but he who hates me shall be slain with the enemies.' So God made a day of rejoicing for Israel when he redeemed them, and he proclaimed: 'All who love my sons may come and rejoice with them.' The virtuous Egyptians came, celebrated the Passover with Israel and went up with them..." Quoted in J. M. D. Derret, Law, 135. Although there is no hint of the son referring to the Messiah, yet the bringing together of banquet and destruction of the king's enemies go hand in hand. Derrett surmises that despite the fact that Jesus' parable is more subtle than the Midrash, they are based on the same image and the comparison is enlightening.

and not at the reaction of the king.²⁸ This means that the oriental setting of the parable can imply that the events described in 22:7 could, in a way, be seen as realism in the story.²⁹ In this instance, one is again reminded of the remarks of Linemann: “dabei ist zu beachten, dass mancher Anstoß, der den Leser des Textes nachdenklich machen kann, dem Hörer nicht auffällt.”³⁰

From the evidence above it could be argued that our parable could have manifested an imperial feast with all the inherent political and selfish intrigues. This is so since it was customary for kings to organize wedding feasts for their sons to which many important dignitaries would be invited.³¹ These celebrations are not void of violence. Already in the OT, a note of warning has been given to all who banquet with the king.³² As the prophet Isaiah notes, the day of vengeance is also the day of joy (Isa 41:2f).³³ Also the NT (Mt 14:6-12 par.) tells the story of the death of The Baptist during a meal organized by Herod Antipas. This could have some consequence in a story located in a pericope that has the authority of Jesus and The Baptist at the background and has John as the focus in the application of the first parable.

Again, it has been maintained by many³⁴ that clean white clothing signifies in the Near East gladness and rejoicing, an outward expression of inner feeling. In this setting those who could afford white clothes wear them, while those who could not afford them wear something close to white.³⁵ This courtesy is so important that poor people would even borrow clothes for religious festivities or marriage feasts.³⁶ Hence, the situation where a man called in from the streets is expected to have a wedding-garment³⁷ may not be as puzzling as it appears. Despite the use of *καὶ πάντα ἔτοιμα* in v.4e or the use of *ὁ μὲν γάμος ἔτοιμός ἐστιν* in v.8b, it could be that the latter

²⁸ See Gen. Rab. 9:10.

²⁹ The hearers of the parable definitely know the killing of messengers in the biblical and Jewish traditions. Cf. 2 Sm 10:4; 2 Chr 30:1.10f. On the other hand, W. G. Olmstead argues that with the addition of v.7, the boundaries of credibility are exceeded from both the actions of the invited guests and the king. See his *Trilogy*, 120.

³⁰ E. Linnemann, *Gleichnisse*, 36.

³¹ See the description of the wedding train of the marriage feast organized by the sons of Ambri in Jos. Ant. 13:18-21. The lavishness of the marriage feast seems to be dramatized in Mt 22:4.

³² Cf. Prov 23:1. See the connection between feasting and violence in Prov 4:17; see also the satire on lady wisdom and lady foolishness in Prov 9. For a fuller analysis of this satire see M. Ebner/B. Heininger, *Exegese*, 2-17.

³³ See also Est 5-6.

³⁴ E.g., J. M. D. Derrett, *Law*, 142. Bauckham has argued for the social importance of the wearing of wedding garments indicating that wearing festal garments was a way of showing one's participation in the joy of the feast. Hence, to appear in ordinary, soiled working clothes would show contempt for the occasion, a refusal to join in the king's rejoicing. This, for him, is no ordinary act of contempt to a host but a matter of political significance. Even poor people were required to borrow garments for such occasions. See his "Wedding Feast," 485-6.

³⁵ See G. Hamel, *Poverty and Charity*, 81-88.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 71f.84-85.

³⁷ See J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 62; B. B. Scott, *Parables*, 162 queries where a poor guest would acquire a wedding garment.

guests had some time to go home and prepare for the feast.³⁸ This is particularly true in view of the earlier stated fact that wedding festivities last long in the oriental world.

If the above is correct, the picture presented in the parable, then, is the picture of a guest showing contempt to his host by turning up in dirty clothes just like the other guests who disregarded his invitation. The fact that the wedding feast is a royal banquet for the son of a king makes this contempt especially acute and gives the impression of a greater show of contempt by attending the feast while disdaining it at the same time. His appearing in improper clothes shows his unwillingness to share in the king's joys.³⁹ The reaction of the king is thus not surprising as it appears *prima facie*. The fact that his initial question (*ἔταίρε, πῶς εἰσῆλθεις ὧδε μὴ ἔχων ἔνδυμα γάμου*) does not accuse the guest of refusing an offered garment means that the guest should have made the garment available himself (cf. 25:10-12). Then the silence of the guest justifies the supposition that he has no excuse. This warrants his expulsion from the hall⁴⁰ with the concluding remark *πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσὶν κλητοὶ ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί*.

But as our later analysis would clearly show, the addition of the man without the wedding garment is a clear transformation of the parable from polemics against the Jewish leaders to a paraenetic focus on members of the Matthean community. All these point to the fact that Mt has utilized the allegorical elements in the Q parable and transformed them into a full allegory. In so doing he seems to have used the parable of the wedding feast to depict the summons to universal mission and to the eschatological banquet.

We also have this rabbinic parable based upon Eccl. 7:8: this may be compared to a king who summoned his servants to a banquet without appointing a time. The wise ones adorned themselves and sat at the door of the palace, for they said, "is there anything lacking in a royal palace?" the fools went about their work, saying, "can there be a banquet without preparations?" suddenly the king desired the presence of his servants: the wise entered adorned, while the fools entered soiled. The king rejoiced at the wise but was angry with the fools. "Those who adorned themselves for the banquet", ordered he, "let them sit, eat, and drink. But those who did not adorn themselves for the banquet, let them stand and watch."⁴¹

7.2.1 Mt 22:1-14 AS SUMMONS TO UNIVERSAL MISSION

The understanding of the parable as a summons to universal mission has to be seen on two levels. First the parable forces a new definition of those who accept the invitation to the banquet. This group is identified as *πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς*. It is

³⁸ So also R. Bauckham, "Wedding Feast," 486. W. C. Allen, *Matthew*, 235 thinks that the parable to which vv.11-14 originally belonged no doubt spoke of a certain interval between the time of invitation and the feast, during which the guests could make preparations.

³⁹ See *Ibid.*, 488.

⁴⁰ R. Bauckham suggests that if his punishment is simply expulsion from the hall, then this is lenient punishment from the side of the king. *Ibid.*, 486.

⁴¹ Eccl. Rab. On 9:8. The Babylonian Talmud (153 A) ascribes this parable to Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai who lived around AD 70. Cf. J. Drury, *Parables*, 99.

telling that these secondary guests were picked εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς to be partakers of the Wedding Feast. Hence Mt could be using the parable to explain the invitation of the Gentiles in the economy of salvation.⁴² On the second level, the parable explains the importance of striving to lead a life worthy of the call. Hence the invitation of the secondary guests does not preclude the wearing of the required wedding garment. But in the final analysis, the parable charts the course of reversal of common expectations. The following arguments aim at expounding the above points.

7.2.1.1 THE INVITATION REFUSED

Since the host is a king, the rejection of the invitation could be tantamount to a rebellion.⁴³ But in Mt's mind, this twofold rebellion of the guests (22:3.5) has already been seen in the response of the Jewish leaders who twice refused the opportunity to repent (21:32) and the twofold refusal of the tenants to render the fruits of the vineyard (21:34.36). As already seen, the initial reaction to the invitation is that the guests οὐκ ἤθελον ἐλθεῖν. The reader of Mt's gospel will later see that is the response of Jerusalem to the message of Jesus (23:37). Then the second invitation with the direct speech of the host (v.4) brought to the fore why the guests initially did not want to come, namely, they were important enough to consider their personal interests over and above the marriage feast of the king's son. This is shown by the fact that apart from the third group of invited guests who turned violent, the duo of those who could not come, surely a representation of those invited,⁴⁴ were characterized through their actions thus: one went εἰς τὸν ἴδιον ἀγρόν, the other ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμπορίαν αὐτοῦ (v.5). That one was able to have his own ἀγρόν could be an indication of his high social status.⁴⁵ If this makes him a landowner (οἰκοδεσπότης), we thus have a further verbal link to the preceding parable where the vineyard owner is described as οἰκοδεσπότης.⁴⁶ And if the setting of the story is the city as 22:9f suggest, the affluence of this landowner is accentuated.

But from a Matthean point of view, these refusals can be nothing else than an allusion to the rejection of Jesus by the Jews and his acceptance by the Gentiles (cf. 8:11f). This interpretation is helped by the correspondencies between the present parable and the preceding parables of the trilogy on the one hand and the similarities with 10:16-18 and 23:29-24:2 on the other hand. In 10:16-18, the rejection of Jesus' messengers is in view while in 23:29-24:2, Mt depicts the destruction of Jerusalem as a punishment upon 'this generation' for rejecting the

⁴² The Lukan account seems to be forcing a new sense of peer evaluation. This is based on the progressive status-decline of Lk's ἄνθρωπος τις. This status diminution, initiated by the refusal of the invited guests to attend the banquet, had the end-effect of forcing the king to invite all those available. But unlike Mt's indiscriminate invitation of the good and the bad, Lk explicitly invites the poor of the society.

⁴³ See R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 436.

⁴⁴ About the Lukan excuses, Linnemann comments that "man muss ja bedenken, dass der Erzähler freie Wahl unter allen nur möglichen Entschuldigungen hatte". E. Linnemann, "Überlegungen," 250.

⁴⁵ This is also the same idea one gets from the reading of Lk's account since those able to purchase land and draft animals "are prosperous landowners who are able to live in a city." See L. Schottroff/W. Stegemann, *Jesus and the Hope of the Poor*, 101.

⁴⁶ The Lukan performance actually calls him an οἰκοδεσπότης. Cf. Lk 14:21.

message of Jesus. Luz supports this view with the remark that the early readers of Mt's gospel know that Jesus is here referring to their missionaries.⁴⁷ Here, then, Jesus accuses the Jewish leaders of carrying forth the same murderous intentions of their fathers against the prophets sent to them. If the above connection can be made in the Matthean narrative, then the violent action and fate of the *λοιποὶ* that maltreated the king's servants gives the above conclusion more clarity.

7.2.1.2 THE VIOLENT GUESTS AND A VIOLENT KING

The notice that the destruction of Jerusalem is in view is based on the fact that in the Matthean account, not only did the invited guests refuse the king's invitation as in Lk, they also succeeded in killing some of his messengers. The implication is that we do not have only a rebellion but a sort of insurrection and the king responded as oriental kings would respond to insurrections.⁴⁸ He used his kingly might to destroy his enemies. As already shown, the question of violence from a section of the invited guests (22:6) and the retaliation of the king (22:7) have led some commentators to regard the bulk of the parable as a pure allegory. It has also been shown that some scholars have found v.7 incoherent with the story since the last invited would surely be living in the destroyed city in which the marriage feast was celebrated.⁴⁹ There is no doubt that in Mt's mind they definitely point to the sacking of Jerusalem.⁵⁰ Since the verse describes the events of AD 70 *ex eventu*, then it has much relevance in the dating of Mt's Gospel⁵¹ as well as to the interpretation of our parable. This is so since the parable is definitely an allegory couched in history.

But more concretely Mt seems to have described in v.7 the actualization of the judgement of 21:41, namely, *κακούς κακῶς ἀπολέσει αὐτούς*. But in the present parable, the killing of the traitors is followed by the destruction of their city. Later in the narrative, the reader is made aware that this generation will not pass away until all these things take place (23:36). The reader also learns about the destruction of Jerusalem (24:2) and the sobering remark of the Jewish crowds (27:25). Hence, the punishment to 'this generation' is based on their reaction to the messengers of Jesus. If, therefore, 21:43 alludes to the transfer of election to the nations as already argued, then 22:7 accentuates the effect of this loss of election. Similar reasoning led Steck to conclude thus: "die Zerstörung Jerusalems versteht Mt...als definitives Verwerfungsurteil; danach werden... solche, die nicht zu den *κεκλημένοι* gehören,

⁴⁷ U. Luz, Matthäus, III.241.

⁴⁸ See R. Bauckham, "Wedding Feast," 484.

⁴⁹ W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Gospel Parables*, 123. For J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating 19*, "the introduction of a military expedition while the supper is getting cold is particularly inappropriate."

⁵⁰ For further reading see J. Wellhausen, *Evangelienkommentare*, 106; B. W. Bacon, "Two Parables," 345; G. D. Kilpatrick, *Origins*, 30; G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 35; 112f; C. W. F. Smith, "Mixed State," 156; W. Trilling, *Israel*, 85; O. H. Steck, *Israel*, 304; J. P. Meier, *Matthew*, 247; W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, I.132; D. B. Howell, *Story*, 219, 240f.

⁵¹ It is good to consider the warning of Reicke: "an amazing example of uncritical dogmatism in New Testament studies is the belief that the Synoptic Gospels should be dated after the Jewish War of AD 66-70 because they contain prophecies *ex eventu* of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in the year 70." B. Reicke, "Synoptic Prophecies," 121; see also W. C. Allen, *Matthew*, 326; J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating*, 20; E. Ellis, "Dating," 488 n.4; J. R. Donahue, *Gospel in Parable*, 94; C. L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 120; R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 436f.

eingeladen- die Konzeption des deuteronomistischen Geschichtsbildes wird abgelöst durch die der Völkermission.”⁵² This seems to be the message in 22:7ff. For J. A. Overman this important passage is clearly a thinly veiled indication of the first revolt against Rome and the destruction of Jerusalem. For him, Mt connects this destruction to the death of Jesus to the effect that since the Jewish leaders are the same reckless tenants who killed Jesus, they are also the ones who opposed the Roman king and therefore brought about Jerusalem’s destruction.⁵³

The above motif of violence and joy is prophesied by Isa 41:2f and coheres with the Matthean parable, which begins with the words ‘the kingdom of heaven is like a king who made a marriage feast for his son’ (22:2) and ends with the notice ‘there shall be weeping and grinding of teeth...’ (22:13). But the mixture of joy and weeping in the context of the meal proper was only possible in the Matthean parable through the invitation of secondary guests. Hence, having identified that the first set of invited guests *οὐκ ἦσαν ἄξιοι*, the command of the king to his servants shows that the banquet must go on.⁵⁴ This leads to the invitation of the good and the bad.⁵⁵

7.2.1.3 THE LAST INVITED

Mt classifies the secondary guests to be invited to the banquet with the words *ὅσους ἐὰν εὕρητε*. At first sight this implies an indiscriminate ensemble. But the fact that they were not originally on the list of invitees places them at an inferior social wavelength relative to the king and the first set of the invited.⁵⁶ This social inequality would naturally be a hindrance to their original invitation and coming to the feast.⁵⁷ However, this group, picked *ἐπὶ τὰς διεξόδους τῶν ὁδῶν*, turns out to contain *πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς*, which morally places them above the first set of guests whose actions (the failure to honour the invitation and the maltreatment of the servants) lead to the conclusion that none was worthy.⁵⁸

⁵² O. Steck, Israel, 302.

⁵³ J. A. Overman, Church and Community, 300f. See also P. Foster, “A Tale of Two Sons,” 26-37. Robinson seems to be on the verge of supporting this view when he writes: “it has to be admitted that this is the single verse in the New Testament that most looks like a retrospective prophecy of the events of 70, and it has almost universally been so taken.” J. A. T. Robinson, Redating, 20.

⁵⁴ Another parallel to our parable could be the Bar Maayan parable from the Palestinian Talmud quoted in B. B. Scott, Parables, 157. Though Derrett thinks that this parable is misleading, he accepts that it illustrates the fact that ignoring an invitation is a form of contempt and social ostracism. J. D. M. Derrett, Law, 143, n. 1.

⁵⁵ This parable attributed to R. Jose bar Hanina at Midrash on Ps 25:9 is used to show that God appreciates man’s acceptance of his bounty: The banquet was announced early but the guests did not arrive until evening. The king said, ‘Had you not come, I should have had to throw the whole banquet to my dogs’. So the Holy one, blessed be He, says to the righteous, ‘I created my world because of you... (Ps 31:20)... otherwise to whom could I give it? Quoted in J. D. M. Derrett, Law, 141.

⁵⁶ J. Wellhausen calls them the *μικροί* and *νήπιοι*. Evangelienkommentare, 106.

⁵⁷ The comments of Neyrey are of import here: “a person of meagre means must decline an invitation from a wealthy person to dine because this would put the poor man at an enormous financial obligation to reciprocate with a rich, comparable meal for the wealthy person.” See his “Ceremonies in Luke-Acts,” 385.

⁵⁸ Though Mt, unlike Lk, did not expressly identify this latter group as the poor (*πτωχοί*) and disabled (*ἀδύνατοι*), the fact that they were picked from the corners of the streets clearly shows that they belong to the lowest echelon, the plebs *urbana* of the social stratification. This group has been fittingly described by Cicero as the “filth and dregs of the city.” Cicero, Ad Atticum 1.16.11.

A further hint that Mt could be referring to the destitute state of these guests is the language employed in their invitation. It is significant that the servants actually *συνήγαγον πάντας* (v.10) instead of the normal language, *καλέσαι* of vv.3.9. The picture created is that of a gathering of a lump of social have-nots. If this change of language hints at the despicable state of these secondary guests, once more, the theme of reversal of expectations is accentuated in the parable. Not only do the invited guests fail to honour the invitation, those on the lower scale of the society are made to join in the joy of the host, while the host (a king!) is made to join the rank and file of the society as his table companions. As Scott puts it “the parable reverses and subverts the system of honour. The man who gives a banquet loses his honour and joins the shameless poor.”⁵⁹ Therefore, if the king who made a marriage banquet for his son wanted to “construct his social biography in terms of allegiance to a particular class of people, the urban elite,”⁶⁰ or if he wanted to acquire honour with ill-gotten wealth like the often-cited Bar Ma’jan of the Palestinian Talmud,⁶¹ he must find a new class of people with whom to identify, namely, the people picked *ἐπὶ τὰς διεξόδους τῶν ὁδῶν*.⁶²

But though the above motif seems to find some background echoes in the parable, the loudest echo seems yet to be that already heard in the preceding parable. Already in 21:43 the reader has been informed that another *ἔθνος* would be given the kingdom who would bring its expected fruits. If the words *τὰς διεξόδους τῶν ὁδῶν* imply, as Luz suggests, that the slaves are to go out of the city to the end of the kingdom,⁶³ then the mission to the Gentiles is also in view here.⁶⁴ This seems to be a recurring motif in the entire trilogy. Drawing the connection between this parable and the preceding, Hagner comments “this open invitation serves in this parable as a counterpart to the letting out of the vineyard to other tenants in the preceding parable (21:43).”⁶⁵ But the tension in the story is increased by the addition of vv.11-14: the inspection of the host and the punishment meted out to a man picked from the road-side for not wearing the appropriate wedding garment. It is actually here that the narrative springs open and renders every attempt at interpreting it apart from an allegorical angle unfeasible.

7.2.1.4 THE MAN WITHOUT THE WEDDING GARMENT

Since it must be assumed that a banquet for a king’s son cannot be cancelled despite the failure of the invited guests (vv.3.5.6), and the destruction of these unworthy guests and their city (v.7), the narrative depicts the coming of a secondary group (v.10). This coming is however overshadowed by the events surrounding the mass of guests who eventually fill up the banquet hall, the *πονηρούς τε καὶ ἀγαθούς* (vv.11-14). It is remarkable that the king’s first direct interaction with the guests was

⁵⁹ B. B. Scott, *Parables*, 173f.

⁶⁰ W. Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 105.

⁶¹ See J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 178f.

⁶² These people picked from the streets would include those whose work has something to do with cemeteries. or with butchery and “an assortment of refugee aliens, disenfranchised villagers, run-away slaves, prostitutes, roving beggars and various shunned ill to live on the outside perimeter of the city.” W. Braun, *Feasting and Social Rhetoric*, 94.

⁶³ U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.243.

⁶⁴ Cf. S. Schulz, *Q*, 397.

⁶⁵ D. A. Hagner, *Matthew*, II.630.

not to take part in the meal but only *θεάσασθαι τοὺς ἀνακειμένους*. In this mass of guests, a single guest without the appropriate wedding garment is singled out for special consideration, a man singled out not for his deeds but rather for not wearing *ἔνδυμα γάμου*. What could be behind this scene?

Since Mt has transformed the dominical parable into a full-blown allegory, it is clear that the demands of the king are not about a wedding garment per se; rather it indicates that entrance into the feast demands certain conditions which the guest did not meet. These conditions seem to emphasize the ethical interests of Mt. Hence, although the parable charts the course of the universal mission, it presents the hard fact that entrance into the fold of those invited demands certain conditions. The above remark is strengthened by noting that the concluding words of the king (*ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων*), employ conventional imagery for hell⁶⁶ and seem to drive the text out of the narrative existential world into its religious apocalyptic significance. This significance is highlighted by the use of *τοῖς διακόνοις* in v.13 and the language of call and election of v.14. This definitely means that an understanding of our parable must also look to its apparent allegorical significance.

7.3 MATTHEW 22:1-14 AS AN ALLEGORY OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL BANQUET

At the beginning of the previous chapter, I pointed out that the Matthean version of the parable of the great feast approximates a Jewish king *mashal*. This approximation is helped by what could be identified at the end of the story as a *nimshal*,⁶⁷ namely, ‘for (*γάρ*) many are called, but few are chosen’ (v.14). In a narrative that has already linked eschatological fulfillment with a wedding banquet and identified Jesus as *ὁ νυμφίος* (see 9:15), one does not need to look far to see how this parable lends itself to allegorical interpretation. It is possible that Jesus’ listeners already had the picture of the banquet meal as a fixed metaphor.⁶⁸ Also the language of 22:14 finds loud apocalyptic echoes in the book of 4 Ezra.⁶⁹ This could then explain why the allegorical significance of the parable has been taken for granted by many scholars, especially in the early history of the church. In this allegorical interpretation, attention has been focused chiefly on the significance of the wedding garment.⁷⁰ A host of modern interpreters read the parable also through this

⁶⁶ Cf. Mt 8:12; 13:42.50. In 8:11f, Jesus makes it clear that many will come from east and west and join Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Also the parable of the fish and dragnets of 13:47-50 makes use of being thrown into the fire as well as weeping and gnashing of teeth as punishment for the evil doers. See also 24:51; 25:30.

⁶⁷ See D. Stern, “Rhetoric,” 265.

⁶⁸ See U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.236f.

⁶⁹ Cf. 2 Esd 8:1; 8:55; 9:15 and Bar 44:15.

⁷⁰ The wedding garment has been identified as ‘the holy spirit’ by Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 4.36.6 (ANF 1:517); as ‘good works’ by Trilling, “Überlieferung,” 259f; as ‘life and practice’ by Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of Saint Matthew* 69.2 (NPNF¹ 10:423); as ‘repentance’ by W. Michaelis, *Gleichnisse*, 162; as ‘righteousness’ by M. D. Goulder, *Midrash*, 108; as ‘charity’ by Augustine, *Sermon*, 40.4-6; *Sermon* 45.4-7 (NPNF¹ 6:393-95; 407f); and as ‘justification’ by J. Schniewind, *Matthäus*, 221f.

allegorical prism. Olmstead thinks that what is at stake in our parable is the messianic banquet.⁷¹ This idea is concurrent with the OT concept of God as banquet host.

7.3.1 THE OT AND THE MARRIAGE SYMBOLIC

The marriage symbolic in the parable takes note of the metaphors behind the concepts of son and father. But the search for a metaphorical picture in the identification of the son and the father in the context of a wedding feast as well as of the allegorical import of the wedding garment leads one into the *Bildfeld* of marriage and wedding as pictures of God and his relationship with his people.⁷² Although the word ‘bridegroom’ or ‘bride’ did not occur in our parable, there is no doubt that the king’s son for whom a *γάμος* is prepared can adequately be seen as the *νυμφίος*. This observation has more appeal by the recognition that even the wedding hall is eventually referred to as a *νυμφών*. It appears that the picture of God looms large in the image of the king who prepares a banquet for his son. The OT gives enough examples for the above thesis.

The following arguments are based on the view that the numerous mentioning of *γάμος* (2a.3b.4f.8b.10c) as well as *ἔνδυμα γάμου* (11b.12c) in this parable show how close the appreciation of this metaphor “wedding” in Judaism of Jesus’ time is very close to the understanding of the parable. Since the time of Hosea, the figure of “wedding” has been used to apply to the relationship between God and his people, a relationship which the people all too often breach,⁷³ and which God renews.⁷⁴ The prophet Jeremiah sees the wandering in the desert as a sign of faithful marriage between God and his people.⁷⁵ When the marriage feast is identified as God’s relationship with his people, it naturally follows that the bridegroom is God. But since the interest of our parable is on the marriage feast organized for the son of the king, the concept of Jesus as bridegroom seems to be more pronounced in the text than the concept of God as bridegroom.⁷⁶ This is already evident in the Jesus’ tradition (cf. Mk 2:18-22/Mt 9:14-17). The main focus could also be on the wedding feast as a joyful celebration. This supposition is strengthened by the repetition of the word *γάμος* (8times). Moreover, Mt’s description of the meal as *ἄριστόν* (22:4) conjures up eschatological connections. Its most important application as a joyful meal is to be seen in the Isaian oracle of 25:6-8 which will be surveyed later.

In the prophetic saying, which could have been influenced by the fertility mystic cults,⁷⁷ the relationship between God and Israel is seen as a marriage vow. For example, in Isa 54:5, the prophet shows the fluidity between the terms ‘husband’, ‘redeemer’ and ‘God’. Jeremiah calls the time of passage through the desert the

⁷¹ W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 123.

⁷² See H-J. Klauck, *Allegorie*, 162ff.

⁷³ Cf. also Isa 50:1; 54:4; Ezk 16:17ff

⁷⁴ Cf. Isa 54:4ff; 62:4f.

⁷⁵ Jer 2:2. R. Zimmermann, *Geschlechtermetaphorik*, 205-207, 212f, shows the presence of the marriage metaphor in some Midraschic and Targumic texts.

⁷⁶ But the concept of Jesus as the Bridegroom can also lie at the background as a Christological title. This is very clear from the use of the word “*νυμφίος*” by the mss a B* L. The word has become a Christological term in the NT (Mt 25:1.5.6.10; Jn 3: 29).

⁷⁷ So H-J. Klauck, *Allegorie*, 162.

bridal days for the youthful Israel (2:2). This bridal time is made more picturesque by the prophet Hosea thus: But look, I am going to seduce her and lead her into the desert and speak to her heart. There I shall give her back her vineyards, and make the Vale of Achor a gateway of hope. There she will respond as when she was young, as on the day when she came up from Egypt. When that day comes- declares Yahweh- you will call me, 'My husband', no more will you call me, 'My Baal' (2:16-18).⁷⁸ In the above referenced images, the turning away of the Israelites from their husband is prostitution and adultery,⁷⁹ what the prophet Hosea had to typify in the parabolic marriage to a whore (Hos ch.3). But since Mt has depicted God as king in the parable, he seems to imply that Jesus is the bridegroom of the story. Hence the whole scenery is not exactly fitting to the OT metaphor.

This marriage symbolic assumes an eschatological colour in Third-Isaiah in which there is a combination of the symbols of marriage and building to designate God's relationship with his people: "Like a young man marrying a virgin, your rebuilders will wed you, and as the bridegroom rejoices in his bride, so will your God rejoice in you." (Isa 62:5). One finds in this marriage symbolic the image of rejoicing and joy which the prophet Jeremiah also extols (33:11). However, on the Day of Judgement, God will silence the rejoicing of bride and bridegroom alike (Jer 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; Bar 2:23). If our parable has reference to the divine judgement and is seen in the same line as the eschatological banquet, then the passage of Isa 25:6-12, though not a traditional wedding passage, is also of importance: "On this mountain, for all peoples, Yahweh Sabaoth is preparing a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines, of succulent food, of well-strained wines. On this mountain, he has destroyed the veil which used to veil all peoples, the pall enveloping all nations; he has destroyed death for ever. Lord Yahweh has wiped away the tears from every cheek; he has taken his people's shame away everywhere on earth, for Yahweh has spoken. And on that day, it will be said, 'Look, this is our God, in him we put our hope that he should save us, this is Yahweh, we put our hope in him. Let us exult and rejoice since he has saved us.' For Yahweh's hand will rest on this mountain, and Moab will be trodden under his feet as straw is trodden into the dung-heap. He may stretch his hands wide on the mountain like a swimmer stretching out his hands to swim. But he will humble his pride despite what his hands may attempt. And the impregnable fortress of your walls, he has overthrown, laid low, flung to the ground, in the dust."

If the above passage refers to eschatological banquet and judgement, which seems to be the case, and if it has some influence on our parable, then, just like the king of our parable was forced to do, Yahweh moves beyond the circle of his intimates in the above Isaiah text and issues a universal feast.⁸⁰ However, Mt has turned this divine banquet into a kingly wedding feast. The punishment in the Matthean parable is carried out by the king's servants. These servants of Mt.22:13a could be metaphoric representation of the angels, since in Mt it is the duty of the angels to bind the wicked to eternal punishment (cf. Mt 13:41-42.49-50). As already mentioned, this

⁷⁸ See also Ezk 16:8.60; Isa 54:6.

⁷⁹ See Hos 2:4.

⁸⁰ See J. D. W. Watts, Isaiah 1-33, 390.

metaphoric interpretation is helped by noticing the Logion of Mt 9:15 (par.) where Jesus uses the image of the bridegroom to refer to himself and to the feasting that would abound until the day *ὅταν ἀπαρθῇ ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὁ νυμφίος*. However, despite the obvious links between the Matthean parable and the above text, seen through the use of the banquet motif, the garment (veil) motif,⁸¹ and the threat of punishment, the events surrounding the invitations to the feast and the note of punishment in vv13-14 indicate that one must look elsewhere to find a clear-cut Scriptural parallel to our parable. Perhaps the LXX version of Zeph 1:7-12.18 provides this parallel.⁸²

7.3.2 Mt 22:4-8.11-14 AND Zeph 1:7-12.18

Zeph 1:7-12 ⁷Silence (*εὐλαβεῖσθε*, MT: *ἤσυχ*) before the Lord God, for the day of the Lord is near! Because the Lord has prepared (*ἠτοίμακε κύριος*) his sacrifice (*τὴν θυσίαν αὐτοῦ*), he has consecrated his guests (*τοὺς κλητοὺς αὐτοῦ*). ⁸On the day of the Lord's sacrifice (*θυσίας κυρίου*), I shall punish the courtiers, the royal princes and all who dress in outlandish clothes (*ἐνδεδυμένους ἐνδύματα ἀλλότρια*). ⁹On that day I shall punish all who go up the step and fill the Temple of their lords, with violence and deceit. ¹⁰On that day, says the Lord, uproar will be heard from the gate of the killers (*ἀπὸ πύλης ἀποκτενούντων*), wailing from the new quarter and a great crash from the hills. ¹¹Wail, you who live in the hollow...! ¹²When that time comes (*καὶ ἔσται ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ*) I shall search Jerusalem by lamplight and punish the men stagnating over the remains of their wine... ¹⁸Nor will their silver or gold be able to save them. On the day of the Lord's anger (*ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ὀργῆς κυρίου*), by the fire of his jealousy, the whole earth will be consumed...

Mt 22:4-8.11-14 ⁴Again he sent forth other servants saying, "speak to the invited (*τοῖς κεκλημένοις*): behold I have prepared (*ἠτοίμακα*) my dinner, my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered (*τεθυμένα*), and all is ready. Come to the wedding." ⁵But they made light of it and went away: one to his farm, another to his business. ⁶And the remnant took his servants, and mishandled them and killed them (*ἀπέκτεινα*). ⁷But the king was very angry (*ὠργίσθη*). And sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers (*ἀπόλεσεν τοὺς φονεῖς ἐκείνους*) and burnt up (*ἐνέπρησεν*) their city. ⁸Then he says to his servants, "The wedding is ready; but the invited (*κεκλημένοι*) were not worthy... ¹¹And when the king came in to see the guests he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment (*οὐκ ἐνδεδυμένον ἐνδυμα γάμου*). ¹²And he said to him friend, how did you come in here not having a wedding garment? And he was silenced (*ἐφίμώθη*). ¹³Then says the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness... ¹⁴For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

⁸¹ It was customary for kings to show their powers at banquets through the performance of some heroic acts. An example is Marduk who is said to have made a garment appear and disappear. See Enuma Elish IV, 28; ANET, 66.

⁸² The majority of scholars believe that Matthew relied more on the LXX than on the Hebrew text of the OT. Cf. W. G. Kümmel, Introduction (rev. ed.), 11f; R. E. Brown, Introduction, 211; W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, Matthew, I.32f.

Before comparing the two passages some clarifications of Zephaniah's text seem necessary.⁸³ After the imperative command to silence (*ἐύλαβεῖσθε*) before God, the reader is informed that God has prepared his sacrifice and invited his guest (cf. Mt 22:3.4.9) whom he has sanctified (v.7).⁸⁴ But unlike Mt's wedding feast, neither the nature of this Zephaniah feast nor of the invitation and sanctification is specified. Further, there is the note of punishment, (v.8) the nature of which (unlike Mt 22:13) again is not specified. But the reader is informed that this punishment is meant for the royal class (cf. Mt 21:43). It seems that the invited guests are foreigners who will carry out God's punishment on the ruling class in Judea.⁸⁵ Finally the place of this punishment is Jerusalem (v.10) which is the seat of controversy between Jesus and the Jewish leaders that gave rise to our trilogy. The unspecified nature of the feast and the accompanying purification and punishment naturally leave room for various applications of these same motifs and for a midrashic application of the text. If the text of Zephaniah forms the basis of our parable,⁸⁶ then Mt's performance of the parable of the Wedding Feast seems to fulfill a midrashic agenda. However, Mt's interests, highlighted by his redaction, bring his version of the parable closer to Zephaniah's oracle. The side by side placement of the two texts brings the verbal and thematic correspondences between the Matthean Wedding Feast parable and Zephaniah's *Drohorte* against Jerusalem to the fore. Yet there are differences.

7.3.2.1 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN Mt AND Zeph

While the two texts have much in common, Mt has left out some details. While on the one hand the prophet characterises those to be destroyed as those who go up the step and fill the Temple of their lords with violence and deceit (v.9), Mt makes no mention of the Temple. This is a significant omission in a passage that surely confronts the Temple authorities and occurs in the context of Jesus' cleansing of and healing actions in the Temple (Mt 21:12-14). This omission is nonetheless understandable in view of the conclusion arrived with regard to the parable of the Wicked Tenants, namely, that the parable attacks the Temple and its cult. Therefore there seems to be no need to defend its sanctity.⁸⁷ We thus find another binding theme in the trilogy.

⁸³ The following section is indebted to the study of D. C. Olson, "Matthew 22:1-14 as Midrash" 435-53. See also J. D. M. Derrett, *Law*, 126-55.

⁸⁴ For the importance of this sanctification see I Sm 16:5

⁸⁵ Cf. A. Deissler, *Zwölf Propheten* III.239; K. Seybold, *Zephanja*, 96f; W. Rudolph, *Zephanja*, 266.

⁸⁶ The hypothesis that Jesus drew this parable from Zephaniah has been rejected by R. H. Gundry, *Matthew* 433; U. Luz, *Matthäus* III.234, n.23. However, my contention is that there are some links between Mt's parable and Zephaniah's oracle. Mt has utilized this oracle as a warning to his own community.

⁸⁷ This is also the conclusion arrived at by Olson who contends that for Jesus the Temple has only a limited value. See "Matthew 22:1-14 As Midrash," 446. He quotes with approval the comments of W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison that "Jesus himself and his Church absorb the functions that were peculiar to the temple," *Matthew*, III.143.

Secondly, if Mt offers the parable as an interpretation of Zephaniah's oracle, the issue of religious harlotry or syncretism⁸⁸ which seems to form the background of Zephaniah's text surprisingly disappears in our parable unless one is to see in the episode of the man without the wedding garment this same concern. But it is also fair to assume that the intention of Mt has never been on official religion but on the true practice which religion demands (cf. Mt 7:15-23).

Finally, the destruction which Zephaniah envisages is a large scale destruction that consumes the whole earth (cf.v18). On the other hand, Mt's notion of punishment is destruction reserved only for the murderers (τούς φονεῖς) and being thrown outside meant only for the man without the ἔνδυμα γάμου. The implication is that for Mt, nomatter how small the ἐκλεκτοί may be, just like the previous two parables have highlighted, there is a remnant that would be saved.

But Olson's conclusion that Zephaniah's critique of the ungodly mind-set of those who build their houses and plant their vineyards (1:12-13), plus the remark that wealth cannot rescue (v.18) and that "all those who were exalted by silver have been completely destroyed" (v.11), are softened by Mt needs some qualification. Though Mt's remarks that one of the invitees went to his field and another to his business (v.6), cannot be compared with Lk's 'three economic excuses' (14:18-20) and Thomas' concluding remarks "traders and merchants will never enter the kingdom of God" which seem to echo and critique this worldly mind-set, yet the Matthean primary guests cannot be excused of this ungodly economic mind-set. As already noted, in their pursuit of wealth, all the initially invited guests in Mt neglected the summons to the feast.

But a look at the tremendous correspondences between the two texts shows that they may have had a literary connexion. This connexion is supported by the use of common themes and vocabulary. But I will concentrate on the thematic parallels.⁸⁹

7.3.2.2 THEMATIC PARALLELS

A. φονεῖς – ἀποκτενούντοι

Perhaps one would easily notice some thematic parallels in these two texts especially in Mt 22:7 and Zeph 1:10. In these verses, the motif of destroying/destroyers comes easily to the fore. While Mt employs the expression ἀπώλεσεν τούς φονεῖς ἐκείνους (22:7) to refer to the fate of the murderers of v.6, Zeph 1:10 uses ἀποκτενούντοι (killers).⁹⁰ Since the Hebrew גרר is sometimes translated by ἀποκτείνω and sometimes by φονεύω in the LXX⁹¹, it can be argued that Mt has conflated his knowledge of the LXX with that of the MT of Zeph 1:10 in the notion

⁸⁸ A. Deissler sees dressing in outlandish clothing as sign of religious syncretism. See Zwölf Propheten III.240.

⁸⁹ Some of these vocabularic connexions found at the background of the two texts include στρατιᾶ-στρατεύματα (Zeph 1:5; Mt 22:7); multiple use of βασιλεῦς (Zeph 1:5.8; Mt 22:2.7.11.13); τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τῶν οὐρανῶν (Zeph 1:5; Mt 22:2); πόλεις -πόλιν (Zeph 1:6; Mt 22:7); σκότους -σκότος (Zeph 1:15; Mt 22:13).

⁹⁰ The translation of ἀποκτενούντοι is taken from Rahlfs MS 62, an eleventh century minuscule. Olson has argued that this translation seems correct while the majority LXX text looks like an inner-Greek corruption. See D. C. Olson, "Matthew 22:1-14 As Midrash," 440, n. 13.

⁹¹ See Ibid., 441.

of destruction or punishment. And since it has been identified above that the locus of Zephaniah's punishment prediction is Jerusalem, the parallels between the two texts give much credence to the thesis that Mt 22:7 is a veiled allusion to the events of AD 70.

B. *φιμώω* - *εὐλαμβάνω*

Thematically parallel also seem to be the silence or silencing of the man without the wedding garment, *ἐφιμώθη* (Mt 22:12) at the presence of the *βασιλεὺς* and the imperative at the beginning of Zephaniah's apocalypse, *εὐλαμβάνω ἀπὸ προσώπου κυρίου* (Zeph 1:7). Though the word used by the LXX *εὐλαμβάνω* means 'be afraid,' it could be argued that Mt follows the word *ἄφω* 'be silent' of the MT in his description of the response of the ill-clad man of the wedding banquet (*ὁ δὲ ἐφιμώθη*). It is not illogical to conclude that it was out of fear that the parabolic man without the wedding garment could not answer since he was not simply silent but silenced (*ἐφιμώθη*).⁹² Hence, the imperative at Zeph 1:7 has been realized in Mt 22:12. The above arguments led Olson to conclude that "if Matt 22:1-14 is a king –mashal and therefore intended to provide a midrash on one or more passages of Scripture, then at least one of those passages is Zephaniah 1."⁹³ On the other hand, one finds stronger parallels between Mt 22:13 and the first book of Enoch 10:4.

7.3.3 Mt 22:13a AND 1 Enoch 10:4A

It must also be pointed out that the Matthean allegory does not only mirror many motifs found in Zephaniah's oracle, but also reflects many tendencies present in 1 Enoch 10:4a. These tendencies are especially acute at Mt 22:13a. As already indicated, this Matthean verse describes in allegorical form, the command of the king to his servants to bind hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, a guest found to be without the proper wedding garment. The main concern of 1 Enoch is God's handling of the wickedness of humanity before the outbreak of the flood in Noah's days (cf. Gen 6:1-4). In 1 Enoch 10:4a, belonging to the book of the watchers, it is related that after the fall of the watchers, God sends the archangel Raphael to bind Asael, the leader of the rebellious angels hand and foot and cast him into the darkness. In obedience to this instruction, Raphael makes a hole in the desert, throws Asael into the hole, covering it with sharp rocks. Asael is meant to remain in this hole until the judgment when he will be thrown into the eternal fire. The correspondences within these judgment texts, already pointed out by earlier commentators,⁹⁴ are evident when they are placed side by side. I take the shorter

⁹² See Deut 25:4 where *φιμώω* translates *סח*.

⁹³ D. C. Olson, "Matthew 22:1-14 as Midrash," 442.

⁹⁴ As early as 1915 McNeile wrote that Mt 22:13a "may be influenced by 1 Enoch 10.4." See his Matthew, 317. See also R. H. Gundry, Matthew, 440; R. Rubinkiewicz, Die Eschatologie von Henoch 9-11, 97-113. The many agreements between the texts led Rubinkiewicz to conclude that: „aus dieser Analyse kann man den begründeten Schluss ziehen, dass wir es im Falle von Mt 22,13a mit einem Zitat von Hen 10,4 zu tun haben.“ 100.

form of the oracle contained in Codex Panopolitanus (c) usually ascribed to the sixth century.⁹⁵

Mt. 22:13a reads:

τότε ὁ βασιλεὺς
εἶπεν τοῖς διακόνοις·
δήσαντες αὐτοῦ
πόδας καὶ χεῖρας
ἐβάλλετε αὐτὸν
εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἑξώτερον·

c version of 1 Enoch 10:4a reads

Καὶ
τῷ Ῥαφαήλ εἶπεν
δήσον τὸν Ἄζαήλ
ποσὶν καὶ χερσίν, καὶ
βάλε αὐτὸν
εἰς τὸ σκότος.

The depiction above shows that the verbal parallels in the two texts reveal significant agreements. The two passages utilise the imperative verb *δέω* to announce the punishment to be meted out to the offender. In Mt's case, the offender is the singular guest without the wedding garment, in Enoch's case, the singular apostate angel Asael. In both traditions, the offender is to be bound *πόδας καὶ χεῖρας* (Mt) or *ποσὶν καὶ χερσίν* (Enoch). Mt's use of the aorist participle *δήσαντες* instead of the aorist imperative *δήσον* is in line with the evangelist's editorial policy where he often uses the aorist participle for the subordinate action and the aorist tense for the main verb to show that two actions relate to each other.⁹⁶ This punishment is then consummated by the use of *βάλλω* (Enoch) and *ἐβάλλω* (Mt) as the follow-up to the action of binding. D. C. Sim has provided the insight that Mt's use of *ἐβάλλω* in this parable is perfectly understandable since it is more emphatic than *βάλλω*. Though Mt is fond of both *βάλλω*⁹⁷ (cf. 3:10; 5:29-30; 7:19; 13:42.50; 18:8-9) and *ἐβάλλω*,⁹⁸ (cf. 8:12; 25:30), the words are not used synonymously by Mt. While *βάλλω* describes the casting of the wicked into the eternal fire, *ἐβάλλω* describes their exclusion.⁹⁹ The most significant connexion, however, is the word for word presentation of *αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ σκότος* as the topos of the punishment, though Mt adds *τὸ ἑξώτερον* which can be seen as a sort of intensification.

There are also structural parallels. The first clauses of the texts have *τότε ὁ βασιλεὺς εἶπεν* (Mt) and *καὶ τῷ Ῥαφαήλ εἶπεν* (Enoch). It is evident that only *εἶπεν* is parallel in the two traditions. While Mt uses the correlative adverb of time *τότε* which is a favourite of his,¹⁰⁰ 1 Enoch employs *καί* to connect the command with the preceding verse. If one accepts that the Matthean king who prepared a banquet for his son's wedding is an allegorical representation of God, then it is clear that God is the subject of *εἶπεν* in both streams of tradition. Already in 1 Enoch 9:4 God has already been described as a king and it is clear that he is the giver of the command to Raphael in 10:1. Also striking is the dative case

⁹⁵ For a detailed discussion on the reliability of the Panopolitanus Codex, see M. Knibb, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch* (vol.2), 19f.

⁹⁶ Cf. G. Barth, "Matthew's Understanding," 59f, n.9. Since expulsion from the eschatological kingdom is one of Mt's favourite themes, it could be that he aimed to focus attention on this theme. So also D. C. Sim, "Matthew 22.13a," 12.

⁹⁷ Mt 34x; Mk 18x; Lk 18x.

⁹⁸ Mt 28x; Mk 16x; Lk 20x

⁹⁹ D.C. Sim, "Matthew 22.13a," 12.

¹⁰⁰ Mt 90x; Mk 6x; Lk 14x.

of the object of *εἶπεν* in both versions.¹⁰¹ While Mt has *τοῖς διακόνους* Enoch has *τῷ Ραφαήλ*. Though Enoch employs a singular object, Mt uses the plural object in agreement with the supposition that the Matthean parable is a king *mashal* where it is more appropriate to designate the king as issuing this command to a plurality of servants. I have earlier argued that the Matthean transition from the use of *τοῖς δούλοις* in v.8 to *τοῖς διακόνους* in v.13 could encourage an eschatological reading of this verse. If this is the case, the servants of v.13 could be a reference to the angels whose duty it is to cast and bind into outer darkness. This coheres with the text of Enoch since in the Enochic corpus, the angelic stature of Raphael is very clear. These and similar considerations led Sim to conclude that “the agreements between these texts in content, structure and wording can hardly be attributed to coincidence. Nor can they be attributed to a common (apocalyptic) motif, since the idea of God commanding an angel (or angels) to bind someone by the hands and feet and cast that individual into the darkness is found in no other extant work of that time.”¹⁰²

Another interesting piece of evidence uniting the man without the wedding garment and the angel Asael is the garment motif and the fact that the identity of Asael has enjoyed tremendous development in Jewish literature up to the time of Mt’s composition. According to the book of the Watchers already discussed above, Asael is the angel who was bound hand and foot and thrown into the darkness. This same angel Asael (Azazel) is referenced in the Apocalypse of Abraham where he is stripped of his heavenly garment. In chapter 13 of this book, Asael tries to hinder Abraham from completing a sacrifice to God. Asael was confronted by the angel Laoel who commands Asael to depart with these words: For behold, the garment which in heaven was formerly yours has been set aside for him (Abraham) and the corruption which was on him has gone over to you (v.14). It could then be right to conclude that Mt 22:13 has utilised these two streams of Asael tradition, combining the motif of his fall and that of his being deprived of his heavenly garment.¹⁰³ This conclusion does not do injustice to the fact that the Matthean parable is anterior to the Apocalypse of Abraham. It shows more that the two authors could have had access to the same tradition.¹⁰⁴

If as argued above, our parable is influenced by the eschatological views of Enoch¹⁰⁵ and Zephaniah and if in the Enochic tradition, the garment refers to a

¹⁰¹ However, Mt and Enoch differ on the specification of the subject of the verb *εἶπεν*. For Mt the subject is mentioned as *ὁ βασιλεὺς* while Enoch leaves it unspecified. The insertion of the subject of the verb could be a Matthean tendency. See E. P. Sanders, *Tendencies*, 152-54.

¹⁰² D. C. Sim, “Matthew 22.13a,” 6.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 14f.

¹⁰⁴ This common tradition is again aptly illustrated by the Parables of Enoch. Cf. G. Bampfyld, “The Similitudes of Enoch,” 9-31 has identified the historical background of the parables of Enoch as reflecting the threat of a Parthian inversion of Judea in the year 51-50 B.C. If he is correct, does this also mean that our parable refers to the Roman inversion of 68-70 A.D? According to Josephus, *Jewish War*, 2:123, the Qumran community always wore white. This could be a physical demonstration of their perceived purity. It also seems that the epistle of Jude 14-15 has adapted some verses of 1 Enoch. See also 2 Cor 5:1-4; 1 Pet. 3:19 and the Christian addition to 4 Ezra, the so-called 5 Ezra (4 Ezra 1-2).

¹⁰⁵ W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, II.52 n. 155 allow the possibility that Mt knew some version of 1 Enoch. For a more extensive discussion, see D. R. Catchpole, “The Poor on Earth,” 378-83.

heavenly reward, then Mt has changed this reward into a prerequisite for participation in the banquet. It would, then, not be difficult to identify the primary and secondary guests as well as the man without the wedding garment. This identification is also aided by regarding the trilogy of Mt 21:28-22:14 as a whole. In this trilogy, Mt has presented a picture of dissolution of ethnic divides, stressing that only those who bring forth the fruit of righteousness would be chosen to enter the kingdom. This “those” incorporates both the Jews and the Gentiles, a motif very current in the Enochic corpus.¹⁰⁶ Mt’s identification of this group as *οἱ ἐκλεκτοί* is also a very prominent designation for the righteous in 1 Enoch.¹⁰⁷ Since this term is not Mt’s designation of the people of God, it could be that he is here echoing apocalyptic language.¹⁰⁸ Therefore those with the proper wedding garment, that is, *οἱ ἐκλεκτοί* refer to all those who bring forth the fruits of righteousness. This conclusion is demanded by the logic of the trilogy.¹⁰⁹

Following Mt’s missionary agenda of Jews first (Mt 10:5) and Gentiles later (Mt 28:19), it may be securely argued that the *κεκλημένοι* of 22:3.4.8 are Jews who set their own earthly interests above the Messianic wedding (cf. 22:6 and 21:35). Those originally known as the *ἐκλεκτοί* now lose their privileged position because of their unresponsiveness to Jesus and the message of joy he preaches.¹¹⁰ The *πολλοὶ κλητοί* of the concluding verse should be taken as embracing those first invited and those last invited, that is, both Jews and Gentiles as Mt understands it. But since the chosen are only from the group of the second invitees, the reversal of fortunes which has been at the core of the trilogy is here given a further accent: the privileged class has been replaced. However, this replacement is based on producing the required response to the invitation.¹¹¹

But if one accepts the parable as an allegory of the eschatological banquet then it can be argued that the king who prepares a wedding feast for his son as Mt understands it is God since Mt has already interpreted the vineyard of the *οἰκοδεσπότης* as *ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ* (21:43). The fact that God is often king in Mt (cf. 5:35) and the fact that in 9:15 and 25:1 Jesus is allegorically seen as the bridegroom

¹⁰⁶ Cf. 1 Enoch 10:21; 50:2; 90:30.33; 91:14

¹⁰⁷ Cf. 1 Enoch 1:1.3.8; 5:7-8; 25:5; 38:2-4; 39:6-7; 40:5; 41:2-5; 48:1.9; 50:1; 51:5; 56:6.8; 58:1-3; 60:6.8; 61:4.12-13; 62:4-8.11-15; 70:3.

¹⁰⁸ So also D. C. Olson, “Matthew 22:1-14 as Midrash,” 453. For him, Mt is echoing the language of Enoch.

¹⁰⁹ Despite the warning contained in 1 Tim 4:1 that some will fall away from the faith in latter times, giving heed to deceitful spirits and the doctrines of demons, it is not necessary to posit that Matthew equates false disciples in the church with Azazel, a leader of the fallen angels in 1 Enoch. This is the contention of Olson. “Matthew 22:1-14 as Midrash,” 448.

¹¹⁰ A consideration of Mt 9:15; 22:1-14; 25:1-13, justifies the conclusion reached by U. Luz that “für die mt Leser/innen ist der Bräutigam selbstverständlich Christus.” Matthäus, II.47.

¹¹¹ Hence an undertone to the parable could also be the theme of watchfulness. Though this theme is not presently explicit, one deciphers it in Mt’s scheme. For instance watchfulness means always doing the words of Jesus (Mt 24:42-51). In the same way, it is not enough to come to the feast but also to wear the required wedding garment. It is not enough to come to the house of the bridegroom, but one must bring along the required oil (25:1-12). It is not enough to guard the talents, but one has to do business with it (25:14-30). When one fails to do this, the only option is the judgment that implies crying and grinding of teeth. Cf. M. Ebner/S. Schreiber (Hrsg.), *Einleitung*, 137.

could imply that the son of the King in our parable is Jesus.¹¹² A further implication is that the first set of slaves (Mt 22:3) would be the early AT prophets, the second set of slaves (Mt 22:4) would be the latter AT prophets, the last slaves (Mt 22:8) would be the NT missionaries, while the servants (Mt 22:13) are the angels.¹¹³ This explains clearly why vv.11-14 must be accepted as referring to the last judgment. This is an acceptance that gives the allegorical conclusions of the preceding parable more security. The inference, therefore, is that although the invitation to the messianic banquet is opened up to all, “both bad and good,” yet the final verses (vv.11–14) show that this does not mean that the issue of preparedness is unimportant. This is also the conclusions of Bornkamm who argues that “the characteristically Matthean thought that the coming judgment applies even to the disciples... is also expressed in the parables of the vineyard and the marriage feast... The same, with express reference to the congregation, is also stated by the closing scene of the parable of the marriage feast, which Matthew adds (22.11-13), but so does the expression *πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς* already, which occurs in 22.10, and which, like the closing parables of ch. 13, points towards the final separation, and finally so does the concluding sentence in 22.14, which is so characteristic of Matthew: ‘Many are called but few are chosen.’”¹¹⁴ The ethical interests of the gospel are thus given a typical accentuation.

This allegorical interpretation was already accepted by Davies and Allison thus: “obviously 22.1-10 is an allegory very much influenced by 21.33ff. The king is God. His son is Jesus (cf. 21.37-8). The royal wedding feast is the eschatological banquet. The dual sending of the servants is, as in the preceding parable, the sending of God’s messengers. The murder of the servants represents the murder of the prophets and Jesus (cf. 21.35-9). And the third sending of the servants is the mission of the church, in which good and evil stand side by side until the end. All this has been evident throughout the history of exegesis. Here the traditional allegorical interpretation...has been correct.”¹¹⁵ Olmstead who quotes this passage with approval adds that “the parable of the Wedding Feast is polemical and salvation-historical, but it is also paraenetic and, in support of this, eschatological.”¹¹⁶

But in order to hear the message behind the story, I will show how the parable combines this allegorical motif with the call to a new definition of those who belong to the community of God. This new definition emphasizes the incorporation of the nations and the need to uphold the law in this new community.

¹¹² See W. Trilling, “Überlieferungsgeschichte,” 261; M. Konrad, *Israel*, 210.

¹¹³ Trilling has noted the difficulty in classifying the figures in the *Bildhälfte* of the parable. “Überlieferungsgeschichte,” 264. For M. Konrad, the slaves of the king refer to the Christian missionaries. He then sees the trilogy as following a chronology. While the first parable refers to the rejection of John, the second refers to the rejection of Jesus and the third the rejection of Jesus’ messengers. See his *Israel*, 210f.

¹¹⁴ G. Bornkamm, “End Expectation and the Church in Matthew,” 20f.

¹¹⁵ W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, III.197.

¹¹⁶ W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 128.

7.4 MATTHEW'S UNIVERSALISM AND THE LAW

The upshot of the fore-going discussion is that two principal points are manifested in the present parable, namely, the fact of the gentile mission and the certainty of judgment. In the two-fold rejection of the summons to the banquet (22:3-6) and the eventual sending out of a new invitation to the good and the bad (22:9-10), Mt justifies this mission to the gentiles. It could thus be said that the notion contained in 21:43 (*ἀρθθήσεται ἀφ' ὑμῶν ... δοθήσεται ἔθνη*) has been realized here. This does not prejudice the fact that only Mt's Jesus openly forbids the mission outside of Israel (cf. Mt 10:5f; 15:24). This is unlike in Mk where Jesus had an extensive contact with gentiles (cf. Mk 5:1-20; 7:24-30.31-37), and teaches his disciples to hearken to their needs, (Mk 8:1-3). On his part Mt reworks these pericopes and shows the inimical reaction of the people of the Decapolis to Jesus (Mt 8:34). On the other hand, the risen and glorified Mt's Jesus enjoins his followers to make disciples *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη* (cf. Mt 28:19). But what remains to be seen is how this new group will realize the demand of *ποιῶντι τοὺς καρποὺς* of the kingdom. This leads to the importance of keeping the law which explains the introduction of the man without the wedding garment.

As has already been argued from the first chapter of this work, one of the central points uniting the whole trilogy is the demand to bear fruit or to do the will of the father. This central point seems to move the hand of Mt in the whole of his narrative. Unlike Mk that declared void the Jewish law of clean and unclean (Mk 7:19; cp. Mt 15:17), Mt's Jesus allows the Sabbath laws (12:1-14) and declares the abiding power of the law (5:17f). The fulfillment of this law leads Jesus to admit to baptism from The Baptist (3:15) and even to his death on the cross (26:31). Seen from this perspective, one has to admit that the fulfillment passages in Mt (1:22; 2:15.17.23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 27:9) are programmed to reflect the importance of the law and the prophets. Hence, just as the two previous parables have shown, the only determinant to belonging to the chosen community is the practice of the will of God. This practice of God's will has been called watchfulness (Mt 24:42-51).

But a related question would be what the metaphors of garment or worthiness actually meant for Mt. In a gospel in which the keeping of the Jewish law has been shown to be of paramount importance (5:17-19), the issue of circumcision would naturally be of interest. Though it has been argued that all the members of the Matthean community were circumcised,¹¹⁷ Mt's silence over this issue which is recommended for joining the people of God (cf. Gen 17; Ex 12:48f) evokes a lot of curiosity. It could be said that Mt's attitude towards this theme was as controverted as the attitude of Peter towards the gentile mission (cf. Gal 2:11ff).¹¹⁸ However, in Mt's insistence on the abiding nature of the law, there seems to be a subtle critique of the law-free teaching of Paul.¹¹⁹ The description of the one who breaks the least of

¹¹⁷ Cf. M. Goulder, "Matthew's Vision for the Church," 27.

¹¹⁸ Cf. S. Brown, "The Matthean Community," 218f. For U. Luz, Matthew wanted to retain the Law but his community's mission to the Gentiles gradually changed its attitude to the law, a change which is not yet visible in the gospel. See his *Studies in Matthew*, 13f.

¹¹⁹ Cf. G. Barth, "Matthew's Understanding," 71. For him Mt was not arguing against Paul but against libertine Christians who hold an extreme view of Paul's teaching. For the argument that Mt uses the

the laws and teaches others to do so as *ἐλάχιστος* echoes Paul's self-description in 1 Cor 15:9¹²⁰ where he is seen as *ἐλαχιστότερος* among the holy ones.¹²¹ The fact that the construction *ὁς ἂν οὖν* (Mt 5:19) is in the singular differentiates it from Mt 7:15.22 and Mt 24:11 and supports the inference that polemics against a particular person, perhaps Paul, is at the heart of this passage.¹²² The claim that Jesus has come to abolish the law is also current in the Pauline communities (cf. Rm 10:4).¹²³ This is then made starker by the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount where those who do *ἀνομία* are known by their saying Lord, Lord (7:21). If this pronouncement which serves as a summary of Paul's teaching (2 Cor 4:5) refers to the followers of Paul, then there is no doubt that Mt's community actually stands up against the Pauline theology of the law.¹²⁴ This "true Israel," depicted by the Matthean community, keeps the laws without exception.¹²⁵ Not only must they obey the laws, their obedience of the law should exceed that of their Jewish opponents (5:20).¹²⁶

The above thought is highlighted in the parables of Mt's special source. Ebner brings out this thought very well: "Es reicht nicht, sich zum großen Festmahl einladen zu lassen (Mt 22:1-10), es kommt vielmehr darauf an, dass man mit einem der Feier entsprechenden Hochzeitsgewand erscheint (Mt 22:11-14). Es reicht nicht, im Haus auf den Bräutigam zu warten, man muss vielmehr bei seiner Ankunft Öl in den Lampen vorweisen können (Mt 25:1-12). Es reicht nicht, das anvertraute Talent sorgfältig zu bewahren, indem man es in der Erde verbirgt, sondern man muss damit wuchern (Mt 25,14-30). Ansonsten droht das unerbittliche Gericht. Man wird hinausgeworfen in die Finsternis: Dort wird Heulen und Zähneknirschen sein" (Mt 22,13; 25,30; vgl Mt 8,12).¹²⁷ This conclusion thus gives a hortatory accent to the whole trilogy of parables since the Matthean community is called upon to act (21:28-32), bear fruit (21:33-46) and accept the invitation of the kingdom (22:1-14).¹²⁸

7.5 CONCLUSION

I have looked at the parable from two angles: from the angle of verisimilitude and from an eschatological angle. And the two angles have shown that the unworthy

pericope to answer to his Jewish opponents' supposition that Jesus has claimed to have abolished the law, see W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, I.501, n.54; J. A. Overman, *Gospel*, 88f; D. A. Hagner, *Matthew*, II.104; M. Konradt, *Israel*, 380f.

¹²⁰ See also Eph 3:8.

¹²¹ The contrast between Peter and Paul is also sharpened by the fact that it is only in Mt that Peter is described as *πρῶτος* (Mt 10:2).

¹²² This argument has been brought forward by G. Theißen, "Kritik an Paulus?," 471-75; contra, J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, I.274. For the argument that Paul's opponents have some connection with the church in Palestine see E. E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic*, 107.

¹²³ See also H. D. Betz, *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount*, 20.

¹²⁴ The differences between the Matthean and Pauline conceptions of the law have been surveyed by R. Mohrlang, *Matthew and Paul*, 7-42.

¹²⁵ It would then be right to conclude that Mt's stress on righteousness is because of his concern on keeping the law. See D. A. Hagner, *Matthew* I.lxii.

¹²⁶ See D. C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 208.

¹²⁷ M. Ebner/S. Schreiber (Hrsg.), *Einleitung*, 137.

¹²⁸ D. Howell, *Story*, 152.

invitees, who spurned the goodness of the host, will at the end be meted out with appropriate punishment, be it their corporal destruction or their eternal banishment. Just as J. Jeremias noted, “if 4 Esdra 8:3 contrasts the totality of those created with the small number of the saved, Mt. 22:14 contrasts the totality of those invited with the small number of the chosen. God’s invitation, like his creation, embraces all without restriction, but the number of those who will stand in the last judgment is only small.”¹²⁹ But because of the absence of the comparative forms of the adjective in both Hebrew and Aramaic, it has been argued that *ὀλίγοι* and *πολλοί* only function as comparatives, implying that those chosen are less than those called.¹³⁰ The implication is that the narrative remains silent on the number of those to be saved.

This number of the elect has already been seen in the two preceding parables as embracing those *ποιεῖν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς* (21:31) and those *ποιεῖν τοῦς καρπούς αὐτῆς* (21:43). But in the present parable what matters is *ἐνδύω ἐνδυμα γάμου*. These metaphors actually point to the demand of the law for all those who want to partake in the bliss of salvation. Hence this man without the proper wedding garment cannot be part of the joy of the banquet. The implication is that the trilogy as a whole demands obedience appropriate to the call as a qualification to be elected. This obedience is manifested in concrete actions and not a fatalistic belonging to a privileged status, race or cult.¹³¹ And more particularly in the present parable, the *ὀλίγοι* are to be seen as those who follow the teachings of Jesus and accept his authority as opposed to the *πολλοί* who refuse to follow Jesus in deeds. Once again the two ways (cf. Mt 7:13) are presented as contrasts demanding a personal decision. Hence, it must be concluded that the parable does not only contain the good news of an open invitation “but also the sobering reminder of the seriousness of discipleship for those who respond.”¹³² This accords with the injunction of 2 Pt 1:10 and could be a critique of Isa.48:12 and 49:7 that see Israel as called and chosen respectively. This picture has already been created by the note in Mt 8:11 that some children of Abraham would be replaced in the eternal banquet by a number chosen from East and West.

However, just as already seen in the two previous parables of the trilogy, the parable of the Wedding Feast is neither a cultic critic of the Pharisees’ party nor is it an ethnic critic of the Jews. Rather the impression is that the trilogy that begins in Mt 21:28 as a polemic response to the question of authority has ended in paraenetic appeal to the Christian community. This could have huge implications for the nature of the Matthean community. This will be my concern in the next chapter.

¹²⁹ J. Jeremias, Art. “πολλοί” ThWNT VI.542.

¹³⁰ See for instance, B. Meyer, “Many (=All) are Called,” 89-97.

¹³¹ Cf. Rev 17:14 where the victors who follow the lamb are classified as *κλητοὶ καὶ ἐκλεκτοὶ καὶ πιστοί*.

¹³² D. A. Hagner, Matthew, II.632.

CHAPTER EIGHT THE TRILOGY IN MATTHEW'S COMMUNITY

Some of the major issues that remain unsettled in Matthean studies are the social situation of the community in which the gospel was produced and the relationship between the Matthean Church and Israel.¹ Another major issue is the nature of the Matthean community as well as the date of the Matthean composition. These issues play themselves out fully in the parable trilogy of 21:28-22:14. Although the whole of Mt 21-23 suggests that we are here at the core of the Matthean case against Judaism,² this case seems to be more concrete in the parable trilogy of 21:28-22:14. As already indicated, the trilogy bears a heavy Matthean redaction and the parables manifest great assimilation to one another, given them a unified polemic bent. This redaction can reveal the situation and nature of the Matthean community.

At the end of the first chapter, I inquired whether the trilogy of parables in Mt 21:28-22:14 can be attributed to the hand of Mt. This enquiry was necessary judging from the overwhelming thematic parallels and verbal links in the three parables. The thematic parallels include the demand to bear fruit and the contrast between saying and doing depicted through the parables as a critic of the Jewish leadership with whom Jesus was contending.³ But an investigation into Mt's tradition has revealed adequately that Mt has added the parable of the Two Sons (21:28-32) and the Q parable of the Wedding Feast (22:1-14) to the parable of the Wicked Tenants (21:33-46) which he found in Mk. To the Markan parable of the Wicked Tenants, Mt added v.43 which announces the handing over of the kingdom to a nation that brings its fruits.⁴ This transference is as a result of the failure of those formerly entrusted with the vineyard to render an account of their stewardship. Not only did Mt add v.43, he also made the Jewish leaders to supply the answer (v.41) to what the vineyard owner would do to the wicked tenants when he comes (v.40). In this answer, Mt also added *κακοὺς κακῶς* as a description of the nature of the tenants. The revision of his traditional material is also evidenced in Mt's handling of the Q parable of the invited guests. Mt has turned this parable into the parable of the Wedding Feast for a king's son (22:2), added a military expedition (vv.6-7) and a logion about the required wedding garment (vv.11-14). These Matthean redactions have been seen as an intensification of the charge against the Jewish leadership. They also contain a stronger paraenetic dimension more than is visible from Mk or from Lk. This last point is particularly true with regard to Mt 22:11-14. These verses undoubtedly refer to the eschatological banquet and the conditions for entrance. Hence, although the parables of Mt 21:28-22:14 make use of different strands of tradition, the trilogy as a

¹ The contributions of A. J. Saldarini are very rich in this discussion. See his *Community*, 2-4. The take-off of his argument is that Mt's community is a small and uninfluential part of the first century Jewish community in the eastern Mediterranean.

² See R. J. Dillon, "Tradition History," 6.

³ Some of the scholars who accept that the trilogy of Mt 21:28-22:14 is a critic against the Jewish leadership include M. Konradt, *Israel*, 182-218;

⁴ The redactional nature of this verse is supported by W. Trilling, *Israel*, 58-60; M. Konradt, *Israel*, 182; W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 148; U. Luz, *Matthäus*, III.217, etc.

unity should be seen as a Matthean composition.⁵ But it seems that this composition is to serve both the polemic needs of the Matthean church against her opponents and also the paraenetic needs of this church.

A consideration of the Matthean use of the word *ἔθνος* (cf. ch.5 above) has yielded the result that it does not imply an empirically definable group but rather refers to those who do the will of God both Jews and Gentiles. This conclusion is worthy since Mt's narrative has shown the incorporation of Gentiles in the economy of salvation.⁶ On the other hand, the internal struggles of the Matthean church seem to be a hidden voice behind these parables. First and foremost, the use of the future *ἀρθήσεται* and *δοθήσεται* (21:43) could have a historical implication.⁷ That is, it can refer to a situation in the future. But if Mt uses the parables for paraenetic purposes then it could also point to the present self-image of the Church in Mt's time. Although this verse is to be seen as the crux of the matter, yet the other two parables confront the problem of the inner realities of the early Christian community or at least the Matthean community on the one hand, and its relation to the outside world, on the other. The outside world is depicted with the image of the Jewish Leaders. Over and against them is an *ἔθνος* that produces the required fruit at the right time. The implication is that the self-image of the early church as well as her idea of mission and ethics all play out in the trilogy and in the entire Matthean narrative.

Consequently, the main trust of this chapter is to show that many of the sayings in the Matthean narrative go beyond a description of the historical life of Jesus into a consideration of the existential situation of the Church in which the gospel was written. The importance of this issue is heightened by the already-discussed universal outlook of the Matthean narrative. Though Stanton has argued that the intention of Mt was not to tell us about his own community but rather to tell the story of Jesus of Nazareth,⁸ it must be maintained that the story about Jesus of Nazareth was already re-interpreted by Mt before its re-telling.⁹ This story must have an existential bearing on the present life of the church that owns it. Moreover, the Matthean use of the *ἐκκλησία* terminology (cf. 16:18; 18:17 twice) leads one to suspect that the community of Mt lies at the heart of his gospel.

8.1 MATTHEW'S COMMUNITY AS THE ORIGIN OF THE TRILOGY

The excursions on the trilogy of parables has so far revealed that a heavy Matthean redaction is to be ascribed, not only to the trilogy but also to a greater part of the rest of the gospel. This redaction reveals the theology of Mt and how he understands the message of Jesus or at least how he wants his readers to understand it. One can discover, behind these reflections, a hidden influence, directing and re-directing the

⁵ Also W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 33-46; M. Konradt, *Israel*, 182.

⁶ Special attention has been paid to the genealogy of Jesus (1:2-17), the positive presentations of the centurion (8:5-13) and the Canaanite woman (15:21-28) as well as the universal commission (28:16-20). These and other passages show the presence of Gentiles in Mt's community.

⁷ G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 190 shares this view.

⁸ G. N. Stanton, "The Gospel of Matthew," 265.

⁹ See W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, I. 4.

transfer of the Jesus' tradition. This view has been accepted by many scholars. In his treatise on the "parables of the true Israel," Dillon asserts that "Matthew, perhaps more than any other gospel, bears the stamp of a community's faith, of its manifold traditions, and of different stages in a considerable evolution in its Christian life and reflection."¹⁰ The "community faith" depicted by the gospel seems to be an early Christian apology. This reflects the argument of Trilling that "to the outside world the work in its entirety had to demonstrate the claim of the Church to be the true Israel and deprive Judaism of any claim in this direction; just as interiorly it had to offer a newly ordered and didactically functional summary of the Jesus-tradition."¹¹

It will not be wrong to argue that Mt has so much placed his community at the centre of his parables that he has constructed them to suit the needs of the community. He can be said to be concerned about the running of a Christian church and the discipline of its members.¹² This can well be shown through the teaching about the kingdom of God (ch. 13), the parables of the Lost Sheep (18:12-14); the Unforgiving Servant (18:23-35) and the Workers in the Vineyard (20:1-16), as well as the teachings about eschatology (chs. 24-25). Trilling has suggested that the best example for Mt's interest is to be seen in the parable of The Talents (25:14-30). The parallel parable in Lk 19:11-27 follows two points, namely, the relationship between the man seeking the throne and his opponents, and the story of the entrusted coins. Mt took over only the motif of the entrusted money and left the motif of the king apparent and his opponents. At the end, it is not the opponents of Lk's ἄνθρωπος τις that were punished but the lazy servant who was thrown into the darkness for failing to invest with his talent.¹³

And in the trilogy I have studied, the ethical demands of the community are expressed in the three parables.¹⁴ It is made concrete in the demand to follow John the Baptist on the way of righteousness (21:32), in the command to bring forth the fruits of the kingdom (21:43) and in 22:11, where ἐνδεδυμένον is the quality that determines entrance into the banquet hall. All these verses have been shown to be Mt's redaction. If the three parables have a specific setting in which they arose in Mt's community, then 22:11 could be an important signal point. The term ἐνδύειν has been called a terminus *technicus* of the baptismal doctrine of the early Church.¹⁵ It occurs in such Pauline texts as Gal 3:27 showing the intimate union between the baptized and Christ.¹⁶ This is augmented by the popular passage about putting off (ἀποτίθημι) of the works of darkness and putting on (ἐνδύω) of the armour of light (Rom 13:12). This same motif recurs in Eph 4:22-24 and Col 3:9-10. Though the practice of clothing oneself with a garment may have some bases in the early ritual of

¹⁰ R. J. Dillon, "Tradition History," 2.

¹¹ W. Trilling, *Israel*, 219.

¹² See J. Drury, *Parables*, 72.

¹³ See W. Trilling, "Überlieferungsgeschichte," 253.

¹⁴ A. Jülicher thinks that the same ethical concept runs through the three parables. *Gleichnisreden II*, 428.

¹⁵ Cf. G. Braumann, "Jesu Erbarmen," 34.

¹⁶ For this verse as an expression of the baptismal liturgy of the early church see R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 154f.; J. D. G. Dunn, *Galatians*, 203

the sacramental baptism, the hortatory and imperative nature of these injunctions shows that what is at stake is not only a reflection of the actualities of election but more of the urgency to live appropriate to the new state of being chosen.¹⁷

Moreover, the common theme of fruit-bearing is also present in the Pauline corpus. This is evidenced in Rm 6:21-22; 7:4-6; Gal 5:22-24; Phil 1:11; Eph 5:8-11, et al. For example, when John's baptism with its effect of producing καρπὸν ἄξιον τῆς μετανοίας (Mt 3:8) is compared with the Christian baptism with its effect of producing καρπὸν εἰς ἁγιασμόν (Rm 6:22), it therefore becomes clear that this motif is current in the tradition of the church prior to Mt's composition. Moreover, Paul contrasts between a fruitless past and a fruitful present in Rm 7:4-6. It is of interest that the former age belongs to the men under the law, while the present age is the age of the spirit. But in Mt's case, the law is not a thing of the past. Rather it is a present reality that must be observed but with a new emphasis that stresses "doing" as against a mere "saying". If it is true that the recurrence of καρπός and καρποφορεῖν in the letter's of Paul attests a certain fixed terminology and served him to express baptismal truths which were not familiar to his hearers,¹⁸ it can be concluded that Mt carried on this common tradition.

This common tradition is again manifested in the use of the Psalm quotation. Though our parable used the Ps quotation as a messianic threat, Paul (Rom 9:33, combining Isa 8:14 and 28:16) and Peter (1 Pet 2:4-10, combining the two Isaian texts with Ps 118:17), identified the stone with Jesus. Since it can be said that Peter did not make use of Paul or vice versa, then it must be said that they "made use of a twofold testimonium already current in the pre-canonical tradition."¹⁹ This agrees with the notion that the Jesus' tradition as a form of controlled tradition "went along the lines indicated by the tradition, rather than introducing wholly new features..."²⁰

Since the parable of the Two Sons (21:28-32), the section involving the handing over of the fruits of the kingdom (21:41c.43), and the episode of the man without the wedding garment (22:11-14) are Matthean additions and thus reflect his special interest, it is also possible to imagine that the trilogy arose out of the community's injunctions to the catechumenate.²¹ This common *Sitz* for the parables of the trilogy could then explain their being brought together by Mt as well as the harmonization of their vocabulary. As remarked in the previous chapters, this could have changed the initial controversy between Jesus and the Jewish leaders about Jesus' authority and

¹⁷ Again, the notion of putting on (ἐνδύεσθαι) as meaning the acquisition of a new identity or the reflection of a special personality is witnessed in the case of John The Baptist who was clothed (ἐνδεδυμένος) in a garment of camel's hair (Mt 3:4).

¹⁸ This is the contention of R. J. Dillon, "Tradition History," 32.

¹⁹ C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 43.

²⁰ J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 333-34.

²¹ Cf. R. J. Dillon, "Tradition History," 25.40f. Trilling sees three levels in the development of the parable of the Wedding Feast. The first level is to be seen in the teaching tradition of Mt's church which incorporates the Q parable of the Banquet. Then the community expanded this parable through the addition of allegorical elements (King, Son, and wedding feast). The third level harmonized the parable with that of the wicked tenants by the addition of polemics. See his "Überlieferungsgeschichte," 263.

the authority of The Baptist (cf. 21:23-24) to a paraenetic conclusion about the fewness of the chosen (22:14). In this case, one can place the Matthean Church as the tradition behind the origin of the Matthean materials.²² In this historical place, the traditions of Jesus are received, interpreted and reapplied.

On the other hand, polemics against the Jewish leaders points to another possible Sitz for the trilogy. Following Trilling,²³ one discovers two concerns of the Matthean Church: the interior concerns centered on the efforts to understand and apply the deposit of salvation in the present dispensation, and the exterior encounter of the Church with established Judaism. While the first concern concentrates on the Church's position in the history of salvation and on its relationship with the master, the second concern concentrates on the opposition between the Church and Pharisaic Judaism. These encounters overlay the polemic bent of the first gospel as well as its evident inherent rabbinic argumentative and theological thought patterns.

Some efforts in this regard have characterized Mt's gospel either as a "catechetical-handbook,"²⁴ as a re-edition of pericopes for reading and exposition in this Church's "liturgy of the Word,"²⁵ "an ecclesiastical Gospel,"²⁶ "a manual for discipleship,"²⁷ or as a scribal school where traditions took shape according to methods of study and instructions inherited from Judaism.²⁸ The tension between this unity with and separation from Judaism is well spelt out in the trilogy of parables. Hence it is my intention to see how the trilogy can help to define Mt's understanding of the Church's self-identity vis-a-vis its relationship to Israel.

8.2 THE SOCIAL SITUATION OF THE MATTHEAN CHURCH

The question of the social situation of the Matthean church is compounded by the fact that the Gospel contains a strong Jewish flavor and an unrepentant attack of the Jewish establishment. For instance, the Law is upheld (5:17), the position of the Pharisees is to be respected (23:2-3a), the people of Israel are called the sons of the kingdom (8:12). On the other hand, they will be cast out (8:11), their cities are condemned (11:20; 22:7; 23:38). Against them is a nation receiving the secrets of the kingdom (13:16f) and producing its fruits (21:43). It remains to be seen how this tension can be resolved.

It is fair to say that the message of Jesus as told by Mt does not envisage a total break between Judaism and the Jesus' movement. This is played out in his upholding

²² See U. Luz, *Matthäus*, I.82. He calls Mt an "Exponent seiner Gemeinde." He develops this point with his analyses of some Matthean passages such as the "oratio dominica" (6:7ff), the last supper (26:26-28), the community rule (ch. 18) as well as Mt's constant recurs to the LXX.

²³ See W. Trilling, *Israel*, 213.216.221-223.

²⁴ G. Schille, "Bemerkungen," 101-14.

²⁵ G. D. Kilpatrick, *Origins*, 59-71.

²⁶ See D. A. Hagner, *Matthew II*.lxiii.

²⁷ J. Nolland, *Matthew*, 20.

²⁸ K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew*, 29.35.

of the Jewish laws (5:17-19)²⁹ and in his expressed mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 10:5-6). Again the community of Mt seems to be one well acquainted with the Jewish tradition. This is explained by the fact that Mt removes Mk's explanation of Jewish practices (cf. Mk 7:3f; 14:12). He also employs a rabbinic manner of argumentation (Mt 12:11; cp. 2 Macc. 2:41; bShab 128b) and concludes with "therefore it is allowed to do good on the Sabbath" (Mt 12:12).³⁰ Moreover, the community of Mt maintains the laws about travel on the Sabbath (24:20) as well as the payment of tithes (23:23).³¹ Above all these are the numerous fulfillment quotations in the gospel which are integral to its composition.³² All these speak for a predominantly Jewish community.³³

Hence, since Mt was writing to his predominantly Jewish audience, he seems to present a document that sees the Church as no longer part of the Synagogue but at the same time still in contact with Israel.³⁴ This position was strongly advocated by J. A. Overman who argues that Mt's community was a Jewish sectarian group in competition with the parent organ.³⁵ It is thus possible that by the time Mt's gospel was written, there were some gentile followers of Jesus who did not observe the Jewish laws.³⁶ If this is true, then the insistence on producing the right fruits (cf. 3:8; 7:16; 21:41, perhaps also 22:11-14) achieves some historical basis. The implication is that the Matthean Church was in the process of defining itself. This definition was acute because of a number of factors including the failure of the mission to the Jews, the destruction of Jerusalem and the influx of the Gentiles into the community. But this does not mean that the Church viewed Judaism from a distance. Rather, the gospel, just as the trilogy has shown, tries a new definition for entrance into the

²⁹ For Sim, this verse shows that "it is beyond question that Matthew's community observed the law and defined itself as Jewish by doing so." D. C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 5. See also J. A. Overman, *Gospel*, 78-90 and A. J. Saldarini, *Community*, 124-64.

³⁰ This shows that Mt's community still honours the Sabbath. Cf. J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, I.448. For the rabbinic background of the argument of this verse see H. Strack/P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 630.

³¹ However, certain facts argue for a gentile background to the gospel. These include the universalism of the gospel (cf. 28:18-20; 10:18; 12:18,21; 22:1-14; etc), dissolution of the ritual laws (cf. 15:11,20b; 23:25f), Mt's use of Greek words for *κορβάν*, *βαπτίμαιος*, *ἑαββονεΐ*, and Ἀββά, etc.

³² A typical example is the quotation of Zech 9:9 in Mt 21:5. It has been argued that "... only a pupil of the rabbis would think of getting a literal fulfillment of Zech 9:9..." See K. Stendahl, *The School of St Matthew*, 119.

³³ For J. A. Overman, "one sees very little evidence of Gentiles (non-Jews) in the Matthean community." *Gospel*, 157. For arguments that the gospel bears more Hellenistic than Jewish marks see K. W. Clark, "Gentile Bias," 165-72. His view has been criticized by W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, I.17-25.

³⁴ D. R. A. Hare thinks that the mission to Israel persisted with vigour beyond this point. See his *Jewish Persecution*, 155. For the argument that the bone of contention between Mt's community and the Jewish leadership is the correct interpretation of Scriptures see M. Konradt, *Israel*, 380.

³⁵ See the introduction to his *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism*. J. Gnilka uses the injunction at Mt 23:3 to posit that by the time this passage was written, there was a sort of friendly relationship between Mt's community and the Synagogue. See his *Das Matthäusevangelium*, II.273f.

³⁶ D. C. Sim has argued that this group could be a result of the missionary activities of Paul. See his *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 6. If his contention is true, then the saying in Mt 5:17-19 could be seen as an opposition against this group.

eschatological community, an entrance not based on profession or ethnic allegiance but based on deeds appropriate to the profession.

However, a lot of factors seem to relate the fact that the situation of the Matthean community seems to have been determined by the break with Israel.³⁷ For Stanton, some Matthean texts (including 21:43) argue against the premise that Mt thought himself and his readers to still be part of Judaism. For him, “the Matthean community saw itself as a separate and quite distinct entity over against Judaism.”³⁸ This breach could account for the references to “their Synagogues” (4:23; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54; 23:34) and “their Scribes and Pharisees” (cf. 5:20; 12:38; 15:1; 23:2.13.15.23.25.27.29). These reactions could imply that Mt’s community is already *extra muros*³⁹ but continues to experience different types of contact with Judaism. And in these contacts, Mt presents his community as the better alternative.⁴⁰ This seems to correspond to the situation of Judaism after 70 AD.⁴¹ It could also account for the persecutions and repressions recorded in the narrative (10:17f; 23:34). The above texts show that the community could have suffered some form of slander, physical attack and rumour-mongering from its adversaries. The contrast between Mt’s group and their opponents then leads to the need of doing the better righteousness (5:20) so as to overcome the hypocritical deeds of the opponents (6:1-18; 23:1-36).⁴²

Although the debate can be carried further, it seems to me that Mt’s community has already broken off with its parent body, Judaism, and now sees itself as the real or true Israel.⁴³ In explaining the break with Judaism, Mt, who seems ill at ease with the break, seems to have placed the guilt on the Jewish leaders.⁴⁴ Not only have they refused the offer of salvation (21:28-32), they also killed God’s messengers (21:35-39; 22:6). To concretize their unrepentance, Mt allows them to declare the punishment that follows these actions, namely, *κακούς κακῶς ἀπολέσει αὐτούς, καὶ τὸν ἀμπελῶνα ἐκδώσεται ἄλλοις γεωργοῖς* (21:41). To bring the consequence of the answer closer to them, Mt adds the response of Jesus namely, *ἀρθήσεται ἀφ’ ἡμῶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ δοθήσεται ἔθνει ποιοῦντι τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτῆς* (21:43). There is no doubt that

³⁷ Cf. U. Luz, *Matthäus* 1.96. Other scholars who discuss the relationship between Mt’s community and Israel include G. N. Stanton, “The Origins and Purpose,” 1890-1951; J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 126-8.

³⁸ G. N. Stanton, “The Origins and Purpose,” 1914.

³⁹ For further reference, see S. Freyne, “Vilifying the Other,” 117-44; B. Prybylski, “The Setting of Matthean Anti-Judaism,” 181-200; U. Luz, “Der Antijudaismus im Matthäusevangelium,” 310-27; D. C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 154.158.

⁴⁰ The *ἄλλοι* then function as those whom the Matthean community wants to win over to her fold. Cf. M. Konradt, *Israel*, 381.

⁴¹ Cf. A. J. Saldarini, *Community*, 46-67; M. Konradt, *Israel*, 379.

⁴² See U. Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 265.

⁴³ Also J. D. Kingsbury, *Parables*, 11. Contra S. Brown. He thinks that Mt 23:2 reflects the hope that a break with Judaism could be avoided. But it is curious that in the very next line he concludes that “Mt 28:19 reveals that Mt is not looking for a reconciliation with Judaism. “The Matthean Community,” 216.

⁴⁴ Some scholars think that the rabbinic *Birkat ha-minim*, literally, “the blessing on the heretics” was the decisive break between Judaism and Christianity. See G. D. Kilpatrick, *Origins*, 109f; for contra arguments see S. Katz, “Issues,” 49-75.

polemics against the Jewish leadership is rife in this verse.⁴⁵ This verse points to the reversal of divine claims to the community of Mt. If the above verse alludes to this transfer, the whole of 22:1-10 makes it a reality.

Against this Christian claim are a number of Jewish writings that tend to defend the election of Israel.⁴⁶ What is at stake is then sacred history couched in ethics. It would then be right to maintain that one of Mt's proper contributions, over and against Mk and Lk was to interpret the eschatological element of sacred history in an ethical sense.⁴⁷ This explains why there is a primacy of ethical demand in the teachings of Jesus. Mt emphasizes the remote judgment as a motivation while the role of the Church is limited to that of being the legitimate and reliable representation of the eschatological demand in the world.⁴⁸ In the context of the trilogy, especially in the parable of the Wedding Feast, one can decipher an eschatologically and ecclesiologically motivated ethic in Mt. This explains why Mt depicts the progress of the concept of *ἐκκλησία* and its organization, as well as a Christian ethic and the mission undertakings more than his synoptic peers.

As already remarked, the most radical reworking of the parable of the Wicked Tenants by Mt is in its application, especially vv.41-43. In these verses, Mt, unlike Mk and Lk, allows the Jewish leaders to provide the answer to the question as to what the *οἰκοδεσπότης* will do to those tenants (v.40). And in this answer Mt alone subordinates the theme of the transfer of the vineyard to that of a terrible destruction for the tenants “κακούς κακῶς ἀπολέσει αὐτούς” and that of the rendering of fruit at the right time “οἵτινες ἀποδώσουσιν αὐτῷ τοὺς καρπούς ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτῶν” (v.41). There is no doubt that at the heart of this parable lie the guilt of Israel and the consequences of this guilt. Nevertheless one can decipher two different motifs in vv.41 and 43.

It is evident that while v.41 echoes the theme of punishment as in 22:7, v.43 seems to uphold the loss of privileged status by Israel and their replacement by another set of covenant people. And in this new set of *ἔθνος*, a new ethos is in place. Hence, we might be at the centre of an ecclesiological theme (cf. Acts 4:1; 1Pet 2:4-5). That means that Mt 21:43 does not only characterize the self-awareness of the Church of Mt. It also shows how it sees itself in relation to its Jewish opponents. If this is the case, it could be argued that the parable does not only offer a true definition of the internal reality of the church for its new members, especially the Jewish converts, but also polemicizes against the Jewish leaders. The Christian community has become the chosen race. This is in line with the interpretation of Ps 117:22 in 1 Pet. Again the same motif of bearing fruit recurs in the preaching of The Baptist (3:7-12), where the two *pericopae* are again linked by the indictment of the Jewish leadership, here represented by the Pharisees and Sadducees. In this pericope in which “the Baptist becomes preacher to the Christian community,”⁴⁹ the issue of divine election, through the producing of appropriate fruits, seems to be at the

⁴⁵ On the use of the language of sectarianism, see J. A. Overman, *Gospel*, 16-19.

⁴⁶ A typical example is Sifre Deuteronomy which defends the election of Israel. See Eugene Mihaly, “Rabbinic Defense,” 103-43.

⁴⁷ R. J. Dillon, “Tradition History,” 9.

⁴⁸ G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 219.

⁴⁹ See G. Bornkamm et al, *Überlieferung und Auslegung*, 2.

background. This same view is shared by John Drury who argues that Mt's concern in the relation of Church to Judaism is fundamentally a concern with a historical question or cluster of questions. For him, the questions revolve around to whom the sacred past belongs, Church or Synagogue? To whom will the sacred future belong, Church or Synagogue? And between these two questions: what did Jesus do and say to his disciples and to his compatriots? Finally, who was he that these questions should arise and that the answer to both should be 'Church'?⁵⁰

The above interpretation is given much currency in the application of the parable of The Sower (13:18-23). In this application, what is sown is the *λόγος*. At the end this *λόγος* receives different responses with the last response being that of producing fruit, yet in different measures, *ὁ μὲν ἑκατόν, ὁ δὲ ἑξήκοντα, ὁ δὲ τριάκοντα* (13:23). There is an indication that Mt is looking at the missionary activities of his church.⁵¹ But over and above these missionary activities is the fact that a clear contrast exists between those to whom the knowledge about the secret of the kingdom have been given and those to whom it has not been given (13:11). This is the declared reason why Jesus speaks in parables. There is thus a clear tension between two distinct groups. It might, then, not be correct to suppose that the parable and its application point to a time in the future.⁵²

This section can thus be concluded by noting that the contrast schema in the trilogy between the old and new peoples has relevance for the community in which the parable was told. If this community is made up of Jews and Gentiles, then the trilogy offers a new definition of election for the two groups. The description of this new group as those *ποιοῦντι τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτῆς* may not only be a warning to the members but could also be a note of assuredness that the community will not fail in its mandate.⁵³ It is however an admonition for those in the new community that an account of their stewardship has to be made. Concretely, this involves the fulfillment of the whole Law and the Prophets (5:17-19) so as to manifest a greater righteousness than the scribes and Pharisees (5:20). This righteousness then includes the commands against murder and anger (5:21-26), against adultery (5:27-30), against divorce (5:31f), against oaths (5:33-37) and against revenge (5:38-42). These prohibitions are then augmented by love of enemies (5:43-48) and the doing of works of charity (6:1-4). I have also noted in the seventh chapter above that a serious consideration of the fulfillment of the whole Law and the Prophets could indicate that the Matthean community practiced circumcision since circumcision is a prerequisite for membership among the people of God (cf. Gen 17; Ex 12:48f). But

⁵⁰ J. Drury, *Parables*, 73. But the parable of the tares (13:24-30) could point at an uneasy acceptance of rival groups as witnessed in the words "let both grow side by side until the harvest" (13:30). See J. D. Kingsbury, *Parables*, 63-76. This same interpretation can be given to the question about payment of tax (17:24-27). See J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 126.

⁵¹ This and similar considerations led W. Trilling to the following conclusion: "die ganze Welt ist das Ackerfeld der Missionare." *Israel*, 103. He implies in this statement that Mt is looking at the missionary activities of its own time.

⁵² Contra C. H. Dodd, *Parables*, 183.

⁵³ For Jülicher, *Gleichnisreden II*.395, Mt is thinking of the elect for whom God is sure of their deliverance of the fruit.

the clear contrast between the Matthean community and its opponents can be deciphered from the way Mt sees the Jewish leaders.

8.3 THE JEWISH LEADERS IN MATTHEW

Though I have read the trilogy as an expression of the theme of universal mission which is central to the heart of Mt's Gospel, yet the centrality of Mt's case against the Jewish leaders,⁵⁴ whom he has classified in the trilogy as *οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς*⁵⁵ καὶ *οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ*⁵⁶ (21:23), and as *οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι*⁵⁷ (21:45) could be an aid to realizing the historical problems his Church was up and against. The peculiar Matthean formulation *οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λαοῦ* (see also 26:3.47; 27:1) seems to indicate that this group represents the people. However, Mt's presentation of the people or crowds in his narrative does not agree with this notion. For instance, the crowds almost always identify with Jesus (cf. 9:33f; 12:22f) and prevented the Jewish leaders from arresting him (21:46). Only the crowds in Jerusalem were led by the Jewish leadership to pronounce the judgment against Jesus (27:20.25). This sort of narrative makes one to suspect that Mt intends to move the reader or hearer of his gospel to see that the Jewish leaders were blind guides of the blind. On the other hand, it must be concluded that Mt did not intend to distinguish between the various Jewish groups.⁵⁸ The fact that the Jewish leaders appear sometimes separately and at other times as a unit is evidence enough for this. The implication is that Mt does not intend to present a historical overview of these groups. For instance, the Pharisees and Sadducees were known to have been rivals before the Jewish war while only the Pharisees were of influence after the war.⁵⁹

Josephus, who sees himself as one of them,⁶⁰ presents the Pharisees as a political interest group which had its set goals for the society and constantly engaged in political activity to achieve these goals.⁶¹ Kingsbury has pointed out that historically speaking, the high council/Sanhedrin made up of the chief priest and the elders, the scribes and the high priest exercised broad powers in Palestine of a religious, political and judicial nature before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.⁶² It is also significant that the controversy leading to the trilogy of 21:28-22:14 occurred at the Temple precincts in Jerusalem. Since the Temple is regarded as the place where

⁵⁴ I find the insights of S. V. Tilborg's Jewish Leaders invaluable to this section.

⁵⁵ The High Priests appear as a separate group only in Mt 26:14; 27:6 and 28:11.

⁵⁶ The elders never appear in Mt as a separate group. In Mt 15:2= Mk 7:5 they are spoken of only in the attributive clause.

⁵⁷ The Pharisees are mentioned again in Mt 9:11.14.34; 12:2.14.24; 15:12; 19:3.

⁵⁸ See R. Hummel, *Auseinandersetzung*, 12-22; R. Walker, *Heilsgeschichte* 11-13; S. V. Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 5.

⁵⁹ Cf. B. Reicke, *New Testament Era*, 152-63, 266-7.

⁶⁰ For a full treatment of Josephus' ideas of this group see his *Life* 12; *Ant* 13:171-173

⁶¹ See for instance, *Jewish War*, 2.119-66; *Ant*. 18:11-25.

⁶² J. D. Kingsbury, "The Developing Conflict," 57. For the relationship between the Pharisees and Herod the Great see Josephus, *Ant* 15:370 and *Ant* 17: 41-43.

God's presence resides and as the seat of the authority of the Jewish Leaders, the location of this controversy is thus significant.⁶³

In his characterization of this united front against Jesus Mt uses such negative epithets as *ὑπόκριται*, *πονηροί*, and *φόνος*. The charge of *ὑπόκρισις* in Mt is brought up in 6:1-6.16-18; 7:5; 15:1-9; 22:18; 23:5-7; 23:13-33; 24:51. Surely some of these texts do not explicitly name the Jewish leaders but the texts of 15:1-9 and 23:13-33 are clear. In his article, Wilkens argues, with regard to 23:13-33 thus: "Mt hat die große, programmatische Rede gegen die Repräsentanten der jüdischen Lehrüberlieferung unter dem Gesichtspunkt (der theologischen Polemik) komponiert, indem er die sieben Wehrufe stereotyp mit der Formel einleitet: *οὐαὶ δὲ ὑμῖν, γραμματεῖς καὶ Φαρισαῖοι ὑποκριταί* (Mt 23:13.15.23.25.27.29).⁶⁴ These verbal invectives show Mt's strong critic against the Jewish leadership and could manifest some form of contact with this group.⁶⁵ The same can also be said of the designation of the leaders as *πονηροί* (9:4; 12:33-35; 12:38-42.43-45; 16:1-4; 22:18), and as *φόνος* and *υἱοὶ τῶν φονευσάντων* (22:7; 23:31.35).

Noteworthy also is that the pericope of the trilogy is the first instance where the Jewish leaders confront Jesus directly with regard to his own actions.⁶⁶ And in this controversy, such critical issues as the question of authority (cf. 21:23) and the right manner of scriptural interpretation (cf. 21:42 see later 22:29.31) come to the fore. Again the controversy features the failed attempt to arrest Jesus (21:46) and shows Jesus defeating the various groups comprising the Jewish leadership: the chief priests and the scribes (21:15), the chief priests and the elders of the people (21:23), the disciples of the Pharisees with the Herodians (22:16), the Sadducees (22:23), a lawyer of the Pharisees (22:35) and the Pharisees (22:41).⁶⁷ Although Mt does not make it clear why one group should be present at one time only to be replaced by another group at another, the manner in which Mt has presented these stories shows the power of Jesus over and against them, with the effect that the Jewish leaders could no longer argue with him (22:46). They even left the Temple, their seat of power and the presence of God. This would have no other intention than the

⁶³ For David Sim, the significance is to be seen by the fact that Mt takes on the whole gamut of Jewish leadership in the midst of its spiritual home and wins every argument against them, as well as denouncing them. D. C. Sim, "Wedding Garment," 168.

⁶⁴ U. Wilckens, "*ὑποκρίνομαι*," ThWNT VIII.566.

⁶⁵ On the other hand, L. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees*, 97f argues that "the accusation of hypocrisy and punctiliousness was not one against which the Pharisees could defend themselves. If by hypocrisy was meant self-control, and by punctiliousness their insistence on the mastery and observance of detail in the Law, they were indeed guilty of both. They were, however, quite innocent of the charges of insincerity, fanaticism and false motives which were ascribed to them."

⁶⁶ Cf. 21:16.23.

⁶⁷ D. C. Allison/W. D. Davies articulate the question and answer dialectic between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in this section of Mt's Gospel thus: "in 21.23-22.46 Jesus asks his opponents several questions, to which the answers given are: 'we do not know' (21.27), 'the first' (21.31), 'he will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their season' (21.41), 'Cesar's' (22.21), 'the Son of David' (22.42), and, finally, silence (22.45). These answers are invariable dictated by the question and show no creativity or wit...two display ignorance (21.27; 22.45) and two are blatantly self-discriminating (21.27,41). We are left with the impression that while Jesus' opponents were adapt at laying traps, they were also good at falling into them..." Matthew. III.168.

authentication of the teachings of the community that represents Jesus against any sort of heresy.⁶⁸

The above conclusion is derived from Mt's consistent characterization of this group. In Mt 9:34 and 12:24, *οἱ φαρισαῖοι* unlike *οἱ ὄχλοι* reject Jesus as the son of David. In Mt 21:9.11.15 *οἱ ἀχειρεῖς* are combined with *οἱ γραμματεῖς* as those opposed to Jesus, though the disciples noted in 15:12 that only *οἱ φαρισαῖοι* were shocked by the answer of Jesus. Further, Mt combines *οἱ φαρισαῖοι καὶ σαδδουκαῖοι* (3:7; 16:1.6.11.12), or *γραμματεῖς καὶ φαρισαῖοι* without article (15:1; 23:2.15.23.25.27.29). Since Mt is the only evangelist who mentions these two groups with one definite article as *τῶν γραμματέων καὶ φαρισαίων* (5:20; 12:38), it could be said that Mt's interest was just to present these groups as a united front against Jesus irrespective of their actual historical political or theological orientations.⁶⁹ Mt's case against the Jewish leaders is once more shown in his reworking of the pericope involving a teacher of the law who questioned Jesus about the greatest commandment (Mk 12:28-34). For Mk, this question was out of genuine interest and the teacher was told by Jesus that he was not far from the kingdom. Mt who identifies him as a lawyer of the Pharisees party, interprets his enquiry as borne out of the desire to test Jesus (Mt 22:34-40).⁷⁰ If these passages have their origin in the intra-community teachings of Mt's church, one can then conclude that the overwhelming attack against these groups could indicate that Mt composed his writing as a warning to the scribes in his community not to emulate the scribes of the Pharisees.⁷¹ This is possible since there are some scribes who have become followers of the kingdom (13:52). On the other hand, the context of our trilogy (cf. 21:23-27.46) shows an active and uneasy contact with the Jewish leaders. This confirms that our trilogy has its origin in a situation of authority controversy between Mt's community and her opponents. Hence the prominence of the word *ἐξουσία* in 21:23f.27. The controversy seems to centre on the divine authority of Jesus⁷² or on the correct interpretation of Scriptures especially the Law.⁷³ With the trilogy, Mt shows God's rejection of the leaders and justifies the tenets of his own community. But he shows that those worthy to belong to this new community should be better than the Jewish leaders (5:20).⁷⁴ Hence, Mt's tirades against the Jewish establishment have to be seen as part of the self-definition of the Christian minority.⁷⁵

⁶⁸ A very useful literary-critical reading of the role of the Jewish leaders in Mt's gospel has been made by J. D. Kingsbury, "The Developing Conflict," 57-73.

⁶⁹ See S. V. Tillborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 3.

⁷⁰ See also D. Sim, "Wedding Garment," 168.

⁷¹ Cf. M. Ebner/S. Schreiber (Hrsg.), *Einleitung*, 134. They infer that Mt composed his writing in a scribal milieu.

⁷² Cf. J. Drury, *Parables*, 96.

⁷³ So also A. J. Saldarini, *Community*, 124-64; M. Konradt, 380.

⁷⁴ Perhaps the conclusion of Tillborg brings out this point well. He thinks that Mt who is a gentile "...admonishes his readers to accept Jesus as so many other people have done, and not to reject him as the Jewish leaders did." *Jewish Leaders*, 171f. The implication is that Mt's attitude to the Jewish leaders is at the service of his ethics.

⁷⁵ Thus G. N. Stanton, "The Gospel of Matthew and Judaism," 274.

8.4 THE SELF-IMAGE OF THE MATTHEAN CHURCH

Once Mt has dismissed the position of the Jewish leadership as false, he endeavours to present his community as the authentic recipient of the deposits of faith. In talking about the self-image of the Matthean church, I mean the way Mt's community sees itself or at least the way the community wants itself to be seen. This self-image may run counter to the actual reality. As already shown above, while some scholars see the Church of Mt as the true Israel, or as a continuation of Israel in *Heilsgeschichte*, others dismiss the link between the Church and Israel. But the question as to the relationship between these two bodies cannot be separated from the question of how Mt conceives of his Church theologically and how he wants his document to be received.⁷⁶

Perhaps one of the natural places to look for the image of the Matthean community is the parable trilogy as a whole. As already stated at the beginning of this study, the reluctance of the Jewish Leaders to respond positively to the message of the OT prophets, to The Baptist and to Jesus and the consequence of such reluctance are the central themes of the trilogy. As a case against their lack of repentance, Mt presents the parable of the Two Sons which emphasizes the importance of repentance and doing of τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς. The application of the parable shows how obedience to God's will overrides a mere profession of faith. This accords with the injunctions at 3:2.7-12; 4:17; 5:17-20; 11:20; 23:18-20. The implication is that the community is one that is constantly reminded of the need to do the will of the father. This will is manifested in the teachings of the Law and the Prophets which Jesus has come to fulfill. This reminder implies that the true believers are those who live according to what they profess. The life of a true believer must correspond to the profession ἐγώ, κύριε.

A further picture appears in the parable of the Wicked Tenants. When read as a polemic against the Jewish Leaders, one sees how the inability to accept the offer of salvation on the part of the Jewish Leaders from whom the kingdom would be taken is contrasted with the giving of this kingdom to another group. This new ἔθνος is no doubt the Christian community. But when read as a message to the Matthean community, one sees a division into groups of obedient and disobedient followers. Only the former group is approved in the parable. Again, this group would be characterized by doing the will of God metaphorically depicted as ποιῶντι τοὺς καρποὺς of the kingdom (21:43). Its members are to guard against the false prophets depicted as ravenous wolves in sheep's clothing who produce only bad fruits (cf. 7:15-20). Since this injunction comes in the context of the Sermon on the Mount, it is then logical to conclude that the false members are those who do not adhere to the teachings Jesus has expounded beginning especially from 5:21-7:6. In these verses the issue of righteousness is at stake. This is to be expected in a gospel in which δικαιοσύνη plays a prominent role. It is righteousness that is greater than that of the Jewish Leaders.

From another perspective the realities and problems of the Gentile mission seem to be expressed in this parable. Unlike Mt 10:5 and Mt 28:19 that expressly prohibit

⁷⁶ See R. E. Menninger, *Israel and The Church*, 10.

and encourage the mission to the gentiles respectively, Mt 21:43 seems to bring out the subtle implication of this mission, namely, the transfer of the privileges of the kingdom. Therefore the community sees herself as a missionary community.⁷⁷ This missionary duty has already been implied in the call of the first disciples (4:18-22). This mission is carried out fully in being a follower of Jesus (cf. 8:23; 9:19.37ff; 12:49f; 19:16-26.27f).⁷⁸ Since the community is already a composite of Jews and Gentiles, there seems to be no Gentile-Jew antithesis in these verses. Mt however thinks of the admission of the Gentiles into the true Israel which is the church in the process of formation.⁷⁹ This admission carries with it the demand to obey the Law and the Prophets which the community has made her own heritage.

Perhaps in no other place is the above point made clearer in the trilogy than in the parable of the Wedding Feast (22:1-14). As already shown, Mt, unlike Lk, justifies the exclusion of the primary guests on the grounds that they were not worthy (v.8), thus disclosing Mt's ethical interest. This interest is carried further in the gathering of the bad and the good (22:10). In the sixth chapter I have already shown the conceptual closeness between Mt 22:10 and Mt 13:47f.⁸⁰ I have also shown how these parables manifest the situation of the Matthean community.⁸¹ The two parables allow that what is important in the community of Jesus is praxis.⁸² It also bears close resemblance to the positive evaluation of the official sinners in 21:32. In this parable that seems to be a foreshadowing of the inner realities of the early Church, there are many words that will again recur in the end-time parable (25:31-46). These words include *συνάγω*, *καθίζω*, *ἀφορῶ*, *δίκαιος*, *πῦρ*. In the parable of the Wedding Feast, the action of the servants who went out and gathered (*συνάγω*) everyone they could find both good and bad led to the hall being filled (*πληρόω*). This has been seen as a picture of the mission to the Gentiles. But the inspection of the king (v.11) brings to the fore the ethical demands of the community. This demand is then concretized by the punishment meted to the man without the proper wedding garment. But it is to be expected that the guests have been allowed to mingle freely before the *παρουσία* of the king. Although the parable is an allegory of the eschatological judgment, its use as a pedagogical tool in the hands of Mt's community has already been shown. If this is so, one could see here the injunction to the community members not to pass a premature judgment on those seen as offenders.⁸³ The Matthean community is then a community that is called to forgive (cf. ch. 18).

This congregational view appears again in 7:21-23 where some members address Jesus as Lord without doing his commands. Since in Mt the word *κύριος* is used only

⁷⁷ Cf. U. Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 277. For E. Schweizer, *Matthäus*, 4, the community takes the issue of mission for granted. Against this view see S. Brown, "The Matthean Community," 214.

⁷⁸ For M. Konradt, *Israel*, 352 an ecclesiological accent has been given to the pericope of 9:2-8 by the acclamation of the crowds who praised God for given such powers (to forgive sins) to men

⁷⁹ See also K. Tagawa, "People and Community," 161.

⁸⁰ Cf. also J. Jeremias, *Gleichnisse*, 79ff; G. Künzel, *Gemeindeverständnis*, 125-34.

⁸¹ Cf. C. W. F. Smith, "Mixed State," 154.

⁸² See U. Luz, *Matthäus*, II.360. Luz makes the important point that the fate of the righteous is not the determining factor in the parable of 13:47-50. This is also the case with the parable of 22:1-14 where the weight seems to lie with the offenders.

⁸³ So also U. Luz, *Matthäus*, I.528.

by the disciples, he is thinking of his community that is differentiated according to their obedience to the teachings of Jesus.⁸⁴ It is possible that the passage is a strong critique against the wandering preachers with whom Mt's community is often in contact with.⁸⁵ The effect is that the ideal image Mt has for his church is the image of a collection of those who will always do the will of God. Although he addresses his members as salt of the earth and light of the world (5:13f), he falls short of designating them as "the righteous" or "the just" to distinguish them from their opponents.⁸⁶ These designations would have been appropriate to the sectarian tone of the gospel.⁸⁷ The absence of such epitaphs confirms Mt's insistence that his community should not relax on their call.⁸⁸ I have already explained how this could imply the issue of circumcision.

8.5 THE NATURE OF THE MATTHEAN COMMUNITY

Though what I have described above is the ideal image of the church as Mt sees it, yet the document Mt presents shows that the reality of the situation is far from the ideal. Perhaps the strong negative descriptions of Jesus' opponents which the trilogy and the entire narrative strongly shows can help in a holistic depiction of the real nature of the community which has adapted and re-interpreted the teachings of Jesus. But over and above this community interest, it can also be a lee way to a fresh application of the teachings of Jesus for the church of today. I find this important because of the realization that what the evangelists depict has more relevance for the readers than for the historical figures in the story.

In the third chapter, I have shown how the term *δικαιοσύνη* is very important in the interpretation of the parable of the Two Sons (21:28-32). This is the righteousness which must be achieved by the members of the Christian community.⁸⁹ This is a human activity under divine inspiration⁹⁰ and has to surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees. I have also further elaborated how *ἔλεος* functions as the determining factor in this community of followers. Since the quotation from Hos 6:6 (*ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν*) appears only in Mt (9:9; 12:7), it is fair to suppose that this verse of Hos. is important in the eyes of the Matthean community. It has been argued that the pericope is not restricted to historical characters but has become a directive for the community in order to follow the mercy of Jesus. That means that what we have before us "is a paraenetic appeal in the form of a Christology."⁹¹ This idea is concretized by the realization that the Matthean Jesus enjoins his followers to follow in his footsteps. This is the case with the hortatory injunctions of 12:7. The saying about forgiveness takes its offspring from the debate over the holiness or validity of

⁸⁴ Cf. H. Weder, *Rede*, 241; U. Luz, *Matthäus*, I.527.

⁸⁵ Cf. J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, I.274.

⁸⁶ Cf. 1 Enoch 39, 58, 91; 4 Ezra 7.

⁸⁷ On the language of sectarianism see J. A. Overman, *Gospel*, 16-19.

⁸⁸ For the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount as community code see L. J. White, "Grid and Group in Matthew's Community," 61-88.

⁸⁹ See G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 153.

⁹⁰ See G. Harder, "Jesus und das Gesetz," 107f.

⁹¹ S. V. Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 113.

the Sabbath. Mt, having redactionally pointed out that the Pharisees were the ones who posed this question, goes on to substitute the debate over the Sabbath with the injunction to forgive. This change of perspective could account for the break in thought between 12:6 and 12:7.⁹² The implication is that the stress of the pericope is on forgiveness of the little ones in the Jesus' movement. These and similar arguments led Tilborg to conclude that Mt's intention here is to depict the ever-abiding validity of the actions of Jesus. Since Jesus has fulfilled the Scriptures by eating with tax-collectors and sinners and even allowed his disciples to eat corn on the Sabbath, the *ἔλεος* of Jesus should regulate the Christian community.⁹³

It seems clear that the contrast between the old and the new people of God which the trilogy defines (21:43) is an indication that the community Mt describes is a visible sociological group. Strecker has also given the valuable insight that the specific construction of the introduction to the parable of the Wedding Feast (22:2) in aorist (*ὡμοιωθή*) shows that *ἡ βασιλεία* should not be understood only in the future but also in the salvation-historic past and as well as in the present situation of the Church. His conclusion then is that "die Basileia wird dort zur Gegenwart, wo die eschatologische Forderung des Kyrios verkündet und verwirklicht wird."⁹⁴ This is also the sense derived from the *ἐκκλησία* terminology of 16:18.

This same tendency to make present to the community realities from the life of Jesus is also evident in the pericope concerning fasting. By omitting Mk's *ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ* (Mk 2:20), Mt could be pointing out that the reality of fasting among the Christians is something that lasts for the whole era.⁹⁵ This lasting duration of fasting is made clearer by the changing of Mk's *νηστεύειν* to *πενθεῖν*.⁹⁶ The meaning is that the situation of the community is clearer in Mt than in Mk.⁹⁷

In the majority of the investigated texts in this chapter, there is a consistency of the contrast-schema. This contrast schema seems to mirror salvation-history. Those who belong to the *Heilszeit* are expected to bear fruit. Hence there is a tension between the indicative realities of calling and the imperative task that accompanies it. This tension is what the trilogy of parables brings out clearly. In the first parable, for instance, the *ἐγώ, κύριε* of the second son is starkly contrasted to his action *οὐκ ἀπήλθεν* (21:30). This is carried forth in the second parable where the progressive sending of slaves to the tenants and the eventual sending of the son did not lead to the conversion of the tenants. And in the last parable of the trilogy, the invitation to the wedding feast enabled those invited to carry out a murderous scheme. As already argued both the tenants of the second parable and the initially invited guests of the last parable manifest a turning back on a previous profession. The implication could then be that the description of the new *ἔθνος* to be given the kingdom as one that

⁹² The verse of Mt 12:7 could be taken as a parenthesis since the *γάρ* of the next verse continues the thought of v. 6. Cf. W. C. Allen, *Matthew*, 128.

⁹³ S. V. Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 116.

⁹⁴ G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 215.

⁹⁵ This is against the view of E. Lohmeyer who thinks that Mt appears not to know anything about fasting. See his *Matthäus*, 175.

⁹⁶ See R. Bultmann, "πένης, πενθεῖν" *ThWNT* VI.42, n. 16.

⁹⁷ See G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 189.

would render the fruits at the right time as well as the addition of the judgment of the man without the appropriate wedding garment could reflect the presence in the community of some who do not keep to the demands of Jesus.

A further hint to the problems concerning the Matthean Church is the debate on marital ethics (Mt 19:3-12//Mk 10:2-12). At the end of this debate, the disciples came to ask Jesus about the significance of his teaching. Though some exegetes have seen the Matthean narrative as more Jewish and logical in nature⁹⁸ or that Mt has concerned himself much with the redaction of the text with the addition of *μὴ ἐπιπονεῖα*,⁹⁹ it seems that the real redaction of Mt begins with the addition of 19:10. Here it is the disciples of Jesus who posit the question about the difficulty of being faithful to Jesus' teaching on marriage. A lot of factors point to the ascription of the verses 10-12 to Mt. These include the use of disciples (*μαθηταί*);¹⁰⁰ the construction with *εἰ* is Matthean;¹⁰¹ the word *αἰτία* has been borrowed from 19:3; the word *συμφέρει* is only found again in Mt 5:29.30 and 18:6. A deeper reflection reveals that Mt 19:10-11 tends to make a distinction between the disciples of Jesus and the ones who receive the word. This could lead to the conclusion that the teaching of Jesus about marriage was for the community of Mt a difficult task which it struggles to embrace. It could be that this pericope links up with other passages which deal with the correct attitude for those to be considered worthy to be in the company of Jesus (Mt 10:11.13.37.38; 22:8). Coupled with the above passages that describe the ideal Christian community, one is led to conclude that the church is not the gathering of the pure. Luz counts as one of the scholars who believe that there is no *Heilsgewissheit* in Matthew's community.¹⁰² Bornkamm may thus be right in seeing the expression *πονηροὺς τε καὶ ἀγαθοὺς* as a favourite ecclesiological metaphor for Mt.¹⁰³

Consequently, one can agree with a host of scholars who hold the Matthean community as a *corpus mixtum*,¹⁰⁴ a collection of the good and bad.¹⁰⁵ And in this collection, the observance of the law seems to be central. While it appears that some members of the community tend to take the offer of salvation for granted- depicted by the second son (21:30), the tenants (21:35-39) the first set of invited guests (22:3-5), and the man without the wedding garment (22:11-14) - the voice of Jesus continues to announce, through the parables, the message of repentance and the importance not to repeat the negative response of the Jewish leaders. The off-shoot is that the Matthean narrative reflects the influx of Gentiles and Jews into the

⁹⁸ See J. Schmid, "Markus und der aramäische Matthäus," 182.

⁹⁹ See R. Bultmann, *Geschichte*, 140; W. C. Allen, *Matthew*, 52; T. W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus*, 136-138; G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 130; V. Taylor, *Gospel*, 419. For the several distinctions between the Matthean and Markan pericopes see S. V. Tilborg, *Jewish Leaders*, 118-123.

¹⁰⁰ Mt 73; Mk 46; Lk 37.

¹⁰¹ This particle has been labeled a Semitism. See W. D. Davies/D. C. Allison, *Matthew*, I.81-2.

¹⁰² U. Luz, *Matthäus*, I.405-6.

¹⁰³ G. Bornkamm, "Enderwartung," 9.

¹⁰⁴ See for example, G. Bornkamm, "Enderwartung," 17; G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 1962, 214-19; C. W. F. Smith, "Mixed State," 149-63.

¹⁰⁵ A strong advocate against this image of the Matthean community is P. Luomanen, "Corpus Mixtum," 469-80.

community with the resultant problem of ethical rigidity or laxity. Hence, Mt does not reject discipline but rather redefines it, while allowing the rigors of its scrutiny to the βασιλεύς who would come at the eschatological time.¹⁰⁶

This idea is very easily read from the parable of the Wedding Feast (22:1-14). As repeatedly said, it is possible to posit that the addition of the figure of the man without the wedding garment (22:12) earlier accounted for the change of the host into the figure of a king and the change from δειπνον μέγα to γάμους. The fact that the end of the parable does not only talk of the transfer of invitation to another group as in Lk but the additional theme of worthiness of those invited speaks for a community that awaits the return of the master. The nature of this community had already been seen as embracing πονηρούς τε καὶ ἀγαθούς (v.10). If we concentrate on the figure of the man without the wedding garment, it is clear that the meaning of the parable for the reflecting community is that the fact of election does not preclude the issue of Judgment. Therefore, it is not a question of calling but of worthiness, not of salvation installed by grace but of the good works which are demanded by the fact of election.¹⁰⁷ As already seen, this message runs through in the Matthean narrative. This confirms the already stated fact that the centre of the parable has been displaced by paraenesis.

As a warning that there should be no complacency in this new group, the community is thus reflecting over the consequences of its election and not on the factum. This is so because there is still a judgment to which all the newly invited will be subjected. Hence the time of the Church can be seen as the *Entscheidungszeit*, and 'in-between time' in which all the preparations for the parousia are to be made. The call to be watchful at all times (24:42; 25:13) confirms the fact that the community consists of the good and the bad (13:36-43). It is not in vain that Mt reminds his community of the coming judgment (7:21ff; 13:36ff; 25:31ff). There is, at the end, a promise of salvation for those who remain faithful till the end (24:13).¹⁰⁸

Apart from the presence of Jews and Gentiles, the Matthean community shows itself as one that is also constituted by scribes (cf. 23:34) and prophets (10:41).¹⁰⁹ Mt shows himself as belonging to the class of teachers (cf. 13:52).¹¹⁰ Therefore when Mt accuses the scribes and Pharisees of hypocrisy, this could be a veiled critic on the Scribes of his own community.¹¹¹ This goes to confirm the argument that the debates in which Jesus engages are meant to impart teaching about matters that were of ardent interest to the church in its own day.¹¹² In this case, one can explain the tension between restriction of

¹⁰⁶ See also C. W. F. Smith, "Mixed State," 166.

¹⁰⁷ See W. Trilling, "Überlieferungsgeschichte," 7, n.1.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. U. Schnelle, *Einleitung*, 266.

¹⁰⁹ See E. Schweizer, "Matthew's Church," 131.

¹¹⁰ For U. Schnelle, Mt was an active teacher in his community. See his *Einleitung*, 262. See also K. Stendahl, *The School of St Matthew*, 20; G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 39.

¹¹¹ D. Garland agrees to this interpretation thus: "In ch. 23, Matthew...warns the scribes disciplined to the kingdom that they had better not be found false stewards like the scribes and Pharisees; for if God did not spare Israel, he will just as surely not spare an unfaithful church. Matthew 23 has a pedagogical function." D. Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23*, 40; contra, D. C. Sim, "Wedding Garment," 174f.

¹¹² J. D. Kingsbury, "Reflections," 447.

mission to the house of Israel (10:5f) and the universal outlook of this mission (Q 7:1-10; 13:28) as a conflict between the Community's scribal tradition and the Q- itinerant missionaries who are more open to the gentile course.¹¹³ It has also been explained that on another level, the references to "their Scribes" (7:29) and "their Synagogues" (4:23; 9:35; 12:9; 13:54; 23:23) could refer to an authority conflict with the Scribes of the Jewish party. There is thus conflict based on the correct interpretation of the Scriptures and ownership of divine rights.¹¹⁴ This conflict presents Mt's community as a front against the leadership of the Jewish synagogues.

8.6 MATTHEW'S DATE AND PROVENANCE

The above discussion indicates the fact that the Story which Mt presents to his readers is one that has great relevance for the post Easter Church consisting of Jews and Gentiles.¹¹⁵ It can be said that the real reader/hearer of Mt's gospel was a member of the Matthean church living towards the end of the first century.¹¹⁶ As 21:41; 22:7 and 23:38 show, this gospel was written after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Since Mt uses Mk as source and is acknowledged by Ignatius around 110 AD, his gospel must have been written around 80 or 90 AD.¹¹⁷ The reader was thus confronted with the problems peculiar with this age in the history of the Jews.

Some events in the narrative indicate Syria as the place of origin of this document.¹¹⁸ One of them is the centrality of Peter (cf. 16:16-19) who seems to have had much influence in the Church in Antioch (cf. Gal 2:11f).¹¹⁹ Again, Mt depicts the fame of Jesus as reaching Syria where the first miracle seekers come looking for Jesus, 4:24 (*καὶ ἀπήλθεν ἡ ἀκοή αὐτοῦ εἰς ὄλην τὴν Συρίαν*) before the narrative depicts the activities of Jesus in the Jewish main regions (4:25). Again unlike Mk, Mt names Jesus a *Ναζωραῖος* (2:23; 26:71), a typical depiction of Jesus in Syrian regions.¹²⁰ If Antioch, the capital of Syria is the concrete origin of the gospel,¹²¹ then the conflict involving the law in the gospel (cf. 5:17-19) seems to have a concrete geographical basis.¹²² During the time of Paul, these problems were rife in this region (cf. Gal

¹¹³ Cf. M. Ebner/S. Schreiber (Hrsg.), *Einleitung*, 143.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 141-43.

¹¹⁵ See J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 121. Kingsbury also argues that the language of this community was Greek.

¹¹⁶ In the historical-biographical approach to the study of the gospels, distinction was made between the primary reader and the intended reader. The primary reader was seen as a real life contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth, while the intended reader was seen as the one for whom the evangelist wrote.

¹¹⁷ Cf. G. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 35f; J. Gnilka *Markus 2.520*; U. Luz, *Matthäus I.104*. But see R. H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 599-609. For him, Mt was written around 65-67 AD. On the date of Mk's composition see M. Hengel, *Studies*, 7-28.

¹¹⁸ Against this view see H. D. Singerland, "The Transjordanian," 18-28.

¹¹⁹ See also E. Schweizer, "Matthew's Church," 129-30. One of the notable improvements of the personality of Peter in Mt against Mk is the note that Peter stayed to see the end of Jesus' trial (Mt 26:58 diff. Mk 14:54).

¹²⁰ Cf. U. Luz, *Matthäus*, 5.102.188.

¹²¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 5.101f; B. E. Schweizer, *Matthäus und seine Gemeinde*, 138f; J. P. Meier, "Antioch," 11-86.

¹²² This view is also supported by S. Brown but he sees Palestine as the place of origin of the Matthean community. "The Matthean Community," 213-14.

2:11-14).¹²³ It could then be said that the Jewish-Christians in the community did not easily welcome the conclusions of the apostolic council to allow the gentiles to be gentiles and Christians at the same time (Gal 2:1-10). Appropriately, the gospel was written so that events, words and characters in the life of Jesus were made transparent for the situational life of the church.¹²⁴ An example of this transparency is the presentation of the Jewish leaders in the trilogy. They serve here as representatives of the Jewish tradition of Mt's time. Against them is a group of official sinners who represent those who obey the call to repentance. Since Mt did not present a biography of Jesus, we are then left with the conclusion that the historical past remained normative for Mt and his church. This has implications for the present reader of Mt's document.

8.7 GENERAL CONCLUSION

Having gone through the language of the trilogy and the background resonances that could help the modern reader to understand the messages that lie at its background, it is now time to assemble the fruits of this research. As has already been hinted from the beginning of this work, there are recurring motifs that seam the parables together, drawing the reader to the conclusion envisaged by the writer. The author of the trilogy has intensified this intention not only by the exposition of common themes, but also by the use of common vocabulary and syntax in his construction of the parables. And as has been shown in the previous chapters, the trilogy does not only have a salvation-historic aim but also is a paraenetic appeal. And it seems to have reached a paraenetic climax in 22:11-14 where the demand for wearing the appropriate wedding garment is in view.¹²⁵

One of the insights already derived from the above discussions is that the bible verses are not to be taken as historical facts in all their ramifications but rather as powerful stories. They combine vestiges of history and the contemporary realities with which the particular narrator is confronted. They tend to move the reader to identify with the characters with whom the narrator identifies. That explains why I have tried to interpret the trilogy from the point of view of Mt and not mainly from the way Jesus could have told it. Surely Mt's retelling of the Jesus' story has the aim of instilling discipline into his own community and the early readers of his gospel. This insight has already been developed especially by narrative critics. Writing about the gospel of Mk, Fowler writes: "The Gospel is designed not to say something about the disciples or even to say something about Jesus, but to do something to the reader."¹²⁶ Although this seems to be an overstatement, it seems that 'doing something' to the reader is definitely true relative to the Bible parables. The implication is that the questions of Jesus in the trilogy (21:28.31.40.42) are intended

¹²³ See also J. P. Meier, "Antioch," 15-27.

¹²⁴ Scholars have coined terms for this kind of writing, namely "transparency" (cf. U. Luz, "The Disciples," 98-128), "typicality" (cf. W. Trilling, *Israel*, 159); and "simultaneity" (cf. J. D. Kingsbury, "Reflections," 446).

¹²⁵ See also W. G. Olmstead, *Trilogy*, 165.

¹²⁶ R. M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand*, 79.

to evoke some kind of response on the present reader of the text. Hence, the recorded responses by the historical hearers of the parable (21:41.41) are left open-ended by the narrator. The reader is thus caught up in the plot that enfolds. He is left to identify with the answers provided by Jesus' interlocutors or to form his own judgment.

In his narrative, Mt makes this intention clear with a number of strategies.¹²⁷ He relegates his own authority as narrator to the background and elevates that of Jesus. He does this by limiting his commentaries to the words and actions of Jesus. In other places in the narrative, the insertion of such statements as *ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω*, (24:15), *ἕως τῆς σήμερον* (27:8) and *μέχρι τῆς σήμερον* (28:15) by Mt "bursts the bounds of the story he is telling of the life and ministry of Jesus in order to address the implied reader directly."¹²⁸ Often Mt uses the historical present for the words of Jesus to indicate that the teachings of Jesus are an ongoing process. By the side of Jesus are the disciples who are identified as learners (13:13-23.51; 16:12; 17:13) and whose questions bring about much teaching from Jesus (cf. 18:1f; 24:34f). On the other hand, the frailties of the disciples (cf. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8) are depicted as a way of showing the reader that discipleship is never complete. The conclusion is that Mt includes the readers in the Jesus' story who is with them at all times (28:20).

As already indicated, this inclusion is clear by the fact that Mt allows the opponents of Jesus to provide the answers to the questions. Therefore, the question comes back to the reader. Who is the one that does *τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς*? Is it the one that says 'no' but later responds positively or the one that says 'yes' and responds negatively? Just as it was with the Jewish leaders, there could be no other answer than *ὁ πρῶτος*. Although there might be disagreements as to what constitutes the will of the father, there is no doubt that one who is not faithful to his profession cannot lay claim to authenticity.

Mt develops this motif on another level. His indictment of false profession and his presentation of what constitutes true worship is a universal truth that applies to readers of his gospel in all ages. This has wide implications for the interpretation of the gospel narrative and in its day to day application. In as much as it remains relevant to remain faithful to the tradition left behind by Jesus, it is more significant to interpret this tradition in the light of present realities. The question that confronts the present reader of the gospel thus appears in the realm of making present the deposit of the Scriptures. This is the only way the *εὐαγγέλιον* can actually be good news to the hearers.

Concretely, one of the questions to be addressed is the question of the incarnation of the Scriptures. This is a question bordering on the nature the message should take when it encounters other cultures or circumstances. Mt has shown this sensitivity in his efforts to harmonize the Jewish and Gentile dispositions of his group. In this sensitivity, he does not relegate discipline to the background. Rather, he shows how discipline can be redefined to reflect what is existentially necessary for the community of believers. Writing shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem, he interprets the events of the destruction as God's judgment on the lack of repentance

¹²⁷ These insights have been developed by U. Luz, *Matthäus*, 1.44-47.

¹²⁸ J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 120.

on the part of the chosen people. This judgment had the positive effect of opening the doors of salvation to all irrespective of ethnic inclinations. In this new gathering of the people of God, the only essential element is doing the will of God. This has to be seen as a new interpretation of the teachings of Jesus. If Jesus can give a new interpretation of the OT laws (cf. Mt 5:21-47) and if his early followers can interpret his teachings to serve the needs of their various communities (cf. Acts 15), then the church of today is called to follow this same step.

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