

**Rest and Sabbath in Matthew's Gospel:  
An Investigation of Matthew 11:25-12:14 in  
the Context of the Gospel's Theology and Setting**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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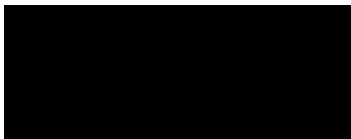
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Jesus' invitation to rest in Matthew 11:28-30 is part of the evangelist's special material, inserted between the pronouncement that only the Son fully knows the Father and possesses the unique prerogative to reveal him (11:25-27) and the only two sabbath stories in this Gospel (12:1-14). This dissertation explores the significance of such a juxtaposition. Since the use of the Jewish Scriptures is pervasive in Matthew's Gospel, the dissertation studies the use of the evangelist's term for rest (ἀνάπαυσις) throughout the LXX. As a result of this analysis, it proposes that there are three main potential backgrounds for the concept of rest in this two-fold pericope and these can be summarized under the categories of "sabbath rest", "peaceful inheritance" and "wisdom's repose." These categories then provide the resources for a fresh evaluation of the significance of Jesus' offer of rest in its Matthean narrative context. In addition, the examination of Matthew's theology of rest and Sabbath in 11:25-12:14 in light of the major themes of law, eschatology and Christology in this Gospel suggests that Matthew's approach to interpreting Sabbath law and his eschatological perspective are primarily based on his beliefs about Jesus. Jesus is the Mosaic-Davidic eschatological agent prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures and through him has been inaugurated a new era of Christ-centered law interpretation along with a present realization of the eschatological expectations of the sabbath rest of the messianic age that is to be consummated at his parousia. This Christological conviction has placed the Matthean community at odds with the leaders of its own religious society, who have rejected its belief about the identity and mission of Jesus, including its proposal that the sabbath commandment's rest from now on points to the eschatological reality of rest that is centered in Jesus.

### **Author's Declaration**

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the dissertation has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The dissertation has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the author's signature.

Signed:

Date: August 20, 2013

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## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

### **Rest – Sabbath Juxtaposition**

As a minister of a sabbatarian Christian denomination I have been intrigued by the seemingly deliberate juxtaposition found in Matthew 11:25-12:14,<sup>1</sup> where the Matthean Jesus offers his own rest (ἀνάπαυσις, cf. Matt 11:28-30) just before proclaiming himself the Lord of the sabbath (σάββατον, cf. Matt 12:8). Furthermore, this juxtaposition becomes increasingly thought-provoking with the realization that Matt 11:28-30 is material unique to Matthew, inserted between Q and Markan material,<sup>2</sup> directly preceding the only two sabbath episodes narrated in this Gospel. In the Gospel of Matthew, the word ἀνάπαυσις (and cognates) appears four times (11:28, 29; 12:43; 26:45). The first two occurrences do not have parallels in Mark or Luke. The third occurrence is a Q passage (Matthew 12:43; Luke 11:24) and the last occurrence Matthew shares with Mark (Matthew 26:45; Mark 14:41). The focus of this investigation will be on the first two occurrences because they are distinctively Matthean and they are placed in the narrative context of the only two-fold sabbath pericope in Matthew (12:1-8, 9-14).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the English translations of the Gospel of Matthew follow the NASB.

<sup>2</sup> This dissertation assumes the two source theory of Synoptic relationships: Markan priority and the existence of Q as the non-Markan material Matthew and Luke have in common.

<sup>3</sup> A brief acknowledgement of the additional two occurrences of the word-group in Matthew is in order. The Q term found in Matthew 12:43 (ἀνάπαυσις), is commonly translated as “resting place.” In the immediate context an unclean spirit is seeking for a resting place after leaving a man. When it does not find it, it returns to the man, along with seven other spirits and takes residence in the man once again. Whether this passage is to be interpreted as a “parable” (cf. J. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*. The New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2005], 514, who argues that Matthew 12:43 “The application at the end makes clear that we have a parable here and not a comment on evil spirits or exorcism as such”), or a “straightforward warning,” (cf. W. D. Davies, and D. C. Allison, *Matthew 8-18* [ICC; New York, N.Y.: T&T Clark, 1991], 360, where the man in it is clearly compared by Matthew to the evil generation that fails to recognize the “greater than” offered by Jesus throughout the preceding section [12:1-42]: “the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation” [12:45b]), Matthew precedes and ends the section of Matt 12:1-45 with the quest for rest (cf. Matt 11:28-30; 12:43-45). Those

What is Matthew trying to convey with the intercalation of these “rest” verses at this stage of the Gospel? What is this “rest” that Jesus offers (Matt 11:28, 29)? What does Jesus mean when he says “I will give you rest” (Matt 11:28) and “You will find rest” (Matt 11:29)? And in Stanton’s words: “Why did Matthew place 11.28-30 at this point in his gospel?”<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps Jesus’ invitation and the context of 11:25-30 encourage us to think in terms of a sabbath background,<sup>5</sup> including the fact that the transition phrase “in that time” is used in both Matt 11:25 and 12:1, “indicating a continuity of thought”.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the frequency of the usage of the word “sabbath” in the narrative following Jesus’ invitation to rest (Matt 12:1-14) is revealing. The term σάββατον is used eleven times in Matthew’s Gospel, and eight of these occurrences are recorded in the two consecutive passages (Matt 12:1-8, 9-14) that follow the first two occurrences of ἀνάπαυσις analyzed above.<sup>7</sup>

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who do not accept the offer of rest by Jesus end up in a terrible condition, controlled by a “restless” unclean spirit with seven other spirits” (cf. Nolland, *Matthew*, 514, who adds: “the little story appears to be about temporary or apparent benefit turning to disaster”). The last Matthean instance of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group (26:45) is a Markan occurrence (cf. Mark 14:41), a verb in the second person plural, either in the Indicative or Imperative present middle. The syntax of the whole verse comes into question. Nolland, *Matthew*, 1104-5 argues for three possibilities: “Are Jesus’ opening words here to be punctuated as a question and the verbs treated as indicatives, or do we have indicatives without a question, or do we have a pair of ironic imperatives?” He proposes that “ironic imperatives would make the point that it is too late now to do anything different.” I propose a fourth option: that we have a pair of imperatives that are not ironic. These two verbs, sleep and rest, are placed in the narrative context of two other preceding verbs, also linked with καί in verse 41: stay awake and pray. Both of these verbs are found in the imperative second person plural, two commands of Jesus to the disciples which stand in contrast to the two verbal commands in question. If we do not interpret “stay awake and pray” as ironic, then we should not interpret “sleep and rest” as ironic. This argument is strengthened by the use of two other imperatives at the end of the scene, after some time has lapsed, that are also used in a straightforward sense: “rise up, let us go” (v. 46). The new condition arises from the change in the scene: “...behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!” (Matthew 26:46). The verbal imperatives in Matt 26:45 suggest that it is too late for the disciples to change their contribution to this event, but not in an ironic manner. Jesus is now being betrayed and there is nothing else for the disciples to do. Jesus has submitted to his redemptive role (In agreement with C. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 372, who argues that, “From this point forward, passive verbs depicting Jesus’ suffering and actions done to Jesus dominate most of the narrative... having labored until his hour, he now relinquishes his destiny to the Father”).

<sup>4</sup> G. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 368.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 289.

<sup>6</sup> Nolland, *Matthew*, 481.

<sup>7</sup> The remaining three occurrences are found in Matt 24:20 and 28:1(twice).

The narrative juxtaposition of Jesus' invitation to rest (ἀνάπαυσις, Matt 11:28-30) and the Pharisaical perspective on the sabbath laws (σάββατον, Matt 12:1-14) is suggestive and seems deliberate. The adjacency of these two terms in Matt 11:25-12:14 indicates that perhaps there is a stronger thematic link that surpasses a halakhic argument. Is there sufficient ground to prove such a claim? And what is Matthew's purpose, if any, in creating this rest-sabbath juxtaposition? These inquiries will be the focus of our study.

In addition, due to Matthew's use of the LXX, it will be of importance to examine the possible precedence to this juxtaposition (ἀνάπαυσις – σάββατον) in the Septuagint.<sup>8</sup> Are these terms deliberately juxtaposed in the LXX, producing possible rest-sabbath connotations? Does the ἀνάπαυσις word group contain sabbatical overtones? We will investigate these questions at the beginning of this dissertation. The juxtaposition of the sabbath concept and the holy rest to the Lord is one that may offer a background for assessing the relationship between Matthew 11:28-30 and 12:1-14, especially since Jesus' assertion in Matthew 12:8 relates the sabbath to the Lord. We can safely propose that Matthew and his audience communicated in Greek, and based their biblical understanding on the Greek Scriptures (LXX).<sup>9</sup> If we find that in the LXX version of Exodus and Leviticus, which represents the Scriptures that Matthew's audience would have utilized, the juxtaposition of ἀνάπαυσις and σάββατον is not accidental, but, on the contrary, a very deliberate one, and that there the use of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms has clear sabbatical overtones, then the juxtaposition of these two terms in Exodus and Leviticus (LXX) will be an important background for research into the possibility of a deliberate

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<sup>8</sup> Matthew's Scriptural sources, his use of the LXX and other possible sources will be discussed in the exegetical chapters of this dissertation. For further discussion on Matthew's use of the LXX, cf. "Was the LXX Matthew's Bible?" in Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 353-361.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 353-361.

Matthean juxtaposition of Jesus' invitation to find ἀνάπαυσις in him (Matt 11:28-30) right before proclaiming himself the Lord of the sabbath (Matt 12:8).

### Context of This Study

Over recent years the scholarly work done on Matthew 11:25-12:14 has concentrated on the Christology. Within the area of Christology one of the main debates has been about the identification of Jesus as Wisdom incarnate.<sup>10</sup> Deutsch has argued for explicit Wisdom Christology,<sup>11</sup> while Laansma<sup>12</sup> has argued against it. A further area of Christological debate has been Jesus' relationship to the sabbath. Monographs on this topic have been almost exclusively interested in Christology,<sup>13</sup> with some treating the sabbath in Matthew as fulfilled in Jesus' redemptive work, and the physical rest of the seventh day therefore annulled.<sup>14</sup> Three recent monographs have concentrated on different and diverse aspects of Jesus and the sabbath in Matthew and have made significant contributions in the area of Jesus' relationship to the sabbath: Sturcke's, *Encountering the Rest of God: How Jesus Came to Personify the Sabbath*, 2005, concentrates on analysing the concept of the sabbath rest, not only in Matthew, but throughout the New Testament. He argues for the importance of the divine command to rest, be refreshed and celebrate redemption in

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<sup>10</sup> E.g. M. J. Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew's Gospel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

<sup>11</sup> C. Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke: Wisdom, Torah and Discipleship in Matthew 11.25-30*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 18 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987).

<sup>12</sup> J. Laansma, *I will give you Rest: The Rest Motif in the New Testament with Special Reference to Mt 11 and Heb 3-4*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 98 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Laansma, *I Will Give You Rest*, 1997; H. Sturcke, H. *Encountering the Rest of God: How Jesus Came to Personify the Sabbath* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag Zurich, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. L. Lybaek, *New and Old in Matthew 11-13: Normativity in the Development of Three Theological Themes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002). Y. Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath in Matthew's Gospel*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 139 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).



Jesus,<sup>15</sup> but his main research does not concentrate on the Matthean relationship between rest and sabbath. Laansma's, *I Will Give You Rest*, 1997, researches the "Rest Motif" in the New Testament, concentrating on Matthew 11 and Hebrews 3-4. He devotes a chapter to the study of the use of ἀνάπαυσις and κατὰπαυσις in the LXX,<sup>16</sup> but his focus is not on the relationship of these terms to σάββατον, even though he briefly acknowledges and discusses the frequency of the rest motif surfacing in connection with the sabbath. In his study of Matt 11:28-30 he questions and doubts the relevance of Sir 51 and the importance of Matthew's Wisdom Christology, as well as any relationship of the passage to developing Gnosticism.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, he argues for a Son of David and "greater than Moses" Christology in Matt 11:28-30,<sup>18</sup> which will be further emphasized in the findings of this research. Laansma's main concern is the relationship between Matt 11 and Heb 3-4 as it relates to the "rest motif," and he does not develop the Matthean juxtaposition of Matt 11:28-30 and Matth 12:1-14.

Yang's, *Jesus and the Sabbath in Matthew's Gospel*, 1997, is a detailed study of the relationship of Jesus and the sabbath in Matthew and the juxtaposition of Matt 11:28-30 and Matt 12:1-14. Nevertheless, his study of the background of the sabbath in the Jewish

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Sturcke, *Encountering the Rest of God*, 325-347. Sturcke both tolerates and warns against sabbatarians: "This is why Christians can tolerate Sabbatarians in their midst—provided that life in Jesus is celebrated. Their existence is a constant reminder that the content of worship is far more important than its timing. At the same time, the Sabbatarian claim must be firmly and decidedly rejected and resisted. The claim that only those who worship on the seventh-day Sabbath are faithful to the biblical pattern is both mistaken and sectarian—a lamentable mixture," 344. Even though I agree with Sturcke's redemptive focus, I disagree with his decisive rejection of the seventh-day physical rest as typological of redemptive celebration for the Christian church. Sturcke's claim cannot be sustained when subjected to appropriate hermeneutical scrutiny in the Gospel of Matthew, as I will show throughout this dissertation.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Laansma, *I Will Give You Rest*, 77-101.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Laansma, *I Will Give you Rest*, 359.

<sup>18</sup> "In any event, in both Mt 11 and Heb 3-4 the Christ, Son of David-Son of God, the 'greater than Moses,' is seen to usher in the fulfillment of God's promise of rest, the eternal Sabbath. At more than one point this train of thought draws from the same OT traditions, not least notably with respect to the promise of 'rest.'" Laansma, *I Will Give you Rest*, 364.

Scriptures concentrates on the Hebrew text,<sup>19</sup> and therefore the LXX's developmental use of the ἀνάπαυσις word group and Matthew's use of this background are not his core area of research. Furthermore, Yang argues that, "after Jesus' fulfilment of the sabbath, the function of the sabbath as the sign/type is replaced by Jesus' redemption, the antitype of the sabbath, and thus is no longer required. Matthew may then have had enough reason even to encourage his community to give up sabbath observance..."<sup>20</sup> This dissertation will challenge his position and argue against it.

These monographs, while contributing to the study of Jesus and the sabbath in Matthew, have not made the relationship between ἀνάπαυσις and σάββατον, along with the LXX's use of ἀνάπαυσις, their main area of research and therefore have also not explored in detail the possibility of the rest motif having sabbatical connotations in a conceivably deliberate Matthean juxtaposition in light of the LXX's development of the term.

At the same time as research into Matthew 11:25-12:14 has been proceeding, a major concern of Matthean studies has also been the discussion of Matthew's community setting in relation to Judaism. This area of research has generated major debate and different views in regard to whether Matthew operated within the Jewish community or not. Some scholars argued that Matthew's group operated within Judaism,<sup>21</sup> even while allowing for its challenge of the Jewish leadership.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, some scholars argue

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<sup>19</sup> Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 21-52.

<sup>20</sup> Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 307-308.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. J. A. Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis: The Gospel According to Matthew* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1996); D. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community*. SNTW (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998).

<sup>22</sup> E.g. B. Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew: Their Redaction, Form and Relevance for the Relationship Between the Matthean Community and Formative Judaism* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000).

that the Matthean community is a group that has emerged from its parent group,<sup>23</sup> and Saldarini proposes that it exists “in-between,” on its way out of Judaism.<sup>24</sup> We will need to explore further the distinction between no longer operating within the local Jewish synagogue and no longer operating within Judaism. Issues concerning sabbath and rest have only been discussed in passing in this debate, and therefore their connection deserves further exploration.

Within the context of such recent scholarship, this dissertation will explore the Matthean juxtaposition of the pericopes that contain Jesus’ invitation as the provider of “rest” (11:28) and Jesus’ assertion to be the “Lord of the sabbath” (12:8). The objectives of this dissertation are to study the relationship between rest and sabbath presented in Matthew 11:25-12:14 in light of the LXX’s development of the term ἀνάπαυσις, with a focus on the possible sabbatical dimensions of the offer of rest, to integrate these themes into Matthew’s other major theological concerns, such as Christology, law and eschatology, and to relate the findings briefly to the debate about Matthew’s setting in relation to Judaism.

The research will be initiated through a review of the LXX’s use of the ἀνάπαυσις word group. It will continue with an exegetical analysis of Matthew 11:25-30 and 12:1-14 in their immediate and broader contexts. The next stage of the study will analyse the previous findings in connection with other aspects of the Gospel’s message: eschatology, law and Christology. In light of these findings, we will briefly investigate and propose a plausible setting for the author and readers in relation to the synagogue and to Judaism in first century Jewish Christianity. In this way the investigation of sabbath and rest in Matthew

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<sup>23</sup> E.g. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 1992. P. Foster, *Community, Law and Mission in Matthew’s Gospel*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 177 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

<sup>24</sup> A. J. Saldarini, *Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

11:25 - 12:14 will be brought to a conclusion with an attempt to summarize what sort of Jewish Christianity the Gospel's narrative most likely represents.

In brief, this research seeks to contribute to current Matthean studies by attempting to answer three key questions: What is the relationship, if any, between Matthew's presentation of Jesus' offer of rest and of Jesus' attitude to the sabbath in Matthew 11:25-12:14? How do the perspectives on Christology, law and eschatology in the rest of Matthew's Gospel bear on this question? And, more briefly, what do the answers to these two main questions suggest about the setting of the author of Matthew's Gospel and his audience within the early Christian movement's self-definition in relation to Judaism?

## Chapter 2 - Ἀνάπαυσις in the LXX <sup>25</sup>

Matthew and his audience communicated in Greek, and based their biblical understanding on the Greek Scriptures (LXX).<sup>26</sup> Because of Matthew's use of the LXX, it will be of importance to begin our study examining the possible precedence of the rest-sabbath juxtaposition (ἀνάπαυσις – σάββατον) in the Septuagint introduced in the previous chapter, as well as other uses of the ἀνάπαυσις word group throughout the LXX.

In the LXX, the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms are utilized with the meaning of *rest* and *resting place*, and the word-group is used to portray different and varied aspects of rest. This discussion begins with a limited word study in the four sections of the LXX: Pentateuch, Historical Books, Poetic Books and Prophetic Books.<sup>27</sup>

### **Ἀνάπαυσις in the Pentateuch (LXX)**

Reference	Word
Gen 8:9	ἀνάπαυσιν
Gen 29:2	ἀναπαυόμενα
Gen 49:14	ἀναπαυόμενος
Gen 49:15	ἀνάπαυσιν
_____ (4)	
Exod 16:23	ἀνάπαυσις
Exod 23:12	ἀνάπαυσις
Exod 23:12	ἀναπαύσεται
Exod 23:12	ἀναπαύσεται
Exod 31:15	ἀνάπαυσις
Exod 35:2	ἀνάπαυσις
_____ (6)	

<sup>25</sup> Cf. E. Talbot, "Rest, Eschatology and Sabbath in Matthew 11:28-30: An Investigation of Jesus' Offer of Rest in the Light of the Septuagint's Use of ANAPAUSIS" in *"What Does the Scripture Say?": Studies in the Function of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity*" (eds. Evans, C. and Zacharias, D.; NY: T&T Clark, 2012), 57-69, for a version of a section of this chapter that has already been published.

<sup>26</sup> In this dissertation we proceed from the assumption that the LXX was the main Scriptural version of Matthew's audience. Cf. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 353-361.

<sup>27</sup> The texts will be listed as they appear in: E. Hatch and H. Redpath, eds. *A Concordance to the Septuagint*. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1998), 80-81.

Lev 16:31	ἀνάπαυσις
Lev 23:3	ἀνάπαυσις
Lev 23:24	ἀνάπαυσις
Lev 23:39	ἀνάπαυσις
Lev 23:39	ἀνάπαυσις
Lev 25:2	ἀναπαύσεται
Lev 25:4	ἀνάπαυσις
Lev 25:5	ἀναπαύσεως
Lev 25:8	ἀναπαύσεις

\_\_\_\_\_ (9)

Num 10:33	ἀνάπαυσιν
Num 24:9	ἀνεπαύσατο

\_\_\_\_\_ (2)

Deut 5:14	ἀναπαύσεται
Deut 28:65	ἀναπαύσει
Deut 33:20	ἀνεπαύσατο

\_\_\_\_\_ (3)

There are twenty-four occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the first five books of the LXX, including minor codex variations<sup>28</sup>. In **Genesis**, the word appears four times. The first two occurrences relate to animals resting (Gen 8:9; 29:2), and the last two occurrences refer to Issachar, son of Jacob, finding a resting place in his inheritance (Gen 49:14-15) according to Jacob's prophecy concerning his sons. In **Exodus** there are six occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms, all of them related to sabbath day observance. Of the six occurrences, four of them are in direct apposition to sabbath or seventh day (Exod 16:23; 23:12; 31:15; 35:2). **Leviticus** contains the word-group nine times in three chapters, the first of which is found in chapter 16 where the law of the day of atonement is explained. This holy day, which took place in the seventh month on the tenth day, is called a "sabbath of sabbaths, a rest (σάββατα σαββάτων ἀνάπαυσις)" (Lev

<sup>28</sup> All occurrences of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in this section of the LXX are found in the main text and footnotes in A. Rahlfs and R. Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta: Editio altera* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 1:1-354.

16:31). The next instance is found in Lev 23:3 in relation to the seventh day sabbath observance while 23:24 has in view a holy convocation on the first day of the seventh month (blowing of trumpets) and 23: 39, with two occurrences, refers to a holy rest on the fifteenth day of the seventh month in which Israel was to celebrate the feast of the Lord for seven days with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. The last chapter of Leviticus in which the word occurs is chapter 25. In this chapter we find the concept of a sabbatical year: the land was to rest every seventh year (Lev 25:2, 4, 5). The last occurrence in 25:8 relates to the rest of seven times seven years (year of jubilee). In **Numbers** the word occurs twice: the first time in 10:33, when the Israelites leave Sinai and the ark of the covenant of the Lord travels in front of them for three days to seek out a resting place for them; the second occurrence is a simile in Balaam's prophecy in which Israel "rested as a lion" (24:9). In **Deuteronomy** the word in question is used three times. The first time in 5:14, as the ten commandments are repeated, the word is used as part of the fourth commandment's sabbath day observance. The second time the word appears is in 28:65, as the consequences of disobedience are listed. One of these consequences is that "there will be no resting place" for the people if, and when, they turn away from God. The last occurrence is found in 33:20, a very similar simile to the one found in Numbers 24:9, now given to Gad ("He rests as a lion") in the final blessing of Moses to the tribes of Israel. From these brief observations, the following preliminary conclusions regarding the use of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the Pentateuch can be made:

With the exception of the first two occurrences in Genesis (8:9; 29:2), all the occurrences of the word-group in the Pentateuch fall into two major categories: a) rest or a

resting place for Israel's descendants, and b) sabbath observance (seventh-day, seventh-year and seventh-month holy convocations) .

### Rest or Resting Place

Six of the twenty-four occurrences (25 %) relate to Israel's descendants resting, finding rest, or not finding rest due to disobedience. The six occurrences are found in Gen 49:14, 15; Num 10:33; 24:9; and Deut 28:65; 33:20. These occurrences refer to a tribe of Israel (Issachar, Gad) or to Israel as a people.

### Sabbath Concept

Sixteen of the twenty-four occurrences (67 %) relate to the sabbath concept, either the observance of the seventh-day sabbath, the rest required of the land every seven years (including the year of jubilee) or a holy convocation that requires a holy rest unto the Lord and that is often called a sabbath (such as the day of atonement in Lev 16:31). The sixteen occurrences are found in Exod 16:23; 23:12 (x3); 31:15; 35:2; Lev 16:31; 23:3, 24, 39 (x2); 25:2, 4, 5, 8; and Deut 5:14. It follows that the prominent meaning given to the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the Pentateuch (LXX) is that of sabbath rest, whether relating to the seventh-day, seventh-year or a seventh-month holy convocation.

### Ἀνάπαυσις in Exodus and Leviticus

Every occurrence of the word-group in Exodus (six times) and Leviticus (nine times) carries the meaning of sabbath rest (whether seventh-day, seventh-year or a seventh-month holy convocation). Because of the prominence of the *sabbath rest* meaning of the word-group in the Pentateuch, and its exclusive meaning in Exodus and Leviticus, the relationship between rest and sabbath may be worth further investigation. On the basis of



the above observations, Exodus and Leviticus are likely to prove the most fruitful sources for researching the relationship between these two terms in the Pentateuch.

### Ἀνάπαυσις and σάββατον in Exodus (LXX)

There are six occurrences of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in Exodus (LXX). The first one is found in Exodus 16:23: “tomorrow is a sabbath, a holy rest to the Lord (σάββατα ἀνάπαυσις ἁγία τῷ κυρίῳ αὐριον).” Ἀνάπαυσις is a singular noun placed in direct apposition to σάββατα. The plural term *sabbata* can have a singular force<sup>29</sup>, which Davies and Allison argue “is to be accounted for by the Aramaic *sabbeta*, which is an emphatic singular.”<sup>30</sup> This is the first occurrence of the term *sabbata* in the LXX. Perhaps the most important grammatical fact to notice in this occurrence is the direct apposition, in which σάββατα is defined as “a holy rest to the Lord (ἀνάπαυσις ἁγία τῷ κυρίῳ).” Wevers explains: “It is then defined as an ἀνάπαυσις ἁγία to the Lord, a definition which was normative for Judaism and its observance a distinctive badge of its culture.”<sup>31</sup> This assertion made by Wevers and others will be analyzed in subsequent chapters but, if in fact ἀνάπαυσις was a normative definition for σάββατα in Judaism and its culture<sup>32</sup>, then the significance of the juxtaposition of the sabbath concept and the holy rest to the Lord will need to be revisited in the relationship between Matt 11:28-30 and Matt 12:1-14 later in this study.

The second, third and fourth occurrences are found in Exodus 23:12, the first of these is “and the seventh day rest (τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ἀνάπαυσις).” Once again,

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<sup>29</sup> Nolland, *Matthew*, 481.

<sup>30</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 320.

<sup>31</sup> J. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*. SBL SCSS 30 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1990), 255.

<sup>32</sup> Also proposed by Bauernfeind when defining ἀνάπαυσις as “‘day of rest’ (Sabbath), Jos. Ap., 2, 174.” O. Bauernfeind, “ἀναπαύω, ἀνάπαυσις, ἐπαναπαύω,” *TDNT* 1:350-351.

ἀνάπαυσις is placed in direct apposition to the seventh day, defining it. Wevers points out that Exodus 23:12 is a shortened version of the sabbath commandment (Exod 20:8-11) and that it is set in the context of the year of release<sup>33</sup>. He also highlights the significance of the juxtaposition in this verse: “Exod thus identifies the two as meaning the same: to keep the Sabbath is to rest, i.e. to desist from labors”<sup>34</sup>. Furthermore, the verse goes on to explain that the animals and the son of the slave will also rest (ἀναπαύσονται) on this day. Durham summarizes the force of this verse: “The Sabbath day is of course a rest day commanded generally, here with no justifying reasons as in 20:8-11 apart from the statement that rest for the Israelite means rest also for the animals and the people under his authority.”<sup>35</sup>

In the fifth occurrence of the word in Exodus 31:15, the exact same phrase is used (“ἀνάπαυσις ἁγία τῷ κυρίῳ”), and therefore, all the previous observations once again apply: σάββατα is defined as ἀνάπαυσις ἁγία τῷ κυρίῳ, in direct apposition. In this case, sabbath is preceded by the word “seventh”, highlighting the interchangeable meaning of the terms “seventh day”, “sabbath” and “rest (ἀνάπαυσις)”. The sabbatical connotations of ἀνάπαυσις as rest on the seventh day in this verse are further explained in detail in the two verses that follow, both in sabbath commandment language and in terms of “the perpetual covenant” (Exod 31:16) of which it is a sign. This appositional juxtaposition is highlighted by Wevers: “Syntactically the clause has σάββατα as subject and ‘on the seventh day’ as predicate, with ἀνάπαυσις ἁγία τῷ κυρίῳ in apposition to the subject.”<sup>36</sup>

The last occurrence of the word is found in Exodus 35:2. In this verse there is a cluster of related terms: “the seventh day”, rest as κατάπαυσις, Sabbath and ἀνάπαυσις κυρίῳ.

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<sup>33</sup> Wevers, *Exodus*, 363.

<sup>34</sup> Webers, *Exodus*, 364.

<sup>35</sup> J. Durham, *Exodus*. WBC 3 (Waco: Word, 1987), 332.

<sup>36</sup> Wevers, *Exodus*, 514.

This time ἁγία σάββατα is found in direct apposition to ἀνάπαυσις κυρίῳ. The distinction between both words meaning “rest” is clearly made by Wevers: “The addition of κατάπαυσις is not a mere doublet but represents a fuller statement on Exod’s part. Not only is the Sabbath an ἀνάπαυσις ‘a rest;’ it is also a ‘making to rest,’ i.e. in accordance with the Sabbath command in which not only you, but also your son, daughter, servants male and female, ox, ass, cattle and alien, are to rest as well.”<sup>37</sup>

From these brief considerations, the previous preliminary observations can be confirmed: every instance of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms found in Exodus (LXX) contains direct and clear sabbatical overtones, usually in direct apposition to σάββατα and having the sense of resting on the seventh day.

#### Ἀνάπαυσις and σάββατον in Leviticus (LXX)

The nine instances of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms found in Leviticus are concentrated in three chapters. The first chapter is Leviticus 16, the law of the “day of atonement”, which some believe to be the very center of the Pentateuch.<sup>38</sup> The actual occurrence of the word is found in Leviticus 16:31 which is part of the segment framed by the “permanent statute” *inclusio* (16:29, 31, 34). The day of atonement is to be a sabbath of sabbaths, a rest (σάββατα σαββάτων ἀνάπαυσις). Once again, as in Exodus, ἀνάπαυσις is placed in direct apposition to σάββατα σαββάτων. This word combination (σάββατα σαββάτων) occurs only twice in the LXX (here and in Lev 16:23). This “sabbath of Sabbaths” is to take place on the tenth day of the seventh month. The next three instances of ἀνάπαυσις are found in chapter 23 which highlights the Lord’s appointed time for “holy convocations”. The first of these is 23:3: “the seventh day is the sabbath; a rest; a holy

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<sup>37</sup> Wevers, *Exodus*, 575.

<sup>38</sup> J. E. Hartley, *Leviticus*. WBC 4 (Dallas: Word, 1992), 217.

convocation to the Lord”. As in Exodus, we have the “seventh day”, then sabbath (σάββατα), followed by ἀνάπαυσις in direct apposition. The last is then followed by “a holy convocation to the Lord (κλητὴ ἀγία τῷ κυρίῳ).” Leviticus 23:24 highlights another such feast, in the seventh month as in the day of atonement (16:31): “the seven month, on the first of the month there shall be for you an ἀνάπαυσις”. The two occurrences of ἀνάπαυσις in 23:39 refer to the day of rest at the beginning and at the end of the feast of booths or tabernacles. It is interesting to notice that all three convocations in which a holy “rest” (ἀνάπαυσις) is required in the book of Leviticus occur in the seventh month: 23:24 (first day of the seventh month), 16:31 (tenth day of the seventh month) and 23:39 (fifteenth day of the seventh month, seven days of celebration to the Lord, resting on the first and eighth days). The third chapter in which ἀνάπαυσις is found is Lev 25 with four occurrences of the word: 25:2, 25:4, 25:5 and 25:8. This chapter highlights the sabbatical year and the year of jubilee: “Just as the people are to rest every seventh day, the land is to rest every seventh year”<sup>39</sup>. In 25:2, the “time” of entering the land is suggested by the future tense of ἀναπαύσεται to which the LXX adds τῇ γῇ, “the same relative clause modifier as that identifying τῇν γῆν”<sup>40</sup> used previously in the verse: “which I will give you”. The land will rest in the sabbath to the Lord (σάββατα τῷ κυρίῳ). In 25:4 there is the combination σάββατα ἀνάπαυσις in the same translation as in Lev. 16:31, from the Hebrew *Shabbat Shabbaton*. What follows is a phrase that has been encountered throughout Exodus and Leviticus: a sabbath to the Lord (σάββατα τῷ κυρίῳ). On this phrase, Wevers comments: “A Sabbath for the Lord is not for its own sake, i.e. intended to preserve its fertility through having it lie fallow for a year, but it is a Sabbath in honor of the

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<sup>39</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, 433.

<sup>40</sup> J. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Leviticus*. SBL SCSS 44 (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1997), 401.

Lord, a mark of respect for the Lord's gift of the land to his people"<sup>41</sup>. Leviticus 25:5 portrays the "year of rest to the land" as in the beginning of the chapter. The last occurrence of ἀνάπαυσις is found in 25:8 in which the concept of the sabbatical year on the seventh year and the Day of Atonement which occurs on the seventh month (Lev 16), both defined as ἀνάπαυσις, will come together at the beginning of the year of Jubilee: "The year of Jubilee appropriately begins on this day [the Day of Atonement], for it is the most solemn day of the year when the whole nation receives forgiveness for all its sins."<sup>42</sup> The verse explains the year of jubilee as seven sabbaths of years, sabbatical years (ἐπτὰ ἀναπαύσεις ἔτων)<sup>43</sup>. Laansma makes the following observation "The Year of Jubilee was never called a Sabbath, but it was calculated by means of sabbaths of years (Lev 25,8) and inaugurated on the Day of Atonement, a Sabbath (Lev 25,9; 16,31; 23,32)"<sup>44</sup>.

From these brief considerations, our preliminary observation can be confirmed: every occurrence of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in Leviticus (LXX) contains sabbatical overtones, whether related to the seventh day, seventh month or seventh year. In summary, there are twenty-four occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the Pentateuch (LXX). Six of the twenty-four occurrences (25 %) relate to Israel's descendants resting, finding rest, or not finding rest due to disobedience. Sixteen of the twenty-four occurrences (67 %) relate to the sabbath concept: the observance of the seventh-day, the seventh month holy convocations and the seventh year (including the year of jubilee). The prominent meaning given to the word-group in the Pentateuch is that of sabbath rest (seventh-day, seventh-month convocations and seventh-year), further attested

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<sup>41</sup> Wevers, *Leviticus*, 402.

<sup>42</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, 434.

<sup>43</sup> Wevers, *Leviticus*, 404, suggests the translation "Sabbatical year-periods."

<sup>44</sup> Laansma, *I will give you Rest*, 66.

by the fact that every occurrence of the word in Exodus and Leviticus carries this meaning, making this the *only* meaning given to the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in Exodus and Leviticus.

### Ἀνάπαυσις in the Historical Books (LXX)

Reference	Word
Judg 4:11 _____ (1)	ἀναπαυομένων
Ruth 1:9 Ruth 3:1 _____ (2)	ἀνάπαυσιν ἀνάπαυσιν
1 Kgdms 16:16 2 Kgdms 7:11 3 Kgdms 5:4 (18) 3 Kgdms 13:30 _____ (4)	ἀναπαύσει ἀναπαύσω ἀνέπαυσε ἀνέπαυσεν
I Chr 22:9 I Chr 22:9 I Chr 22:18 I Chr 28:2 _____ (4)	ἀναπαύσεως ἀναπαύσω ἀνέπαυσεν ἀναπαύσεως
Neh 9 (19):28 _____ (1)	ἀνεπαύσαντο
Tob 2:1 _____ (1)	ἀνέπεσα
Jdt 10:21 _____ (1)	ἀναπαυόμενος
Esth 9:16 Esth 9:17 Esth 9:17 Esth 9:18 Esth 9:22 _____ (5)	ἀνεπαύσαντο ἀνεπαύσαντο ἀναπαύσεως ἀνεπαύσαντο ἀνεπαύσαντο

There are nineteen occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the historical section of the LXX, including minor codex variations<sup>45</sup>. In **Judges** there is one occurrence found in 4:11 that qualifies, with a participle, the oak by which Heber, the Kenite, pitched his tent: “by the oak of the resting ones” (πρὸς δρῦν ἀναπαυομένων). In **Ruth** there are two occurrences. The first one found in 1:9 is part of the blessing that Naomi gives her two daughters-in-law after her sons died saying “May the Lord grant that you may find rest (ἀνάπαυσιν), each in the house of her husband,” highlighting Naomi’s desire to see their daughters-in-law cease from the anxieties related to the lack of a husband. The second occurrence (3:1) has a similar reference, except this time Ruth and Naomi are back in Bethlehem and Naomi seeks “rest” for Ruth through the possibility of a new husband, Boaz, “rest” having the same connotation as in the previous instance. **1-3 Kingdoms** (LXX) contain four occurrences. The first one, 1 Kgdms 16:16, refers to the seeking of a skilled harpist (eventually David) who would play when the evil spirit came upon Saul, facilitating a cessation from the evil torment which would bring about peace for the king: “he (the player) shall give you rest” (ἀναπαύσει σε). The second occurrence is found in 2 Kgdms 7:11. In this chapter, the Lord makes a covenant with David, and part of the covenant is “I will give you rest from all your enemies” (ἀναπαύσω σε). This is the first time in the LXX that the verbal form of ἀνάπαυσις (ἀναπαύω, ἀναπαύειν) is used in the first person singular from the mouth of the Lord (this time in future tense). The third occurrence, found in 3 Kgdms 5:4, carries a very similar meaning to the previous one except that this sentence is constructed in the third person singular in the past tense. Solomon sends word to Hiram, king of Tyre, explaining that “the Lord my God has given me rest on every side”, from enemies and from

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<sup>45</sup>All occurrences of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in this section of the LXX are found in the main text and footnotes in Rahlfs and Hanhart, *Septuaginta*, 1:354-1184.

misfortune thereby suggesting peace, safety and well-being. The fourth and last occurrence is found in 3 Kgdms 13:30 and it relates the story of a prophet who buries the body of a man of God in his own grave giving him “rest” (ἀνέπαυσεν), meaning death or a final resting place.

There are four occurrences of the word in **I Chronicles** and three of them are in the same chapter. The first two occur in 22:9 as David recalls to Solomon what the Lord had said to him about his son: Solomon would be a man of rest (ἀναπαύσεως), peace as opposed to war; the same promise that was given to David in 2 Kgdms 7:11 as part of the covenant the Lord made with him is now promised for his son—“I will give him rest (ἀναπαύσω) from all his enemies on every side.” This last occurrence is now the second verbal use in the first person singular from the mouth of the Lord in the LXX, both in the context of the Lord making a covenant with David and his son to give them rest from their enemies. The third time, the word-group is used in 1 Chr 22:18 and it has the same contextual meaning as the two prior occurrences. David commanded all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon, saying “is not the Lord your God with you? And has he not caused you to rest (ἀνέπαυσεν) on every side?”, highlighting what God has done for Israel under the Davidic dynasty. The last event of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in this book is once again from the mouth of David. In 1 Chr 28:2, David gathers all the leaders of Israel and conveys his intentions of building a “house of rest (ἀναπαύσεως) for the ark of the covenant of the Lord” which will be fulfilled by his son Solomon when he builds a dwelling place for the ark of the Lord. **Nehemiah** uses the word-group once, in 9:28. In this chapter the descendants of Israel confess their sin to the Lord, and they recognize their evil ways exemplified in a rebellious behavioral pattern: “as soon as they had rest (ἀνεπαύσαντο), they did evil again before



you.” In **Tobit**, the word-group is used in 2:1, as Tobit tells of his return to Nineveh and to his family in the feast of Pentecost and when he saw a good meal prepared for him, he “rested (ἀνέπεσα) to eat.” In this context, the word is used to assume a restful position in order to eat, in some cases translated as “sat down to eat”<sup>46</sup>.

In **Judith** the word is used in 10:21 of Holofernes, the chief captain of the Assyrian army, when lying in his bed: “Holofernes rested (ἀναπαυόμενος) upon his bed.” The last book in this section of the LXX in which the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms occur is **Esther**. The word is used five times in Esther, all in the same chapter and relating to the same event. The Jews defend themselves from their enemies and destroy them, the defeat of Haman and his plot brings rest to the Jews. This type of rest from enemies is closely associated with the rest from their enemies promised to Israel (1-2 Kgdms; 1 Chr). The first occurrence is in 9:16 when the Jews assembled to defend their lives and “rest from their enemies”. The second and third instances of the word-group are found in verse 9:17 that follows the previous event: on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar they defended themselves and in the fourteenth day they “rested” (ἀνεπαύσαντο) and made it a day of rest (ἀναπαύσεως), the observance of this day called Purim. In 9:18 an explanation is given about the Jews who were in Susa, who assembled on the thirteenth and fourteenth day of the same month and they rested (ἀναπαύσαντο) on the fifteenth day, thereby accounting for the tradition of observing Purim on two different days: the fourteenth in most towns and the fifteenth in Susa. The last occurrence of the word in this book is found in 9:22 in what

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<sup>46</sup> L. Brenton, ed., *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001), 24.

seems to be a summary statement as the feast of Purim is instituted, “because on those days the Jews rested (ἀνεπαύσαντο) from their enemies.”

From these brief observations the following preliminary conclusions regarding the use of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the historical books of the LXX can be made: Two main patterns of meaning appear in the nineteen instances of the word-group in the historical books of the Septuagint: a) a physical rest that assumes a physically restful position and b) a peaceful state or dwelling that surpasses a mere physically restful position. Four of the nineteen occurrences (21%) of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in this section of the LXX are used to portray the meaning of physical rest, assuming a physically restful position such as sitting, lying down, or even death. These are found in Judg 4:11, 3 Kgdms 13:30, Tob 2:1 and Jdt 10:21. Fifteen of the nineteen occurrences (79%) relate to a peaceful state or dwelling either of a person (including the ark of the Lord, which represented God’s presence) or a people (e.g. Israel, Jews). There are various aspects of peace highlighted in the different occurrences, such as cessation from the lack of a husband/family and its consequent anxieties ( Ruth 1:9, 3:1), peace from evil spirits (1 Kgdms 16:16), cessation from wandering and journeying (1 Chr 28:2 “house of rest” for the ark of the Lord) and a peaceful dwelling due to the absence of enemies. This last meaning (peaceful dwelling due to the absence of enemies) is the meaning most often used in this section of the LXX and deserves the following additional observation.

#### Peaceful Dwelling

Eleven of the nineteen occurrences (58%) of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the historical books of the LXX relate to a peaceful dwelling due to the absence of enemies, making this the meaning most often used in this section. The eleven instances are

2 Kgdms 7:11; 3 Kgdms 5:4; 1 Chr 22: 9 (x2), 18; Neh 9:28 and Ezra 9: 16, 17 (x2), 18, 22.

With the exception of Neh 9:28, the remaining ten occurrences fall into two major categories: a) peace for Israel from enemies during the Davidic dynasty (David and Solomon) found in 2 Kgdms 7:11; 3 Kgdms 5:4; and 1 Chr 22: 9(x2), 18 and b) peace for the Jews from enemies, during the reign of the Persian king Ahasuerus, recorded in Esth 9 (five times in verses 16, 17 (x2), 18, 22), as the institution of Purim is introduced when the Jews defend themselves and prevail against Haman's plot to defeat them. A restful dwelling for the descendants of Israel was promised (in terms of ἀνάπαυσις ) in the Pentateuch. This restful dwelling was conditional to their faithfulness to God. The six instances in which ἀνάπαυσις is promised are Gen. 49:14,15; Num 10:33, 24:9; Deut 28:65; 33:20. Now, in the historical books, these promises seem to be fulfilled for Israel during the Davidic dynasty and the deliverance of the Jews during the Persian reign. This restful dwelling or resting place is now defined mainly as the absence of enemies.

#### Peace for Israel from enemies during the Davidic dynasty

In these five occurrences of the word-group that relate to David's and Solomon's reign Israel is promised peace from enemies as part of the covenant the Lord makes with the monarchy as representative of the people of Israel. Furthermore, in 1 Chr 22:9, ἀνάπαυσις is placed in parallelism with "peace" (εἰρήνην) and "quiet" (ἡσυχίαν), providing an appropriate term (peace) through which to define ἀνάπαυσις in this section of the LXX. Gen 49:14,15 already contained a connection between the concept of "rest" and "dwelling"/land. This connection anticipates the "peaceful" rest that will come to Israel once they are in possession of the land and freed from their enemies. Several themes come into place to enhance the "peaceful" state of Israel when these promises come true (e.g. land,

rest from enemies, temple). When commenting on this progression in the Hebrew text, Laansma points out: “There [2 Kgdms 7:1,11] God gives David rest from his enemies, paving the way for David’s expression of a desire to build a ‘house’ for the Ark. YHWH promises instead to build David a ‘house’, to give him rest from his enemies, and to raise up a son for him who will be the one to build a ‘house’ for YHWH. This is developed further when Solomon claims to have been given rest, thus enabling him to undertake the building of the temple (1 Kgs 5:4 [LXX 3 Kgdms 5:4])”<sup>47</sup>. It is important to notice that in this section of the LXX the Davidic dynasty and the temple traditions are emerging as fulfillment of the promises of rest found in the Pentateuch. Now Israel is in possession of the land and it is interesting to identify “the Chronicler’s theologically motivated reworking of the Dtr. History”<sup>48</sup> as the promised rest is now fulfilled in this “peaceful rest” given to the Davidic Dynasty. Furthermore, it is this section of the LXX that depicts God promising this peaceful rest with the use of the first person verbal form ἀναπαύσω (“I will give you rest”), only utilized three times in the LXX. Two of these occurrences are found in this section of the historical books, specifically related to David and Solomon: 2 Kgdms 7:11 and 1 Chr 22:9. The same word will be used by Matthew in the invitation of Jesus, “I will give rest to you” (Matt 11:28) and this latter usage will be discussed later in the dissertation.

#### Peace for the Jews from enemies during the Persian reign

As mentioned earlier, this event is recorded in Esth 9 (five times in verses 16, 17 (x2), 18, 22). Four of these instances are exactly the same word (ἀνεπαύσαντο) as the experience of the Jews is explained: “they had rest” (Esth 9: 16, 17, 18, 22). The fifth occurrence is found in Esth 9:17 the second time the word is used in this verse, and it is

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<sup>47</sup> Laansma, *I will give you Rest*, 33.

<sup>48</sup> Laansma, *I will give you Rest*, 38.

used as a genitive defining the “day of rest” (ἀναπαύσεως), introducing the institution of Purim. Interestingly, in Neh 9:28 the “peaceful rest” of Israel is remembered as attained and then lost in fulfillment of the consequences of disobedience listed in Deut 28:65: “Among those nations you shall find no rest (ἀναπαύσει), and there will be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul.”

In brief, there are nineteen occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the historical books of the LXX. Four of the nineteen occurrences (21 %) relate to physical rest in which a physically restful position is assumed, such as sitting or lying down. Fifteen of the nineteen occurrences (79 %) portray a peaceful state in which peace from evil, wandering and enemies is experienced. Within this last category we find that eleven of the nineteen times (58%) this word is used, the meaning specifically refers to peace from enemies for the people of Israel/Jews. Peace from enemies is the most prominent meaning of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in this section of the LXX and it mainly relates to two historical periods: Israel under the Davidic dynasty and the Jews during the Persian reign. Therefore, ἀνάπαυσις (and its cognate terms) in this section of the LXX, is a term used mainly with the meaning of “peace” due to the absence of extrinsic or outer trouble such as enemies and foes, and it is experienced prominently in a collective or corporate manner, as the people of God (Israel/Jews).

### **Ἀνάπαυσις in the Poetic Books (LXX)**

Reference	Word
Job 2:9	ἀναπαύσωμαι
Job 3:13	ἀνεπαυσάμην
Job 3:17	ἀνεπαύσαντο

Job 3:23	ἀνὰ πᾶν μα
Job 3:26	ἀνεπαυσά μιν
Job 7:18	ἀνὰ πᾶσιν
Job 10:20	ἀναπαύσασθαι
Job 13:13	ἀναπαύσωμαι
Job 21:13	ἀναπαύσει
Job 32:20	ἀναπαύσωμαι
_____ (10)	

Ps 22(23):2	ἀναπαύσεως
Ps 114(116):7	ἀνὰ πᾶσιν
Ps 131(132):4	ἀνὰ πᾶσιν
Ps 131(132):8	ἀνὰ πᾶσιν
_____ (4)	

Prov 21:16	ἀναπαύσεται
Prov 21:20	ἀναπαύσεται
Prov 29:17	ἀναπαύσει
_____ (3)	

Eccl 4:6	ἀναπαύσεως
Eccl 6:5	ἀνὰ πᾶσις
Eccl 7:10 (9)	ἀναπαύσεται
Eccl 9:17	ἀναπαύσει
_____ (4)	

Wis 4:7	ἀναπαύσει
_____ (1)	

Sir 3:6	ἀναπαύσει
Sir 6:28	ἀνὰ πᾶσιν
Sir 11:19	ἀνὰ πᾶσιν
Sir 18:16	ἀναπαύσει
Sir 20:21	ἀναπαύσει
Sir 22:11	ἀνεπαύσατο
Sir 22:13	ἀνὰ πᾶσιν
Sir 24:7	ἀνὰ πᾶσιν
Sir 28:16	ἀνὰ πᾶσιν
Sir 30:17	ἀνὰ πᾶσις
Sir 30:34 (33:26)	ἀνὰ πᾶσιν
Sir 34 (31):3	ἀναπαύσει
Sir 34 (31):4	ἀναπαύσει
Sir 34 (31):21	ἀναπαύση
Sir 36:29 (24)	ἀναπαύσεως
Sir 38:14	ἀνὰ πᾶσιν
Sir 38:23	ἀναπαύσει

Sir 39:11	ἀναπαύσῃται
Sir 40:5	ἀναπαύσεως
Sir 40:6	ἀναπαύσει
Sir 47:23	ἀνεπαύσατο
Sir 51:27	ἀνάπαυσιν

\_\_\_\_\_ (22)

There are forty-four occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the poetic books of the LXX with minor codex variations<sup>49</sup>. In **Job** there are ten occurrences of the word. The first one is found in 2:9; in this verse Job's wife tells him how she waits, in despair, for the setting of the sun "that I may rest (ἀναπαύσωμαι) from my labors and my pangs". Chapter 3 contains four occurrences of the word (3:13, 17, 23, 26) from the mouth of Job. In 3:13 Job laments that he should not have been born or that he should have died thereafter: "I should have been at rest (ἀνεπαυσάμην)". In a similar manner, still speaking of death, Job seems to desire that state in 3:17: "there the wearied<sup>50</sup> in body rest (ἀνεπαύσαντο)". Job 3:23 parallels death with rest (ἀνάπαυμα), while 3:26 places "having rest" (ἀνεπαυσάμην) in parallelism to being at peace (εἰρήνην) and being quiet (ἡσυχία). The parallelism of rest, peace and quiet presented in 3:26 is the same one found in 1 Chr 22:9. In 7:17, 18 Job asks the Lord a question: "What then is a human being, that you made so much of him or that you turn your attention to him, or will visit him until the morning and judge him until he goes to rest (ἀνάπαυσιν)?" In this question, rest is used with the force of ceasing the daily activities and is placed in opposition to morning. In 10:20 Job asks the Lord to let him "rest a little" (ἀναπαύσασθαι) before he dies, proposing that the time of his life is short and there is no rest for him in the current circumstances. Another aspect of resting is mentioned in 13:13 when Job asks his friends to be silent and let him

<sup>49</sup> All instances of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in this section of the LXX are found in the main text and footnotes in Rahlfs and Hanhart, *Septuaginta*, 2:1-489.

<sup>50</sup> The word for "wearied" (κατάκοποι) is the same root word as in the context of Jesus' invitation to "the ones becoming weary" (οἱ κοπιῶντες) in Matt 11:28.

speak: “Be silent that I may speak and rest (ἀναπαύσωμαι) from my anger.” This proposed rest is from an inner feeling or emotion (in this case anger), not just from perils and trials. In 21:13 Job marvels at the fact that the ungodly seem to live blessed lives and they spend their days in wealth and “fall asleep in the rest of the grave”. Finally, Elihu decides to speak, to give himself rest (ἀναπαύσωμαι), meaning relief from silence in 32:20. In summary, the book of Job contains ten occurrences of the word, eight of them from the mouth of Job. Job desires rest, either in life (from weariness, perils and anger) or in death (final rest). The **Psalms** record four instances of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms. The first one is found in Psalm 22 (23):2. There the psalmist portrays the Lord as his shepherd, who takes him to green grass and waters of rest (ἀναπαύσεως); this image is then paralleled to restoration of the soul in 22 (23):3. Psalm 114 (116):7 portrays the psalmist inviting his own soul to rest because the Lord has delivered him: “return to your rest (ἀνάπαυσίν), my soul”. Psalm 131 (132) mentions the word-group twice. The first occurrence is found in 131 (132):4 where the psalmist remembers David’s words and his commitment not to give rest (ἀνάπαυσιν) to his temples until he found a place for the Lord. The second occurrence is found in 131 (132):8 and it is an invitation for the Lord to enter his rest (ἀνάπαυσίν) along with the ark. This later meaning echoes the usage in 1 Chr 28:2, of a house of “rest” for the ark.

**Proverbs** records three occurrences of the word-group. The first two are found in 21:16, 20 and are the same verb (ἀναπαύσεται). The first occurrence (v. 16) depicts a man who wanders away from the path of righteousness who “will rest in the assembly of the giants (dead)”. The second one (v. 20) is a proverb that praises the wise: “a desirable treasure will rest on the mouth of the wise”. The third occurrence in Proverbs is found in 29:17 and it relates to the consequence of correcting a child: “correct your son, and he will



give you rest (ἀναπαύσει)”. **Ecclesiastes** contains the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms four times. The first of such is Eccl 4:6, in which rest is depicted as highly desirable: “better is a handful of rest (ἀναπαύσεως) than two handfuls of hardship”; rest is placed in opposition to trouble (μόχθου). In Eccl 6:5 the author talks about the futility of life and how everyone’s end is the same. In talking about someone who has never seen or known the sun it is said that “more rest (ἀνάπαυσις) has this one than that one (who has lived many years...)”. This sense is similar to the main meaning of the word ἀνάπαυσις in Job, where many times rest equals death or not being born. In Eccl 7:9 (10), wisdom and folly are contrasted and “anger will rest (ἀναπαύσεταί) in the bosom of fools” (unlike the treasure that rests in the mouth of the wise, as in Prov 21:20). Once again, in a contrast between wisdom and folly, in 9:17 the words of the wise are heard in rest/quiet (ἀναπαύσει) more than the cry of those who rule in folly. In **Wisdom** there is one occurrence of the word in 4:7. In this verse, the final fate of the righteous man is that he shall be in rest (ἀναπαύσει) when he dies.

**Sirach** contains twenty-two occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms. The first of these is 3:6; this section of Sirach discusses honoring your parents, and in this particular verse the word is used in regards to the comfort or peace experienced by a mother whose son is obedient to the Lord: “He that is obedient unto the Lord shall give rest (ἀναπαύσει) to his mother”. In 6:28 there is an exhortation to seek wisdom: “for at last you shall find her rest (ἀνάπαυσιν)”, implying that it is only wisdom that can give the kind of rest that turns to joy. Sir 11:19 is part of a pericope that explains that all things, prosperity and adversity, life and death, come from the Lord. And even if a rich person might say “I have found rest (ἀνάπαυσιν)”, he does not know when he will have to leave everything to

others and die. This use of the word implies a rest that the rich person thinks he has achieved before death because of his prosperity and lack of hardship. In 18:16 there is a simile to explain the power of a wise word: “shall not the dew give rest (ἀναπαύσει) to the heat? so is a word better than a gift”. A fool is being described in the text found in Sir 20:21. There is a person who is hindered from sinning for lack of means, but in his inaction/rest (ἀναπαύσει) he is not troubled/pained or repentant. Once again, exhortation against fools continues in the two occurrences found in Sir 22. The first text is Sir 22:11 and in it a contrast between a dead person and a fool is suggested: the dead has lost the light and the fool wants understanding, but the dead person is resting (ἀνεπαύσατο), and the life of the fool is worse than death. In the second occurrence found in Sir 22:13 the exhortation continues: do not talk much or go with a fool, and you will find rest (ἀνάπαυσιν). The words found in Sir 24:7 come from “wisdom” who describes herself as dwelling in high places, in heaven and in the bottom of the deep, in the waves of the sea and in all the earth including every people and nation. She says: “With all these I sought rest (ἀνάπαυσιν) : and in whose inheritance shall I abide?” Interestingly, “wisdom” then receives a command to dwell in Jacob/Israel (Sir 24:8). Another exhortation, this time against a slanderer’s tongue, is found in Sir 28:16: “Whoever hearkens unto it will never find rest (ἀνάπαυσιν).” Death is paralleled to eternal rest in Sir 30:17: “Death is better than a bitter life and eternal rest (ἀνάπαυσις) than continual sickness.” In Sir 30:34 (33:26) the author is giving instructions on how to treat a servant as opposed to a donkey. In the preceding verse, 30:33 (33:25), the text reads as follows: “Fodder and a rod and burdens for a donkey, bread, instruction and work for a servant”, then it goes on to counsel in 30:34 (33:26) “labor with instruction and you will find rest (ἀνάπαυσιν).” The text then goes on to highlight that a yoke will bow a

neck. It should be noted that many of the words found in these three verses, Sir 30:33-35 (33:25-27), will be used by Matthew in Jesus' invitation to rest recorded in Matt 11:28-30: burden/load (φορτία), yoke (ζυγός), rest (ἀνάπαυσις) and many other terms which are implied (e.g. instruction paralleled to learning)<sup>51</sup>. In Sir 34 (31):3 the text explains that the rich have great labor gathering riches and then he (the rich man) rests (ἀναπαύσει), he is filled with his delights. In this context, "rest" is given the opposite meaning of "labor". The next verse, 34 (31): 4, juxtaposes the poor with the rich from the previous verse, once again placing rest and labor as antonyms: "the poor labors in his poor estate, and when he rests (ἀναπαύσει) he is still needy." Sir 36:24 (29) speaks of the blessedness of the man who has acquired a wife, who is now a helper for him and "a pillar of rest (ἀναπαύσεως)."

The next occurrence of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in Sirach is 38:14. In this text there is practical counsel about what to do when in illness; the exhortation is to pray to the Lord and to allow a physician to do his work, because the physician will also pray to the Lord to give him "success with rest (ἀνάπαυσιν) and healing for the maintenance of life." In this text, "rest" is opposite to "illness" and parallel to "healing". The text goes on to give counsel on how to mourn a person who dies, and in 38:23, the instruction is: "in the resting (ἀναπαύσει) of a corpse put to rest (κατάπαυσον) his memorial/remembrance." The change of wording for "rest" should be noted; the first one as the corpse or dead body is put to rest using ἀναπαύω (and cognates), and the action of putting a memory to rest, or ceasing from remembrance is then portrayed by κατάπαύω (and cognates). The two chapters that follow contrast the practical abilities of one who is a craftman (e.g. smith, potter) with a person who devotes himself to seeking

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<sup>51</sup> This possible background to Jesus' words will be explored later in this study.

wisdom. The craftsman is necessary for a city to prosper, but a person who devotes himself to wisdom, who thinks about the law of the Most High (38:34), will be the person who gives counsel and instruction. He will be praised in life and death. Sir 39:11 states that if the wise person lives he will have a name greater than a thousand and if he rests/dies (ἀναπαύσηται), even then it will be favorable for him. Chapter 40 speaks of a “heavy yoke” having been placed upon the sons of Adam (40:1): fear of the day of death. For both the ruler and the humble there are wrath, envy, confusion, fear of death, fury and strife, even at the time of rest (ἀναπαύσεως) upon a bed (40:5). Furthermore, “there is little as nothing in his rest (ἀναπαύσει)” (Sir 40:6). Sir 47:23 reports that “Solomon rested (ἀνεπαύσατο) with his fathers” (47:23), meaning that he died. Sirach ends with the prayer of Jesus, son of Sirach, reported in chapter 51. In this last occurrence of the word (51:27), we find an invitation from the author of the prayer. After praising God for sparing and delivering him from many of the troubles highlighted in the book, he reports that he has sought wisdom and instruction, and invites others to draw near to him and to seek instruction as well:

Draw near to me, you who are uneducated, and lodge in a house of instruction. Why are you still lacking in these things, and your souls thirst greatly? I opened my mouth, and I said, ‘Acquire for yourselves without money. Place your neck under a yoke, and let your soul receive instruction. It is near to find it.’ See with your eyes that I labored little, and I found for myself much rest (ἀνάπαυσιν). (Sir 51:23-27 NETS<sup>52</sup>).

This last section is believed by many to provide background for Jesus’ invitation in Matthew 11:25-30<sup>53</sup>.

From these brief observations the following conclusions regarding the use of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the poetic books of the LXX can be drawn:

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<sup>52</sup> A. Pietersma and B. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 762.

<sup>53</sup> This possibility will be explored further later in the dissertation.

There are forty-four occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognates in the poetic section of the LXX. Of these forty-four occurrences, only two mention the Davidic dynasty (Psalm 131: 4,8) in a psalm that echoes 1 Chr 28:2. The occurrences in this section refer mainly to the “seeking of rest”, whether in life or death. The collective sense of the word (peace from enemies for Israel/Jews) found in the historical books of the LXX is now absent. The uses of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group can be divided into four major categories: a) Rest as death, b) Rest in life, including physical rest (such as sleeping), rest from emotions (such as anger) and rest from labor, toils and trouble, c) Rest as a residing place, and d) Rest through possession of wisdom and instruction as opposed to foolishness.

#### Rest as death

There are twelve occurrences (27%) of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in this section of the LXX which have the connotation of death. In this section we have included “not being born”, as in the case of miscarriage. The twelve occurrences in which death is the main meaning are Job 3:13,17,23; 21:13; Prov 21:16; Eccl 6:5; Wis 4:7, Sir 22:11; 30:17; 38:23; 39:11 and 47:23. In these cases not being born or dying is a synonym for rest (ἀνάπαυσις). Death is sometimes defined as or paralleled to “eternal rest”, “joining ancestors” and the laying down of a “corpse”. When life is filled with toils and labors, then the “rest” brought by death is a desirable state in the poetic books of the LXX.

#### Rest for “the living”

This kind of rest involves physical rest (such as sleeping, ceasing of work, or relief from illness) and emotional rest (from trouble, toils, distress). Rest experienced in life is portrayed in twenty (45%) occurrences, even though sub-categories are likely. Four occurrences relate to resting from anger and emotions, six instances portray a physical rest,

and eleven times the words indicate the opposite to distress and toils. These sub-categories are difficult to delineate because sometimes rest from emotions or distress comes when the person assumes a position of physical rest, such as sleeping or lying down. All three categories can therefore be treated as one: rest from work, distress, difficulties and wandering. The twenty-one occurrences of the word with the above mentioned meaning are: Job. 2:9; 3:26; 7:18; 10:20; 13:13; 32:20; Ps 22(23):2; 114(116):7; 131(132):4,8; Eccl 4:6; Sir 11:19; 20:21; 34 (31):3,4,21; 36:24; 38:14; 40:5,6. “Waters of rest” (Ps 22:2) has been included in this category because it suggests rest and restoration for the psalmist’s soul.

#### Rest as a Residing Place

There are three instances (7%) of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms with the force of dwelling or residing: a “treasure” resting in the mouth of the wise in Prov 21:20, the “dwelling of anger” in Eccl 7:10 (9), and wisdom looking for a place to repose/reside in Sir 24:7, which the creator tells her to find in Israel.

#### Rest brought by Wisdom/Instruction

This type of rest implies a state of mind and soul achieved only by the gaining of understanding, usually related to seeking instruction and wisdom from the Lord. Furthermore, this type of rest involves speaking the right word at the right time and staying away from the slanderer’s tongue and from fools. Wisdom, in many instances, is opposed to laboring, and seeking instruction from wisdom (sometimes personified) is portrayed as placing oneself under a yoke. There are nine occurrences (21%) of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group that relate to this category, and they are Prov 29:17; Eccl 9:17; Sir 3:6; 6:28; 18:16; 22:13; 28:16; 30:34 (33:26); 51:27. The rest that comes from instruction and wisdom is not just for the wise, but for those who associate with them (e.g. parents).

Rest as “repose”: There is an English word that may capture all four main meanings of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognates as used in the poetic books of the LXX. That word is “repose” and it is defined as “The act of resting or the state of being at rest. Freedom from worry; peace of mind. Calmness; tranquility. To lay (oneself) down. To rest or relax (oneself). To lie at rest. To lie dead. To lie while being supported by something.”<sup>54</sup> It is worth noting that all the meanings previously discussed are present in this definition: death or dying, resting, freedom from worry and calmness and tranquility (which the LXX argues comes from receiving instruction and having wisdom).

The NETS<sup>55</sup> uses, in several instances, the word “repose” to translate all the main meanings of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the poetic section of the LXX: in Job 21:13 as “death”, in Eccl 4:6 as “opposed to labor”, in Sir 3:6 as instruction from the Lord and as a place for wisdom to dwell in Sir 24:7.

Because of the various meanings of the word “repose” which correlate with the various meanings of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in the poetic section of the LXX, the term “repose” will be chosen in this study as the term that best sums up the force of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in this section of the LXX. Rest, then, is repose. Death and wisdom are synonyms of rest and repose; labor and burdens are antonyms of repose.

### Ἀνάπαυσις in Sirach

It is worth noting in our observations that Sirach is the book with the most occurrences of the word-group in the poetic section of the LXX containing twenty-two occurrences of the word and its cognate terms (fifty percent of the overall occurrences in the poetic books). Sirach utilizes the word eight times to convey ideas of wisdom, wise

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<sup>54</sup> J. Pickett, D. Pritchard, and D. Weeks, eds. “Repose” in *the American Heritage College Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Boston, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993), 1158.

<sup>55</sup> Pietersma and Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, 682, 652, 738.

words and seeking instruction (Sir 3:6; 6:28; 18:16; 22:13; 24:7; 28:16; 30:34 (33:26); 51:27), five times to convey the meaning of death (22:11; 30:17; 38:23; 39:11; 47:23), four times to speak of sleeping or rest from illness (34 (31):21; 38:14; 40:5,6) and five times as rest from labor, burdens, toils and emotional distress (11:19; 20:21; 34 (31):3,4; 36:24). There is an emphasis on seeking instruction and wisdom as the way to obtain ἀνάπαυσις. This emphasis is summarized in the conclusion of Sirach (Sir 51:23-27).

In summary, there are forty-four occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the poetic books of the LXX. The word is used with various meanings that may be grouped in four major categories: rest as death, rest from toils, burdens and labors, rest as a residing place and rest as the state of the wise. The English word that encompasses all meanings is “repose”. It follows that a personal “repose” (not collective as in the historical section of the LXX) is the main meaning of the word in the poetic books of the LXX, whether physical or emotional, whether in life or in death. Sirach is the book that utilizes the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognates the most in this section of the LXX (twenty-two occurrences), and it emphasizes rest as a state of being obtained by instruction and wisdom from the Lord. This type of rest, given when in possession of instruction and education, is the goal of the book which concludes with an invitation to repose in opposition to labor and burden and to submit oneself to be in yoke with wisdom in order to experience rest (ἀνάπαυσις) (Sir 51:23-27).

### **Ἀνάπαυσις in the Prophetic Books (LXX)**

Reference	Word
Mic 2:10	ἀνάπαυσις
Mic 4:4	ἀναπαύσεται
_____ (2)	



Hab 3:16 _____ (1)	ἀναπαύσομαι
Zech 6:8 _____ (1)	ἀνέπαυσαν
Isa 7:19	ἀναπαύσονται
Isa 11:2	ἀναπαύσεται
Isa 11:10	ἀνάπαυσις
Isa 13:20	ἀναπαύσωνται
Isa 13:21	ἀναπαύσονται
Isa 13:21	ἀναπαύσονται
Isa 14:1	ἀναπαύσονται
Isa 14:3	ἀναπαύσει
Isa 14:4	ἀναπέπαυται
Isa 14:4	ἀναπέπαυται
Isa 14:6 (7)	ἀνεπαύσατο
Isa 14:30	ἀναπαύσονται
Isa 17:2	ἀνάπαυσιν
Isa 23:12	ἀνάπαυσις
Isa 23:13	ἀνάπαυσις
Isa 25:10	ἀνάπαυσιν
Isa 27:10	ἀναπαύσονται
Isa 28:2	ἀνάπαυσιν
Isa 28:12	ἀνάπαυμα
Isa 32:16	ἀναπαύσεται
Isa 32:17	ἀνάπαυσιν
Isa 32:18	ἀναπαύσονται
Isa 34:14	ἀναπαύσονται
Isa 34:14	ἀνάπαυσιν
Isa 34:17	ἀναπαύσονται
Isa 37:28	ἀνάπαυσίν
Isa 57:15	ἀναπαυόμενος
Isa 57:20	ἀναπαύσασθαι
Isa 65:10 _____ (29)	ἀνάπαυσιν
Jer 29 (47):6	ἀνάπαυσαι
Jer 30(49):29(23)	ἀναπαύσασθαι
Jer 31 (48):11	ἀνεπαύσατο
Jer 49 (42):10	ἀναπέπαυμαι
Jer 51:33 (45:3) _____ (5)	ἀνάπαυσιν
Lam 1:3	ἀνάπαυσιν
Lam 1:6	ἀναπαύσαι

Lam 5:5 _____ (3)	ἀνεπαύθημεν
Ezek 16:42	ἀναπαύσομαι
Ezek 17:23	ἀναπαύσεται
Ezek 17:23	ἀναπαύσεται
Ezek 31:13	ἀνεπαύσαντο
Ezek 34:14	ἀναπαύσονται
Ezek 34:15 _____ (6)	ἀναπαύσω
Sus 37 _____ (1)	ἀναπαυομένην
Dan 12:13	ἀναπαύου
Dan 12:13 _____ (2)	ἀναπαύση

There are fifty occurrences of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in the prophetic section of the LXX, with minor codex variations.<sup>56</sup>

**Micah** contains two occurrences. The first one is found in 2:10 in a passage addressed to the house of Jacob, to whom a command is given to draw near to the everlasting mountains: “Arise and depart, for this rest (ἀνάπαυσις) is not for you because of uncleanness; you have been utterly destroyed”. Nevertheless, two verses later, Jacob is gathered with all the people, as the Lord receives the remnant of Israel. The second instance is found in 4:4 when the word of the Lord goes forth from Jerusalem in the last days, when there is no more war, “and every one will rest (ἀναπαύσεται) under his vine, and everyone under his fig-tree” The connotation of the word in Micah is of a place to settle or to dwell.

**Habakkuk** concludes with the prophet’s prayer and song. After delivering his message of doom, the prophet states that he will trust in the Lord to strengthen him; after he has trembled and was troubled, he decides: “I will rest (ἀναπαύσομαι) in the day of affliction”

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<sup>56</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the occurrences of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognates in this section of the LXX are found in the main text and footnotes in Rahlfs and Hanhart, *Septuaginta*, 2:490-941.

(3:16). In this instance, rest is the opposite of being troubled. **Zechariah** 6:8 is contextualized by the angel talking to the prophet about the four chariots of horses that went out to encompass the earth, and the angel adds: “they have quieted/rested (ἀνέπαυσαν) my anger in the land of the north”.

**Isaiah** has twenty-nine occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms. It is the book that uses the word-group the most in the entire LXX. The first instance of the word is found in chapter 7, which is the chapter that contains the Immanuel prophecy taken up by Matt in 1:23. In 7:19 God speaks to Ahaz that there will be trouble on his people, and that the Lord will bring insects from Egypt and Assyria that would come and rest (ἀναπαύσονται) in the ravines of the country, because the Lord is bringing desolation. Once again, the sense of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognates is one of “settling” or “dwelling”. Chapter 11 contains two instances of the word, the first one found in 11:2. This chapter, which describes the righteous reign of the Branch, starts by stating that the Spirit of God “will rest (ἀναπαύσεται)” on him, the spirit of wisdom (σοφίας) and understanding (11:2); the spirit of God will dwell on the Branch. The second occurrence in the same chapter continues with the description of the righteous reign of the root of Jesse: “in him shall the nations trust and his rest (ἀνάπαυσις) shall be glorious” (11:10), his rest meaning the settlement or establishment of his reign. Chapter 13, which narrates the vision which Isaiah saw against Babylon, contains three occurrences of the word. After announcing that Babylon will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. The text goes on to describe the desolation of Babylon: it will not be inhabited, neither will anyone enter it for many generations, neither will the Arabs pass through it, nor will “shepherds rest (ἀναπαύσωνται) in it” (13:20). The description of the desolation continues in the next

verse where other types of creatures are juxtaposed as dwellers of the land: “but wild beasts will rest (ἀναπαύσονται) there... and sirens (demons of the dead<sup>57</sup>) shall rest (ἀναπαύσονται) there and demons will dance there” (13:21). Chapter 14 of Isaiah exhibits six occurrences of the word, the first of which is found in the first verse: “And the Lord will have compassion on Jacob and will yet choose Israel and they will rest (ἀναπαύσονται) on their land” (14:1). This last text makes a direct connection between “rest” and “land”, and this suggests that settlement and dwelling are the connotations of the word-group in this context. This fortunate future for the people of Israel will be a consequence of the Lord’s intervention: “and it will be in the day the Lord gives you rest (ἀναπαύσει) from your pain and turmoil ... that you will take up this lament against the king of Babylon: ‘How the exactor has rested (ἀναπέπαυται) and how the taskmaster has rested (ἀναπέπαυται)’” (14:3-4). In these last three instances, two different meanings of rest can be seen: the first one is rest from pain and turmoil (14:3), also associated with the settlement of Israel in their own land (14:1), and the second one displayed twice in 14:4, in which the oppressor and the taskmaster cease to be. The wailing continues with its celebration that the Lord broke the yoke of sinners, the yoke of rulers, and then “he rested (ἀνεπαύσατο) confidently” (14:6 [7]). The chapter ends with judgment on Philistia: the Lord will destroy her root and kill her survivors, but “the poor will feed through him and the poor men will rest (ἀναπαύσονται) in peace” (14:30). Isaiah 17:2 is an oracle concerning Damascus: it is about to become a fallen ruin, it will be “a resting place (ἀνάπαυσιν) for flocks.”

Chapter 23 contains an oracle against Tyre with two occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις. Tyre is a stronghold that is being demolished and if she goes to the Kitieans she

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<sup>57</sup> J. Lust, E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie, eds., “σειρήν, —ήνος,” *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*. Rev. ed., (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), 550.

will find no rest (ἀνάπαυσις) (23:12 NETS), and if she goes to the land of the Chaldeans, even there she will find no rest (ἀνάπαυσις), for the Assyrians have made it desolate. The song of praise found in Isaiah 25 portrays an exuberant salvation brought about by God; the hand of the Lord will rest (ἀνάπαυσιν) on this mountain (25:10). “This mountain” refers to Zion/Jerusalem (cf. 24:23). Isaiah 27 narrates the deliverance of Israel and how Jacob’s iniquity will be forgiven when the people tear down the altars: “the flock that dwelt there will be left as a deserted flock; and the ground will be pasture for a long time, and there will the flock lie down to rest (ἀναπαύσονται)” (27:10). In the next chapter there are two instances of the word-group. Isa 28:2 predicts the captivity of Ephraim saying that the wrath of the Lord is as strong as hail and as a great flood and that “it will give rest (ἀνάπαυσιν) to the land.” Similarly, the text in 28:12 continues to portray a people who did not hear the Lord and are now taken captives: “saying to them: ‘this is the rest (ἀνάπαυμα) for the hungry and this is the destruction’, yet they would not hear”, portraying the meaning of rest as cessation from hunger<sup>58</sup>.

The text in Isa 32 contains three instances of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in verses 16, 17 and 18 as the glorious future is envisioned. When a spirit is poured from on high, then “justice will rest (ἀναπαύσεται) in the wilderness and righteousness will dwell in Carmel” (32:16). This text provides a parallelism that is worth noting: “rest” (ἀναπαύσεται) is parallel to “dwell” or “abide” (κατοικήσει), and Isaiah uses ἀνάπαυσις and κατοικήσει (and their cognates) as parallel terms found in the same verse throughout the book (e.g. Isa 13:20, 27:10, 32:18, 57:15), indicating the high frequency with which the ἀνάπαυσις word-group has the force of “dwelling”. In 32:17 the work of righteousness is said to be peace,

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<sup>58</sup> The juxtaposition of rest and hunger will also be made in Matthew 11:28-30; 12:1-8, and will be discussed later in the study.

rest (ἀνάπαυσιν) and confidence for ever. Then God's people will dwell (κατοικήσει) in peaceful habitations and secure dwelling and they will rest (ἀναπαύσονται) with wealth (32:18) once again highlighting the parallelism between dwelling and resting. Chapter 34 depicts God's wrath against the nations and his indignation that will bring catastrophes and desolation. Isa 34:14 contains two instances of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group, as the desolation is further visualized: "there donkey-centaurs (mythic creatures resembling a donkey) will rest (ἀναπαύσονται), for they have found for themselves a resting place (ἀνάπαυσιν)" (34:14). Furthermore, these creatures will inherit the land forever, since they will rest (ἀναπαύσονται) on it for generations of generations (34:17). This last text provides another term that can sometimes be synonymous with dwelling: "inherit" or "possess" (κληρονομήσετε) (cf. Isa 65:9 κληρονομήσουσιν, κατοικήσουσιν). In Isa 37 God sends word to Hezekiah, through Isaiah, as an answer to Hezekiah's prayer (37:14-20). The word of the Lord comes against Sennacherib, king of Assyria: "But now, I know your rest (ἀνάπαυσίν), and your going out and your coming in" (37:28), in this case portraying the fact that the Lord knows everything about the king, even when he is lying down to sleep.

Chapters 40-55, which many consider a separate section in the book of Isaiah that includes the songs of the servant, do not utilize the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in any form. The next occurrence of the word-group in Isaiah is found in chapter 57. The text in 57:15 offers, once again, a direct parallelism between resting and dwelling: "This is what the Lord says, the Most High, who dwells (κατοικῶν) forever in high places... the Lord Most High, the one resting (ἀναπαυόμενος) among the holy ones" (57:15). In the same chapter, there is a rebuke for evil leaders. Those who follow the Lord will find peace, but there is no peace for the unrighteous, who will be tossed like the waves, they will not be able to rest

(ἀναπαύσασθαι) (57:20). The last occurrence of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in Isaiah is found in 65:10. This verse serves as an appropriate summary to the study of this word in Isaiah because its context provides the words that were utilized as parallel terms throughout the book, and have been mentioned in previous instances. Preceding the description of the new heavens and earth, the Lord acts on behalf of his servants. In 65:9 he says: “I will bring forth the offspring that comes from Jacob and from Judah and it will inherit (κληρονομήσει) my holy mountain; and my chosen ones and my servants will inherit (κληρονομήσουσιν) it and dwell (κατοικήσουσιν) there... and the ravine of Achor will be a resting place (ἀνάπαυσιν) for herds, for my people who have sought me” (Isa 65:9,10).

**Jeremiah** contains five occurrences of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group. The first one is found in 29 (47):6 where the Lord speaks against the Philistines, and the question is asked of the sword of the Lord: “How long will you smite? . . . return to your sheath, rest (ἀνάπαυσαι)”, but the sword cannot be quiet because the Lord has commissioned it against the Philistines. Rest is paralleled to quiet (ἡσυχάσει) in 29:6 and 29:7. The next instance is found in 30:29 in a prophecy against Damascus (Hamath and Arpad): “they will not be able to rest ( ἀναπαύσασθαι)”, placing “no rest” as a corollary to “anger” and “bad tidings”. The third appearance word-group in Jeremiah is found in 31 (48):11. This prophecy is against Moab, who “was at rest (ἀνεπαύσατο) since his childhood and trusted in his glory”, but now his day is coming in accord with the word of the Lord. It seems that Moab is at rest because of the absence of trouble, which now is soon to come. In 49 (42):10, Jeremiah delivers a comfort word from the Lord to his people: “I have rested (ἀναπέπαυμαι) from the calamities I brought upon you”, therefore they were to dwell in the land and not to be afraid of the king of Babylon, because the Lord was with them. The verb “rested” here

clearly has the force of “ceased”. The last occurrence in Jeremiah is found in 51:33. It relates to a word from the Lord that comes to Baruch through Jeremiah because Baruch had said “Woe to me, for the Lord has laid sorrow over my pain, I lied down in groaning and I found no rest (ἀνάπαυσιν)”; then the word of the Lord continues with the promise that Baruch’s life would be spared, no matter where he went. In this verse, Baruch cannot find rest even though he lies down.

**Lamentations** contains three instances of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognates. The first one is found in 1:3 where the prophet laments that Judah was deported and she dwells among nations and “she has not found rest (ἀνάπαυσιν)”. The reason she has not found rest is that she dwells among other nations and this suggests a meaning of resting place; “settlement” or “dwelling” for this use of ἀνάπαυσις. The prophet goes on to lament that they have given their desirable things for food, “to bring rest (ἀναπαύσαι) to the soul”<sup>59</sup> (1:6). Finally, in 5:5, the prophet asks the Lord to remember what has happened to them: “we have been persecuted, we have labored, we have had no rest (ἀνεπαύθημεν)”, thereby making a parallelism between “labor” and “no rest” for the people.

In **Ezekiel** there are six occurrences in four chapters. The first one is in 16:42 where the Lord condemns Israel for being an adulteress, and he says “My jealousy will be removed from you and I will rest (ἀναπαύσομαι) and I will not care for you any longer.” In this instance, the Lord will rest from his care and jealousy of Israel, in the sense of “ceasing.” In 17:23 there are two occurrences of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in the same text. Both instances refer to animals resting under the cedar the Lord will plant to show that he is Lord and that he brings low the high tree (the king and Pharaoh): “every bird shall rest

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<sup>59</sup> Lamentations 1:6 is the only variant not appearing in Rahlfs and Hanhart, *Septuaginta*. This variant, noted in Hatch and Redpath, eds. *A Concordance to the Septuagint*, 80, is found in H. B. Swete, *Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899) 3: 361.



(ἀναπαύσεται) under it, and every fowl shall rest (ἀναπαύσεται) under its shadow.” This same meaning is conveyed in 31:13, once again speaking of Pharaoh who has become a great cypress which the Lord has brought down, and on his fallen trunk “all the birds of the heavens have rested (ἀνεπαύσαντο).” In these last three occurrences, the verb ἀναπαύειν depicts the action of settling or finding a permanent place to dwell. In both chapters 17 and 31, animals are settling in the trunks of the great trees (kings) that the Lord has cut down. The last two occurrences of the word in Ezekiel are found in chapter 34. Here the Lord is the shepherd and his people are the sheep; he will bring them back from wherever they were scattered and he will feed them in good pasture in the mountain of Israel, there “they will rest (ἀναπαύσονται) in perfect prosperity” (34:14). In the next verse, the text portrays the Lord giving the sheep of Israel rest and the verb is used in first person: “I will feed my sheep and I will give rest (ἀναπαύσω) to them” (34:15). This is the third time in the LXX that the verb is used in the first person of God (the first two times in the historical section of the LXX, addressed to the Davidic dynasty). In **Susanna**, verse 37, false testimony is given by the two elders against Susanna. When they falsely accuse her, saying “we saw this woman resting (ἀναπαυομένην) with a man”. This text uses the verb ἀναπαύειν with the connotation of “lying down”.

The last book of the LXX to use ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms is **Daniel**. There are two occurrences in the same text (12:13), which is the last verse in the book. In the conclusion of the book, the prophet asks the Lord what will be the end of these things (12:8) and the Lord answers that the words are closed and sealed up to the time of the end. Then, the imperative follows in verse 13: “And you go, rest (ἀναπαύου)” and after it, the conclusion: “you will rest (ἀναπαύση) and you will rise upon your glory” at the end of times.

In these instances, *anapauein* is used with the sense of dying or lying down to rest, after which Daniel will rise at the end of days.

From these brief observations the following conclusions regarding the use of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the prophetic section of the LXX can be drawn: There are fifty occurrences of the word-group in the prophetic books. These occurrences may be grouped in three major categories as follows: a) Ceasing from an on-going activity, b) Relief from trouble, anger and labor, and c) Dwelling or settling in the land.

### Ceasing

This meaning is found seven times (14%) in relation to people or personified things. Isa 14:4 (x2) speaks of the ceasing to be of the oppressor and of the taskmaster, Isa 28:2 narrates God's plans to have the land cease producing for a while because Ephraim is going to captivity, Jer 29:6 talks of the sword of the Lord not resting again his enemies, and finally Dan 12:13 (x2) where Daniel will rest or cease to be in the sense of dying. Included in this category is Sus 37 which speaks of the ceasing of regular activity and lying down (resting), in this case with someone in order to engage in sexual activity.

### Relief

This meaning is reflected fourteen times (28 %) and it relates to relief from a variety of stressors: trouble, hunger, anger and fear. The fourteen instances are Hab 3:16; Zech 6:8; Isa 14:3, 6 (7), 30; 28:12; 32:17; 37:28, 57:20; Jer 49:10; 51:33; Lam 1:6; 5:5; and Ezek 16:42. Many of these occurrences represent a group of people such as the poor, the wicked, the hungry, or the people of God (e.g. Isa 14:3, Isa 14:30, Isa 28:12, Isa 57:20, Lam 5:5).

## Dwelling

This meaning of ἀνάπαυσις is the one most often used in this section of the LXX. There are twenty-nine occurrences (58 %) of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group with the clear meaning of dwelling in, settling in or inheriting the land. Some of the instances of the second category (relief) can be related to this category since the people of God will have relief from trouble or hunger because they will be dwelling in their own land. As discussed above, in Isaiah, ἀνάπαυσις is placed several times in parallelism to “dwelling”, and sometimes in parallelism to “inherit”. There are two marked sub-groups within this category:

Animals and mythological figures: eleven instances of the word refer to wild animals, birds, mythological figures and monsters dwelling and settling in places that are or will be desolate. These animals do not represent a people (as is the case with the sheep of Israel in Ezek 34:14 to be discussed below), but represent the desolation that has come upon a land where people no longer live. These eleven instances are Isa 7:19, Isa 13:21 (x2), 17:2; 27:10; 34:14 (x2); 34:17; Ezek 17:23 (x2); 31:13.

Proper nouns (e.g. people, God) and other related nouns: there are eighteen occurrences of “rest” with the use of the word as “dwelling” or “settling” that refer to proper nouns and other related nouns. Most of them relate to a collective people, such as Israel, Moab, Tyre, or to a trade group such as shepherds. Also included is any instance of a people seeking a place to dwell that is identified by a geographical location (e.g. Damascus). Included in this category there are nouns such as “justice”, “hand” and “branch”. Instances in which God or a spirit from above dwells in the land or in a person are also included in this

category. The eighteen references are: Mic 2:10; 4:4; Isa 11:2,10; 13:20; 14:1; 23:12,13; 25:10; 32:16; 32:18 ; 57:15; 65:10; Jer 30:29; 31:11; Lam 1:3; Ezek 34:14,15.

### Isaiah

Isaiah contains twenty-nine instances of ἀνάπαυσις and its word-group, the most occurrences in any book of the LXX. Nineteen times (67% of the uses in Isaiah) in Isaiah ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms are used with the clear meaning of “dwelling” or “settling”. This priority of meaning spills over to the rest of the prophetic books, but it is particularly prominent in Isaiah. Mostly collective, the dwelling happens as a people or as animals. Desolate lands provide a dwelling place for wild animals. The people of God are promised a safe and peaceful dwelling and settlement in their own land as long as they seek the Lord. The nations or peoples that are enemies of the Lord do not find a place to dwell safely. Isaiah echoes the uses of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group under the Davidic dynasty, during which God promised to them peace from their enemies (e.g. 2 Kgdms 7:11, 1Chr 22:9). This time, the emphasis is placed on the dwelling place, not just on the absence of enemies, but on the actual possession and/or inheritance of their own land as a final resting place.

In brief, there are fifty occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the prophetic books (LXX) used with three main meanings: ceasing an activity, relief from trouble, anger, fear and other burdens, and dwelling or settling in the land, the later being the most prominent (58%), often providing the parallel word of “dwelling” or “inheritance” to ἀνάπαυσις and its cognates in the same verse. The “collective” sense of the word found in the historic section of the LXX is regained in this section, with a special emphasis on the people of Israel settling and dwelling in their own land as part of the Lord’s intervention to

redeem them from captivity. Isaiah carries the weight of the occurrences of the word, thereby representing the overall usage of the word in the prophetic section of the LXX.

### Ἀνάπαυσις Word Study Conclusion (LXX)

There are one hundred and thirty-seven instances of ἀνάπαυσις and cognate terms in the LXX. Of these occurrences, twenty-four are found in the Pentateuch, nineteen in the historical books, forty-four in the poetic section and fifty in the prophetic books. Through this word study, a variety of meanings for this term emerged in the different sections of the LXX. In the Pentateuch, the main use of the term relates to a sabbatical rest to the Lord (whether on the seventh-day, the holy convocations of the seventh month or on the seventh-year). Not only is this the most prominent meaning of the word-group in the Pentateuch, but it is the exclusive meaning of the term for Exodus and Leviticus, where the term is used only for this purpose and with this meaning. In the historical section of the LXX, the most prominent meaning of the word-group relates to a collective peace from enemies or foes. In this section, peace from enemies is experienced mainly in two historic periods in the life of Israel as a people: Israel under the Davidic dynasty and the Jews during the Persian reign; this means that it is experienced in the land of Israel and abroad. The prophetic section of the LXX continues the emphasis on the *collective* peace for the people of Israel with a more deliberate effort towards the final *dwelling* or *settlement* of the people in their own land. Furthermore, there is an on-going underlying meaning of inheritance, peaceful dwelling and settlement in the land in both the historical and prophetic books<sup>60</sup> (with special prominence in the book of Isaiah). The poetic books in the LXX portray an individual repose when using the ἀνάπαυσις word-group. This type of rest may be

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<sup>60</sup> The meaning of ἀνάπαυσις as a peaceful place of dwelling for the descendants of Israel may be observed as early as Genesis 29:14-15, continuing through Numbers and Deuteronomy, but it is a minority usage of the word in the Pentateuch, which becomes prominent in the historical and prophetic books.

experienced in life or death. Rest in life is experienced through the absence of burdens, labor and toils, and the deliberate seeking of wisdom. This repose, brought about through learning and instruction, is experienced in yoke with wisdom, especially prominent in Sirach.

In conclusion, there are three predominant meanings given to ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the different sections of the LXX: “sabbath rest to the Lord” in the keeping of the law, “the promise of a peaceful dwelling for the people of God”, and “the repose brought about by the possession of wisdom.”

### **Chapter 3 – Jesus’ Offer of Rest (Matthew 11:25 – 30)**<sup>61</sup>

Having analyzed the Septuagintal precedence of the ἀνάπαυσις – σάββατον juxtaposition in the Pentateuch, as well as the additional meanings of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in the LXX, we now turn to study of the Matthean narrative.

This exegetical study starts with Matt 11:25-30, a pivotal section in the Matthean narrative that follows Jesus’ denunciation of the Galilean cities that did not repent in spite of witnessing Jesus’ mighty works. The preceding literary setting (11:20-24) is linked to the current pericope by the introductory formula “at that time” (11:25a), emphasizing the narrative continuity.<sup>62</sup> This passage can be divided into two major parts: a) Narrative context of the promise of rest (vv. 25-27), and b) The promise of rest (vv. 28-30).<sup>63</sup> In the first part (vv. 25-27) Jesus addresses the Father in a thanksgiving prayer (vv. 25-26) and explains his authority (v. 27) in the light of the mutual knowledge of Father and Son. In the second part (vv. 28-30), Jesus issues an invitation to come to him and find rest.

#### **Narrative Context of the Promise of Rest (Matt 11:25-27)**

The first section (vv. 25-26) is a Todah, a prayer of “praise” or “thanksgiving.” Prayers of praise/thanksgiving are common in the Jewish Scriptures and predominantly ascribed to David (e.g. 2 Sam 22:50; 1 Chr 29:13; Ps 9:1). Thanksgiving prayers are often longer than the prayer recorded in the Matthean version. The majority of these prayers are found in the

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. Talbot, E. “Rest, Eschatology and Sabbath in Matthew 11:28-30: An Investigation of Jesus’ Offer of Rest in the Light of the Septuagint’s Use of ANAPAUSIS” in *“What Does the Scripture Say?: Studies in the Function of Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity”* (eds. Evans, C. and Zacharias, D.; NY: T&T Clark, 2012), 57-69, for a version of a section of this chapter that has already been published.

<sup>62</sup> “At that time” is also used to introduce the following passage that forms the second part of this exegetical study, Matt 12:1-14 (cf. also 14:1). These three instances are the only three occurrences of this phrase in the New Testament. Similar phrases using both ἐκεῖνος and καί ποτε are found in Acts 12:1; 19:23 and Eph 2:12

<sup>63</sup> The first part (Matt 11:25-27) may also be divided in two sections (vv. 25-26 and v.27) thereby resulting in the three-part division of Matthew 11:25-30 suggested by some scholars. E.g. U. Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A commentary* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 157. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 271.

Historical books and the Psalms; a few are found in other Poetic and Prophetic books (e.g. Sir 51:1-12; Jer 40 (33): 11). In the LXX, prayers of praise are often introduced with the verb (ἐξομολογέω) in the first person singular followed by a second person singular pronoun in the dative (σοι), followed by *Lord* (κύριος) (2 Kgdms 22:50; Ps 9:1). This is also the case in Matt 11:25; *Lord* and *Father* are used as appositional terms. Similarly, Sir 51:1-12 begins with a Todah which contains the same verb (ἐξομολογέω), followed by *Lord* (κύριος) (v. 1), and places *Lord* in apposition to *Father* (Πατήρ) (v. 10).

In the Jewish Scriptures there are prayers of praise and thanksgiving specifically for divine wisdom and revelation that utilize the same word-groups used by Matthew in this prayer (vv. 25-26). In the LXX, when the mystery of the king is disclosed to Daniel, he blesses and praises (ἐξομολογέω) the Lord most high for giving wisdom and understanding and for revealing (ἀνακαλύπτω) deep and obscure things (Dan 2:20-34). 1 Esdras 4:60 (LXX) records the young man blessing and praising God (εὐλογέω, ὁμολογέω) for giving him wisdom. The prayer of the son of Sirach praises (ἐξομολογέω) God for wisdom and instruction (Sir 51: 1, 17, 22)<sup>64</sup>. The tradition of praise and thanksgiving for revelation continues at Qumran in the thanksgiving psalms, where thanksgiving for knowledge is a fundamental theme (e.g. 1QH 12 and 16)<sup>65</sup>.

The second section, verse 27, is a saying of Jesus about the mutual knowledge of Father and Son rooted in the biblical tradition of God being the father of the Davidic king, and the king being the son of God (cf. 2 Sam 7:12-16), as representative and mediator for his people.

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom*, 55-56.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom*, 74-75.



This passage (vv. 25-27) is found in reconstructed Q 10:21-22,<sup>66</sup> where it follows after Q 10:16, “Whoever takes you in takes me in, [and] whoever takes me in takes in the one who sent me,” a passage recorded in Matthew earlier in the narrative (10:40). The Q passage that immediately precedes it is Q 10:13-15, the woes against the Galilean towns. From Q, Matthew omits (and relocates) Q 10:16 at this point in his narrative to make a direct connection between Jesus’ denunciation of the Galilean cities (vv. 20-24) and his prayer of thanksgiving and subsequent authoritative saying (vv. 25-27).

In Matt 11:25 the introductory sentence differs from the more specific Lukan version, “in that hour” (Luke 10:21-22), after which both follow Q with minor variations. The Lukan narrative adds “he was full of joy by the holy Spirit” (v. 21), which is absent in the Matthean version and it is consistent with the fact that Luke places this pericope after the joyful ministerial success of the 70, while Matthew places it following unbelief and failure to repent (11:20-24), as “a theological assessment of the unbelief that precedes it.”<sup>67</sup> Matthew adds, “having answered, Jesus said” (ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν) (11:25a), as a link from the previous lament followed by Jesus’ response to his rejection (Matt 11:20-24). The word links between Q 10:21 and Q 10:22 are two-fold: *Father* (πατήρ) and *to reveal* (ἀποκαλύπτω); Matthew’s version retains these links.

The prayer of praise that is introduced by “I praise you” (Ἐξομολογοῦμαί) in v.25, contains two appositions to “you”: “father, Lord of heaven and earth” (11:25b). This prayer of Jesus is addressed directly to the Father and Lord in the second person singular. The

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<sup>66</sup> Accepting that Matthew is dependent on Markan priority and Q. Cf. J. Robinson, P. Hoffmann, and J. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Sayings Gospel Q in Greek and English, with Parallels from the Gospels of Mark and Thomas* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2001), 102.

<sup>67</sup> D. A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*. WBC 33A (Dallas, Tex.: Word, 1993), 316.

combinations of ἐξομολογέω with both σοι and κύριε are common in the LXX<sup>68</sup> and the Septuagintal usage of this combination is translated to mean not only “to praise” but also “to thank”<sup>69</sup>. This Q passage (Matt 11:25; Luke 10:21) is the only time in the Gospels where this verb is used in the first person singular in a prayer of praise/thanksgiving. It is the only time in the New Testament where the reason for the praise/thanksgiving is *revelation*.<sup>70</sup>

The two appositions used in this passage, Father and Lord of heaven and earth, target two different aspects of the addressee. “Father” is Jesus’ most common manner of addressing God<sup>71</sup> while it reveals Jesus’ consciousness as the Son of God, strongly highlighted later in v. 27 with the possessive pronoun. The use of *father* to address God is attested throughout the Jewish Scriptures (cf. Sir 51:10; Isa 63:16; Jer 31:9; 3 Macc 6:3, 8). God as *father* is used with two identifiable forces: God as father of Israel (corporate force, e.g. Jer 3:19; Deut 32:6), and God as father of the king of Israel and the king as son of God (individual force, e.g. 2 Kgdms 7:12-16; Ps 2:6-8). The corporate force of God as father portrays God as the deliverer of Israel (e.g. Jer 31:9; Isa 63:15-16) and giver of the inheritance to his children (e.g. Jer 3:19); he is also the father who cares and provides for his offspring (e.g. Ps 103:13). Even when the individual force of God as father of the king is employed, the king functions as a representative of God’s people and as a mediator between God and his children<sup>72</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. Gen 29:35; 1 Chr 23:30; 29:13; Ps 137 (138):1.

<sup>69</sup> “The use of ἐξομολογεῖν to mean ‘thank’ is a Septuagintalism. With the verb in the future, the phrase here is used frequently in the LXX of thanksgiving psalms.” Nolland, *Matthew*, 470.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom*, 26. Though Ephesians 1:8-10 blesses God for the revelation of the mystery of his will.

<sup>71</sup> E.g. “Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be your name” (Matt 6:9, NASB).

<sup>72</sup> For a detailed discussion of God as father in the OT and second temple Judaism cf. M. Thompson, *The Promise of the Father: Jesus and God in the New Testament* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 35-55.

The phrase “Lord of heaven and earth” carries the force of the Father’s sovereignty and authority over all of creation. Aside from this Q passage, “Lord of heaven and earth” is seldom used in New Testament<sup>73</sup>. This phrase offers a creation connotation to the passage, emphasizing the force of sovereignty and authority over everything.<sup>74</sup> This phrase is also used in Tob 7:17 (LXX), and there are similar expressions that use δεσπότης (master) in place of “Lord” in both the LXX and the NT (e.g. Jdt 9:12, Acts 4:24). There are passages that place “Lord” and “father” in parallelism (e.g. Tob 13:1-5), some of which highlight the sovereignty of God as ruler of all power (cf. 3 Mac 2:21; 6: 2-3). Two passages that have strong affinities with Matt 11:25-30 as a whole also contain similar introductory addresses. Sir 51 has been a pivotal chapter in the background of Matt 11:25-30. The introductory formula “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth” (Matt 11:25b) resembles the prayer recorded in Sir 51:1, “I will give thanks to you, Lord King” (Ἐξομολογήσομαί σοι, κύριε Βασιλεῦ). Sir 51 will be discussed further in the exegetical analysis of Matt 11:28-30 in this chapter. This address is also found in 4 Bar. 5:32<sup>75</sup>, “I bless you, God of heaven and earth, the Rest of the souls of the righteous in every place.” (Εὐλογήσω σε, ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, ἡ ἀνάπαυσις τῶν ψυχῶν τῶν δικαίων ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ). 4 Bar 5:32 replaces “praise” with “bless”, “Lord” with “God”<sup>76</sup>. There are other striking similarities between 4 Bar 5:32 and Matt 11:25b that spill over into the whole section of Matt 11:25-30, particularly the last sentence of 11:29, “and you will find rest for your souls” (καὶ εὐρήσετε ἀνάπαυσις ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν).

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. Acts 17:24.

<sup>74</sup> “A phrase which recalls God’s act of creation (Gen 1.1).” Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 274.

<sup>75</sup> In his book, J. Herzer, *4 Baruch: (Paraleipomena Jeremioi)* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), argues that 4 Baruch is a Jewish work that was preserved after the war by a Christian group that also provided a Christian ending to the book.

<sup>76</sup> For further discussion on 4 Bar 5:32 and its resemblance to Matt 11:25-30 cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 274.

The reason for Jesus' praise is introduced by the conjunction "that, for" (ὅτι) followed by an unexpected antithesis in the choice of the sovereign father: he has hidden from the wise (v. 25c) and he has revealed to the simple (v. 25d), portraying the Father as the one who conceals and the one who reveals<sup>77</sup>. The text mentions the group from whom the Father hides "these things": "the wise and the learned/discerning" (v. 25c). The two-fold designation (wise and learned/discerning) found in v. 25, is also used in the Jewish Scriptures (e.g. Dan 1:4; Prov 16:21). "These things" being "hidden" from "the wise and the learned" echoes Isa 29:14, which in the LXX reads "ἀπολῶ τὴν σοφίαν τῶν σοφῶν καὶ τὴν σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν κρύψω" (I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning I will hide). There are three common concepts in this passage when compared with Matt 11:25: the "wise", the "discerning" and the Lord "hiding" discernment and wisdom from them. There is a strong distinction: Matthew does not mention destruction as in the Isaiah passage. The concept of God "depriving" of understanding those who think highly of themselves is found elsewhere in the Jewish Scriptures (e.g. Job 12:24, 25).

Who are the wise? All those in Israel who considered themselves to be wise, the religious leadership, the theologically learned.<sup>78</sup> The preceding narrative context (Matt 11:20-24) suggests that also the Galilean unrepentant cities are included in this group. In Jewish thought, wisdom is connected with the study of the Torah (e.g. Sir 38:34). Wisdom had been introduced in the preceding narrative where Jesus is talking to the crowds about John and the Son of Man, ending in "Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds" (Matt 11:19),

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<sup>77</sup> These two notions, the understanding of all things for the humble and the concealment of the mysteries of truth, are also found at Qumran (cf. 1 QS 4:6-7). Cf. also Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 318.

<sup>78</sup> "The entire religious aristocracy." Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 162. "The wise and understanding regard themselves as the theological elite." D. E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel* (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2001), 132.

foreshadowing the sapiential language found in vv. 28-30. But the wise in this passage (v. 25), paralleled to “the discerning”, are not wise in Jesus’ eyes, because the Lord of heaven and earth is not revealing “these things” to them.

The recipients of the revelation of “these things” are the “infants” (νηπίοις, v. 25).<sup>79</sup> It is the “unlearned” who most readily became Jesus’ disciples and the “learned” who most readily rejected him. The concept of God revealing wisdom to the children, the simple, is also common in Jewish thought (e.g. use of σοφία (wisdom) and νηπίων (infants) in Wis 10:21). Wisdom and understanding are offered to the simple ones (Prov. 1:4). Wisdom appeals to the simple, untaught, uneducated (ἄπαιδευτοι) (cf. Prov 8:5; Sir 51:23) and announces that she hates pride and arrogance (Prov 8:13). Particularly relevant for the study of Matt 11:25-30 is that the LXX offers a background for the Lord preserving and saving the simple/infants (νήπιος), and in the Lord’s dealing bountifully with them, their soul (ψυχή) finds rest (ἀνάπαυσις), (Ps 114 (116): 6,7).

The need to become like a child in order to receive the kingdom of God is made clear later on in the Matthean narrative (Matt 18: 1-4). Only one other time Matthew uses νήπιος in his narrative, when Jesus quotes Ps 8:2, “Out of the mouth of infants (νηπίων) and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself” (21:16). This comes in response to the chief priests and scribes’ question, “do you not hear what these children are saying?” (21:16). The children were shouting in the temple, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David” (21:15), and the religious leadership became indignant. The “infants” possess understanding about Jesus as the Son of David that the “theologically wise” are lacking. It is in this antithesis,

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<sup>79</sup> “The contrast established between ‘infants’ and ‘wise and understanding people’ suggests that ‘infants’ might be being used metaphorically. The LXX use of νήπιος to translate *pty*, which can mean ‘simple’ as well as ‘infant’, has expanded the available scope of νήπιος.” Nolland, *Matthew*, 470.

between the “learned” and the “unlearned”, that the unexpected lies: the Father gives revelation to those who seem unworthy of such knowledge.

But, what are “these things (ταῦτα)” that have been concealed from the wise and revealed to the infants (v. 25c)? In the Matthean context, the preceding pericope exposes the lack of understanding of the mighty works (δυνάμεις) that Jesus’ performs (Matt 11:20-24) and the lack of discernment of the identity of Jesus (Matt 11:19) throughout his Galilean ministry. “These things” refer to the significance of Jesus’ mission. In other words, the wise and the discerning have “missed” the full impact of Jesus’ words and actions; only the infants (the unlearned) have understood because the Father has revealed these things to them. The mighty works of Jesus demonstrate his proclamation of the kingdom of God; but in the Matthean context, many are rejecting his mission (11:20-24). The force of v. 25 can be further appreciated when interpreted in the light of the Jewish eschatological understanding that knowledge of the Lord would be revealed at the end of the ages (e.g. Jer 31:34; Dan 12:9). The understanding that in the person of Jesus the end-times secrets have been revealed, and that in him the eschatological hopes are being realized is an important background that should be considered in this announcement of “revelation” (ἀπεκάλυψας).

Many Jews believed that “secrets hidden since the foundation of the world” (Ps 78:2) would be revealed in the last days. But this passage (11:25-27) makes clear that this end-time apocalyptic knowledge is a present reality through the person of Jesus who, through his mission, reveals the eschatological mysteries to the infants/simple.<sup>80</sup>

The narrative continues in v. 26 with a confirmation of the previous thanksgiving. The word “yes” or “indeed” (ναί), effectively emphasizes the preceding statement. Once

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<sup>80</sup> Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 277, propose that Matt 11:25-27 announces the realization of an eschatological hope.

again, as in the previous verse, the addressee is the Father, this time without an apposition, providing the context for the more detailed explanation of the relationship between Father and Son that will follow in the next verse. The “because” (ὅτι) clause that follows must be read in connection to the preceding sentence (v. 25c, d), reinforcing the concept that “this way (οὕτως)” (v. 26) has happened within God’s will. The noun “good pleasure” (εὐδοκία) is found in Matthew only here.<sup>81</sup> What is viewed as God’s “good pleasure” is the revelation of the significance of Jesus’ mission to the simple rather than to the wise. The antithesis of the previous verse is resolved in the will of God, it “was well-pleasing in front of” the Father (11:26b), it is his desire and his doing, “the meaning combines notions of decision and approval.”<sup>82</sup>

The Father, Lord of heaven and earth, who has revealed to infants (vv. 25-26), is also the Father who has handed over all things to his Son, whom he knows intimately and who reciprocally knows the Father intimately and becomes the mediator of such revelation (v. 27). The Scriptural background to the Father/Son tradition has the forces of God as father of Israel (corporate force, e.g. Hos 11:1), and father of the king as the representative and mediator of Israel (individual force, e.g. 2 Kgdms 7:12-16). In v. 27, Matthew portrays Jesus speaking of God as “my Father” (individual force), even though he also utilizes the corporate force throughout his gospel (e.g. “your father” in Matt 6:26, 32; “our father” in Matt 6:9), mirroring the Jewish Scriptures.<sup>83</sup>

“These things” (ταῦτα) from v. 25 are now “everything” or “all things” (πάντα) at the beginning of v. 27; but the former refer to the revelation of the significance of Jesus’

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<sup>81</sup> The verbal cognate refers to the person of Jesus and his servant role (Matt 3:17; 12:18; 17:5).

<sup>82</sup> Nolland, *Matthew*, 471.

<sup>83</sup> “Matthew draws from the Old Testament both the motif of the Messiah as the Son of God, and of the people of Israel as the children of God.” Thompson, *The Promise*, 113. For further discussion on Matthew’s use of “father” and “son” cf. Thompson, *The Promise*, 105-114.

mission and the latter to the absolute authority that has been handed over to him, even though Jesus' sovereignty over all is the basis for his mission.<sup>84</sup> This all-encompassing authority given by the Father to Jesus resembles what is said at the end of Matthew's gospel, immediately preceding the great commission: "All authority has been given to me" (Matt 28:18b). This all-encompassing authority is "in heaven and on earth" (Matt 28:18), recalling the authority of the Father, "Lord of heaven and earth," in 11:25.

The recipient of "all things" that have been handed over is Jesus himself, "to me" (μοι) (Matt 11:27); the dative pronoun is found in second place in the sentence for emphasis. The focus has shifted from God's sovereign choice to Jesus himself, and Jesus is no longer speaking to the Father in the second person, but about the Father in the third person singular. The Matthean Jesus states: "all things have been handed over (παρεδόθη) to me by my Father" (v. 27a).<sup>85</sup> This all-encompassing sovereignty has been given by the Father who has hidden "these things" from "the wise" and revealed "these things" to the "infants." He has handed over "all things" to Jesus, including the mediation of the revelation of the Father as stated later in the verse. Jesus calls the Father, "my Father (τοῦ πατρός μου)" (v. 27a). The possessive genitive pronoun indicates the intimacy that exists between the Father and the Son, introducing a "Son of God" Christology that is then further

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<sup>84</sup> Even though Davies-Allison propose that there is a direct link between "these things" and "everything", they also recognize the this link falls short of the overall contextual meaning, "Πάντα (cf. MT Deut 18:18) refers firstly to the ταῦτα of 11:25; but it goes beyond that to include the whole revelation of God in Jesus, which is eschatological revelation." Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 279.

<sup>85</sup> "The past tense of *have been delivered* may indicate the Son's eternal relationship with the Father before his incarnate life, though this is not explicit here." R. T. France, *The Gospel According to Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 199-200.



developed in the same verse. Matthew uses “father” language for God more often than Mark and Luke combined and he prefers “possessive formulations” such as “my father.”<sup>86</sup>

The Scriptural Father/Son tradition with the force of God as father of the king of Israel (individual force, e.g. 2 Kgdms 7:12-16 (LXX); Ps 2:6-8) offers an eschatological background for this passage emphasized by the definite article; Jesus is not only “a” son/king, but “the” expected Davidic king. “The Father” and “the Son”, with definite articles, will be used again by Matthew in the later part of his Gospel as pairs (cf. 24:36; 28:19). Jesus is identified as the “Son of God” early in the Matthean narrative, in 3:17 (previously stated with a different force in 2:15), and God is identified as “Father” shortly thereafter (5:16). The unique relationship between the Father and the Son is explained in terms of a reciprocal, intimate and exclusive knowledge: “no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son” (v. 27 b, c). Matthew uses ἐπιγινώσκω (knows) while Luke uses γινώσκω in the parallel Q passage (Luke 10:22). The prefix ἐπι acts as an intensifier, and even though this verb is translated as “knows”, it is used with the force of “knows well” or “knows through and through”.<sup>87</sup>

The Jewish Scriptures offer three main backgrounds for a reciprocal intimate knowledge of God. The first background is found in Wisdom literature. God knows Wisdom, and she knows God (cf. Sir 1:6, 8; Wis 8:4; 9:9-11); Wisdom is also a giver and revealer of knowledge to those who desire and seek her (e.g. Sir 4:11, 18; Wis 6:13; 10:10; Prov 8: 10, 12). The second background is Moses, the mediator between God and Israel who is known by God and requests that he may have an intimate knowledge of God (cf. Exod 33:12, 13).

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<sup>86</sup> “Matthew has some form of ‘my Father’ about fifteen times (compared to four times in Luke; never in Mark), and ‘your Father’ about fifteen times as well (three times in Luke; once in Mark).” Thompson, *The Promise*, 105. For further discussion of Jesus and the Father in the Synoptic Gospels, cf. Thompson, *The Promise*, 87-115.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Nolland, *Matthew*, 472; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 320.

Moses' intimate knowledge of God which is confirmed in Deut 34:10: "Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." Face to face implies reciprocal, intimate knowledge. The Matthean order of the two clauses of reciprocal knowledge (the Father knows the Son, and the Son knows the Father in Matt 11:27 b, c) follows the order of Exod 33:12, 13: God's knowledge of Moses is stated before Moses' prayer for knowledge of God. The Mosaic background on this passage must be taken into consideration since it is one of the closest parallels of mutual knowledge between God and a human being in the Jewish Scriptures. The chiastic structure-Son, Father, Father, Son (ABBA)-, highlights this comprehensive mutual knowledge.

Thirdly, Israel is God's son (cf. Hos 11:1) and God knows his son Israel (cf. Hos 5:3). Even though Israel at times has failed or refused to know God (e.g. Jer 9:6; Isa 1:3; Hos 11:3), a full knowledge of God is part of the eschatological promise to Israel (cf. Jer 31:34). In this passage, Jesus is presented as not only the exclusive agent who possesses the full eschatological knowledge of God, but also the one who mediates it and chooses to reveal it: "and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal him (καὶ ὃς ἐὰν βούληται ὁ υἱὸς ἀποκαλύψαι)" (11:27d). Jesus is the Son who is also the eschatological Davidic king<sup>88</sup> (individual sonship), and he reveals, and mediates the knowledge of, the Father to his people (corporate sonship).

The same verb "to reveal" (ἀποκαλύπτω) used to describe the "revelation" of "these things" by the Father to the infants in v. 25 is now used to describe the exclusive

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<sup>88</sup> Commenting on Matt 11:27, Thompson, *The Promise*, 112, indicates that in this passage "there is not explicit indication that the relationship of the Son and Father is to be construed as 'messianic.' Still, Jesus' identity as 'son of David' is reiterated often in Matthew, and Jesus is unquestionably identified as the Messiah of Israel." Since the Son/Father relationship of 2 Kgdms 7:11 is added to the promise (in the same verbal tense), ἀναπαύσω (cf. 2 Kgdms 7:14; Matt 11:28), given in those terms only to the Davidic dynasty and through the future eschatological Davidic king (cf. 2 Kgdms 7:11; 1 Chr 22:9; Ezek 34:15), then "son" language in this verse may evoke Jesus' identity as "son of David."

prerogative of Jesus, because Jesus is the mediator of the revelation (v. 27d). It is now clear that “the infants/simple ones” received the revelation from the Father through Jesus. This verse (v. 27) is perhaps the most explicit statement of Jesus’ relationship with the Father in the Synoptic Gospels<sup>89</sup>, and it contains the claim that resides at the core of early Christian belief: that only Jesus can reveal God to humanity. Jesus is not only acting as the prophet like Moses who was to come (cf. Deut 18:15) to impart and mediate revelation from God, but he is also acting as the eschatological agent, the Davidic Son, in whom all knowledge resides and through whom all revelation is realized; the “eschatological revealer” of God<sup>90</sup>.

Matt 11:25-27 must be understood through its rich Scriptural background: Jesus fulfills the role of Wisdom, he is the new and greater Moses expected to come, and he is the eschatological Davidic Son who embodies and represents Israel’s relation to God, possessing the full knowledge of God reserved for the end of the ages. Jesus authoritatively acts as the sole mediator of such revelation.<sup>91</sup>

### **The Promise of Rest (Matt 11:28-30)**

The unique prerogative of the Son as the sole mediator of the Father’s revelation is now expressed in the form of an invitation to come to Jesus. The pattern shown in this

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. France, *Matthew*, 199.

<sup>90</sup> “...the Old Testament itself looks forward to knowledge of God at the eschaton. The land will then be filled with the knowledge of God (Isa. 11:9); he will be known personally to everyone in the nation (Isa. 52:6), from the least to the greatest (Jer. 31:33-34). This is the background against which we must understand our saying.” E. Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew* (Atlanta, Ga.: John Knox Press, 1975), 271.

<sup>91</sup> Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 287, summarize the significance of this verse as follows: “One could put it like this: in a manner strongly reminiscent of Moses, Jesus, who is the perfect wise man and prophet, knows and reveals God, his Father, thereby fulfilling the calling of Israel while at the same time bringing to pass the prophecies of eschatological knowledge.”

invitation, an imperative followed by a promise, may be observed in wisdom and prophetic literature (e.g. Isa 55:1-3; Prov 9:4-6; Sir 51:23-30).<sup>92</sup>

A striking element of this pericope is the joining of the previous Q section (Q 10:21-22; Matt 11:25-27) to Jesus' invitation in vv 28-30. The invitation is not found in Q or in Mark, therefore it is part of Matthew's special material (M). Whether this is Matthew's own composition or traditional material is not completely clear even though Matthew's use of his traditional sources seems to favor the latter. The imperative-promise format preceded Matthew and it may have been found in traditional material used by him. It is noticeable that the passage contains Matthean characteristics, such as the use of *meek* (πραΰς) and *lowly* (ταπεινός) which emphasize the Matthean lack of hesitation to redact his sources to further develop his themes (e.g. Matt 21:4-5; cf. Isa 62:11; Zach 9:9). In addition, there seems to be a revised LXX rendition that Matthew has used elsewhere.<sup>93</sup> It may well be, therefore, that this section comes from the M traditions of sayings of Jesus and it was redacted by Matthew as an extension of 11:25-27 and an introduction/bridge to 12:1-14.<sup>94</sup>

The Coptic Gospel of Thomas contains a similar saying to the one found in Matt 11:28-30: "Jesus said, 'Come to me, for my yoke is easy and my mastery is gentle, and you will find rest for yourselves'" *Gos. Thom.* 90.<sup>95</sup> There are considerable differences between this text and the Matthean version. Matt 11:28-30 is addressed to the heavy laden and burdened, while the saying in the *Gospel of Thomas* is a general invitation with no specific

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<sup>92</sup> It has been proposed that the *Sitz im Leben* of vv 25-30 is found in Christian liturgy. Cf. Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology, and Law*, 77-83. But the form of the invitation, often found in the Jewish Scriptures, precedes Christian liturgy.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom*, 141. M. Menken, *Matthew's Bible: The OT Text of the Evangelist* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 268-269.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 292-293.

<sup>95</sup> M. Meyer and Harold Broom, trans. *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus* (San Francisco, Calif.: Harper San Francisco, 1992), 59.

addressee. The Thomasine version has no mention of learning from Jesus, of “burden/burdened” and it simply states that those who come will find rest. The Matthean Jesus offers rest for the soul, for the ones burdened, while claiming that Jesus’ burden is light (vv 28-30).<sup>96</sup> It is highly contested that this text pre-dates Matthew or that Matthew was dependent on this source, therefore the *Gospel of Thomas* will not be treated as a source for Matt 11:28-30 in this exegetical study. It is much more likely that a collection of sayings of Jesus circulated and was adapted by different authors in the early Christian community.<sup>97</sup>

In Matt 11:28-30 Jesus makes an invitation: “Come to me” (Δεῦτε πρός με) (v. 28a), followed by his promise: “I will give you rest (ἀναπαύσω)” (v. 28c). The verb ἀναπαύω is translated “to give rest” in the active voice and “to rest” or “take rest” in the middle voice.<sup>98</sup> Jesus introduces himself as “the giver of rest” in the first person singular.

The result of heeding the invitation to come to Jesus, defined as taking his yoke and learning from him, is: “you will find rest (ἀνάπαυσιν) for your souls” (v. 29d). This is the second time the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms appear in the invitation; first in the invitation proper (v. 28), then in the explanation of the invitation (v. 29). The phrase “and you will find rest for your souls” (καὶ εὐρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν) is a quotation from Jer 6:16.

Matthew’s use of the Jewish Scriptures is predominantly shaped by the Greek translation. Given that Matthew uses ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms, can its use in the LXX illumine the meaning of the Matthean narrative? The range of possible meanings for the

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. H. Turner and H. Montefiore. *Thomas and The Evangelists*. (Eugene, Ore. : Wipf & Stock, 2009), 59.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. A. DeConick. *Recovering the Original Gospel of Thomas: A History of the Gospel and its Growth* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005), 238-9.

<sup>98</sup> J. Lust, E. Eynikel and K. Hauspie, eds., “ἀναπαύω” *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 42.

ἀνάπαυσις word-group in Matthew's Scriptural source has been analyzed in the previous chapter. What difference could the specific LXX background to the actual offer of rest make?

As we have seen earlier, there are three prominent backgrounds found in the LXX for the offer of rest: the first is found in wisdom literature. The author of Sirach and "personified Wisdom" speak similar invitations (e.g. "Draw near to me" (ἐγγίσατε πρός με) in Sir 51:23; "Come to me" (προσέλθετε πρός με) in Sir 24:19). In Sirach, the sage issues an invitation to the "unlearned" to come to him and dwell in the house of instruction, while he also claims that he has found for himself much ἀνάπαυσις (cf. Sir 51:23, 27). Sirach can do this because he has earlier portrayed Wisdom herself as issuing the invitation to come (cf. Sir 24:19). Now as a teacher, representing and mediating Wisdom, he can offer the invitation in this form. The same would apply to Jesus, as Wisdom's representative and mediating teacher. Wisdom and the teacher of wisdom do not however offer rest in the first person singular as is the case with Jesus' promise in the future tense found in Matt 11:28 (ἀναπαύσω). In wisdom literature, the possession of instruction is associated with giving rest: "Instruct your son, and he will give you rest, and he will give your soul an ornament" (Prov 29:17, NETS). In this case, the future tense in the third person singular (ἀναπαύσει) is the result of the son receiving instruction in the present. A similar case is found in Sir 3:6, "...he who listens to the Lord will give rest to his mother."

A second favorable background for this promise is found in Exod 33:14. Moses' assertion that the Lord has said that he knows Moses and Moses' prayer that he may know the Lord (Exod 33:12,13) are followed by the promise from God to Moses, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest (καταπαύσω σε) " (Exod 33:14). The promise made by Yahweh is in the first person singular to the second person singular in the future

tense and it follows after Moses' request that he may intimately and reciprocally know the Lord as the Lord knows him.

Thirdly, aside from the Wisdom and Mosaic backgrounds of this promise of rest, a strong eschatological context can be established<sup>99</sup>. It is in this context that the introduction of a mostly overlooked LXX background must be brought into consideration: the promise of rest (ἀνάπαυσις) made by God to the Davidic dynasty<sup>100</sup> in the historic books and to the sheep of Israel in the prophetic books.

Jesus promises "I will give rest" (Matt 11:28). This exact wording, in the first person singular, appears only three times in the LXX, and all three come from the mouth of the Lord: 2 Kgdms 7:11; 1 Chr 22:9 and Ezek 34:15. The first two occurrences are promises to the Davidic dynasty and the third relates to the future Davidic king. In 2 Kgdms 7 the Lord makes a covenant with David. He reminds David that he took him from following the sheep to leading Israel. He then goes on to clarify how this covenant, made with the leader of Israel, is also for the people of Israel: "I will also appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, that they may live in their own place and not be disturbed again, nor will the wicked afflict them any more as formerly" (2 Kgdms 7:10). Following the description of a place without disturbances for Israel, the Lord then promises rest to David: "I will give rest to you (ἀναπαύσω σε) from all your enemies" (2 Kgdms 7:11). Following the promise of rest, God discloses to David that he will raise up a descendant after him that would be the one to build the house for the Lord (7:12, 13). The Lord then uses the "son/father"

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<sup>99</sup> Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 171, proposes that "rest" had an eschatological meaning: "The thought is widespread that humans will find "rest" in wisdom (Sir 6:28; 51:27, cf. 24:7). This image, originally connected with the promise of occupying the land, was later given an eschatological meaning by the prophets, and in Philo and Gnosticism it became a symbol for the absolutely transcendent salvation."

<sup>100</sup> Laansma, *I will give you Rest*, 250, has noted the absence of this proposal but does not pursue it, "What has not been hitherto argued is that the rationale for Matthew's redaction of 11, 28-30 is best understood against the background of the OT rest tradition, where God's promise of rest is associated with the Davidic dynasty and with the temple."

language, also present in Matt 11:27: “I will be a father to him and he will be a son to me” (2 Kgdms 7:14). In the Florilegium, from Cave 4 at Qumran, 2 Sam 7:14 is quoted and applied to the eschatological Son of David, who shall arise with the Interpreter of the Law in Zion at the end of times.<sup>101</sup> This father/son language is often used of God and the king in the Jewish Scriptures, but in this case it is applied to the future Davidic king. The background of 2 Kgdms 7:11-14, which contains a direct verbal link to ἀναπαύσω, is of special significance due to the eschatological implications of such a promise and the Matthean interest in portraying Jesus as the promised Davidic shepherd King (e.g. 1:1; 2:6; 9:27; 21:9). The narrative that follows (12:3, 4) will further emphasize the Davidic overtones of this pericope.

The second occurrence of ἀναπαύσω in the LXX is found in 1 Chr 22:9. David relates to his son Solomon the promise that the Lord has made to him. Solomon would not only be a man of rest (ἀναπαύσεως), but the Lord also promises for him what he promised to David: “I will give rest (ἀναπαύσω) to him” (1 Chr 22:9). The Lord promises David that he will give him and his son rest (rest for the people of Israel through their leaders is implied).

The third and last occurrence of the verb ἀναπαύω in the first person singular (future tense) is found in the prophetic books (LXX) and it follows a prophecy against the shepherds of Israel. God will rescue his sheep (Israel) from the false shepherds, and he will search for them (Ezek 34:10, 11) and care for them (34:12, 13) himself. The end result will be rest: “They will rest (ἀναπαύσονται) in perfect prosperity” (34:14). The promise that follows comes from the mouth of God himself: “I will feed my sheep and I will give rest (ἀναπαύσω) to them” (34:15), echoing the psalmist’s portrayal of the Lord as his shepherd, who takes him to green grass and waters of rest (ἀναπαύσεως) in Ps 22(23):2 (LXX). This

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<sup>101</sup> Cf. S. Bacchiocchi, “Matthew 11:28-30: Jesus’ Rest and the Sabbath.” *AUSS* 22 (1984): 294.



time the enemies of Israel, from whom God will give them rest, are their own “shepherds” and through his future Davidic prince, God would break the bars of their oppressive “yoke” (Ezek 34:27). The relationship between God’s promise of rest mediated through the future Davidic king and the breaking of the shepherds’ oppressive yoke should be noted. The restoration of Israel is spoken of in terms of shepherd/sheep (Ezek 34:11-31) and the eschatological hope of the Messianic rest finds fulfillment when the “one” Davidic shepherd king reigns over them (Ezek 34:23, 24). God’s giving of rest is therefore mediated by the divine representative, the future Davidic king.

Having analyzed form, possible sources and Septuagintal background of the specific offer of rest, we turn to the content and function of Matt 11:28-30. The first verse serves as a summary that will be developed and clarified in the two verses that follow, and it may be divided in three parts: the invitation proper (v. 28a), the invitees (v. 28b), and the promise (v. 28c). After disclosing himself as the Son who possesses all knowledge and revelation and who chooses to whom he reveals the Father (v. 27), Jesus makes an invitation using an imperative: “Come to me” (Δεῦτε πρός με) (Matt 11:28a). Jesus had previously made invitations using an imperative (δεῦτε) in the Matthean Gospel, such as “come follow me” (4:19), but this form of solicitation to the second person plural, that makes Jesus the destination of the invitation, only appears in this verse in the NT (Jesus issues similar solicitations, with him as the “destination,” in the third person plural, cf. Matt 19:14). In this text, Matthew portrays Jesus as Wisdom’s representative and mediating teacher, who issues an invitation in similar terms as those spoken by Sirach and “personified Wisdom” (e.g. Sir 24:19; 51:23).

The fact that an inclusive “all” (πάντες) is used to introduce the invitees (Matt 11:28bα), indicates that everyone and anyone who is laboring and burdened is included in Jesus’ invitation, even laboring and burdened Israelites, in spite of the lament that preceded this pericope (Matt 11:20-24). The invitation proper (Matt 11:28a, b) is the link with the previous verse that ended with the exposition of the exclusive prerogative of Jesus to “choose” the recipients of the revelation he possesses: he chooses all who are “laboring and burdened (οἱ κοπιῶντες καί πεφορτισμένοι)” (v. 28b)<sup>102</sup>. To the wearied and burdened Jesus promises: “I will give you rest (ἀναπαύσω)” (v. 28c).

Who are the ones becoming wearied and burdened? The preceding narrative context (vv. 11:25-27) suggests that these may well correspond to the “simple ones” (νηπίοις). The ones becoming wearied and burdened are not the wise and intelligent in their own opinion, nor the religious elite, but those who, “like infants”, are willing to come to rest in Jesus. The participle πεφορτισμένοι (v. 28b) forms an inclusio with φορτίον in v. 30b, when Jesus attests that his burden is light. Later in the Gospel, Matthew uses the noun once again when Jesus exposes the heavy load of excessive Pharisaic regulations<sup>103</sup>: “They [scribes and Pharisees] tie up heavy burdens (φορτία) and lay them on people’s shoulders” (v. 23:4).

In Matt 11:28c Jesus promises that he will give the burdened ones rest (ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς). Jesus introduces himself as “the giver of rest” in the first person singular, a prerogative of Yahweh in the LXX (cf. Exod 33:14; 2 Kgdms 7:11). As we have already noted,

<sup>102</sup> Gnika comments that if the preceding claim of the Son’s *exclusive* Revelation (11:27) gave the impression of the narrowing of God’s saving will, now in the Son’s *inclusive* Invitation the arms of the Savior go very *wide* indeed. J. Gnika, *Das Matthäusevangelium I* (HThKNT; Freiburg: Herder, 1986) 1:439.

<sup>103</sup> “It was, however, not the law itself that was burdensome (the law instead was the delight of the pious Israelite; cf. Ps 119 *passim*) but rather the overwhelming nomism of the Pharisees. The tremendous burden of the minutiae of their oral law fits the description especially well...” Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 323.

the verb ἀναπαύω in the first person singular future tense appears only here in the NT. The ἀνάπαυσις word study in the LXX revealed that this verbal form, in the first person singular, appears only three times in the Greek Scriptural text, and all three are found in a Davidic context: 2 Kgdms 7:11; 1 Chr 22:9 and Ezek 34:15. The first two occurrences are promises to the Davidic dynasty and the third relates to the future Davidic king. The context that precedes v. 28 (vv. 25-27) and the material that follows it (11:29-30; 12:1-14) strongly encourage an interpretation of this verse that takes into consideration the Davidic background to the passage. Particularly prominent in current scholarship is the Matthean portrayal of Jesus as the eschatological Davidic shepherd<sup>104</sup> who heals, gathers and teaches the sheep of Israel in light of Ezekiel's vision (Ezek 34; 37). When Matthew depicts Jesus' promise that he will give rest, it may well be then, that this is to be interpreted against the backdrop of Yahweh promising the final "rest" to Israel, through the Davidic dynasty in the historic books (2 Kgdms 7:11; 1 Chr 22:9) and through the future Davidic king in the prophets (Ezek 34:15; cf. Isa 11:10).

In addition, that Matthew may be presenting Jesus in a Mosaic context is strongly suggested by the narrative order: the intimate, reciprocal knowledge is then followed by the promise of rest in the first person singular in the future tense (Exod 33:12-14). However, Matthew uses a different verb than the one used in its Septuagintal rendition: "I will give you rest (καταπαύσω σε)" in Exod 33:14, while "I will give you rest (ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς)" is used in Matthew 11:28c. The invitation made by Jesus (Matt 11:28) is made in the first person singular to the second person plural (unlike Exod 33:14 where it is made to the

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<sup>104</sup> Cf. W. Baxter, "Healing and the 'Son of David': Matthew's Warrant." *NovT* 48, 1 (2006): 36-50; J. P. Heil, "Ezekiel 34 and the Narrative Strategy of the Shepherd and Sheep Metaphor in Matthew." *CBQ* 55 (1993): 698-708.

second person singular), highlighting the inclusiveness of all (πάντες) who are weary and burdened (v. 28a). Matthew's presentation of Jesus as the new and greater Moses, the ultimate law interpreter in the light of his exclusive knowledge of the Father (v. 27) should be taken into consideration<sup>105</sup>. The prominent meaning given to the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in the Pentateuch is that of sabbath rest. The exclusive meaning of ἀνάπαυσις with the force of sabbath rest in Exodus and Leviticus (LXX) would also explain Matthew's deliberate replacement of: "I will give you rest (καταπαύσω σε)" in Exod 33:14, with "I will give you rest (ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς)" in Matthew 11:28c.

The third possible interpretation is the one suggested by its background in wisdom literature. In Sirach, the sage, after issuing a similar invitation, claims to have found much ἀνάπαυσις (cf. Sir 51:23, 27). Wisdom and the teacher of wisdom do not however offer rest in the first person singular as is the case with Jesus' promise in the future tense found in Matt 11:28 (ἀναπαύσω).

Matt 11:29 starts in the same manner as 11:28, with an imperative verb, linking this part of the invitation with the preceding one and further clarifying it; vv. 29, 30 are in apposition to 11:28. "Take up" (ἄρατε) is a command from Jesus addressed to the second person plural (ὑμᾶς) audience as before, the same group to whom rest (ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς)

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<sup>105</sup> Some scholars have argued that Exod 33:12-14 is the closest OT parallel to the mutual knowledge portrayed in Matt 11:27, 28. "Exod 33.14 has this: 'And he said, 'My presence will go with you and I will give you rest'' (LXX: καὶ καταπαύσω σε). This is the LXX's closest parallel to Mt 11.28: 'Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest' (καὶ γὰρ ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς). In view of the similarities between Mt 11.27 and Exod 33.12f., this can hardly be coincidence" Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 285-286. "By far the closest parallel in the OT to the mutual knowledge of the Father and Son is offered by Moses' relationship to God as pictured in Ex. 33:12-13: the relationship with God out of which Moses seeks to fulfill his role is to consist in both being known by God and knowing God. A background influence from Jewish understanding of Moses' special relationship with God is certainly possible, but the specific father/son relationship remains distinctive, as does the emphasis on the will of the Son" Nolland, *Matthew*, 472. Exod 33:12-14 may be one of the closest parallels in the LXX, but adding the verb ἀναπαύω to the equation nuances this claim and renders additional results. Our study demonstrates that a Father/son relationship and ἀνάπαυσις promised as inheritance finds its closest parallel in the Davidic dynasty, specifically in 2 Kgdms 7:11, 14. This proposal is made in addition to the wisdom and Mosaic backgrounds proposed for the passage.

was promised (v. 28c). The promise of rest is followed by a command to take up “the yoke” (τὸν ζυγόν); the genitive pronoun qualifies it: “my yoke” (v 29). This emphasis on the first person singular pointing to Jesus is consistent with the preceding context in which the narrative uses several such pronouns: “all things to *me*”, “my Father”, “come to *me*”, “I will give you rest” in Matt 11:27, 28. The imperative form of “to take” (αἶρω) may be used with the force of “to take up” or “to take away” (e.g. Matt 25:28), but the addition of “upon you” (ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς) clarifies the meaning in this instance.

The use of “yoke”<sup>106</sup> is usually in contexts of dependence and submission. In the LXX the term is often used for the rule of alien nations as oppressors of Israel (e.g. Assyria in Isa 14:29, Babylon in Is. 47:6). But for the people of Israel it also became a metaphor for submission to the instruction of the law and the kingdom of heaven. This is attested in the LXX (e.g. Jer 5:5; Sir 51:26), in the NT (e.g. Acts 15:10; Gal 5:1), and in rabbinic Judaism (e.g. *m. Abot* 3.5; *m. Ber.* 2.2).

The image of the yoke is applied to wisdom and Torah in the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha<sup>107</sup> (cf. 2 Enoch 34:1-2; 2 Baruch 41:3-5; Sir 6: 18-37; 51:25, 26). In rabbinic Judaism, yoke is used positively and negatively, usually juxtaposed with each other<sup>108</sup>. The negative use of yoke relates to worldly cares and the positive use to Torah, wisdom, heaven and commandments (e.g. *Aboth* 3:5, 6). Yoke also refers to eschatological knowledge (cf. 2 *Enoch* 48:9). In Ezek 34, in the context of God promising that he would give rest (ἀναπαύσω) to the sheep of Israel through the coming Davidic prince, yoke is used of the

<sup>106</sup> In the LXX, the word ζυγός normally “means either ‘scales’ or ‘yoke,’ and in both senses it occurs mostly in ethical or religious contexts.” Bertram, “ζυγός,” TDNT 2, 896.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. also Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom*, 115-6.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. also Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom*, 126-8.

burden that the religious leaders of Israel place over the sheep of Israel, which God would break through the reign of the eschatological divine agent (Ezek 34:27; cf. 34:23-26).

Nevertheless, there is no instance in which someone employed a genitive possessive pronoun in the first person singular as Jesus does when he states “my yoke” (τὸν ζυγόν μου) (v. 29a). In doing so, Jesus proclaims his own interpretation of the law in light of his exclusive knowledge of the Father (v. 27). Jesus is not just inviting others to join him in the yoke of instruction of the Torah which is considered wisdom (as Sirach does in Sir 51:26), but he is proclaiming himself the eschatological re-interpreter, revealer and mediator of the heavenly yoke<sup>109</sup> in light of his mission (vv. 27, 29). Jesus’ yoke is the divine alternative to the oppressive yoke offered by the shepherds of Israel (cf. Ezek 34:27), and he will break theirs and offer his. More on the juxtaposition between Jesus and the Pharisaic leaders of Israel will become evident in Matthew’s use of “burden” in 11:30 and 23:4. The law in the Jewish Scriptures is the utmost revelation of God to his people<sup>110</sup>, but more revelation was expected to come in the last days (e.g. Dan 12:13; 4Q174 I: 13-14). The law in the Jewish Scriptures points to two very important concepts contained in the preceding context (v. 27): revelation and relationship to and with God.<sup>111</sup> By inviting all to take up his yoke, Jesus in

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<sup>109</sup> “He [Jesus] is, therefore, playing not only the part of Wisdom ... but also the part of Torah; or, rather, he is Wisdom, he is Torah. How very significant this is should not be missed. For Judaism ‘Torah’ is ‘all that God has made known of his nature, character and purpose, and of what he would have man be and do’ (Moore 1, p. 263); it is the full revelation of God and of his will for man. So the identification of Jesus with Torah makes Jesus the full revelation of God and of his will for man. But this is precisely what 11.27 has already done, for there the Son declares that he knows the Father and has been given a complete revelation. Hence Jesus, in both 11.27 and 29, and in contrast to Moses, is the perfect embodiment of God’s purpose and demand and the functional equivalent of Torah. Law-giver and law are one.” Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 290.

<sup>110</sup> “The laws are in the strictest sense the requirements of the God to whom Israel belongs because He has revealed Himself in the exodus from Egypt and because in all future wars He will show Himself to be the God of this people.” Gutbrod, “νόμος,” TDNT 4, 1036.

<sup>111</sup> This dual understanding of the law is explained by Gutbrod, “Materially, the Rabbinic understanding of the Torah may be summed up in two inwardly related principles: 1. God has revealed Himself once and for all and exclusively in the Torah; 2. man has his relationship with God only in his relationship with the Torah. Gutbrod, “νόμος,” TDNT 4, 1055.

fact is further explaining what he has already stated in v. 27: he possesses the fullest revelation of God and chooses to reveal it to the tired and burdened (v. 28) through his own interpretation of the Torah in light of his exclusive knowledge of the Father as opposed to the “burden” of the Pharisaical interpretation of the law (Matt 23:4). What Jesus is stating in regard to the yoke of the law in his invitation he will later demonstrate in the sabbatical section that follows in the Matthean narrative (12:1-14).

The previous section is followed by another command: “learn from me” (v. 29b). All three imperatives found in 11:28, 29 (“come”, “take up”, and “learn”) are paralleled commands as the same promise is attached to all three: “rest” (ἀνάπαυσις). By qualifying the imperatives with first person singular pronouns, the parallelism becomes evident: “*take up my yoke*” and “*learn from me*” (Matt 11:29 a, b). These two commands further define and clarify the first “summary” command: “*come to me*” (v. 28a). The command, “learn from me” (μάθετε ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ), emphasizes the source of the instruction: Jesus himself. This imperative further describes the meaning of Jesus’ yoke: to heed his instruction.

The sentence, “learn from me,” is one more indication that Jesus is the functional equivalent of Torah in this pericope. The Sages learned from Torah, the disciples learn from Jesus.<sup>112</sup> “Learn” and “from” are used together when the source of the instruction is highlighted (cf. Matt 24:32).

The imperative form (μάθετε) used in v. 11:29 is found in the prophets (e.g. Isa 1:17) and most prominently in wisdom literature. Sapiential language issues the same imperative for kings and judges (Wis 6:1) and the direct object of this learning is σοφία (Wis 6:9). Sirach emphasizes the importance of learning from the wise (e.g. Sir 8:8,9). Wisdom issues the

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<sup>112</sup> Cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 291.

invitation to listen to her and “learn” knowledge (Sir 16:24). The extensive wisdom background suggests that Jesus is also speaking as wisdom’s teacher.

The reason given to take up Jesus’ yoke and learn from him is his two-fold qualification that follows in the clause: Jesus is “meek and humble in heart”. The clause may also be interpreted as “what” to learn from Jesus if it is translated “that”: “learn from me, *that* I am meek and humble.” Either option is possible, but, since this clause is connected to taking up the “yoke” of Jesus and coming to him, the “because” translation is preferable, further emphasized by the two-fold description of the yoke/burden to follow (“easy and light” v. 30). A minority of scholars prefer to translate ὅτι as “that.”<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, the narrative context offers more than an exemplary proposal; it offers the reason to come to Jesus for rest.<sup>114</sup>

The two-fold description of Jesus is designed as an antonym, opposite to the initial two-fold description encountered at the beginning of the pericope. Two-fold descriptions have been used throughout the preceding Matthean narrative. The pericope started with a two-fold description of those from whom the Father had hidden “these things”: “the wise and learned” (v. 25). The text then developed a two-fold description of those to whom Jesus offers rest: “tired and burdened” (v. 28b). The two-fold description of Jesus as “meek and lowly” (v. 29c) offers a welcome alternative from those who do not receive the revelation from God (σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν) and for those oppressed by the yoke of legalism (οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι). The two words appear together elsewhere in the LXX (e.g.

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<sup>113</sup> E.g. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 156, 174.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Nolland’s proposition: “The ὅτι could introduce a supporting reason for learning from Jesus (so: ‘because/for’), or it could identify what is to be learnt (so: ‘that’). But since the learning is linked to the yoke and thus to the content of the servitude intended, learning that Jesus is ‘gentle and humble in heart’ is hardly fitting. The ὅτι clause is motivational” the demands imposed by this yoke will bring relief to the weary and burdened because they are imposed by one who is ‘gentle (πραῦς) and humble in heart’.” Nolland, *Matthew*, 477.



Isa 26:6, Zeph 3:12). Humility and meekness are characteristics of the wise (e.g. Prov 11:2; Sir 1:27) and they stand in antithesis to pride and arrogance (e.g. Prov 11:2); wisdom's antipathy to pride and arrogance is unequivocal (e.g. Prov 8:13). Meekness is the attribute for which Moses is known in the history of Israel<sup>115</sup>, "Now the man Moses was very meek (πραῦς σφόδρα) more than all men that were on the face of the earth" (Num 12:3, LXX). This idea was also adopted in the LXX (e.g. Sir 45:4; Numb 12:3), by Philo (e.g. *Mos.* 2:279), and in other Jewish Literature (e.g. *b. Ned.* 38a<sup>116</sup>).

Meekness also describes the eschatological coming king: "...Behold your king is coming to you; he is just and endowed with salvation, meek (πραῦς) and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zech 9:9 LXX). This last verse is a Matthean redactional addition to the Markan version of the triumphal entry in Matt 21:5 "SAY TO THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, 'BEHOLD YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, GENTLE (πραῦς) AND MOUNTED ON A DONKEY, EVEN ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A BEAST OF BURDEN'",<sup>117</sup> further emphasizing the Matthean interest in portraying Jesus as the Davidic coming king. This word is only used once more by Matthew in 5:5 as the characteristic of those who will inherit the earth, a befitting eschatological confirmation for those who accept the yoke of the "meek one" in Matt 11:29c.

The connection between "humble" (ταπεινός) and "in heart" (τῇ καρδίᾳ) is also found in the LXX (cf. Dan 3:87). The phrase internalizes the behavior, making this a spiritual

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<sup>115</sup> Commenting on Matt 11:29c, Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-20*, 290, make these observations, "Moses was, for Judaism, the exemplar in meekness... We do not doubt that Matthew's redactional reference to Jesus' meekness is yet one more clue that in 11.25-30 Jesus is being compared and contrasted with Moses."

<sup>116</sup> In Nedarim 38a, Moses' meekness is stated along with strength, wealth and wisdom.

<sup>117</sup> NASB usage of capital letters.

attitude<sup>118</sup>, and it is corollary to “humble in spirit” (ταπεινούς τῷ πνεύματι) (cf. Ps 33:19, LXX). A non-confrontational style of authority (such as meekness and lowliness) will be brought up again in the Matthean narrative following the sabbath pericopes (Matt 12:1-14) as the characteristics of Jesus, the Servant, in the longest quotation of Scripture (Isa 42:1-4) in this Gospel (Matt 12:18-21).

The result of heeding the invitation to come to Jesus, defined as taking his yoke and learning from him, is: “YOU WILL FIND REST (ἀνάπαυσιν) FOR YOUR SOULS” (v. 29d). As in the preceding sentences, the subject continues to be the second person plural. The promise is: “you will find”, which implies that the addressees, those who labor and are burdened, are seeking something and they will find it if they heed Jesus’ invitation. Those who come will find “rest” (ἀνάπαυσις). This is the second time this word and its cognate terms appear in the invitation; first in the invitation proper (v. 28), then in the explanation of the invitation (v. 29). The “soul” (ψυχή) of the “infants” (νήπιος) finds “rest” (ἀνάπαυσις) in the Lord’s bountiful dealing with them (cf. Ps 114 (116): 6, 7, LXX).

Those who accept Jesus’ offer are promised: “you will find rest for your souls” (Matt 11:29) (καὶ εὐρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν). In the LXX, this quotation from Jer 6:16 reads, “καὶ εὐρήσετε ἀγνισμόν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν” (Jer 6:16 LXX). Matthew agrees with the LXX (against the MT) in both the plural of souls/selves<sup>119</sup> (ψυχαῖς) and the verbal form, but exchanges Jeremiah’s “purification” (NETS) for “rest” (MT). In other words, Matthew quotes the LXX (Jer 6:16) word for word with the exception of “rest”<sup>120</sup>, which he

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<sup>118</sup> “The dative τῇ καρδίᾳ internalizes the lowliness. One may think both of a condition (emotionally ‘down’) and an attitude (‘humble’). The other texts in which the stem occurs in Matthew (18:4; 23:11-12; cf. 18:10; 20:26-28; 23:8-10) demonstrate that the issue is the humble attitude.” Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 173-4.

<sup>119</sup> Some scholars argue that in Jer 6:16 ψυχᾶς means ‘selves’, not ‘souls’. (Cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 291; Nolland, *Matthew*, 478).

<sup>120</sup> “Rest” is the translation that follows the MT, against “purification” in the LXX.

edits to read ἀνάπαυσις, against “purification” (ἀγνισμόν) in the LXX. By quoting Jer 6:16, Matthew makes an allusion to Yahweh’s peace offer that was rejected by Israel and resulted in Exile. There are two significant questions to be asked of this sentence: Why does Matthew replace “purification” with “rest” (ἀνάπαυσις)? And what is the force of “souls”?

To answer the first question, some scholars argue for a word link with 11:28 and the Hebrew text of Jer 6:16 as the main reasons for the edition.<sup>121</sup> Matthew wants the link with v. 28, and the Hebrew term (*margôa'*) enables him to make it. The translation proposed by Matthew renders the Hebrew better than the LXX does, and it agrees with the usual LXX translation of this verb and noun.<sup>122</sup> The LXX translation of *margôa'* is very unusual; the most common translation of this Hebrew word-group when its meaning is considered to be “being quiet” is ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms.<sup>123</sup> There are other places where Matthew turns to Hebrew in a LXX quotation (Matt 2:15, cf. Hos 11:1; Matt 2:18, cf. Jer 31 (38):15 LXX). These modifications are usually minor (one or two words) and serve to agree better with the Hebrew. The exception is Matt 27:9-10 where Matthew’s redaction of Zech 11:13 is not modest and it suggests an effort to fit the narrative context. Overall, Matthew uses a revision of the LXX text that is in closer agreement with the Hebrew text.<sup>124</sup>

Could it be that the LXX background themes for the meaning of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group also played a part in influencing Matthew’s search for a more appropriate term resulting in the change of the text? In the poetic books of the LXX, an important force of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms is the *rest* that implies a state of the soul achieved by

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 291.

<sup>122</sup> Menken, *Matthew’s Bible*, 267-8.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Jer 29 (47): 6. F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, eds. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 921.

<sup>124</sup> The revision may be Matthean or a pre-existent revised LXX text. Commenting on Matt 11:30 Menken concludes, “the unmarked quotation may well derive from a LXX that was corrected towards the Hebrew, although independent translation from the Hebrew is not completely impossible.” Menken, *Matthew’s Bible*, 268-9.

seeking instruction and wisdom from the Lord, and wisdom, in many instances, is opposed to “laboring” (cf. Prov 29:17; Eccl 9:17; Sir 3:6; 6:28; 18:16; 22:13; 28:16; 30:34 (33:26); 51:27). Sirach offers promising parallels to the Matthean promise of finding rest.<sup>125</sup> In Sirach 6:27-28, the author promises that those who seek and get a hold of wisdom will also find “rest” (ἀνάπαυσις). Ἀνάπαυσις is promised in conjunction with “instruction.” Sir 33:26 (30:34) makes a direct connection between the two, “Work with instruction, and you will find rest.” The prayer of the son of Sirach also juxtaposes the yoke of instruction with finding rest (ἀνάπαυσις) (Sir 51:26, 27). Furthermore, he counsels the uneducated to place their neck under a yoke (ζυγός), and let their soul (ψυχή) receive instruction (cf. Sir 51:26); both of these words are present in 11:29. Wisdom is identified with the Torah (Sir 24:23).<sup>126</sup> Wisdom’s formulations offer a clear background to Matthew’s choice of “rest” from the MT in place of “purification” from the LXX rendition of Jer 6:16.

But, might the other LXX background themes also illumine Matthew’s choice of “rest”? A Mosaic background should be considered. The use of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the Pentateuch is very specific: the prominent meaning given to the ἀνάπαυσις word-group is that of sabbath rest (whether relating to the seventh-day, seventh-year or seventh-month holy convocation). Furthermore, this force is the *only* meaning given to the word ἀνάπαυσις in Exodus and Leviticus. In Matthew’s time, the word ἀνάπαυσις had become normative for “sabbath day of rest.”<sup>127</sup> A Mosaic background

<sup>125</sup> Cf. Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom*, 116-7, 137-9.

<sup>126</sup> “Now in Judaism wisdom was identified with Law (Ecclus. 24:23). The rabbis also spoke of the Law as the yoke of the Kingdom of God, which men must put on...Matthew is probably glancing at this idea, especially the individual commandments of Pharisaic legalism, which were impossible to fulfill (23:4; cf. Acts 15:10).” Schweizer, *Matthew*, 272. “Since in Sirach 24 wisdom was identified with the Torah, that [‘the yoke of wisdom’ in Sir 6:24; 51:26] means nothing more than the ‘yoke of the commandments,’ or of the Torah, a widespread Jewish expression.” Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 171

<sup>127</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Against Apion* 2, 174.

(Exod 33:12-14) is promising, portraying Jesus as the new and greater Moses, the definitive interpreter of the law in light of his absolute knowledge of the Father. In the sabbatical section that follows (Matt 12:1-14), Jesus declares himself “Lord of the sabbath” (Matt 12:8). In support of this observation, a Mosaic background has already been proposed as part of the connotation of the offer of rest in v. 28. Furthermore, the Pentateuch also portrays the relationship between “rest” and “soul” (cf. Lev 16:31; Deut 28:65). The usage of the word ἀνάπαυσις in Matt 11:29d could therefore be a deliberate Matthean edition of Jer 6:16 LXX, linking Jesus’ invitation and promise (Matt 11:28-30), with the sabbatical section that follows (Matt 12:1-14), in which Jesus eventually declares himself “Lord of the sabbath” (Matt 12:8).

A Davidic eschatological background has also been proposed as a possible background for the use of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in Jesus’ offer of rest in v. 28 because ἀναπαύσω appears only three times in the LXX exclusively in this context (2 Kgdms 7:11; 1 Chr 22:9 and Ezek 34:15). The presence of the eschatological kingdom was often promised in terms of “rest” (ἀνάπαυσις), as can be seen from the majority usage of the word ἀνάπαυσις with the force of “the final dwelling of the people of God” in the prophetic books of the LXX (e.g. Isa 11:10; 65:9, 10).<sup>128</sup> In later traditions, the kingdom is often spoken of in terms of ἀνάπαυσις (cf. 2 Clem. 5:5). The specific promise of Yahweh that he will give ἀνάπαυσις to Israel through the coming Davidic prince is of decisive importance in v. 29. In Ezek 34:15-27, Yahweh promises rest and the breaking of the “yoke” that enslaves the sheep of Israel. The prominence of “rest” and “yoke” is observed in Matt

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<sup>128</sup> “The presence of the kingdom means the presence of ‘rest’. (Note that 2 Clem 5.5 speaks of the ἀνάπαυσις of the kingdom.) We should like to propose that Mt 11.28 is kindred to Heb 4.3: Jesus, the Messiah and bringer of the kingdom, offers eschatological rest to those who join him and his cause.” Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-20*, 289.

11:28-30. Matthew has a causality relationship between the two words in v. 29: taking the yoke of Jesus results in rest (ἀνάπαυσις) for the soul.

In the LXX, the force of “soul” (ψυχή) is primarily portrayed as the center of the inner life/self of a person, as the individual or living being.<sup>129</sup> “Rest” and “soul” are used together in the LXX. Of relevance is the instance found in Deut 28:65, where God does not allow his people to find rest among the nations due to their disobedience, and he gives them despair of soul. In Deut 28:65 there is a parallelism between “no rest” and “despair of soul.” In the poetic books there are five instances where ἀνάπαυσις and ψυχή are used in direct connection with each other and all occurrences use “soul” with the force of inner self: Ps 22(23):2, 3; Ps 114 (116):7; Prov 29:17; Sir 6:26, 28; Sir 51:26, 27. The narrative of Ps 22 (23): 2, 3 proposes that the waters of rest and restoration of soul are related to each other. In Ps 114 (116): 7, the writer uses both words when he orders his own soul (inner self) to return to its rest. The two words (rest and soul) appear in Prov 29:17 in parallel relation to each other: *rest* is paralleled to *delight of soul*.

Sir 6:26, 28 is an exhortation to seek wisdom with all the *soul* (inner self) and the result will be that the soul will find wisdom’s rest. The son of Sirach parallels placing the neck under a *yoke* and letting the *soul* (inner self) receive instruction (Sir 51:26). He claims that, in doing this, he has found much *rest* (ἀνάπαυσις) (Sir 51:27). All three words (yoke, rest, soul) in this passage are present in Matt 11:29. Due to the usage of these key words, Sir 51:26, 27 is a clear background for the Matthean text.

The prominent force of *soul* in connection with *rest* in the LXX is that of *inner self*. In the Matthean narrative (11:29), when Jesus says that those who take his yoke upon them

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<sup>129</sup> Cf. “ψυχή” in Lust, Eynikel and Hauspie, *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 674.

will find ἀνάπαυσις for their souls, he is promising a benefit experienced in the inner self that can be interpreted against a three-fold background: an inner sabbath rest offered by the new and greater Moses (Pentateuch), a present eschatological rest brought about by the Davidic shepherd/king (Historic/Prophetic books) and the inner repose realized through the presence of personified Wisdom (Poetic books). The Mosaic and Davidic themes will be further developed in the explicit consideration given to both the law and David in the pericope that follows in the Matthean narrative (12:1-14).

Matt 11:30 is the second part of the detailed description of the invitation summarized in 11:28. The emphasis on the first person genitives continues: “my yoke” (11:30a), “my burden” (11:30b), further developing the prominence of Jesus as the giver of the invitation, “Come to me” (11:28a). The words “yoke” and “burden” have been used throughout this section (11:28-30) and in this verse complete a deliberate A BC BC A structure:

11:28b	Burdened
11:28c	Rest
11:29a	Yoke
11:29d	Rest
11:30a	Yoke
11:30b	Burden (light) <sup>130</sup>

This narrative structure, that may also be considered a “chiastic structure”<sup>131</sup>, juxtaposes and contrasts the burden of Jesus (“light” in v. 30b) with the burden being experienced by those whom Jesus is calling (v. 28b), who are under the burden of Pharisaic interpretation of the law (Matt 23:4). It also parallels “rest” with “yoke”; yoke is qualified by a first person genitive: “my yoke.” “Yoke” (ζυγός) is only used here (vv. 29, 30) in this

<sup>130</sup> Cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-20*, 290.

<sup>131</sup> A (Burden), B (Rest-Yoke), B (Rest-Yoke), A (Burden).

Gospel, and four other times in the NT (Acts 15:10; Gal 5:1; 1 Tim 6:1; Rev 6:5), but it is used several times in the LXX. In the LXX, the word-group not only refers to submission to the law and instruction (e.g. Sir 51:26), but to the yoke of the oppressor from which Yahweh would deliver Israel through the Messiah (e.g. Isa 9: 4 (3); 10:26, 27; 11:13 LXX), as he had already done through a typological deliverance in the Exodus and the Exile. In Ezek 34:27 God himself breaks the bars of the yoke placed on the sheep of Israel that have been enslaved by the shepherds of Israel. This prophecy is uttered against the shepherds of Israel and it is through the Davidic shepherd prince that God accomplishes his task (Ezek 34: 23, 24). Matthew's emphasis on the "lost sheep of Israel" is attested in 10:5, 6; 15:24 and on the portrayal of Jesus as the Davidic shepherd king in e.g. 2:6; 9:36.

The adjective assigned to Jesus' yoke in v. 30a (χρηστός) may be translated as "kind" or "comfortable". This word occurs only here in this Gospel. The adjective "kind" is more befitting of a person than a yoke; the personal characteristics of Jesus previously mentioned ("meek and humble" in v. 29c) are metaphorically transferred to his yoke, "my yoke is kind/comfortable" (v. 30a).

The second clause is in synonymous parallelism to the first clause, thereby aiding in the interpretation of this verse: "my burden is light" (v. 30b). "Yoke" and "burden" are parallel concepts; "kind" and "light" describe both subjects. The word "burden" (φορτίον) acts as an *inclusio* for this M source section (πεφορτισμένοι in 11:28). "My burden is light" stands in opposition to the "heavy burdens" of the Pharisees and scribes (23:4); "light" (ἐλαφρόν) in Matt 11:30b is the antonym of "heavy" (βαρέα) in Matt 23:4, both applied to "burden". These (11:30; 23:4) are the only two occurrences of "burden" (φορτίον) in the Gospel of Matthew. A juxtaposition of the difference between Jesus' interpretation of the



law and the Pharisaical interpretation of the law follows after this section (Matt 12:1-14), contrasting two different approaches to “resting” on the Sabbath.<sup>132</sup>

## Conclusions

This exegetical study of Matthew 11:25-30 reveals three prominent interpretive themes for both the narrative context of the promise of rest (vv. 25-27) and the promise of rest itself (vv. 28-30).

The first interpretive theme is Jesus as “personified Wisdom” and Wisdom’s mediating teacher. After thanking the Father for revealing “these things” to infants and hiding them from the wise (vv 25-26), the Son claims a reciprocal intimate knowledge of the Father and the exclusive prerogative to reveal him (v 27). In the Jewish Scriptures, Wisdom knows God and God knows Wisdom and Wisdom is the revealer of knowledge to those who seek her (e.g. Sir 1:6, 8; 4:11; Wis 6:13; 8:4; 9:9-11; 10:10). This theme continues in the invitation and promise of rest issued by Jesus (Matt 11: 28-10). Jesus issues the invitation to come to him (Matt 11:28); Sirach and Wisdom utter similar invitations (Sir 24:19; 51:23). The sage claims that he has found for himself ἀνάπαυσις (Sir 51:23, 27). Jesus, as Wisdom’s representative and mediating teacher, offers ἀνάπαυσις to the weary and heavy-laden who heed his invitation (Matt 11:28, 29). The most noticeable difference between the invitations in Wisdom literature and the invitation issued by Jesus is that Wisdom and the teacher of wisdom do not offer rest in the first person singular as Jesus does in Matt 11:28 (ἀναπαύσω). Jesus’ invitation is clarified as taking up his yoke, a metaphor also applied to wisdom and Torah in wisdom literature (e.g. Sir 6:18-37; 51:25, 26). This interpretive theme

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<sup>132</sup> On this contrast, cf. R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*. NICNT 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 451.

is further emphasized by the introductory praise/thanksgiving formula of Matt 11:25a, which resembles the prayer recorded in Sir 51:1: “I will give thanks to you, Lord King.”

The second prominent theme is Jesus as the new Moses, who interprets, reveals and mediates the Torah. The Son is known by the Father and the Son knows the Father (Matt 11:27). A very similar assertion is made of Moses in Exodus 33:12, 13: the Lord knows Moses and Moses prays that he may know the Lord. The Lord answers Moses with a promise of rest: “My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest (καταπαύσω σε)” (Exod 33:14). The Matthean text proposes the same narrative order: the intimate reciprocal knowledge of the Son and the Father (Matt 11:27), followed by the promise of rest (11:28-30). The promise made by Yahweh to Moses is in the first person singular to the second person singular in the future tense. The promise made by Jesus is in the first person singular to the second person plural in the future tense. The most noticeable difference is the Matthean use of ἀναπαύσω instead of καταπαύσω in the Exodus text (LXX). A possible explanation for the Matthean word usage is the prominent meaning given to the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in the Pentateuch (LXX): sabbath rest. This is the exclusive meaning of the word-group in Exodus and Leviticus (LXX). The theme of the re-interpretation of sabbath rest in light of Jesus’ mission continues in the next two Matthean pericopes (Matt 12:1-8, 9-14), in which Jesus proclaims himself the Lord of the Sabbath (v 8). A strong Mosaic portrayal of Jesus is further emphasized by his self-description as “gentle/meek” (πραΰς, Matt 11:29), a known attribute of Moses in the Septuagint (Num 12:3). Jesus offers his easy yoke (Matt 11:29, 30). “The yoke” was used as a metaphor for submission to the law in the Jewish Scriptures (e.g. Jer 5:5; Sir 51:26 LXX), further portraying Jesus as the new law-interpreter.

The third theme influencing Matthew's portrayal in this section is Jesus as the expected Messianic Davidic prince. The Father-Son language of Matt 11:25-27 is rooted in the background of the Father/Son tradition with the force of God as father of the king of Israel (e.g. 2 Kgdms 7:12-16 (LXX); Ps 2:6-8). The definite article utilized by Matthew in v 27 highlights that Jesus is not only "a" son/king, but "the" expected Davidic prince. In Matt 11:27, Jesus is presented as the only one who possesses the full knowledge of God and the "eschatological revealer" who chooses to reveal the knowledge of God, an eschatological promise made to Israel (cf. Jer 31:34). It is in this context that the exact wording for the promise made by the Matthean Jesus, in the first person singular in the future tense, "I will give you rest (ἀναπαύσω)" (Matt 11:28) finds its background in the LXX. Ἀναπαύσω is found only three times in the LXX: 2 Kgdms 7:11; 1 Chr 22:9 and Ezek 34:15. The first two are promises to the Davidic dynasty and the third relates to the expected Davidic prince. The promise of Messianic rest (Ezek 34:15) finds fulfillment through the eschatological Davidic shepherd king (Ezek 34: 23, 24), who would break the "yoke" of the religious leaders of Israel (cf. Ezek 34:27; Matt 11:29-30). The theme of Jesus as the expected Davidic shepherd King has been previously emphasized by Matthew (e.g. 1:1; 2:6; 9:27), and in the following Matthean pericope, Jesus mentions David as an example of his interpretation of the law (Matt 12:3-4). Jesus is described as meek (πραῦς) (Matt 11:29), a description of the eschatological coming king (Zech 9:9), preserved by Matthew in his redactional addition to the Markan version of the triumphal entry (Matt 21:5). Matthew is emphasizing the Messianic eschatological overtones of this passage (Matt 11:25-30) through word links with the LXX.

The LXX's use of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms significantly informs the exegesis of Matt 11:25-30 and confirms the three Matthean Messianic/Christological overtones through the predominant meanings given to the ἀνάπαυσις word-group: "Wisdom's repose" in the Poetic books, "sabbath rest" in the Pentateuch, and "peaceful dwelling/inheritance" in the Historical and Prophetic books.

The prominent meanings of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group in the general LXX usage of the term analyzed in the previous chapter consistently correspond with the three Septuagintal specific backgrounds of Jesus' offer and promise of finding rest. These dominant forces of the ἀνάπαυσις word-group along with the predominant themes in Matthew's portrayal of Jesus, provide a new fertile background for the analysis of Matt 11:25-30. These three prominent Septuagintal themes, wisdom's rest, sabbath, and eschatology may in fact color the message of this passage which re-interprets the sabbath and eschatological hopes of the Jewish Scriptures by deliberately portraying Jesus and his mission as Wisdom's teacher, new Mosaic mediator and interpreter of the law and eschatological Davidic shepherd/prince. Jesus can be seen as the embodiment and fulfillment of the eschatological Messianic rest typified by the sabbath and proclaimed by Wisdom.

In addition, the offer and promise of ἀνάπαυσις could also be interpreted as a three-fold reality experienced in the inner self of each individual who heeds Jesus' invitation (v. 29): the inner repose brought about by the instruction and presence of Wisdom (Poetic books), a sabbath rest for the soul, offered by the new and greater Moses (Pentateuch), and a present eschatological rest experienced within, brought about by the divine Davidic shepherd/king (Historic/Prophetic books).

## **Chapter 4 – Sabbath Controversies (Matthew 12:1-14)**

Our study now proceeds to Matt 12:1-14, a two-fold sabbath pericope that contains eight of the eleven occurrences of σάββατον and its cognate terms in the Gospel of Matthew. The two sabbath stories (Matt 12:1-8, 9-14) have parallels in Mark (Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-6) and Luke (Luke 6:1-5, 6-11). Only in Matthew's narrative do these two sabbath sections follow Jesus' invitation to rest (ἀνάπαυσις) (Matt 11:28-30). This Matthean insertion (Matt 11:28-30), placed between Q<sup>133</sup> (Matt 11:25-27) and Markan material (Matt 12:1-14), is a deliberate introduction to the two-fold sabbath section that follows.<sup>134</sup> The prominent use of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the Pentateuch (LXX) with the meaning of "sabbath rest" and its predominant usage as the "peaceful dwelling" for the people of God under the Davidic Dynasty in the Historical books, and the "final eschatological dwelling" in the Prophetic books (LXX)<sup>135</sup>, encourage the assertion that Matthew's use of ἀνάπαυσις in the verses that immediately precede this section is intentional in creating a narrative link between Jesus' invitation of rest and Jesus' interpretation of the sabbath in the light of his identity and mission. The juxtaposition indicates that Jesus, giver of rest (11:25-30), is also Jesus, Lord of the sabbath (12:1-8; 9-14). The Jesus-centered interpretation of the law and the eschatological hopes of Israel by Matthew in his preceding narrative, provide a background for the exegesis of Matt 12:1-14. These two controversy stories end with the Pharisees' resolution to destroy Jesus (v. 14).

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<sup>133</sup> "After R. Bultmann's challenge to the unity of 11.25-30, most scholars have tended to agree that only 11.25-27 was present in Q, though they do not agree where 11.28-30 came from." Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 152.

<sup>134</sup> "Thus, the material of 11.27-30 sets up the narrative of 12.1-14, which focuses upon the contrasting yokes of the Pharisees and of Jesus, and issues of Christology." R. Beaton, *Isaiah's Christ in Matthew's Gospel*. (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 166.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Chapter 2 in this research for a complete word study of ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms in the LXX.

This sabbath narrative is divided into two sections: Harvesting on the sabbath (Matt 12:1-8), and Healing on the sabbath (Matt 12:9-14).

### **Harvesting on the sabbath (Matt 12:1-8)**

This first sabbath story is a controversy story<sup>136</sup> that concludes with a pronouncement of Jesus: “For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” (12:8). Conflict between Jesus and his opponents, primarily the Pharisees and Jewish officials, over the interpretation of sabbath keeping is a recurring theme in the Gospels (cf. Matt 12:1-14//Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 6:1-11//Luke 13:10-17; Luke 14:1-6; John 5:1-17; John 7:19-24; John 9:13-34) but Matthew, as does Mark (Mark 2:23-3:6), deals with sabbath controversy arguments between the Pharisees and Jesus only in this one place (Matt 12:1-14).<sup>137</sup>

Assuming Markan priority, Matthew preserves most of Mark’s material (Mark 2:23-28), with the exception of the first pronouncement of Jesus regarding the sabbath in Mark (v. 27), which is omitted by Matthew (as by Luke). Contrary to Matthew’s customary abbreviating of Mark’s narratives (e.g. Matt 9:1-8, 18-26), in this pericope he adds verses 5-7, material unique to Matthew.<sup>138</sup> These verses (vv. 5-7) reflect characteristics of Matthew’s

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<sup>136</sup> That this is a controversy/conflict story is widely proposed by scholars (e.g. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 327; Keener, *Commentary on Matthew*, 350; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 454).

<sup>137</sup> The sabbath controversy that follows Jesus’ offer of rest illustrates the contrast between the yoke of Jesus and the burden of the Pharisees (cf. Matt 23:4). C. Evans, *Matthew*. New Cambridge Bible Commentary (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 249, agrees: “Matthew’s version of the controversy generated by plucking grain on the Sabbath immediately follows Jesus’ invitation to take his yoke of teaching upon oneself, to learn from him, and to find rest (cf. Matt 11:28-30). Set in this context, the Sabbath controversy illustrates the heavy and unreasonable burden that the yoke of the Pharisees place on people.” Cf. also Sturcke, *Encountering the Rest of God*, 177, “This juxtaposition has the effect of characterizing the approach of the accusing Pharisees to the Sabbath, which was supposed to give rest, as burdensome. Taken together with the grainfield and Sabbath-healing episodes—a triptych—the effect is that of reinterpreting the Sabbath in Christological terms.”

<sup>138</sup> I agree with Hagner’s plausible hypothesis regarding the content of vv. 5-7: “this material was preserved in an oral tradition available to Matthew.” Hagner, “Jesus and the Synoptic Sabbath Controversies” *BBR* 19.2 (2009), 225.

own redaction, such as the use of οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε in v. 5, which he favors throughout his gospel (cf. Matt 12:3, 5, 19:4, 22:31).<sup>139</sup>

The narrative of the first sabbath story (12:1-8) may be divided into three sections: the setting (12:1), the challenge (12:2); and the response (12:3-8). The setting begins with the continuity of thought between the previous section and the current passage, emphasized by the repetition of the same phrase that occurs in Matt 11:25a, “At that time” (Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ)<sup>140</sup>, at the beginning of Matt 12:1a. Furthermore, the Matthean replacement of the pronoun “he” (αὐτὸν) in Mark 2:23 (and Luke 6:1) with “Jesus” in Matt 12:1 creates a parallel sentence with the beginning of the previous pericope: “At that time Jesus answered” (Matt 11:25), and “At that time Jesus went” (Matt 12:1). The person of Jesus forms an *inclusio* in this first sabbath section, because the story starts with Jesus (Matt 12:1a) and ends with him (“Son of Man” in 12:8), thereby underlining Jesus as the main character in this sabbath story. Jesus’ interpretation of the sabbath in light of his mission is the core discussion in this section, emphasized by the climactic concluding pronouncement that proclaims the relationship between Jesus and the sabbath (12:8).

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<sup>139</sup> This phrase is used only one time in the Gospel of Mark (12:26) and is not utilized by Luke.

<sup>140</sup> “Ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ, ‘in that time,’ although merely a transition phrase, does have the effect of tying this passage together with the preceding argument concerning the kind yoke and light burden of Jesus’ teaching. The evangelist makes the connection by means of the assertion that about the time Jesus had made the previous remarks, these illustrative episodes occurred.” Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 328. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 305, agree: “The phrase [“at the time”] is not intended to supply chronological information but to serve as a thematic bridge: it helps associate 11.25-30 (which is introduced by ‘at that time’ and which proclaims Jesus as the giver of rest) with 12.1-8 (where Jesus is the Lord of the sabbath).” “Although Matthew has already introduced the conflict about fasting, this is the first time he associates it with the conflicts about the Sabbath... possibly because the Sabbath of Judaism is considered to foreshadow the great rest promised by God for the eschatological age; for Jesus, the eschatological day will be feasting not fasting (cf. 9:14-15). The creation story in Genesis 1:1-2:3 leads up to the Sabbath, which even there was probably understood as a symbol of the world to come, which would be ‘all Sabbath.’ It is therefore possible that Matthew uses the opening words ‘Not long afterward’ (Greek: ‘At that time’) to refer to the promise of rest given in 11:29.” Schweizer, *The Good News according to Matthew*, 227.

## The Setting (12:1)

Following the introductory phrase that provides the word link with the previous pericope and the Matthean edition that changes the pronoun to Jesus' proper name, Jesus initiates the action of "going" into the grainfields. Matthew provides both the temporal setting (sabbath), as well as the geographical setting (grainfields). This is the first mention of the sabbath in the Gospel of Matthew.<sup>141</sup> The fact that this episode happens on the sabbath reinforces the link with the previous pericope that includes the offer of rest,<sup>142</sup> because "the sabbath was a time of rest."<sup>143</sup> Rest was part of the sabbath law.<sup>144</sup> The LXX's consistent use of ἀνάπαυσις in the Pentateuch with the force of sabbath keeping has already been established in previous chapters. The connection "rest-sabbath" for the Matthean audience would have been obvious and in the appropriate order<sup>145</sup>. The sabbath is the core concept in this pericope and the word is mentioned four times in this first story (12:1, 2, 5, 8). In 12:1, "the sabbath" (τοῖς σάββατον) is in the plural. The plural σάββατα can have a

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<sup>141</sup> Cf. Sturcke, *Encountering the Rest of God*, 176.

<sup>142</sup> In agreement with R. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), 220, who proposes that this is a deliberate thematic link: "Since he has just written about the rest Jesus gives (11:28-30), Matthew now brings in two stories about the issue of rest on the Sabbath."

<sup>143</sup> Commenting on this verse (12:1), Hagner proposes the link with the preceding narrative, "The sabbath was a time of rest (cf. the emphasis on rest in the preceding sentences, 11:28) and rejoicing." Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 328.

<sup>144</sup> France explains, "It is probably not accidental that it follows the offer of 'rest' in 11:28-30, since 'rest' was the declared aim of the sabbath law." France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 454-5.

<sup>145</sup> J. Neusner, *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus: an Intermillennial, Interfaith Exchange* (New York, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1993), 60-62, explains how, for a Jew, these two pericopes would be absolutely connected and in the appropriate order, "The two statements, appropriately, deal with the Sabbath first in the setting of our relationship with God, and only second, in the context of the things we do, and do not do, on that particular day. So Jesus stands well within the framework of the Torah in his presentation of what he wishes to say about the Sabbath: a this-worldly moment that bespeaks eternity. The Sabbath forms the centerpiece of our life with God, and Jesus treats it as the centerpiece of his teaching; only as a second thought do the do's and don'ts matter... First Jesus speaks about rest from work, and then, and only then, about the Sabbath... Standing by itself, Jesus' statement speaks only about rest. But as we see, in the very same context, he speaks of the Sabbath. So, hearing what he said, I think only of the Sabbath, which is how eternal Israel finds rest for its soul: 'Six days you shall labor, and do all your work' but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work' (Exod 20:9-10)."



singular force, and it may also be understood as the plural used of festivals.<sup>146</sup> Matthew alternates singular and plural forms of the word in this pericope (12:1, 2, 5, 8). The second part of v.1 introduces the disciples as stock characters. The genitive of possession highlights that these are “his” (αὐτοῦ), Jesus’, disciples. The disciples are recognized as “his”, because even though Jesus is not portrayed as engaging in the challenged activity later on in the conflict, he is still assumed responsible to answer for “his” disciples’ actions. In 12:1b, the cause for the actions that will follow (and eventually ignite the conflict in this pericope) is given: “his disciples became hungry”. This reason is different than the one proposed by Mark in his Gospel, where the disciples pluck the grain “to make a path” (Mark 2:23).

In response to their hunger the disciples begin to pluck heads of grain and to eat them (12:1). The disciples engage in an activity allowed in the law: the picking of grain (σπάχυσ) by hand (Deut 23:25(26), LXX). This activity will not be questioned in the subsequent verses.<sup>147</sup> The temporal setting, the sabbath, is the reason for the challenge and controversy. Later Mishnaic sabbath law, dating from the second and third centuries C.E., forbids “reaping” and “threshing” within the thirty-nine forbidden acts<sup>148</sup>, but even the Torah forbids “harvesting” on the sabbath (Exod 34:21). Two important additions have been made by Matthew in this section compared with Mark 2:23: the Matthean narrative adds “hunger” and “to eat”, both absent in the Markan narrative, providing a strong and intentional parallel to David’s example used in Jesus’ response: David and those who were

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<sup>146</sup> Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 328.

<sup>147</sup> For a discussion of possible meanings and implications of τίλλειν σπάχυσ for sabbath laws, cf. L. Doering, “Sabbath Laws in the New Testament Gospels” in eds. R. Bieringer, F. G. Martinez, D. Pollefy and P. Tomson, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 209-213.

<sup>148</sup> m. *Sabb.* 7:2.

with him were also “hungry”, and they “ate” the bread of the Presence (12:3, 4)<sup>149</sup>. Some scholars<sup>150</sup> suggest that by adding “hunger” to the setting (cf. Mark 2:23), Matthew proposes, early in the narrative, a legal argument against the accusation of the Pharisees (12:2): the disciples transgressed the sabbath law out of need, not will,<sup>151</sup> but this is not the focus of Jesus’ response in this narrative.<sup>152</sup> Matthew omits the mention of need in the case of David (cf. Mark 2:25).<sup>153</sup>

### The Challenge (12:2)

Matthew 12:2 introduces the accusation of the Pharisees: a more aggressive challenge than in Mark’s version (Mark 2:24), where the Pharisees pose a question to Jesus and not an outright charge. The Pharisees represent a group in constant and increasing conflict with Jesus. In the narrative, they act in a foreseeable manner: by challenging the actions of Jesus’ disciples, also by implication challenging Jesus’ interpretation of the law. The juxtaposition<sup>154</sup> between this pericope (12:1-8) and the previous one (11:25-30) is even more striking once the Pharisees are introduced, because the Pharisees are the ones who exert the “heavy burden” (Matt 23:4), while Jesus offers the “light burden” (Matt 11:30),

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<sup>149</sup> “Matthew has...added the remark on hunger, which anticipates v. 3 and thereby increases the parallelism between the situation of David and the situation of Jesus.” Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 306.

<sup>150</sup> E.g. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 180; Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 137.

<sup>151</sup> E.g. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 180.

<sup>152</sup> In agreement with Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 168, who proposes that, “though the disciples’ hunger is the surface reason for their behavior, as the story is developing, it will become clear that the fundamental ground which makes the disciples guiltless (cf. v.7) even according to the Pharisaic standard is not their hunger but the presence of Jesus, Lord of the sabbath, with them.”

<sup>153</sup> M. Casey, “Culture and Historicity: the Plucking of the Grain (Mark 2.23–28),” *NTS* 34 (1988):6, points out that, “The Pharisees would not necessarily be impressed by the fact that the disciples were hungry, because they were themselves so well accustomed to fasting. They would therefore take the view that food should have been gathered and prepared the previous day, so that the Sabbath rest could be enjoyed with food but without work.”

<sup>154</sup> “Both the theme of ‘rest’... and that of Jesus’ ‘kind yoke’ in contrast with the burdens of scribal demands (23:4) will be illustrated as Jesus’ understanding of the sabbath is contrasted with that of the Pharisees.” France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 457.

these two instances being the only two occurrences of the noun “burden” (φορτίον) in the Gospel of Matthew. The participial noun “burdened ones” (πεφορτισμένοι) in 11:28, is the only other cognate in this Gospel, also contributing to the present juxtaposition since it is carriers of the heavy burdens, to whom Jesus offers rest (11:28-30). The fact that the Pharisees make an accusation regarding the keeping of the sabbath highlights the contrast between “Jesus’ rest” and the “Pharisees’ rest,” a conflict that illustrates the two radically different approaches to the Torah.<sup>155</sup> The Pharisees will be exposed later in the narrative (12:10, 14) as wanting to destroy Jesus.

“When the Pharisees saw this” (Matt 12:2a) implies that the Pharisees are in the same grainfields as Jesus and his disciples when they witness the events described in the previous verse (12:1). Matthew has added the fact that the Pharisees “saw” these events to the Markan version (Mark 2:24). The disciples are not charged with exceeding a sabbath’s journey to go to the grainfields, and the presence of the Pharisees in the same place encourages the assumption that the grainfields were close enough to town not to exceed the permissible distance.<sup>156</sup> When they “saw” what was happening, then the Pharisees confronted Jesus (12:2b), as the master, for his disciples’ conduct: for allowing, if not encouraging, his disciples to break the law. This is further emphasized by the use of the genitive of possession in the accusation: “Look, *your* disciples” (Matt 12:2c). The accusation proper is that Jesus’ disciples are doing what is not lawful to do “on the sabbath”, this last qualifier being the source of the conflict. It is not that the activity of the disciples is not

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<sup>155</sup> Cf. Keener, *Commentary on Matthew*, 350.

<sup>156</sup> Contra J. Meier, “The Historical Jesus and the Plucking Grain on the Sabbath,” *CBQ* 66 (2004): 561-81, who denies the historicity of the event partly because the presence of the Pharisees in the grainfields, “strains credibility,” 573. In agreement with L. Doering, “Sabbath Laws in the New Testament Gospels” in *The New Testament and Rabbinic Literature* (eds. R. Bieringer, F. G. Martinez, D. Pollefyt and P. Tomson. Leiden: Brill, 2010), 213-214.

lawful in itself; the conflict resides in that they are doing this work on the day of rest, violating the sanctity of the sabbath. The disciples seem to be breaking a commandment given to Israel since the beginning of their identity as a nation (Exod 20:8-11; Deut 5:12-15). This is not a trivial accusation for the Matthean audience.

Since the accusation was addressed to Jesus as the teacher responsible for his disciples' behavior, Jesus' response will focus on his own authority (12:8), not on his disciples'.

### **The Response (12:3-8)**

Jesus' response may be divided into four sections, three arguments from Scripture and a pronouncement: Jesus' interpretation of Scripture (Historical Books) (12:3-4), Jesus' interpretation of Scripture (Pentateuch) (12:5-6), c) Jesus' interpretation of Scripture (Prophetic Books) (12:7), and d) Jesus' pronouncement about himself (12:8). Jesus' three arguments from the Jewish Scriptures are introduced by Jesus' own challenge to the Pharisees on the basis of their reading and interpretation/knowledge of Scripture: "have you not read?" (v. 3), "have you not read in the law?" (v. 5), and "if you had known what this means" (v. 7), followed by a quotation from Hosea 6:6.

### **Jesus' interpretation of Scripture-Historical Books (12:3-4)**

Jesus' first response is addressed to the "Pharisees" who had initiated the challenge in 12:2; Jesus speaks on behalf of his disciples and takes responsibility for their behavior by answering the challenge: "*he* said to *them*" (v.3a). The response is a question pertaining to a reading of the Jewish Scriptures: "Have you not read?" (v.3b). This is the first time in the

Gospel of Matthew that Jesus answers a challenge from the Pharisees by asking a question regarding their reading of Scripture. Jesus often addresses the understanding of the disciples and the crowds using the verb “to hear” (e.g. Matt 11:15; 13:9, 13, 15-17; 15:10), but when he answers the religious leadership (Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes and priests) he often challenges them on the basis of reading the Scriptures (cf. Matt 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31).<sup>157</sup> Jesus refers to what David did when he and the ones with him became hungry (v.3c, d). In the Matthean version, 12:3 is a similar narrative to 12:1: Jesus and his companions are hungry (12:1) and David and his companions become hungry as well (12:3c, d).<sup>158</sup> This parallelism has been deliberately emphasized by Matthew’s addition of the word “hungry” (v. 1) to the Markan version (2:23) at the beginning of the pericope.<sup>159</sup> Jesus and David are both leaders of a group of hungry followers and make decisions and allowances to provide for their companions. The focus of the reading is “what David did” (v. 3c) when he faced the same situation that Jesus is facing. The verb “to do” (ποιέω) is found at the core of the challenge of the Pharisees in v. 2: “your disciples are *doing* (ποιοῦσιν) what is not lawful to *do* (ποιεῖν)” (v.2). Jesus’ first response is his interpretation of what David *did* (ἐποίησεν) in v. 3. The verb “to do” is at the core of the next sabbath pericope controversy as well (12:12).

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<sup>157</sup> Cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 313-14.

<sup>158</sup> Meier, “Plucking Grain on the Sabbath,” 569, proposes a pattern of “distinction-yet-connection” that first mentions the main characters (Jesus in the setting, and David in the first argument) only followed by their companions once the basic narrative has been established.

<sup>159</sup> Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories*, 95, argues that David’s men and the disciples being hungry is the key for the parallel argument: “The hunger of the disciples, then, is foremost a parallelization with the hunger of David and his men. But it also serves to clarify the position of this deed within the confines of the Law precisely because Matthew creates a closer affinity with the men of David. For Matthew, the parallel between the disciples and the men of David is the only key to the argument that is borne out by the text.” While I agree with Matthew’s intentionality in the addition of “hunger” in both cases (vv. 1, 3), I do not agree that this is the key to the parallel argument, as a more significant parallel is drawn between the interpretation of the law in light of David’s and Jesus’ identity and mission (cf. vv. 3-4; v. 8). Cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 306.

Through the additional information available in 12:4, it becomes clear that Jesus is referring to the instance recorded in 1 Sam 21:1-6. This story occurs at Nob, a town northeast of Jerusalem where the tabernacle was relocated after the destruction of Shiloh (1 Sam 4:2-3). David tells Ahimelech the priest that he is on a special commission from the king and asks for bread. The priest answers that there is no ordinary bread, only the bread of the Presence which was removed from the Lord's presence in order to put in its place new bread. The priest is willing to give David this bread if the men that are with him have kept themselves from women, which David affirms. The priest then gives the consecrated bread to David. Matthew (and Luke) omit Mark's remark, "when Abiathar was high priest" (Mark 2:26), because there seems to be a confusion in the historical narrative about the father and the son of Abiathar, both named Ahimelech (1 Sam 21:1; 2 Sam 8:17). Matt 12:4 adds that David entered the house of God (τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ); this information is not stated in 1 Sam 21. By adding this detail, Matthew makes the situation even more "unlawful", as David steps into sacred territory in addition to eating sacred bread. Jesus' first response (vv. 3-4) does not deal with what is lawful to do on the sabbath, even though some may argue for a veiled reference to the sabbath because it was on the sabbath that the bread of the Presence was replaced and became available for the priests to eat (Lev 24:8, 9).<sup>160</sup> Casey's argument that David's story, "must be dated on the Sabbath,"<sup>161</sup> simply does not stand. There is no mention of this event taking place on the sabbath;<sup>162</sup> not in Matt

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<sup>160</sup> For a short discussion on the possible sabbath reference in this verse, cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 458-9; also Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 308.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Casey, "The Plucking of the Grain," 9. His argument that, "the halakhah dealing with the showbread had a firm and ancient basis in Scripture, and it is natural that the very same passage prescribes the changing of the showbread on the Sabbath and restricts its eating to the priests" (Lev 24, 8-8) imposes a sabbath argument that is absent in Jesus' argument regarding David.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 21. The second and third assumptions in Casey's conclusion, namely that the temple halakhah made it obvious that 1 Sam 21.2-7 related an incident on the sabbath and that Mark 2: 25-26 does not mention the

12:3-4 nor in 1 Sam 21:1-6.<sup>163</sup> This first response answers the first part of the challenge which was that the disciples were “doing what is not lawful to do”; the second response will deal directly with the second part of the challenge which refers to the sabbath (12:5, 6).<sup>164</sup>

The narrative on 12:3 introduces what David “did” (v. 3c); the next verse (v. 4) emphasizes that what David did was “not lawful” (οὐκ ἐξὸν) to do (v. 4c). This phrase is found at the core of the challenge as well: “your disciples are doing what is *not lawful* (οὐκ ἐξεστίν) to do” (v. 2). With the use of “not lawful” and “to do” the parallelism between Jesus and David is complete: Jesus and his disciples are hungry and they are charged with doing what is not lawful to do (12:1); David and the ones with him are hungry and they also do what is not lawful to do (12:3, 4); only the priests could “lawfully” eat the bread of the Presence (Lev 24:8-9). Matthew adds to the Markan version (Mark 2:26) that the priests “alone/only” (μόνοις) could eat the sacred bread (v.4d), further emphasizing the unlawfulness of David’s actions. Luke also adds this emphasis (Luke 6:4).

A wide variety of arguments for Jesus’ appeal to 1 Sam 21:1-6 may be proposed<sup>165</sup>. In the first place, it may be that Jesus was reminding the Pharisees that saving or accommodating human beings sometimes took precedence over sabbath laws<sup>166</sup>, therefore providing for human need; in this case hunger was above the sabbath law. But there is no

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sabbath because it has already been mentioned five times in six verses, are assumptions from silence and therefore weak arguments.

<sup>163</sup> There is a rabbinic tradition dating from 400 C.E. that argues that this event took place on the sabbath, when David’s life was in danger. Cf. *b. Menah.* 95b, 96a.

<sup>164</sup> Meier, “Plucking Grain on the Sabbath,” 576, correctly argues that, “the attempt by some modern commentators to read the Sabbath into Jesus’ appeal to David’s action misses the point, since Jesus stresses that David’s violation involved *what* David did-eating food that only priests should eat-and not *when* he did it.”

<sup>165</sup> For additional lists of possible forces cf. Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 174-177; Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 310-311.

<sup>166</sup> Latter Mishnaic traditions made provisions for accommodating guests on the sabbath (*m. Sabb.* 18:1), assisting in the birth and circumcision of a baby on the sabbath (*m. Sabb.* 18:3), and healing related to circumcision on the sabbath (*m. Sabb.* 19:2). The Tosefta states that when there is a matter of doubt concerning the saving of life it overrides the sabbath requirements. Cf. *t. Sabb.* 15:16.

mention of mercy in this argument and, though the appeal to David's experience might make such an interpretative proposition plausible, the subsequent appeal to Scripture from the Torah (12:5) does not relate to laws derived from mercy or compassion. Jesus' third appeal to Scripture (12:7) does speak of compassion/mercy, making this a possible explanation. Secondly, Jesus might be proposing that David was allowed to break the law in special circumstances because of his special commission, therefore permitting Jesus to break the law in light of his mission.<sup>167</sup> But this argument, that the law was broken once before and therefore it may be broken again, is inconsistent with the Matthean Jesus, who insists that he has come to fulfill the law, and not to abolish it (cf. Matt 5:17-18). A third explanation is that Jesus is challenging the Pharisees' interpretation of the Torah and not the Torah itself.<sup>168</sup> He is not challenging the Torah itself, because the written Torah states that only the priests could engage in this activity (Lev 24:8-9). Another interpretation is that Jesus proposes that a greater good permits David to break the law, just as in his second Scriptural appeal a greater good allows priests to work on the sabbath (12:5, 6), therefore Jesus' mission is the greater good. This may be a plausible argument, not for the breaking of the law (see answer to second argument), but for the re-interpretation of the law. This argument is also consistent with the "greater than" pattern that Matthew establishes in chapter 12 (12:6, 41, 42).<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Nolland, *Matthew*, 484, recognizes that, "...the comparison creates a space in which apparently unlawful behavior may be justified on other grounds," even though it is not his most plausible proposition. Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 329.

<sup>168</sup> Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 355, argues that, "Jesus challenges not merely their interpretation of the Sabbath but their entire method of legal interpretation." Cf. Casey, "The Plucking of the Grain," 7.

<sup>169</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 459, concludes that "something greater than David is here" may be seen as implied in this declaration. He favors a "Son of David" Christological argument, stating that, "Jesus will argue that the Messiah is more than just a son of David, and that claim is applied in a veiled form to establish his special authority here."



Lastly, it seems that the appeal to the incident involving David is making a claim about the status of Jesus in relation to David. If David, the anointed, re-interpreted the law according to his understanding of his mission, how much more the eschatological David will re-interpret the law according to his mission.<sup>170</sup> This last argument, which is consistent with its preceding narrative, in which Jesus offers his own ἀνάπαυσις, is most plausible. It relates to David's authority to re-interpret the law. Even the priest realizes that he is speaking with the Lord's anointed and allows for a re-interpretation of the law in light of David's mission (1 Sam 21:4, 6). The key to interpreting Jesus' first response is the person involved in the example: David. Jesus is proposing a comparison between David and himself.<sup>171</sup> The parallelism between Jesus and David allows for Jesus' authority being placed alongside David's authority in a veiled "how much more" (*qal wahomer*) argument that foreshadows the "something greater than"<sup>172</sup> arguments that will follow in this chapter (12:6, 41, 42). A Davidic typology<sup>173</sup> is the basis for this argument, and it is in line with Matthew's employment of a "son of David" Christology throughout his Gospel (e.g. 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15).

The Davidic typology is further emphasized by the preceding context of Jesus' invitation in 11:28-30. Jesus promises "I will give you rest" (ἀναπαύσω), in 11:28, the exact verbal form of the promise made by Yahweh to the Davidic dynasty (2 Kgdms 7:11; 1 Chr 22:9; LXX). As discussed previously, ἀναπαύσω is found only three times in the LXX: 2

<sup>170</sup> Nolland, *Matthew*, 483, argues that Christ as an antitype to David is the best appeal in this argumentation. Cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 311.

<sup>171</sup> P. Sigal, *The Halakha of Jesus of Nazareth According to the Gospel of Matthew* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 160, proposes that this is a *heqqesh*, a hermeneutical juxtaposition of two persons and situations: "Thus Matt 12:3-4 constitute a combined *heqqesh* and an implied *qal wahomer*." For a discussion on the *qal wahomer* hermeneutical rule used in this section, cf. Sigal, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth According to the Gospel of Matthew*, 156.

<sup>172</sup> Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 452, 459.

<sup>173</sup> Yang also argues for a Davidic typology as the fundamental reason for Jesus's appeal to 1 Sam. 21:1-6. Cf. Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 176-7.

Kgdms 7:11; 1 Chr 22:9 and Ezek 34:15. In the first two occurrences, Yahweh promises to give rest to the Davidic dynasty and to the people of Israel through the Davidic rulers. In the third occurrence, Yahweh says that he will give rest to the sheep of Israel through his servant David, the eschatological ruler of Israel. This statement comes after Yahweh's prophecy against the shepherds of Israel (Ezek 34:1-10); the Lord himself would search for his sheep (Ezek 34:11-22) and appoint a Davidic ruler over them who would feed them himself and be their shepherd (Ezek 34:23, 24). When the Davidic eschatological ruler takes over the sheep of Israel, they will have peace and prosperity, safety and blessings (Ezek 34:25-31). All this would happen because Yahweh would have broken the bars of their *yoke* (ζυγός) (cf. Matt 11:28-30) and delivered them from the hand of those who enslaved them (Ezek 34:27). The preceding narrative background encourages the interpretation of 12:3-4 as an argument for Jesus as the eschatological Davidic ruler and the re-interpretation of the law in light of his mission and authority. David was the mediator of Yahweh's rest to his people (cf. LXX 2 Kgdms 7:11; 1 Chr. 22:9), now the eschatological David is the mediator of God's rest for his people (cf. Matt 11:28-30; Ezek 34:15, 23, 24), and he is re-interpreting the Jewish Scriptures, revealing the Father to them according to his authority, knowledge and sovereignty (11:27). The Son is the only one who fully knows the Father (11:27), and the Son is revealing the full meaning of the law through his exclusive knowledge of God.

Alongside this argument is Jesus' exclusive prerogative to reveal the Father, and therefore, as Wisdom's teacher and mediator, reveal the true interpretation of sabbath laws. Having issued an invitation in the likeness of the teacher of Wisdom (Matt 11:28-30; cf. Sir 51), Jesus appeals to a previous Scriptural example of the re-interpretation of the law.

His ultimate ability to re-interpret Torah in light of his mission continues with greater force in his second appeal to Scripture (12:5-6).

### **Jesus' interpretation of Scripture-Pentateuch (12:5-6)**

Jesus' second appeal to Scripture is material unique to Matthew (vv. 5-6). In these two verses Jesus appeals directly to the Law, in order to answer the "not lawful" charge (v. 2). The second appeal expands to what is lawful to do on the sabbath (v. 5). That Jesus would appeal to the law, and not merely to an example from the historical books (vv. 3-4), is a stronger argument for the Matthean audience and it offers a justification for Matthew's addition (vv. 5-6)<sup>174</sup>. The Matthean Jesus proceeds from a Haggadic argument (vv. 3-4) to a Halakhic one (v. 5), in tune with the original charge of what is "lawful" to do on the sabbath (v. 2), while emphasizing an even greater Christological claim.<sup>175</sup>

Verse 5 starts with the characteristically Matthean ἦ, followed by the same phrase used by Matthew to introduce Jesus' first Scriptural appeal (v. 3), "Or have you not read...?" (v. 5). The addition of "Law" to the original question (v. 5), places the second Scriptural appeal in the halakhic realm. Jesus' first mention of the sabbath is in the plural, τοῖς σάββατον, as in the introduction of the pericope (v. 1). The term is placed at the beginning of the phrase for emphasis and the plural, often used with singular force, indicates an ongoing situation during the holy days.

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<sup>174</sup> For the possible insufficiency of the first Scriptural appeal for the Matthean audience, cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 313. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 181, indicates that the preceding argument in vv. 3-4 is, "rabbinically correct, except for a single point. One cannot justify a halakah with a (haggadic) example." Therefore, he proposes that this argument is incomplete for the Jewish ears and that it must be further developed by Jesus with the argument that follows (Matt 12:5-6).

<sup>175</sup> I am in agreement with Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 178, who proposes that the second argument is not added simply because of the insufficiency of the previous argument (vv. 3-4), but because it strengthens Jesus' Christological claim: "In my judgment, Matthew's purpose in including the sayings of vv. 5-6 was rather to strengthen the force of Jesus' Christological claim in vv. 3-4, which is implicit as we have seen above, by adding another Christological claim of Jesus in vv. 5-6, which is this time explicit..."

The priests (v. 5), mentioned in the previous haggadic appeal (v. 4) as the only “lawful” recipients of the bread of the presence, now are the subject of the sentence and perpetrate the desecration of the sabbath. The second mention of the sabbath in Jesus’ response is singular, τὸ σάββατον (v. 5), as in the original charge of the Pharisees (v. 2). This is the only verse, in this two-fold sabbath pericope (12:1-14), that contains two occurrences of the term “sabbath.” The recurrence of the word emphasizes the weight of the argument.

That the priests “desecrate the sabbath” (τὸ σάββατον βεβηλοῦσιν) (v. 5) is a statement made in LXX phraseology (cf. Ezek 20:13; Isa 56:2, 6) and it describes a covenant violation (cf. Isa 56:6). The verb “desecrate” is in the present tense, which may imply that the word is used not simply with the primary force as descriptive of what the priests do in the law, but that it is still happening in the time of Jesus.

The setting for the priests’ violation is “in the temple” on the sabbath (v. 5). As the priests serve, working in the temple on the sabbath day, they seem to desecrate the sabbath law. But the Torah makes provision for sacrifices to be offered on the sabbath (e.g. Num 28:9-10; Lev 23:38), and therefore they are innocent (ἀνάτιοί). The assessment of innocence when offering sacrifices, offerings and performing certain rites<sup>176</sup> on the sabbath was not only Scriptural, but well attested in Qumran<sup>177</sup> and it is also found in later rabbinic tradition.<sup>178</sup> The term ἀνάτιος is repeated in Jesus’ third appeal to Scripture (v. 7) creating a parallelism between the absence of guilt of the priests and that of the disciples. The interpretation of the sabbath law relates to who they are (priests) and the mission they have (working in the temple). The priests’ sabbath activities were in accordance with the

<sup>176</sup> Cf. John 7:22-23, where a similar argument is made in regard to circumcision.

<sup>177</sup> E.g. 11QTemple 13.17, 14.2.

<sup>178</sup> E.g. *m. Pesah.* 6:1-2; *b. Sabb.* 132b; *m. Ned.* 3:11;

temple services. Now Jesus will develop an explicit *qal wahomer* argument consistent with rabbinic exegetical principles, strengthening the proposal that the second argument from halakhah was added to further the Christological force, and not to compensate for the insufficiency of a haggadic example: “But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here” (12:6).<sup>179</sup> This pronouncement of Jesus summarizes the second Scriptural appeal directly from the law. Even though the two Scriptural appeals (vv. 3-4; 5-6) (from haggadah and halakhah) relate to people (David and priests), the “greater than” argument is that “something” (neuter) (μᾶλλον), not “someone” (μείζων) is greater than the temple (v. 6). The comparative of μέγα is introduced with an emphatic ὅτι, giving the comparative the force of a superlative. The pronouncement is introduced by λέγω δέ, pointing to Jesus’ authority.<sup>180</sup>

What is the “something” greater than the temple and what is the force of the “how-much-more” argument? The tabernacle and the temple (built by the Davidic dynasty) were the focus of God’s presence with his people and thereby a divine institution. Jesus’ comparison is not with the priests that work on the sabbath in the temple, but with the temple itself. The neuter comparative is used in Matt 12:41, 42 regarding people (Jonah and Solomon), as representatives of the prophetic and kingly mediators of God’s presence. What

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<sup>179</sup> “No more than the previous illustration [vv. 3-4], however, does this yield a suitable precedent for the disciple’s conduct, since their activity and that of the priests are scarcely parallel. Nor is it intended to add a more technically astute halakhic proof though, from a formal point of view, the example would have carried more weight with rabbinic hearers. The key to the citation lies in the following words: ὅτι τοῦ ἱεροῦ μᾶλλον ἔστιν ὧδε which, as the similar saying in 12.41 and 42 demonstrate, are to be understood as referring to Jesus himself.” R. Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 116-7.

<sup>180</sup> In agreement with Banks, who rightly argues that this is a question of authority rather than legality, further emphasized by λέγω δέ ὑμῖν. Cf. Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, 117.

is “here” (v. 6) is the mission and role of Jesus as mediator of God’s presence that supersedes that of the temple.<sup>181</sup>

The role of Jesus as Wisdom’s teacher of the law, eschatological Davidic prince, and new Moses already proposed in the preceding context (11:25-30; 12:3, 4), gives him the authority to reveal the meaning of the sabbath in light of his exclusive knowledge of the Father (which is greater than the knowledge available through the temple system). The *qal wahomer* argument will lead into Jesus’ pronouncement “For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” (v. 8), placing him as the highest authority to interpret the sabbath law; a greater authority than the temple institution (v. 6)<sup>182</sup>. He offers the true sabbath<sup>183</sup> ἀνάπαυσις (11:28-30). Jesus is not warranting a suspension<sup>184</sup> of the sabbath, but a greater and deeper understanding of it in light of his role and mission.

### **Jesus’ interpretation of Scripture-Prophetic Books (12:7)**

Jesus’ third appeal to Scripture is from Hosea 6:6. The parallel phrases utilized by the Matthean Jesus to introduce the two previous Scriptural appeals, “Have you not read...?” (12: 3, 4) are now replaced with a conditional clause: “If you had known what this means...”

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<sup>181</sup> These implications include and supersede Beaton’s argument that, “by virtue of their service to Jesus and his ministry, the disciples are likewise innocent of wrong-doing.” Beaton, *Isaiah’s Christ*, 167. It is true that, “the practice of Sabbath-keeping has not been rescinded; it is merely being considered within the framework of mercy rather than according to the overly harsh Pharisaic stipulation” *Ibid.*, 168. But Jesus’ argument goes beyond the halakhic dispute to a claim that relates to his identity and mission.

<sup>182</sup> Saldarini’s argument, “If Jesus is greater than the Temple, then the disciples might be justified in serving him the way priests serve the Temple. But the disciples serve themselves in their hunger; they do not feed Jesus...thus the sacrificial activities of the priests, food, Sabbath, and obedience to divine law are loosely linked...” Saldarini, *Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community*, 130, fails to recognize that the second Scriptural appeal is not a “how-much-more” argument about food or hunger, but it is a Christological claim of Jesus’ authority, greater than the temple, to reveal the Father and re-interpret the law, strongly suggested by the preceding and succeeding context (11:25-30; 12:8).

<sup>183</sup> “The Sabbath of Judaism is considered to foreshadow the great rest promised by God for the eschatological age.” Schweizer, *Matthew*, 277.

<sup>184</sup> “Given Matthew’s favorable attitude to the Law, the point cannot be that Jesus’ presence obviates the need to keep the sabbath.” Nolland, *Matthew*, 485.

(v. 7). The force of this introduction, with the conditional εἰ, implies that even though the Pharisees are reading the Scriptures, they are not understanding its meaning. The prophetic utterance is preceded by “what this means” (τί ἐστὶν ) as in the previous encounter of Jesus with the Pharisees, when the same LXX quotation (Hos 6:6) is inserted in Matt 9:13: “But if you had known what this means, ‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,’ you would not have condemned the innocent” (Matt 12:7). That the same introduction precedes the same quotation (Hos 6:6) inserted by Matthew in a Markan passage in Matt 9:13, strengthens the proposal that this verse (12:7) is Matthew’s own material. The quotation from Hosea 6:6 is word by word from the LXX. That the same quotation (Hose 6:6) is repeated with the same introduction (“what this means”) (Matt 9:13; 12:7), also indicates that the Pharisees had not learned what they were supposed to in 9:13. With this last Scriptural quotation, Jesus has appealed to all three major sections of the Jewish Scriptures: Writings, Law and Prophets.

Following the initial conditional clause, Jesus assesses that a better knowledge of the meaning of Scripture would have resulted in a different response to the original situation by the Pharisees: “...you would not have condemned the innocent.” (Matt 12:7). Jesus judges that the Pharisees have condemned the disciples (v. 2), even though God, through the prophetic utterance, is not in agreement with their charge. The prophetic Scripture, as explained by Jesus, declares that the disciples are innocent (ἀναιτίους) (v. 7), just like the priests who work on the sabbath in the temple (v. 5).

The principle of interpretation proposed by Jesus is ἔλεος (cf. Matt 12:7). This word is used three times in Matthew (9:13, 12:7, 23:23), and all three times Jesus challenges the Pharisees’ interpretation of the law and lack of mercy. In the Gospel of Matthew, the verb

“to be merciful” (ἐλεέω) is linked with the Christological title “Son of David” (cf. 9:27; 15:22; 20:30, 31). Jesus declares that mercy is one of the weightier provisions of the law (cf. 23:23), and the Pharisees, by not applying this interpreting principle, are misreading the Scriptures (Matt 12:7). In Matthew all the law, not just the sabbath laws, must be interpreted through the principles of love and mercy (e.g. 22:38-40; 23:23).<sup>185</sup>

That the Pharisees do not know what the Scriptures mean (12.7) and that Jesus is the only one who has the exclusive knowledge of the Father (11:27) highlights Jesus’ authority, as Wisdom’s teacher, new Moses and eschatological David, to fully disclose and interpret the meaning of Scripture. Even though the rituals and sacrifices were observed (v. 7), the law’s principles were not understood.<sup>186</sup> Mercy (LXX ἔλεος translated the Hebrew word *hesed*) is the attitude of kindness and compassion for another human being that God requires<sup>187</sup> and of loyalty to Yahweh in response to his mercy. Without it, the religious system is divinely rejected.<sup>188</sup> Jesus explains that the principles are greater than the rituals. Jesus is the one who can truly reveal the meaning of the law and the rituals, in light of his exclusive knowledge of the Father (cf. 11.27).

<sup>185</sup> In agreement with Sturcke, *Encountering the Rest of God*, 179, who argues that, “the subordination (but not abrogation) of the Sabbath command to the practice of mercy corresponds to the overall stance of Matthew toward the law.”

<sup>186</sup> W. Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998), 227, proposes that v. 7 continues the argument made in v. 6: “In engster Verbindung mit der christologischen Begründung erscheint das Liebesgebot, das hier in Gestalt einer prophetischen Halacha begegnet... Wie Christus mehr als der Tempel ist, so ist dem im Opfer gipfelnden Kult die Barmherzigkeit übergeordnet.”

<sup>187</sup> Bultmann proposes that the sense of kindness in mutual relationship is the original force of mercy in Hosea 6:6: “In the NT ἔλεος and ἐλεεῖν are often used for the divinely required attitude of man to man. Indeed, in a few instances ἔλεος has the original OT sense of the kindness which we owe one another in mutual relationships, Hos. 6:6 being alluded to in Mt. 9:13; 12:7...” Bultmann, “ἔλεος, ἐλεέω, ἐλεήμων, ἐλεημοσύνη, ἀνέλεος, ἀνελεήμων” *TDNT* 2:482.

<sup>188</sup> D. Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*. WBC 31 (Mexico City, Mexico: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 110, argues that in Hosea 6:6 Yahweh is rejecting the cult itself in light of Israel’s lack of mercy: “Yahweh’s words here amount to a rejection of the cult itself... because it had become so unbalanced. The tendency to settle for a mechanistic, ritual-dependent religion of ‘motions’ rather than of godly actions must again and again be attacked: compare Amos 5:21-24; Isa 1:12-17; Micah 6:6-8; Ps 51:16-17; Matt 9:13; 12:7 (cf. Hos 4:8, 13; 8:13). Declaring the sacrificial system meritless *except* as an adjunct to the ‘weightier matters of the law’ was in effect the suzerain’s declaration to his vassal how the covenant was to be kept, and what its essential—as opposed to peripheral—demands were.”



## Sabbath Pronouncement (12:8)

At this point in the narrative, Matthew returns to Markan material. Matthew omits Mark 2:27: “Jesus said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.’” The focus on the generic ἄνθρωπος as the recipient of the sabbath in the Markan pronouncement may have diverted the Matthean audience’s attention from the Christological assertion<sup>189</sup> regarding the Son of Man’s authority that Matthew is interested in highlighting (Matt 12:8)<sup>190</sup>. Therefore, he omits the first pronouncement (Mark 2:27), but preserves the second (Matt 12:8; cf. Mark 2:28). Luke makes the same omission, and preserves the last pronouncement (cf. Luke 6:5).

This pronouncement (Matt 12:8) by Jesus summarizes his response to the charge of the Pharisees regarding the disciples’ sabbath keeping (Matt 12:2). Matthew’s addition of “for” (γάρ) (12:8) in place of the Markan “so that” (ὥστε) (Mark 2:28) emphasizes that this is the final argument and summary of the three Scriptural appeals (Matt 12:3-7).

Matthew re-arranges the Markan order, placing “Lord” in an emphatic first place in the sentence revealing the authoritative force of the Christological pronouncement. Lord, an authoritative position over a subject or institution, was ascribed by Jesus to his Father:

“Father, Lord of heaven and earth...” (Matt 11:25). Now, Jesus ascribes the title to the Son of Man (Matt 12:8). Just as the Father is Lord of heaven and earth (11:25), so the Son of

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<sup>189</sup> A. J. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries: The Form and Function of the Conflict Stories in the Synoptic Tradition* (Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 112, argues for a Christological reason in the Matthean omission of Mark 2:27: “The reason for doing so may well be that for them [Matthew and Luke], as actually for Mark himself, it is the Christological statement ‘the Son of man is lord of the sabbath’ (Mark 2:28) that is the point of the whole story.”

<sup>190</sup> “This is obviously part of the larger fact, to which Matthew has already introduced the reader, that as the promised one, the Messiah, Jesus is the authoritative and definitive interpreter of the Torah. Thus the demands of the sabbath commandment, however they be construed, must give way to the presence and purpose of Jesus, and not vice versa. Matthew ends the pericope on this important Christological note. If something greater than the temple is present, then here is also someone greater than the sabbath.” Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 330.

Man is Lord of the sabbath (12:8). In the Pentateuch (LXX), several times the words “Lord,” “sabbath” and “rest” (ἀνάπαυσις) occur together in the same verse (cf. Exod 16:23; 31:15; 35:2; Lev 23:3) with the force of holy sabbath rest to the Lord. That the Matthean Jesus pronounces the Son of Man to be the Lord of the sabbath is a Christological claim to be the Lord of the Scriptural sabbath, stressing the Son of Man’s lordship over the sabbath and implying that the re-interpretation and expansion of the meaning of the sabbath relates to the Son of Man. Jesus has claimed exclusive authority that has been handed to him by the “Lord of heaven and earth” (11:25) and is hereby exercising that authority by revealing God’s will and intention regarding the meaning of the sabbath. One recent monograph has gone as far as to argue that Matthew is encouraging his community to give up sabbath observance.<sup>191</sup> Instead, Matthew is proposing a new focus on Jesus and his revelation in this pericope, a new dimension of the meaning of the sabbath without abolishing sabbath observance.<sup>192</sup>

Matthew introduces Jesus with the designation of “Son of Man” in Matt 8:20.<sup>193</sup> The same designation follows in 9:6, 10:23 and 11:19. Hence, the Matthean audience is accustomed to this designation of Jesus when the pronouncement of Matt 12:8 is made. The Son of Man is the Lord of the sabbath, therefore, Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. The controversy that was initiated by the Pharisees regarding the disciples’ “unlawful” actions on the sabbath (12:2) is forced to another level of discussion with the presence of Jesus. The

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<sup>191</sup> Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 229, holds that, “Matthew may then have good reason to encourage his community to give up sabbath observance and instead to focus on Jesus who is the Lord of the sabbath and on his redemption which is the ultimate goal of the sabbath.” Most other scholars do not agree with Yang.

<sup>192</sup> “Mercy as the standard for dealing with Sabbath and purity commandments—that was probably the praxis on the Matthean community that it had learned from the Son of Man, Jesus. Thus the issue is not that parts of the Torah, viz., the ceremonial law, are annulled, but that the entire Torah is subordinate to its own center, mercy (Hos 6:6).” Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 183.

<sup>193</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the Matthean use of the title “Son of Man,” cf. Chapter 5 - “Rest and Sabbath in the context of Matthew’s theology” in this dissertation.

response now relates to Jesus' role and mission of expanding the interpretation of the sabbath in accordance to the Father's exclusive revelation to his Son. That Jesus is the Son of the Father (11:25-27) and the Son of Man (12:8) is a Christological juxtaposition regarding Jesus' mediating role. The Son of Man is a veiled Messianic title introduced by the prophet Daniel (Dan 7:13-14).<sup>194</sup>

This pronouncement is made in the present tense (ἐστίν) (12:8), signifying that the lordship over the sabbath is being exerted at that moment. It is the Son of Man, and not the Pharisees, the one who possesses exclusive authority (cf. 11:27) to make judgment on what is the meaning of the sabbath.<sup>195</sup>

The force of this pronouncement (12:8) is that Jesus, the Son of Man, is expanding the understanding of the sabbath due to his authority as Wisdom's teacher, new Moses and eschatological Davidic king.<sup>196</sup> His presence, mission and role reveal God's intention for the sabbath and this revelation is "greater than" God's revelation through the temple institution (12:6). The preceding context (11:28-30), where Jesus offers his own rest (ἀνάπαυσις), strengthens the force of his authoritative pronouncement in 12:8. Jesus is the provider of rest (11:28-30) and Jesus is the Lord of the sabbath (12:8). That ἀνάπαυσις was used in Exodus and Leviticus (LXX) with the force of sabbath rest offers a Scriptural background for the continuity of Jesus' offer of rest (11:28-30) and his pronouncement (12:8).

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<sup>194</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 462, argues that this title, "denotes Jesus himself, in his earthly ministry, as 'a figure of unique authority.' Dan 7:13-14, from which the title almost certainly derives, is a vision of universal authority over all peoples exercised by the 'one like a son of man' from his heavenly throne."

<sup>195</sup> "Matthew's Jesus nowhere directly calls in question the sabbath principle as such; the issue is always how it should be translated into practical guidance for living." France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 463.

<sup>196</sup> Commenting on the Christological significance of the "Son of Man" title in this context, Wiefel proposes that, "Die Proklamierung des erbarmenden Gotteswillens macht den Menschensohn - den auf Erden wirkenden künftigen Richter - zu dem, was nach Lev 23,3 Gott selbst ist, Herr des Sabbaths." Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 228.

This conflict, that started with a halakhic concern presented by the Pharisees (12:1-2) regarding what is lawful to do on the sabbath, has been answered by Jesus in a developmental progression of arguments that culminate in a Christological pronouncement.<sup>197</sup> First, Jesus uses a haggadic argument to address “what is lawful to do,” (12:3-4) that implies a typological parallelism between David and the eschatological Davidic king. Then he engages in a halakhic argument regarding the interpretation of sabbath laws for those who officiate in the temple (12:5-6) in which he introduces the newness of his identity and mission: “something greater than the temple is here” (12:6). Jesus completes his argument with the all-encompassing principle of mercy and a judgment of the Pharisees who have not understood the Scriptures correctly (Hos. 6:6) and therefore have misjudged the disciples (12:7), going back to the original challenge (12:2).<sup>198</sup> Concluding his argument, Matthew’s Jesus declares his lordship over the meaning of the sabbath in light of his eschatological mission in a Christological pronouncement (12:8).<sup>199</sup>

### **Healing on the sabbath (Matt 12:9-14)**

The second sabbath story in this pericope is also a controversy story<sup>200</sup> that includes a pronouncement of Jesus (v. 12) and a miracle of healing (v. 13). The plot, as in the

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<sup>197</sup> Hagner, “Jesus and the Synoptic Sabbath Controversies,” 237, agrees: “What starts out in Matthew as an argument over the interpretation of the Sabbath commandment ends up on another level involving the dramatic newness of Christology and mission.”

<sup>198</sup> Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 2, 234, argues that an unprecedented principle of the Matthean church is revealed in this section: “Die matthäische Gemeinde ordnet *grundsätzlich* das Sabbatgebot dem Liebesgebot unter. Damit macht sie von Jesus her einen Schritt, den sonst im Judentum keine Gruppe machte.”

<sup>199</sup> The fact that Hosea 6:6 precedes the Christological pronouncement legitimizes it: “Wie in 9,13, legitimiert das alttestamentliche Wort die christologische Aussage, diese wiederum bringt das Zitat eschatologisch zur Geltung”. W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*. Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 1 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1968), 322.

<sup>200</sup> As in the previous section, against Hultgren, the term “controversy” has been chosen over “conflict” because controversy over sabbath keeping is an on-going, “linear” theme and not just a “punctiliar” conflict (for the difference between the two terms, cf. Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, 53).

previous sabbath story, revolves around what is permissible on the sabbath day (v. 10). In this case the challenge relates to healing on the sabbath. The miracle is the conclusion to Jesus' response in this controversy.<sup>201</sup>

Mark only records two stories of Jesus and his disciples' behavior on the sabbath and they are narrated one after the other (Mark 2:23-28; 3:1-6). Matthew preserves both in the same order (Matt 12:1-8, 9-14). In the second sabbath story, Matthew preserves most of Mark's material (Mark 3:1-6), but reworking it and adding more assertive rhetoric both from the Pharisees and from Jesus. In Matthew the Pharisees provoke the controversy with their question (Matt 12:10), while in Mark Jesus provokes it by his action (Mark 3:2). In Matthew Jesus responds with an assertive pronouncement, "So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath" (Matt 12:12) instead of his question in Mark, "is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?" (3:4). Matthew omits Jesus calling the man with a withered hand to come to him (Mark 3:3). He also omits Jesus' anger and grief (3:5) and the Pharisees counseling with the Herodians against Jesus (3:6). The most notable addition of Matthew to the Markan version is Jesus' question about his questioners' execution of sabbath laws regarding the saving of an animal from the pit, and his comparative statement regarding the value of a human in comparison to a sheep. This Matthean addition creates an even closer link with the previous sabbath story (12:1-8) because it continues to dialogue on the interpretation of specific sabbath laws.

The story of the healing on the sabbath may be divided into five sections: the setting (12:9-10a), the challenge (12:10b), Jesus' direct response and pronouncement (12:11-12), the miracle (12:13) and the response of the Pharisees (12:14).

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<sup>201</sup> Even though the presence of a miracle in the narrative might indicate a "miracle story" as the main form, the role of the miracle in the pericope is most prominently a summary and enacted response, clarifying Jesus' position in answer to the question to the controversy posed in v. 10.

## The Setting (12:9-10a)

Matthew links the previous sabbath story (12:1-8) with the second story by his use of the sentence “and having gone from there...” (v. 9), making the synagogue a sequel to the grainfields. This is a Matthean addition to the Markan version, and it deliberately perpetuates the sabbath controversy that started on the grainfields (“there,” v. 9) and now continues in the synagogue (v.9). The use of μεταβαίνω is Matthean (8:34; 11:1; 15:29; 17:20). The flow of the narrative indicates that Jesus went straight from the grainfields “into” (εἰς) the synagogue. The genitive of possession used by Matthew is revealing. This synagogue is “their” synagogue (v.9), creating a distance between the Matthean Christian-Jewish audience and “their” (αὐτῶν) place of worship. This is the first instance of Jesus visiting a specific synagogue<sup>202</sup> in Matthew, even though the general explanation that Jesus taught in “their” synagogues has been used before (Matt 4:23; 9:35). The use of the third person plural in the possessive pronoun (v.9) and the past tense (v.10, ἐπηρώτησαν) without any explanation indicates the continuing reference to the Pharisees of the previous encounter (12:2), eventually identifying them as “the Pharisees” in v.14. That the sabbath is the temporal setting is implied by the immediacy of the narrative following the grainfields, but it will become explicit in the challenging question that follows (v.10).

As Jesus comes into their synagogue, he encounters a man with a withered hand (12:10a). The addition of a specific circumstance within the synagogue setting is introduced with the word “behold” (ἰδοὺ) (12:10) as in the previous sabbath story, when the specific challenge of the Pharisees is introduced (12:2b). This word is a common Matthean addition to the Markan narratives (e.g. Matt 9:2, 3; Mark 2: 3, 6) and a Matthean preference over the

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<sup>202</sup> It has been proposed that this specific synagogue is, “that of Capernaum, Jesus’ normal base in Galilee (3:13; 8:5; 9:1).” See France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 463. If this is the case, then the use of the possessive pronoun is even more striking, as it would have been Jesus’ local synagogue, now identified as “theirs.”

Markan use of ἴδε (e.g. Matt 12:2; Mark 2:24; Matt 12:49; Mark 3:34). Ἰδοὺ is one of Matthew's signature words, used sixty-two times in his Gospel, as opposed to seven times in Mark. Matthew uses this word to focus the reader's attention on a specific detail, situation or pronouncement.

The reader's attention is focused on the on-going condition of a man present in the synagogue: he has a withered hand (12:10a). No appeal or petition for healing is made by this man. His condition is not presented as an emergency in which an urgent action is required to save or preserve his life. Matthew describes this man's hand with an adjective (ξηρός) (12:10a), replacing the unusual participial verb used by Mark (ἐξηραμμένην in Mark 3:1, changed to ξηρός in 3:3). A paralyzed or dried up hand could have been interpreted as a sign of judgment from God in the Jewish Scriptures (1 Kings 13:4) and the healing of such as God's miraculous intervention (1 Kings 13:6). The word used by Matthew to describe the condition of the man's hand as withered, shrunken or paralyzed<sup>203</sup>, is also utilized in the LXX to describe symbolically a human state of spiritual disease, barrenness and death (e.g. LXX Sir 6:3; Hos 9:14; Ezek 37:2, 4,11). Matthew omits the Markan Jesus' command for the man to stand up in the middle (Mark 3:3). Luke adds that this man's right hand had withered, making the physical handicap more detailed and poignant (Luke 6:6). The focus in the Matthean narrative is the controversy between Jesus and his opponents.

### **The Challenge (Matt 12:10b)**

In the Matthean narrative, "they" questioned Jesus (12:10b); in Mark and Luke, they watched him instead (Mark 3:2; Luke 6:7). The Pharisees of the previous story, which takes place in the grainfields (12:2), now follow Jesus to the synagogue and challenge him again

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<sup>203</sup> "ξηρός," in Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 685.

(12:10b). The initiative taken by the implied Pharisees from the previous story is a challenge in the form of a question, “...asking, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’” (12:10b). In the previous challenge, the Pharisees had declared that what the disciples were doing was not lawful to do on the sabbath (12:2). In the synagogue, the challenge to Jesus himself is posed as a question. The two-fold word link with the previous challenge seems deliberate: lawful or permissible and sabbath (12:2, 10). The addition in this challenge is the specific activity: to heal (θεραπεύω) on the sabbath.<sup>204</sup> Matthew favors the verb θεραπεύω and uses it sixteen times in his gospel, as opposed to five times in Mark.<sup>205</sup> With the exception of the plucking of grain on the sabbath story, all the other sabbath controversies between Jesus and the Pharisees in the gospels relate to healings (cf. Matt 12:9-14//Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 9) and the result of the healings (such as carrying a pallet after being healed on the sabbath; John 5:1-16).

Jesus’ ability to heal attested to his Son of Man’s authority (cf. Matt 9:6). The Jewish Scriptures prophesied that God would “bind up the broken and strengthen the sick” (Ezek 34:16) through the coming Davidic prince, a parallel action to giving them rest (ἀναπαύσω) (LXX, Ezek 34:15). In Ezek 34 God condemns the failure of the shepherds of Israel to take care of the sick and the weak (v. 4) and describes the people as being scattered and in need of deliverance (vv. 5-6). God would remedy their state by providing what they needed through the Davidic prince, who would shepherd them, feed them, protect them and give

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<sup>204</sup> For the Matthean use of the verb θεραπεύω in connection with restoration motifs and frequent messianic connotations, cf. Y. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd: Studies in the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, and in the Gospel of Matthew* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 296-302.

<sup>205</sup> For Matthew’s preference for the verb θεραπεύω, cf. D. Duling, “The Therapeutic Son of David: An Element in Matthew’s Christological Apologetic” *NTS* 24 (1978): 392-410.



them rest (vv. 11-24).<sup>206</sup> Matthew portrays Jesus as the shepherd prince throughout his Gospel (e.g. 9:36; 26:31).

Healing was not forbidden on the sabbath as one of the thirty-nine main classes of work not permissible on the sabbath day, as was the case with reaping and threshing (Matt 12:1).<sup>207</sup> This is the reason why Matthew presents the Pharisees making an accusation in the first case (Matt 12:2) and asking a question in the second scenario (Matt 12:10).

Nevertheless, their motives are exposed in the Matthean narrative: "...in order that they might accuse him" (12:10). The language has associations with a court setting.<sup>208</sup> Matthew uses the verb "to accuse" (κατηγορέω) twice in his gospel (Matt 12:10; 27:12). The second time portrays Jesus standing before the governor and the chief priests and elders are accusing him. In that instance Jesus answers "nothing" (v. 12). But in the first instance, found in Matt 12:11, Jesus answers their question even though their motive is not an honest halakhic argument and the answer could be used to accuse him.

### **Jesus' Response and Pronouncement (12:11-12)**

Jesus responds to "them" (12:11); "they" have not yet been identified in this story, therefore continuity with the Pharisees of Matt 12:2 is implied. The unveiling of the identity of Jesus' adversaries as "the Pharisees" forms an *inclusio* in this two-fold pericope (12:2, 14), not yet fully revealed in v. 11. Jesus' rhetorical question is a Matthean addition to the

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<sup>206</sup> Matthew's deliberate juxtaposition between Jesus' offer of "rest" (Matt 11:28-30) and his ministry for the sick (12:9-14), prophesied of the upcoming Davidic prince (Ezek 34:11-24), strengthens Baxter's argument that Matthew connects the Christological title "Son of David" with Jesus' healing activity using contextual, verbal and thematic links with the Davidic Shepherd of Ezekiel 34. Cf. Baxter, "Healing and the 'Son of David': Matthew's Warrant," 36-50.

<sup>207</sup> Cf. *m. Sabb.* 7:2.

<sup>208</sup> For later Rabbinic traditions that reflect the use of the synagogue as a court house, cf. *y. Sanh.* 2a.

narrative (v.11).<sup>209</sup> This is a similar addition to that in 12:5-7, emphasizing Matthew's interest in portraying Jesus in halakhic arguments. But Jesus' question appeals to the common practice of an ordinary man in contrast to addressing a scholar of the law: "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?" (12:11). The negative (οὐχί) used by Jesus implies that a full consent is expected; therefore the counter-question does not contain a challenge.

Discussions regarding the sabbath laws in the case of an animal in need were on-going in the first century. The Essenes offered the strictest rules,<sup>210</sup> explicitly forbidding help for a stranded animal on the sabbath: "No man shall assist a beast to give birth on the Sabbath day. And if it should fall into a cistern or pit, he shall not lift it out on the Sabbath." (CD 11.13-14).<sup>211</sup> Later Rabbinic literature allowed for helping an animal to get out of a pit on the sabbath day by placing pillows and bedding so that the beast may be raised up (*b. Sabb.* 128b), explicitly concluding that relieving the pain of a suffering animal on the sabbath was biblically lawful (cf. *b. B. Mes.* 32b). In Jesus' question, there are two actions needed to bring relief to the sheep: "take hold of it and lift it out" (12:11). By using these two verbs, κρατέω and ἐγείρω, Jesus assumes that if a man is to be compassionate with his beast (cf. Prov 12:10), it is not enough to take hold of the animal and comfort it by placing blankets under it, but that it will be lifted out of the situation, removing the animal from the place of suffering. In this circumstance, they will act the way they would on any ordinary day (cf. Deut 22:4).

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<sup>209</sup> The Lukan version does not contain this argument (Luke 6:6-11), but Luke 14:5 makes the same argument with different victims (son and ox instead of sheep; cf. Luke 13:15) and different location (well instead of pit).

<sup>210</sup> For a discussion of sabbath regulations in the Qumran scrolls, cf. Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 62-67.

<sup>211</sup> G. Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York, N.Y.: Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 1997), 142.

Jesus continues with his *qal wahomer* argument in the next verse (v. 12) regarding a sheep and a man, both in need of relief. Whether “one” (ἓν) is to be interpreted as an indefinite article (“a”) or an “only” sheep is not clear.<sup>212</sup> Nevertheless, it is evident that when Jesus addresses them in the second person plural (ὕμῶν), he is not expecting to find any man (ἄνθρωπος) who would not raise up a sheep that has fallen into a pit on the sabbath.

“The sabbath” (τοῖς σάββασι) in Jesus’ response is in the plural (v. 11) as in the Pharisees’ question (v.10b). Even though Matthew alternates plural and singular forms of the word in the previous story (12:1, 2, 5, 8), he uses only the plural form in the healing controversy story (12:10, 11) and the pronouncement that follows (v. 12).

Following his rhetorical question, Jesus makes his argument in the form of the rabbinical *qal wahomer*: “How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep!” (v. 12). If a sheep must be rescued, how much more a man must be rescued! This argument by analogy is found only in Matthew. Previously in his gospel, Matthew has employed Q arguments that conclude that man is worth much more than animals (cf. Matt 6:26// Luke 12:24; Matt 10:30-31// Luke 12:7). This redactional argument uses πρόβατον, which Matthew favors; this is the sixth occurrence of the word in this gospel. Every one of the eleven occurrences of this word is used in an analogy that relates to people (cf. 7:15; 9:36; 10:6; 10:16; 15:24; 25:32,33; 26:31) or in an argument that results in a comparison to people (cf. 12:11, 12; 18:12). Matthew also favors οὖν, used to introduce the *qal wahomer* argument in v. 12. The word is used fifty-six times in Matthew compared to six times in Mark, strongly suggesting Matthean redaction.

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<sup>212</sup> Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 187-88, argues that it depicts a poor peasant with an only sheep, as in Nathan’s narrative found in 2 Sam 12:3.

Following the *a fortiori* argument (v. 12a), Jesus makes a pronouncement: “So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” (v. 12b). In Mark, Jesus asks a counter-question instead (Mark 3:4), but Matthew portrays Jesus finalizing the halakhic argument with a pronouncement. Both sabbath stories (12:1-8; 9-14) follow a similar narrative outline: the setting (12:1; 9-10a), the challenge/question (12:2; 10b), Jesus’ analogy response (12:4-5; 11), *qal wahomer* argument (12:6; 12a) and pronouncement (12:8, 12b). Only in the second story the pronouncement is followed by a miracle of Jesus and the response of the Pharisees (12:13-14), actions that serve as the summary of the two-fold controversy, both by Jesus and by the Pharisees. In both narratives, the *qal wahomer* argument that immediately precedes the pronouncement (12:6; 12a) is a Matthean addition, preceding the Markan pronouncement/question (Mark 2:28; 3:4).

The pronouncement of Jesus (v. 12b) is introduced with the conjunction ὥστε, implying that the previous argument results and is summarized in the pronouncement. Even though Jesus responds to the original question of lawfulness (v. 10), his response is not specific to healing on the sabbath. His assertion is an all-encompassing positive principle about what is lawful to do on the sabbath: “it is lawful to do good on the sabbath” (v. 12b). “Doing good” could have been interpreted in multiple and divergent ways in the Matthean audience, perhaps providing insight into the re-evaluation of sabbath laws and rules in the recently formed Jewish-Christian community<sup>213</sup>. The permissive nature of the saying contrasts with the prohibitive nature of the sabbath commandment in the law,<sup>214</sup> and, even though the two stances are not mutually exclusive, Jesus’ emphasis is on the compassionate and healing nature of the sabbath day (healing, rescuing, doing good). Furthermore, καλῶς

<sup>213</sup> Luz argues that this pronouncement is “the basic rule of the Matthean church’s Sabbath practice.” Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 188.

<sup>214</sup> “You shall not do any work” (cf. Exod 20:10; Deut 5:14).

ποιεῖν encompassed the question of the Pharisees regarding the lawfulness of healing on the sabbath (v. 10), Jesus' analogy of a sheep that needs rescue on the sabbath (v. 11), Jesus' *qal wahomer* argument regarding human worth (v. 12a) and the miracle that will take place following the pronouncement (v. 13).

The Markan version is a question of Jesus with a double set of alternatives: "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4). Matthew's version does not put forward a question but a general principle and it omits the alternative to doing good and the second set of alternatives (Matt 12:12b). In the process, Matthew omits the specific mention of life saving activity (Mark 3:4), the parallelism between "doing good" and "saving a life," thereby rejecting the possibility that the principle pertains only to life-threatening situations. In Matthew, Jesus expands the boundary of what would have been permissible in the Jewish halakhah regarding healing on the sabbath, which was acceptable when threat to life was imminent. Matthew replaces Mark's adjective ἀγαθόν with the adverb καλῶς, indicating an appropriate manner or way of acting instead of a qualitative assessment of what is being done<sup>215</sup>.

There is no indication that through his pronouncement Jesus is abrogating or challenging sabbath laws. Jesus is re-interpreting and expanding the meaning of sabbath keeping in light of who he is and the mission he has come to fulfill. Jesus' pronouncement upholds sabbath keeping and it should not be mistaken for antinomianism, something that Matthew is careful to avoid (cf. Matt 5:17).<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Nolland, *Matthew*, 489, proposes that the exchange of terms produces a development in the meaning of the sentence: "the sense becomes something like: 'so, to act well or appropriately on the sabbath is (surely) allowed'."

<sup>216</sup> Commenting on Jesus' healings on the Sabbath, L. Doering, "Much Ado About Nothing? Jesus' Sabbath Healings and their Halakhic Implications Revisited" in eds. L. Doering, H-G. Waubke and F. Wilk, *Judaistik und Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft: Standorte- Grenzen- Beziehungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht,

## The Miracle (12:13)

After Jesus has answered their question through the sheep analogy (v. 11) and the *qal wahomer* summarizing argument (v. 12), “then” (τότε) (v. 13) he proceeds to exemplify the principle of doing what is appropriate or good on the sabbath through a miracle of healing on the sabbath (v. 13). In Jesus’ response, the pronouncement is primary (v. 12) and the miracle secondary (v. 13). The miracle is narrated in three steps: Jesus’ commanding address to the man (v. 13a), the man’s response (v. 13b) and the confirmation of healing (v. 13c). Matthew does not offer many details related to the man or to the healing. The focus is on this miracle as a concrete enactment of the principle just pronounced by Jesus (v. 12). For the first time in the narrative Jesus now addresses the person needing healing (v. 13). The narration of this miracle starts with Jesus simply speaking to the man (v. 13a), in contrast with previous instances where Jesus touched the person involved in the healing (e.g. 8:15; 9:25). Matthew introduces Jesus’ command with a historic present: “Then he says (λέγει) to the man” (v. 13). The use of “then” followed by “he says” emphasizes the immediate continuity with the previous pronouncement (v. 12). That Jesus speaks, instead of doing any other “work” to heal this man, minimizes the possibility of further accusations regarding Jesus’ alleged violation of sabbath laws (cf. 12:2). The focus is on the concrete enacted example of the lawfulness of doing good on the sabbath (v. 12).

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2008) 213-41, cautions about mistaking an eschatological proposal of Jesus’ view of the sabbath with antinomianism regarding the sabbath day: “To my mind, it is more promising to view Jesus’ Sabbath conduct as a corollary of the *apocalyptic-eschatological outlook of his mission in general*... However... we have no basis for the claim that for Jesus an ‘eschatological Sabbath’ has begun which has *blurred* the distinction between weekdays and the Seventh Day. All Sabbath texts in the gospels maintain the distinction between Sabbath and weekdays.” 236, 241.

Jesus' command to the man is short and specific; "Stretch out your hand" (v. 13b).<sup>217</sup> Whether the command presupposes a healing is not clear because the extent of the man's disease has not been discussed in detail in the Matthean narrative. The reader has been informed that the "hand was withered" (v. 10); Matthew's use of the adjective (ξηρός, cf. v 10) does not provide enough information to be certain about the man's previous ability or inability to move his arm or stretch out his hand<sup>218</sup>.

The man's obedient response is narrated in two words: καὶ ἐξέτεινεν ("...and he stretched it out," v. 13b). The verb in the imperative used by Jesus in his command (v. 13a) is the same verb now employed in depicting the action performed by the man, emphasizing the man's immediate obedience to Jesus' command.

The report of the healing miracle is also narrated in two words: καὶ ἀπεκατεστάθη ("... and it was restored," v. 13c), followed by a description of the extent of the healing: "healthy as the other" (v.13c). The verb ἀποκαθίστημι, "to change to an earlier good state or condition,"<sup>219</sup> is used by Matthew only here and in Matt 17:11, where the disciples ask Jesus regarding the coming of Elijah, and Jesus responds that Elijah was coming to "restore" all things, referring to the restoration in the messianic age. Luke uses it only in the healing of the man with the withered hand (Luke 6:10). Mark uses this verb three times: the first time in the same synoptic narrative (3:5), the second in the two-step healing of a blind man, whose sight is restored (8:25) and the third in the coming of Elijah (9:12).

<sup>217</sup> Cf. K. Queller, "'Stretch out your hand!': Echo and Metalepsis in Mark's Sabbath Healing Controversy," *JBL* 129 (2010), 737-758, who argues for an Exodus 14 (LXX) background for Mark 3:1-6 through the appearance of three expressions found in the parting of the sea.

<sup>218</sup> *Contra* Nolland, *Matthew*, 489, who proposes that, "...the mode of cure is to direct the person to behavior that presupposes healing. In the very act of reaching out, the hand becomes capable of stretching out in a manner not earlier possible."

<sup>219</sup> "Ἀποκαθίστημι" in Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 111.

The descriptive phrase that follows, “healthy/whole (ὁγιῆς) like the other” (12:13c), is a Matthean addition, a depiction found only here in the synoptic narrative. The adjective is used by Matthew once more in 15:31 related to the healing of the maimed. The Matthean comparison (“like the other,” v. 13) highlights the complete and whole restoration of the withered hand. This healing miracle may be compared to the one narrated in I Kings 13:1-10, where the man of God prays that the withered hand of the king may be restored, and the healing is confirmed with a comparative statement, “...and it became as it was before.” (I Kings 13:6).

By performing a healing miracle that goes beyond the Pharisaic concession of “saving life” on the sabbath, Jesus is enacting the prophecy of the Davidic prince who was to come, who would strengthen the sick, bind up the broken and lead them to rest (cf. Ezek 34: 15, 16, 23, 24). His offer of rest (Matt 11:28-30) is consistent with his healing activity<sup>220</sup> (Matt 12:9-14; cf. Ezek 34:15-16), and it is not restricted to saving life, but it is expanded to “doing good” on the sabbath, a holy day that typified the coming age in light of Jesus’ identity and mission. Jesus argues about the interpretation of the sabbath laws and acts according to his pronouncement by performing this non-emergency healing miracle on the sabbath day.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> L. Novakovic, *Messiah, the Healer of the Sick: A Study of Jesus as the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 190, argues that, “Matthew’s Gospel shows that the dominant feature of Jesus’ miracles, especially his miracles of healing, is their eschatological significance.” I agree that this proposal is strongly suggested by the Matthean use of the title “Son of David” in Jesus’ healing activity (e.g. Matt 9:27; 15:22; 20:30-31).

<sup>221</sup> For a discussion of the application of the principle of *piqquah nefesh* (the principle of danger to life or the suspicion of such a danger allowed for any form of healing) in Jesus’ healings on the sabbath, cf. Doering, “Much Ado About Nothing? Jesus’ Sabbath Healings and their Halakhic Implications Revisited,” 213-41.



## The Response of the Pharisees (12:14)

When Matthew introduces the response to Jesus' pronouncement and miracle, he makes two changes to the Markan version (Mark 3:6). In the first place, the word καί is replaced by δέ (Matt 12:14), emphasizing an adverse reaction by the subjects. Secondly, Matthew omits εὐθὺς μετὰ τῶν Ἡρώδιανῶν (Mark 3:6), leaving only the Pharisees as the subjects of the conspiracy to follow. By taking out "the Herodians" (Mark 3:6), Matthew concentrates on the religious opponents of Jesus, who, for the first time in the healing controversy, are identified as "the Pharisees" (Matt 12:14). Before this verse, Matthew utilizes third person plural pronouns throughout the second narrative (12:10, 11), implying a direct connection with the Pharisees who accused Jesus in the previous story (12:2). "The Pharisees" become a character *inclusio* for both sabbath stories (12:2, 14). Matthew does not mention any discussion or pondering among them regarding Jesus' argument. The reaction or astonishment of others around Jesus, who witnessed the miracle, is not identified. The synagogue congregation's response to the miracle is clearly not Matthew's concern in this instance, even though he mentions, in the following verse, that many followed him and Jesus healed them (Matt 12:15). Instead, the Matthean narrative concentrates on what the Pharisees did once they went out from the synagogue. The fact that the Pharisees "went out" (ἐξελθόντες, v. 14) of *their* synagogue (12:9) implies that Jesus had responded to their challenge in an irrefutable manner; Jesus stayed in the synagogue, *their* synagogue, with the people, "but" (v. 14) the Pharisees left. Jesus is gaining authority as a teacher and interpreter of the law.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 210, proposes that this is the reason why the Pharisees went out of the synagogue after Jesus' miracle: "The verb ἐξελθόντες may indicate the Pharisees' failure to forge an accusation with respect to the sabbath law at least on the theological level. They could not stay in the

The Pharisees' failure to refute Jesus' answer results in a further determination on their part to terminate Jesus' ministry as soon as possible, exposing their motives for their challenges and questions (12:2, 10b). Matthew replaces the Markan συμβούλιον ἐδίδουν with συμβούλιον ἔλαβον ("took counsel," 12:14). This clause ("took counsel") is exclusively Matthean and is utilized only for opponents of Jesus (cf. Matt 12:14; 22:15; 27:1, 7; 28:12). This is the first of the five occurrences of this clause in the gospel, and it foreshadows Jesus' death (cf. 12:14; 27:1).<sup>223</sup>

In addition, their counsel will result in the first mention of the Pharisees wanting to "destroy" (ἀπολέσωσιν, 12:14) Jesus in Matthew. The verb "to destroy" (ἀπόλλυμι) was first used in the Matthean narrative in the angelic announcement to Joseph regarding Herod's intent (cf. Matt 2:13). The Pharisees' conspiracy against Jesus is narrated in the same terms as Herod's plot. And, in the final decision "to destroy" Jesus, Matthew uses, for the last time, the same verbal tense as in 12:14: "But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to put Jesus to death (ἀπολέσωσιν)" (Matt 27:20).

What prompted such desire to destroy Jesus in Matt 12:9-14? Matthew has been careful to avoid any mention of actions or commands of Jesus when performing the miracle that would presuppose a violation of the thirty-nine activities forbidden on the sabbath.<sup>224</sup>

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synagogue any longer because of this failure and perhaps also because of Jesus' overwhelming authority in the synagogue after the healing; there was no other option for them but to go out of the synagogue."

<sup>223</sup> Keener, *Commentary on Matthew*, 353-4, agrees that the Pharisees' accusations foreshadow the final plot against Jesus: "Matthew contends that God's law was not genuinely written in these Pharisees' hearts, emphasizing their hostile response to Jesus' violation of their known tradition (12:10,14)...these Pharisees are so enraged with Jesus that they resort to plotting his death—a *heinous and obvious breach of the very law they purport to uphold* (12:14). On the Matthean level, even their 'accusations' (12:10) foreshadow those of the priestly aristocracy before Pilate (27:12), and perhaps the *delatores* (accusers to the court) who might ultimately betray Matthew's fellow disciples to Roman authorities."

<sup>224</sup> m. *Sabb.* 7:2.

There is no apparent reason in the sabbath healing to encourage such response. The force of this narrative focuses primarily on the teaching and pronouncement of Jesus, and secondarily on the healing,<sup>225</sup> therefore the reason must reside in his teaching, pronouncement and re-interpretation of the sabbath laws. The authoritative pronouncement of Jesus portrays him as the new Moses, interpreting the Torah, focusing on the sabbath laws. Jesus is authoritatively arguing his re-interpretation of what is “lawful” to do on the day of rest, offering his own rest (cf. 11:28-30). Furthermore, his authority is challenging the Pharisees’ own interpretive right. Jesus is acting as the Davidic prince who would challenge the shepherds of Israel (Ezek 34:1-11), breaking the yoke of those who enslaved the people, the sheep of Israel (Ezek 34:27) with their own interpretation of the law. It is a deliberate Matthean move to juxtapose this two-fold sabbath pericope (12:1-14) with Jesus’ offer of rest and reminder that his yoke is easy and his burden is light (11:30) in opposition to that of the Pharisees (cf. 23:4). Seeing this narrative as foreshadowing Jesus’ final trial is encouraged by the verbal links: “took counsel” (Matt 12:14; 27:1, 7), “to accuse” (Matt 12:10; 27:12), and “to destroy” (Matt 12:14; 27:20), though infringement of sabbath laws has no explicit part in that trial.

Jesus’ authoritative actions in these two sabbath sections (12:1-8, 9-14) have done more than establish a new understanding of the sabbath law. Jesus, as the eschatological Davidic king, is ushering in the kingdom of God, and as such, is re-affirming and re-interpreting the sabbath in light of the new dimension of the “something greater than the

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<sup>225</sup> Nolland, *Matthew*, 489, agrees that the main reason for the Pharisees’ reaction relates to Jesus’ teaching: “Despite the heavy penalty attached to sabbath breaking in the Law (e.g., Ex 31:14), the Pharisees’ plotting to destroy Jesus seems inadequately motivated, given the general uncertainty about where to draw precise boundaries as to what constituted unjustified work on the sabbath and given Jesus’ own claim that no sabbath breaking was occurring. What is likely to have proved most provocative is that Jesus was placing in question the right which Pharisees claimed to define for ordinary Jews what constituted best practice. Jesus as teacher rather than Jesus as healer was the problem.”

temple" (12:7) that is now here. He offers his ἀνάπαυσις (Matt 11:28-30) because he is the new Davidic mediator of God's rest for his people. The eschatological David is the Son of Man and the Lord of the sabbath. As such, he re-interprets the sabbath as a day to do good and be merciful (12:7, 12), bringing health and wholeness (12:13), in anticipation of the ultimate eschatological reality of God's rest and restoration in the messianic age.<sup>226</sup> Through his teachings and actions, according to Matt 12:1-14, Jesus announces that he is the eschatological agent who is ushering in the kingdom of God and that all law, including the sabbath law, must be interpreted in light of this new reality.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Hagner, "Jesus and the Synoptic Sabbath Controversies," 247, in his discussion of the healings of Jesus on the Sabbath, concludes that, "A correct understanding of the matter necessarily involves recognition of the determinative importance of messianic fulfillment in all that Jesus does and says—in short, matters of Christology and eschatology... The messianic Son of Man, who brings the eschatological fulfillment of the kingdom of God, as the Lord of the Sabbath, interprets the Sabbath in accord with its original intention—a day created by God for the experiencing of health, wholeness, and joy, a day which by its very nature therefore points toward and anticipates the salvation from sin and suffering that he now brings to the world."

<sup>227</sup> "What Jesus, in fact, takes up, however, is not a particular orientation towards the Sabbath law, but the demand that the Sabbath be orientated towards, interpreted by, and obeyed in accordance with, his own person and work." Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, 131.

## **Chapter 5 - Rest and Sabbath in the Context of Matthew's Theology**

This chapter attempts to place the preceding discussion of Matt 11:25-12:14 in the context of Matthew's Gospel as a whole by asking how its findings relate to the major themes of law, eschatology and Christology.

### **Law, Rest and Sabbath in Matthew**

Since sabbath observance is obviously commanded in Torah, we need to probe how the presentation of Jesus' attitude to sabbath rest best fits Matthew's overall perspective on the law. In Matthew, Jesus recognizes the Mosaic law, in conjunction with the prophets, as valid and relevant. Moses himself is mentioned seven times in the Gospel of Matthew (8:4; 17:3, 4; 19:7, 8; 22:24; 23:2), none of which are within the narrative scope of this dissertation (11:25-12:14), nor in connection with the sabbath law. Nevertheless, Jesus is depicted as validating Moses' authority (cf. 8:4; 17:3, 4; 23:2), while disagreeing with the Jewish leaders regarding their interpretation and application of Moses (cf. 19: 7, 8; 22:24, 29; 23:2). For example, the first instance in which Moses is mentioned is in a command by the Matthean Jesus, instructing the leper who he had healed to present the offering that Moses commanded, "...as a testimony to them" (8:4). The testimony (μαρτύριον) was that Jesus acted in accordance with Moses and kept the Torah.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> In agreement with Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 6, who explains that, "Until modern times μαρτύριον ("testimony") was interpreted, probably incorrectly, as a sign of judgment on Israel; but it is more likely that what is meant is a positive witness initially for the priests, but then for all the people who are listening: As Israel's Messiah Jesus keeps the Torah." Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 16, argue that Jesus showing that he keeps Moses' Torah is one of four possible reasons given by Jesus, when εἰς is taken in a positive manner: "(i) Jesus could be showing the Jewish leaders or the people in general that he keeps that law ('a testimony to them that I uphold the Torah'). (ii) Or he could be making it possible for the leper to re-enter society ('a testimony to them that the outcast has been made whole'). (iii) Or the witness could concern the miracle itself ('a testimony to them

Nevertheless, the Matthean Jesus is depicted as greater than Moses, fulfilling the law and the prophets (Matt 5:17, 18) and mediating a new dimension of revelation from the Father (Matt 11:25-30). This depiction of Jesus is consistent throughout the Gospel of Matthew. In the transfiguration account (Matt 17:3, 4), Moses and Elijah have appeared, and are talking to Jesus (v. 3). The Law and the prophets are now visualized in the person of Moses and Elijah. When Peter offers to build three tabernacles (σκηνῇ, as in the tent of the meeting in the Exodus), one for Jesus, one for Moses and one for Elijah (v. 4), he is interrupted by the voice out of the cloud that said: “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” (v. 5). The saying from the cloud alludes to Deut 18:15, the prophecy about one who was to come in the likeness of Moses, and whom they were to heed. In this passage, Matthew utilizes Scriptural imagery from the narrative of the Exodus, such as the face shining, the high mountain, the tabernacles and the cloud, while highlighting Jesus’ supremacy as the new Moses<sup>229</sup> and the eschatological agent proclaimed by the law and the prophets.<sup>230</sup>

In his Mosaic Christological portrayal, Matthew proposes that there is a new and greater mediator of the law. This is consistent with Matthew’s overall Christological law-interpreting hermeneutics. Jesus speaks of Moses as a legitimate representative and

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that I have done this great work’). There is also the possibility that εἰς κ.τ.λ. simply means ‘as a statute for Israel.’”

<sup>229</sup> *Contra* Nolland, *Matthew*, 701, who argues that, “The presence of both Moses and Elijah makes it less likely that in the Moses echoes of Mt. 17:2 Matthew intends to identify Jesus as in any sense a new Moses. Rather, he is one who shares a certain likeness to both Moses and Elijah, destined as he is to carry forward the purposes of God within which both Moses and Elijah have had important roles.” These two statements are not an antithesis and should not be presented as mutually exclusive. In Matthew, Jesus’ mission is greater than anyone and anything that preceded it: it is greater than the temple (12:6), greater than Jonah (12:41) and greater than Solomon (12:42), while carrying forward the purposes of God “within which” the temple and these biblical characters “had important roles.” The Matthean Jesus is depicted as the new and greater Moses, and Matthew deliberately and continually presents Jesus in this light. Cf. W. Baxter, “Mosaic Imagery in the Gospel of Matthew,” *TJ* (1999): 76-78; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 647-651.

<sup>230</sup> “These two men therefore also symbolize the coming of the messianic age, and their conversation with Jesus marks him out the more clearly as the Messiah who comes as the climax to their eschatological role.” France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 648.

interpreter of the law (cf. Matt 8:4; 19:8; cf. also 17:3, 4),<sup>231</sup> but one who must now be subject to the greater revelation of the law brought by the fulfiller of the law. This is the reason why Jesus exposes the Pharisees and scribes as hypocritical interpreters and mediators of Moses (cf. Matt 19:8; 23:2-4), as well as “not doers” of Moses (cf. 23:2-4). In essence, the Matthean Jesus validates Moses’ commands (e.g. 8:4; 19:8), but challenges the way the Jewish leaders understand and practice Moses (cf. 19:8; 22:24; 23:2-4).

That the Matthean Jesus does not present himself in opposition to the law and the commandments may also be deduced by his use of these two words. Seven of the eight occurrences of νόμος in Matthew, are the words of the Matthean Jesus (Matt 5:17,18; 7:12; 11:13; 12:5; 22:40; 23:23). The eighth occurrence is an inquiry regarding the interpretation of the law, posed to Jesus by a lawyer (22:36). Four times νόμος is used by Jesus in conjunction with the prophets (5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40); once in inverted order (“prophets and law” 11:13); the latter is the only passage that highlights the prophetic role of the law. Three times Jesus ratifies the law (5:17, 18; 23:23) and a fourth time appeals to the sabbath laws (12:5). Two times Jesus discusses particular behaviors specified in the law (12:5; 23:23) and both times explicitly denounces the lack of mercy in the interpretation of the law (12:7; 23:23). Of the six occurrences of ἐντολή and its cognates, five are uttered by Jesus (5:19; 15:3; 19:17; 22:38, 40) and one is contained in a question addressed to him (22:36). Jesus

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<sup>231</sup> In addition to the times when Jesus discusses Moses, Matthew depicts him in action as the new Moses, with greater authority than the Old Testament prophet. Jesus further unravels and expands the law bearing in mind his own position as revealer of the father. Thus, the Matthean Jesus validates Moses not only in words but also in actions. In agreement with Baxter, “Mosaic Imagery in the Gospel of Matthew,” 83, who proposes that Mosaic imagery in Matthew is prominent and deliberate, while highlighting Jesus’ surpassing authority: “Jesus, then, is not to be perceived as being opposed to Moses but as able to win the day because he has greater authority. Rather, he is to be perceived as aligning closely with Moses so as majestically to fill out the old prophet’s authority; an authority which Moses himself could never have filled out. Thus, Matthew, by painting a picture of Jesus with the colors of Moses, seems to highlight this alignment of this authority.”

validates the importance of keeping the commandments (5:19; 19:17) and denounces those who transgress the commandments (5:19; 15:3). Furthermore, he exposes the Pharisees and scribes as transgressors of the commandment of God for the sake of their tradition (15:3). The Matthean Jesus summarizes the law and the prophets in the two greatest commandments: love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself (22:38, 40), and pronounces that the whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments (22:40).

Matthew discusses the law using four main terms: νόμος, ἔξεστι, Μωϋσῆς, and ἐντολή. There are two sections in Matthew that contain more than one of these terms, and that offer specific teachings of the Matthean Jesus regarding the interpretation of the law as a whole. These two sections offer hermeneutical principles for Matthew's audience regarding the law, the commandments, and what is permissible to do.

#### Christological Hermeneutical Principle

The first is Matt 5:17-19, where the law is mentioned in conjunction with the commandments. There are two occurrences of νόμος found in Matt 5:17, 18, included in the account of the Sermon on the Mount. Matt 5:17 has the first appearance of the term in this Gospel. Here Jesus emphatically denies that he has come to abolish the law or the prophets, and declares an antithesis to such a presupposition regarding his own relationship with the law: "... I did not come to abolish but to fulfill" (Matt 5:17). A pronouncement follows in regards to the law itself: "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished." (Matt. 5:18). In this section (vv. 17, 18) Jesus is not only explicitly denying that he has come to



abolish the law, but he is unambiguously ratifying it.<sup>232</sup> The verb πληρόω used in Matthew 5:17 is used sixteen times in this Gospel, with the primary force of the fulfillment of the Scriptures in the life and death of Jesus (cf. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54,56; 27:9). The immediate context of the use of this verb by the Matthean Jesus (Matt 5:17) unambiguously refers to the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Therefore, both by the immediate context (5:17) and by the overall Matthean usage of πληρόω, we observe that “to fulfill” in this Gospel signifies that in Jesus the law and the prophets find their fullest manifestation.<sup>233</sup> Πληρόω is used in opposition to καταλύω: οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι (Matt 5:17), therefore “to fulfill” cannot be interpreted as “to do away with.”

The eschatological extent of the Christ-centered fulfillment of the law as well as its perpetual nature may be observed by the fact that in Matt 5:18, the phrase “until heaven and earth pass away” is used in parallelism with the phrase “until all is accomplished.” Even though an attempt has been made to define “all is accomplished” as the death and resurrection of Jesus, and therefore, heaven and earth passing away in these events,<sup>234</sup> the argument does not withstand the Matthean developmental understanding of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant to all nations (cf. Matt 1:1; 28:19) and Jesus’ presence in the mission to the Gentiles until “the end of the age” (28: 18-20). Both sentences in 5:18 are

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<sup>232</sup> D. Hagner, “Balancing the Old and the New: The Law of Moses in Matthew and Paul,” *Int* 51 (1997): 22, underlines that these two verses (Matt 5:17-18) mark Jesus’ loyalty to the law: “We have..., every reason to believe that Jesus considered his work and his teaching to be in continuity with, and thus loyal to, the scriptures of Israel generally, and the law specifically. His quotation of those scriptures and the extent to which his own ethical teaching depends on them are clear evidence of this loyalty.”

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Dellling, “πληρόω,” *TDNT* 6:290. Furthermore, “The goal of the mission of Jesus is fulfilment (Mt. 5:17b); according to Mt. 5:17a this is primarily fulfilment of the Law and the prophets, i.e., of the whole of the OT... as a declaration of the will of God. Jesus does not merely affirm that He will maintain them. As He sees it, His task is to actualise the will of God made known in the OT... He has come in order that God’s Word may be completely fulfilled, in order that the full measure appointed by God Himself may be reached in Him.” 294.

<sup>234</sup> Cf. J. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew’s Gospel: a Redactional Study of Mt. 5:17-18* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976), 64-65. For an expanded explanation of Meier’s interpretation of Matt 5:17-20, cf. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew’s Gospel*, 41-124.

introduced with ἕως and are meant as synonyms, alluding to the law being valid “until” the very end of the age.<sup>235</sup> Furthermore, the verb παρέρχομαι is used twice in 5:18, both of heaven and earth and the law, emphatically stating the eschatological presence of the law until the very end.<sup>236</sup> The Matthean Jesus is hereby proposing a hermeneutical principle: from the beginning (the law and the prophets, cf. Matt 5:17) to the end of salvation history (until all is accomplished when heaven and earth pass away, cf. Matt 5:18), the will of God to redeem humanity finds its completeness in his life and death.<sup>237</sup> Jesus clearly states that he has come to fulfill the law and that the law continues to be valid finding its fullest expression in his own mission. The understanding that the notion of the “fulfillment of the law” on some level has a rescindable or retractable force is not consistent with Matthew’s presentation of the law as revealed and affirmed by Jesus. On the contrary, Matthew insists that Jesus has come to bring the Scriptures to their fullest expression, imparting a new dimension of understanding of them.<sup>238</sup> From that point forward, the law and the prophets must be interpreted in light of Jesus’ identity and mission.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 107-8.

<sup>236</sup> In agreement with R. Deines, “Not the Law but the Messiah: Law and Righteousness in the Gospel of Matthew—An Ongoing Debate.” in *Built upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew* (ed. D. M. Gurtner and J. Nolland. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 76-77, who finds in this verb a parallel term to πληρώω from v. 17: “παρέρχεσθαι in verse 18...needs to be understood as an apocalyptic *terminus technicus* and cannot be taken exclusively as indicating disregard of the commandments. Because of this, the last part of the verse ἕως ἃν πάντα γένηται ... is to be interpreted like πληρώσαι in 5:17 in a way that takes salvation history and eschatology into account and refers to the messianic mission of Jesus.”

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Deines, *Not the Law but the Messiah*, 74, who argues that πληρώσαι is an exclusive Christological term: “... I agree with the exegetical tradition that sees πληρώσαι as an exclusive Christological term, which could in the context of the First Gospel only be understood in the framework of a salvation history which reaches its peak in Jesus.”

<sup>238</sup> In agreement with Deines, *Not the Law but the Messiah*, 75, who proposes that: “[Matthew] 5:17 may be compared to the preamble of a new treaty that relates what will be in force from now on but based on an existing foundation.”

<sup>239</sup> I agree that Matthew depicts the ultimate validity and meaning of the law fully revealed in Jesus and his mission. Yet I disagree with those who suggest that Jesus’ demands at some level nullify the law and move away from it. D. Moo, “Jesus and the authority of the Mosaic law.” *JSNT* 20 (1984): 3-49, makes a commendable effort to reconcile both sides of the argument, but his conclusions are antithetical regarding the meaning of the “fulfillment of the law”: “The *whole* law came to culmination in Christ. As the sole ultimate authority of the Messianic community, he takes up the law into himself and enunciates what is enduring in its

The Matthean Jesus then proceeds to explain the importance of keeping the commandments and the danger of transgressing them, and he does it in the third person, applying his previous hermeneutical principle of law interpretation to those who will keep and teach the commandments (5:19). This is the first occurrence of ἐντολή in Matthew (5:19), and it appears immediately after Jesus' statement about his coming to fulfill, and not abolish, the law and the prophets (v. 17), and his ratifying of the law as not obsolete (v. 18). Following these statements (5:16, 17), Jesus gives a pronouncement regarding the validity of the commandments: "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments (ἐντολῶν), and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:19). This saying is consistent with the previous two verses; this is indicated by the use of οὖν in the introduction of the saying, linking it with the previous statements. Furthermore, by using the adverb οὕτως, "accordingly," Matthew clarifies that the commandments that Jesus is referring to are those found in the Jewish Scriptures,<sup>240</sup> and not only to his own instructions and teachings.<sup>241</sup>

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contents... The change in redemptive 'eras' brings with it a change in the locus of authority for the people of God, but it does not bring liberation from authority as such... Jesus by no means countenances the abandonment of the Mosaic law; indeed (if Mt. 5:18-19 be accepted as authentic), he explicitly commands that it be taught. However, this teaching must always be done with due attention to the fulfillment of the law (v. 17) and the way in which this fulfillment affects the meaning and applicability of its provisions." Moo, "Jesus and the authority of the Mosaic law," 30. And yet, he also proposes that Jesus' authority somehow nullifies the sabbath commandment (cf. Moo, "Jesus and the authority of the Mosaic law," 29).

<sup>240</sup> In agreement with France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 186-187, who points out that, "The 'So' which links this saying [Matt 5:19] with the last rules out the convenient suggestion of some interpreters that the 'commandments' here spoken of are those of Jesus, not those of the OT law. The context demands that 'these smallest commandments'... are the same as the jot and tittle of v. 18; because they are as permanent as heaven and earth, no one has the right to set them aside." But France then questions his own comment, by adding: "But are the commandments to be 'done' in the same way as before Jesus came?... we can only suppose therefore that he had in mind a different kind of 'doing' from that of the scribes and Pharisees, a 'doing' appropriate to the time of fulfillment." The Matthean Jesus explains that he is not against the "doing" per se of the Pharisees (cf. Matt 23:3, 23) but against their reason and heart behind the "doing" which includes lack of mercy and hypocrisy (cf. 23:23, 25). The notion that the fulfilled Torah (Matt 5:17-19) taught by Jesus in Matthew signifies the annulment of such is faulty and without basis in the Matthean narrative; as is the

The hermeneutical principle taught by Jesus in Matt 5:17, 18 is consistent with the high Christological interest in Matthew's portrayal of Jesus, which I will analyze further in this chapter. Matthew proposes that the law, from now on, cannot and must not be interpreted separately from its maximum expression found in Jesus' identity and mission.<sup>242</sup> The coming of Jesus has inaugurated a new dimension of interpretation of the law; the law and the prophets witnessed to its coming. In Matt. 11:13, Jesus refers to the law, in combination with the prophets, possessing a prophetic role: "For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John." It is the same formula for the Hebrew Scriptures used by Jesus before (5:17; 7:12), except in inverted order, placing the prophets before the law. Matthew adds the verb "prophesied" and the word "all" to Luke's version (Luke 16:16). Not only all the prophets, emphasized first in the sentence,<sup>243</sup> but also the law had a prophetic role until John.<sup>244</sup> Not only the prophets, but the law point forward to a fuller revelation than the one available in the Scriptures. This is the only time in Matthew that the law is portrayed as acting in a prophetic role.<sup>245</sup> Following Jesus' pronouncement about the fulfillment of the law in his person and mission (Matt 5:17) and the validity of the law, as fulfilled in him, until heaven and earth pass away (Matt 5:18-19), he then discusses that his followers will have a

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proposal that the change of term from νόμος (vv. 17, 18) to ἐντολαί (v. 19) is symbolic of a change of referent. *Contra* Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 115-116.

<sup>241</sup> *Contra* Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, 222-223.

<sup>242</sup> Cf. Deines, *Not the Law but the Messiah*, 82-84.

<sup>243</sup> Nolland, *Matthew*, 458-459, agrees that the order of the phrase in Matt 11:13 is unique: "The phrase 'all the prophets and the Law' is quite distinctive; 'the prophets' has probably been drawn to the beginning to identify from the beginning the focus of the clause on the activity of prophecy. In Matthew's focus, the time of prophetic activity is seen as pointing to a time of fulfillment, which he is eager to identify as taking place in and through Jesus..."

<sup>244</sup> Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 307, comments on the unity of both the prophets and the law as witness to Jesus: "For Matthew, the law and the prophets bear a united witness to Jesus..."

<sup>245</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 431, highlights that in this passage Matthew finds that the forward-pointing role of the law is fulfilled in the present ministry of Jesus: "It was not only the prophets who pointed forward to what was to come; the law, too, had this function, preparing the way for a fuller revelation of the will of God which was to come in the time of fulfillment, and which Matthew now finds present in the ministry of Jesus. Thus not only the prophets but even the law itself 'prophesied.' With the coming of John, the last and greatest of the prophets, that forward-pointing role is complete."

δικαιοσύνη that surpasses that of the Pharisees (Matt 5:20)<sup>246</sup> because they have been made perfect in Jesus.<sup>247</sup>

What follows are the so called “antitheses” (Matt 5:21-48) that reflect nothing other than the Christological law-interpreting hermeneutical principle of how the followers of Jesus, whose righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees (5:20) because they believe in Jesus who fulfilled the law (5:17), now live in the eschatological realities brought about by the identity and mission of Jesus: “In Jesus’ teaching on the practice of disciples, outlined in verses 21-48, the accent is upon the eschatological style of their living, determined by the fact that they are disciples of Jesus who do not abrogate the Mosaic law... Jesus’ request that the righteousness of his disciples (v. 20) reflects the perfection of God (v. 49) draws them into this eschatological fullness.”<sup>248</sup>

#### “Love and Mercy” Hermeneutical Principle

The second section in Matthew that explores an overall principle of law interpretation is 22:36-40. The discussion starts with a question directed to Jesus about the greatest commandment. The Pharisees gathered together, after hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees (22:34). Matthew 22:36 records the only instance of the word νόμος being uttered by someone other than Jesus in this gospel. This is a question asked by an expert in the law, with the motive of testing him (cf. 22:35). He asked Jesus: “Teacher, which

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<sup>246</sup> In agreement with F. Moloney, “Matthew 5:17-18 and the Matthean Use of Δικαιοσύνη” in *Unity and Diversity in the Gospels and Paul: Essays in Honor of Frank J. Matera* (ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Kelly R. Iverson. Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 33-54, who argues that, “the believer’s righteousness ‘exceeds... that of the scribes and Pharisees’ because its measure is the person of Jesus Christ... it is this ‘perfect righteousness’ that leads to the eschatological gift of the kingdom of heaven.” Moloney, “Matthew 5:17-18,” 47-48

<sup>247</sup> “Matthew makes clear that they [Matthew’s community] are products of the perfection of the law and the prophets in the person and teaching of Jesus, and that they are summoned to follow his way till the end of the age.” Moloney, “Matthew 5:17-18,” 39.

<sup>248</sup> Moloney, “Matthew 5:17-18,” 48.

is the great commandment (ἐντολή) in the Law?" (22:36). Matthew adds: "one of them" to his depiction of the questioner, thereby identifying the lawyer with the Pharisees. Moreover, Matthew adds the sentence "in the law" to the Markan account (cf. Mark 12:28). In this way, Matthew links together the Torah, the commandments and love for God and neighbor in one pericope. Jesus answers the inquiry by quoting Deut 6:5: "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND" (Matt 22:37), adding that this is the great and first commandment (ἐντολή) (22:38). Having given the first commandment, Jesus adds a second one, from Lev 19:18, qualifying it as being "like" the first one: "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." (Matt 22:39).

The Matthean Jesus makes a final pronouncement that summarizes his teaching; this conclusion is solely Matthean (Matt 22:40; cf. Mark 12:31) and it reiterates the author's effort to depict the law and the prophets in accordance with Jesus' love principle.<sup>249</sup> These two commandments are Jesus' interpretive summary of the law and the Prophets. This is the second and final teaching of Jesus where ἐντολή is referred to in conjunction with νόμος (cf. Matt 5:17-19; 22:36-40) in this Gospel. In this section, ἐντολή occurs three times, and νόμος once; these are the last three uses of ἐντολή, and its cognates, found in Matthew (Matt 22:36, 38, 40). As a conclusion to his answer, Jesus mentions the law in conjunction with the prophets, and makes a summary statement: "On these two commandments depend<sup>250</sup> the whole Law and the Prophets" (Matt 22:40).<sup>251</sup> In this case,

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<sup>249</sup> In agreement with E. Park, "A soteriological reading of the great commandment pericope in Matthew 22:34-40," *BR* 54 (2009): 65, who notes that, "A synoptic comparison clearly shows that all of the interpretive remarks in Matt 22:38, 39a and 40 are heavily redactional and reflect the distinctive features of the Torah hermeneutics articulated in a series of sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew."

<sup>250</sup> Donaldson, "The Law That Hangs (Matthew 22:30): Rabbinic Formulation and Matthean Social World," *CBQ* 57 (1995): 689, argues that, "The equivalents of κρεμόννυμι ("to hang," either literally or figuratively) in

the word used is ὅλος (complete and entire) instead of πάντες which Matthew adds to the Q version of Matt 11:13 (Q 16:16,17).

The preceding observations allow us to conclude that “love” is the second law-interpretive principle proposed by Jesus, because it summarizes the entire law and the prophets. That the love principle is of Matthean interest when proposing an overarching principle of law interpretation may be observed in other sections as well, applied to specific situations, even when ἀγαπάω is not specifically mentioned. In Matt. 7:12, Jesus speaks of treating others as one desires to be treated, declaring that “this is the Law and the Prophets” (7:12). This saying echoes Matt 5:17, where Jesus discussed his own fulfillment of the law and the prophets. It also functions as a summary of the spirit of the law (and the prophets).<sup>252</sup> The summary statement is absent in the same saying in Luke and Q (cf. Luke 6:31; Q 6:31), making this saying unique to Matthew.<sup>253</sup>

In the story of the rich young ruler, Matthew explicitly mentions ἀγαπάω (Matt 19:16-19), once again quoting Lev 19:18, as in Matt 22:39. Jesus’ answer confirms that the commandments are to be kept, and that the keeping of the commandments is consistent with entering into eternal life. Further, Jesus proceeds to enumerate five commandments found in the Decalogue (Matt 19:18), and adds the summarizing commandment of love, found in Lev 19:18 “...and YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF” (Matt 19:19).

This last sentence appears only in Matthew (cf. Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20) and once again

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Hebrew... and in Aramaic... are used several times in rabbinic literature in a manner formally similar to Matthew’s use of the term in 22:40.”

<sup>251</sup> Four of the eight occurrences of the word νόμος are linked with the prophets in the same sentence (cf. Matt 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40), but all eight instances of the word may be linked to the prophets in their immediate narrative context (cf. K. Snodgrass, “Matthew’s Understanding of the Law,” *Int* 46 (1992): 370).

<sup>252</sup> A parallel statement was ascribed to Hillel: “Do not do to your neighbor what is hateful to you. This is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary.” *b. Sabb. 31a*.

<sup>253</sup> Commenting on Matt 7:12, and comparing it to the summary Jesus offers in 23:34-40, France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 282, points out that his summary is unique in that, “It is a principle so all-embracing that he can declare not so much that it is the greatest commandment but that it actually “is” the law and the prophets.”

confirms Matthew's interest in presenting an interpretation of the commandments through the principles of love and mercy (e.g. Matt 12:7; 22:36-40; 23:23).

Jesus often exposes the inconsistency of the Pharisees' application of the law and their lack of mercy, justice and respect for other human beings. He boldly charges the Pharisees with hypocrisy, not doing what they say should be done. On one occasion, speaking to the crowds and to his own disciples, he starts a whole discourse on this topic by saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the chair of Moses; therefore all that they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds; for they say things and do not do them..." (23:2, 3).<sup>254</sup> In this section, Jesus mentions both Moses and the law (23:2, 23) in an orthodoxy versus orthopraxy dissonance: even though the Pharisees and scribes have seated themselves in the chair of Moses (23:2), they have neglected the weightier provisions of the law (νόμος, 23:23).

Jesus exhorts the crowds to do what the Pharisees tell them, but not what they themselves do. Following these charges, he adds: "They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger" (Matt 23:4). The Pharisees' interpretation of the law of Moses is identified and qualified by Jesus as a "heavy burden." This sentence stands in contrast to Jesus' own words: "... my burden is light" (11:30). As discussed in the earlier chapter on Jesus' offer of rest, these are the only two times that the word φορτίον is used in Matthew. Jesus

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<sup>254</sup> M. Powell, "Do and Keep What Moses Says (Matthew 23:27)," *JBL* 114 (1995): 431, proposes that Jesus' statement is not just about the Pharisees teaching and interpreting the law, but also about them controlling accessibility to the law, and therefore becoming sole mediators of it: "When Jesus says that the scribes and Pharisees sit on the seat of Moses, he might not be referring to their role as teachers at all, but to their social position as people who control accessibility to Torah. They are the ones who possess copies of the Torah and are able to read them. They are the ones who know and are able to tell others what Moses said... Those who (metaphorically) sit on Moses' seat could be those who continue to bring Moses' words to the present generation."



presents his offer to all those who are burdened (πεφορτισμένοι; 11:28). This is the only time a cognate of φορτίον is used in this Gospel, and it is used in connection with Jesus' offer of ἀνάπαυσις (ἀναπαύσω; Matt 11:28, 30). In Matt 23, Jesus proceeds to expose the scribes and Pharisees through "eight woes" (Matt 23:13-33), in which he charges them with shutting off the kingdom of heaven from people (v. 13), being hypocrites (vv. 14-15, 23, 25), being blind guides (v. 16), with neglecting the weightier provisions of the law: justice, mercy and faithfulness (v. 23), and for their outward appearance of righteousness and piety, while on the inside they are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness (vv. 25-29). The last occurrence of νόμος in Matthew is found in this context: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others." (Matt 23:23). Here, as in 5:17, 18, Jesus does not abolish but ratifies the law ("without neglecting the others"), expanding its interpretation to include the "more important" provisions of the law: justice, mercy and faith (23:23).

Jesus also accused the Pharisees and scribes of transgressing the commandment by not honoring their father and mother, thereby assuming a principle surely to be understood as love and mercy. This instance is found in a question he directed to some Pharisees and scribes (Matt 15:3). Responding to their question and charge that the disciples are breaking the tradition of the elders (v. 2), Jesus counters with another question. In this challenge, Jesus accuses them of transgressing the commandment; it is the only explicit accusation in this Gospel by Jesus that the Pharisees and scribes are transgressors of the commandment of God. In other instances Jesus explicitly denounces their lack of mercy in their interpretation of the law/commandment (12:7; 23:23). On this occasion, the charge includes

the reproach that the Pharisees and scribes are giving priority to the traditions of the elders by placing them above the commandment of God (19:17).<sup>255</sup>

#### Law-interpreting principles and the Sabbath

We have now highlighted the two general principles of law interpretation proposed by the Matthean Jesus: 1. A Christological hermeneutical principle that demands that all the law and the prophets now be understood in the light of their maximum revelation and fulfillment: the identity and mission of Jesus; and 2. The principle resulting from the Christological approach, which assumes a hermeneutic of love and mercy. How then do these hermeneutical principles relate to and inform our understanding of the sabbath and rest material investigated in this dissertation?

Of the eleven occurrences of the word σάββατον in the Gospel of Matthew, eight are found in 12:1-14; one in 24:20 and two in 28:1. Therefore, the Matthean discussion of the sabbath rest is concentrated within this two-fold pericope (12:1-14). In addition, there are four occurrences of the word ἀνάπαυσις and its cognate terms (11:28, 29; 12:43; 26:45), but only two occurrences relate to Jesus and his offer of rest. As mentioned earlier, these two instances are unique to Matthew (11:28, 29) and are placed immediately preceding the sabbath pericope (12:1-14). Due to this narrative juxtaposition (Jesus, the giver of rest [11:28-30], and Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath [12:1-8]), the theological themes of rest, sabbath and law converge in Matt 11:25-12:14. The only explicit mention of the word

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<sup>255</sup> J. Bailey, "Vowing away the fifth commandment: Matthew 15:3-6//Mark 7:9-13," *ResQ* 42 (2000): 200, proposes that there is more than one commandment in view in Jesus' accusation: "The key sentence occurs in Matt 15:5 and Mark 7:11-12. It describes a practice by which a son could make a vow prohibiting his parents from receiving any benefit from him, thus exempting him from honoring them with material support. This violated not only the commandment to honor one's parents (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16) but also the commandment not to speak evil of one's parents (Exod 21:17; Lev 20:9)." Both of these applications would surely be considered a violation of the principles of love and mercy.

νόμος in conjunction with the interpretation of sabbath laws is found in Matt. 12:5; therefore it is the most relevant occurrence for our discussion.

Another word that relates to the interpretation of the law in Matthew, and is part of the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees recorded in 12:1-14, is the word “permissible” or “lawful.” The word ἔξεστι (and its cognates) is found nine times in Matthew: 12:2, 4, 10, 12; 14:4; 19:3; 20:15; 22:17 and 27:6. The first four occurrences are found in the two-fold sabbath pericope of 12:1-14 (12:2, 4, 10, 12).<sup>256</sup> This is the only section in Matthew (12:1-14) that explores what is permissible to do on the sabbath, and it is the only pericope in Matthew that discusses the word more than once.<sup>257</sup>

Following the first argument,<sup>258</sup> Jesus addresses the sabbath laws and appeals to the law (νόμος; 12:5). As analyzed previously, this second argument is found only in Matthew (12:5-6).<sup>259</sup> In Matthew, this is the only pericope (12:1-14) where σάββατον and νόμος converge. The fact that Jesus appeals to the law in his response to the Pharisees

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<sup>256</sup> The remaining five occurrences of the word ἔξεστι in this Gospel, relate to the marriage relationship and the use of money (14:4; 19:3; 20:15; 22:17; 27:6).

<sup>257</sup> Of the four occurrences, three of them explicitly address what is permissible to do on the sabbath day (12:2, 10, 12). In 12:1-14, Matthew’s narrative concentrates on the discussion of what is “permissible” to do on the sabbath, and not on the sabbath law itself (one occurrence of νόμος and four occurrences of ἔξεστι). In 12:1-14, the law is mentioned with reference to lawful priestly behavior on the sabbath. But what is permissible to do on the sabbath is discussed four separate times in this section: twice the discussion of what is allowed on the sabbath is initiated by the Pharisees (12:2, 10) and twice Jesus responds (12:4, 12). In his first response, Jesus discusses what was not permissible (eating the bread of the presence), and yet it was done by David (12:4), and in his second response, he answers affirmatively, stating that it is permissible to do good on the sabbath (12:12).

<sup>258</sup> The first inquiry is brought up by the Pharisees in the form of a charge, when they saw the disciples picking the heads of grain and eating them on the sabbath (cf. 12:1,2). Jesus’ answer about what is proper (ἔξεστι) to do on the sabbath does not relate to sabbath laws but to David and the bread of the presence (12:4). The Pharisees come to Jesus with a halakhic concern (12:2), yet he answers with a haggadic example (cf. 12:3-4). The first response of Jesus seems to imply that the emphasis of the Pharisees’ challenge was related to “lawfulness” or interpretation of the law, not to the law itself. Nevertheless, Matthew adds a second argument of Jesus, halakhic in nature, that appeals to the law. (Cf. J. Hicks, “The Sabbath controversy in Matthew: An Exegesis of Matthew 12:1-14,” *ResQ* 27 (1984): 85).

<sup>259</sup> In this instance, Jesus asks the Pharisees if they have not read in the law that on the sabbaths the priests in the temple desecrate the sabbath and are innocent.

demonstrates that he considers the law valid.<sup>260</sup> But now the law must be interpreted in light of the greater revelation available in Jesus. The law had a prophetic role (cf. Matt 11:13), that was pointing to the future manifestation of a fuller understanding, only available through the coming eschatological agent, whose mission was greater than the temple (12:6). Jesus' supplemental statement "but I say to you that something greater than the temple is here" (v. 6) evidences that, even though the law is a legitimate authoritative witness, it must be re-interpreted in light of the greater reality of Jesus' identity and mission (in this case "greater than the temple," v. 6). This "new dimension"<sup>261</sup> is not just another rabbinical interpretation, but the revelation of the eschatological agent of the father (cf. 11:25-27), who proposes a Christological understanding of the sabbath.<sup>262</sup> There is no doubt that, "He transcends the usual understanding of the sabbath commandment."<sup>263</sup> This Christological new dimension is then explicitly stated by the Matthean Jesus when he declares himself: "the Lord of the sabbath" (12:8).

The Christological focus in turn results in the love and mercy hermeneutics when interpreting the law (e.g. 12:7).<sup>264</sup> The second Matthean hermeneutical principle of love

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<sup>260</sup> This is not simply a question about the validity of the Halakah. Cf. Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 178, who rightly points out that, "We do not need, however, to suppose that Jesus is here dealing with a rabbinic halakhic casuistry, since Jesus clearly indicates that he is appealing to the Old Testament itself (...v.5)."

<sup>261</sup> The term "new dimension" as explained by Hagner, is an appropriate description for Jesus' teaching regarding the law: "The Gospel of Matthew provides exceptionally fruitful ground for exploring this matter [balancing the old and the new] since the question of how the gospel relates to the scriptures of the Old Covenant was far from theoretical for its Jewish Christian reader. Indeed, one main reason the evangelist wrote was to demonstrate the continuity of the new with the old... And yet, as Matthew knows well, this fulfillment contains within it undeniably new dimensions." Hagner, "The Law of Moses," 21.

<sup>262</sup> Jesus' interpretation of the sabbath through his proposed Christological focus, supersedes all other secondary arguments. *Contra* Martin, who suggests that the main reason why the disciples are permitted to eat ears of grain on the Sabbath is because David, when hungry, ate the bread of the presence on the Sabbath (12:3-4). B. Martin, "Matthew on Christ and the law," *TS* 44 (1983):59.

<sup>263</sup> Cf. Hagner, "The Law of Moses," 22.

<sup>264</sup> Snodgrass, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," 369, proposes that, "the proper understanding of the law is attained through a 'prophetic' reading of it that sees love and mercy as its real focus." This proposal is further exemplified by Jesus' statement in Matt 12:7. While in agreement with Snodgrass, I propose that the

and mercy is also mentioned by the Matthean Jesus regarding the Pharisees' inquiry (12:7; ἔλεος). The only two times that Jesus appeals to the law regarding specific behaviors, (12:1-8; 23:23-24), he points out that mercy is being neglected in the interpretation of the law. ἔλεος is mentioned one other time in Matthew (9:13), in the context of Hosea 6:6, as is the case with the occurrence of the word in 12:7.<sup>265</sup> All three times that the word "mercy" is used in Matthew, it is uttered by Jesus (cf. 9:13; 12:7; 23:23), who, as we have previously observed, teaches that "mercy" is a principle through which to interpret the law.<sup>266</sup> The law finds its validity when interpreted through mercy and love (cf. 12:7; 22:37-40; 23:23).<sup>267</sup> In this gospel the verb "to be merciful" (ἐλεέω) is narratively linked with the Christological title "Son of David"; a fact that will be evaluated further in the Christological section of this chapter.

After pointing to the lack of mercy in the Pharisees' interpretation of the law, the Matthean Jesus returns to the Christological principle alluded to in 12:6, this time explicitly pronouncing his lordship of the sabbath, and thereby announcing the new dimension of understanding of this commandment in light of himself: "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" (12:8).

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Matthean Jesus expands and develops the meaning of the sabbath and other commandments to be understood in light of his mission, not only in light of the principles of love and mercy.

<sup>265</sup> Cf. Snodgrass, "Matthew's understanding of the Law," 371.

<sup>266</sup> *Contra* M. Edin, "Learning What Righteousness Means: Hosea 6:6 and the Ethic of Mercy in Matthew's Gospel," *WW* 18 (1998): 357, who argues that in Matt 12:6, "Mercy is the 'something greater' to which Jesus refers, the 'something greater' which is here in Jesus' teaching and actions... The neuter form of the comparative μέγας makes it likely that what is greater is mercy (τό ἔλεος)." While mercy is a new interpretive principle offered by Jesus, the comparative μέγας cannot be limited to this aspect of Jesus' teachings, especially in the light of the "greater than" pattern depicted in Matt 12 (vv. 6, 41, 42) regarding the scope of Jesus' mission, and his pronouncement regarding the "Son of Man" in the same pericope (Matt 12:1-8).

<sup>267</sup> In agreement with Snodgrass, "Matthew's understanding of the Law," 371, who proposes that, "Most of all, however, the integrating center of the law is found in love and mercy. In Matthew, Jesus provides as scriptural hermeneutic for reading the law."

The second inquiry by the Pharisees (“they” 12:10; cf. 12:14) occurs at the synagogue, in the form of a question (not a charge as in 12:2): “Is it lawful (ἐξεστί) to heal on the Sabbath?” (12:10).<sup>268</sup> This time, Jesus answers with an interpretive principle of what is permissible to do on the sabbath, that encompasses, but is greater than, the specific subject of the inquiry: “...it is lawful (ἐξεστί) to do good on the sabbath” (12:12). The specific question of the Pharisees (12:10) is answered by a general principle (12:12). In doing so, Jesus is emphasizing the overall fulfillment of the law, and not the rabbinic halakha, and therefore turns their specific question into a general principle for doing good on the Sabbath.<sup>269</sup> This principle of the Matthean Jesus, that the sabbath must be interpreted through “love and mercy,” is then exemplified in the miracle of healing that follows: “Then He said to the man, ‘Stretch out your hand!’ He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other” (12:13). In response to this act of kindness, “the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him” (12:14). The conclusion of the two-fold sabbath pericope (12:1-14) is that the Pharisees “took counsel” to kill Jesus, initiating a response pattern by the Pharisees that will continue until the end of the Gospel.<sup>270</sup>

<sup>268</sup> Matthew’s account adds the verb ἐξεστί (cf. 12:10; Mark 3:2; Luke 6:7), creating explicit narrative link with the previous pericope (12:1-8; 12:2, 4). The disclosed motive of the Pharisees when questioning Jesus is “that they might accuse Him” (12:10). Cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 317, argue that in addition to the narrative link between both pericopes, “it also makes the Pharisees speak in the legal terminology of the rabbis... and increases the verbal correlation between question and answer.”

<sup>269</sup> In agreement with Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 334, who proposes that Jesus’ disagreement with the Pharisees is centered on their interpretation of the sabbath laws and not the sabbath law itself: “Again Jesus challenges not the sabbath law itself but the interpretation of that law. And again the criterion of love becomes determinative.” Cf. also Martin, “Matthew on Christ and the law,” 59.

<sup>270</sup> Of the five times συμβούλιον is used in Matthew (cf. 12:14; 22:15; 27:1; 27:7; 28:12), four refer to the Jewish leaders plotting against Jesus (12:14; 22:15; 27:1; 28:12). Commenting on this pattern, Keener, *Matthew*, 523, points out that the repetition of συμβούλιον (cf. 22:15; 12:14) depicts the Jewish leaders, now with the Herodians, engaged in a conspiracy against Jesus: “**Matthew presents the opposition as conniving.** When Matthew announces that the Pharisees ‘took counsel’ to trap Jesus (22:15), the reader may recall the last time the Pharisees ‘took counsel,’ when they were plotting his death (12:14).”

Therefore, we observe that in Matt 12:1-14, Jesus appeals to the law (12:5) and validates it. Furthermore, the Matthean Jesus in this pericope acts in accordance with the two general principles of law interpretation in this Gospel: 1) Christological hermeneutics: the law, from this point forward, must be interpreted in light of who Jesus is, his identity and mission, that fulfills and surpasses all previous revelation and that is greater than the temple (12:6) and makes him Lord of the Sabbath (12:8); and 2) love and mercy hermeneutics, reminding his opponents that if they would have understood the Scriptures, and the mercy desired by God, they would not have condemned the disciples (12:7).

In brief, we conclude that in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus asserts and validates the law, Moses and the commandments (5:17-19; 7:12, 11:13; 12:5; 15:3; 19:17; 22:38, 40; 23:23). There are two general principles of interpretation of the law introduced by the Matthean Jesus. First, the Mosaic law, including the sabbath commandment, from now on, must be interpreted through the new Christological dimension. Jesus came to fulfill the law and the prophets (Matt 5:17, 18) and, therefore, his approach to the law in Matthew is developmental: not just validating it, but unraveling and unfolding the full meaning of the law in light of his own identity and mission.<sup>271</sup> The Matthean Jesus claims a unique prerogative to mediate a fuller revelation of the Father (cf. Matt 11:25-27).

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<sup>271</sup> *Contra* Park, "A soteriological reading of the great commandment," 76, who makes the following soteriological conclusion regarding Matthew's perspective on the relationship between the Torah and Jesus: "In contrast, Matthew's soteriology is based on the Torah and its condition is not believing but doing. In other words, Matthean soteriology appears to go contrary to the great Reformation doctrine of salvation sola fide." Matthew's proposal is exactly the opposite: Jesus is the only one who can fully explain and fulfill the Torah in light of this unique prerogative as the eschatological agent and only mediator of the Father (e.g. Matt 5:17-19; 11:25-27, 28-30; 22:36-40). The ultimate meaning of the sabbath rest is found only in him (Matt 11:28-30; 12:8), because he is the fulfillment of the law (Matt 5:17-19). Cf. Footnotes 246-248 and previous discussion on δικαιοσύνη.

The second principle is that the law is to be interpreted through the hermeneutics of love and mercy (Matt 22:36-40), because of its new Christological dimension. In Matthew, Jesus often speaks of the law and the commandments, in light of these two hermeneutical principles.

Jesus applies both of these principles to the two-fold sabbath pericope (Matt 12:1-14), challenging the Pharisees with the new Christological dimension of the sabbath (12:6, 8) and with God's desire for mercy (12:7) in the application of the sabbath commandment.

On the other hand, the Pharisees and the scribes generally inquire about what is lawful/permissible to do (cf. 12:2, 10; 19:3; 22:17; cf. 27:6, where the chief priests state what is not lawful to do with the blood money). In their discussions with Jesus about what is permissible, their motives are generally exposed as accusing (12:10), testing (19:3) and desiring to trap him (22:17). Furthermore, Jesus exposes the Pharisees and scribes as lacking mercy in their interpretation of the law and what is lawful to do (12:2,7; 23:23), of assuming the chair of Moses but not doing themselves what they tell others to do (23:2) and of transgressing the commandment of God in order to uphold their own traditions (15:3).

The only section in this Gospel where sabbath and rest are discussed in conjunction with what is lawful to do on the sabbath day is found in 12:1-14; Matthew is consistent here with his general principles of interpretation of the law. The overall and ongoing disagreement between Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes is not about the validity of the law, but about their interpretation and application of the law and the behaviors resulting therefrom. The sabbath commandment remains valid. It is in regard to its application and understanding that Jesus provides a distinctive perspective.



Matthew provides a validating, conciliatory, and developmental approach found in the teachings of Jesus regarding the Torah. Matthew's readers are invited into a new dimension of the redemption history witnessed by the law and the prophets, the scope of which spans from the beginning to the end of human history (Matt 5:17, 18). Therefore, they are not to nullify and abrogate the commandments, which, from now on, must be understood in a new Christological light. The principles of interpreting the law upheld by Jesus in light of his own identity and mission are mercy (12:7; 23:23) and love (22:37-40; 19:19). Jesus is the awaited eschatological agent who brings a new dimension of revelation, of which the prophets and the law "prophesied" (cf. 11:13).<sup>272</sup> He is the only one who reveals the Father (11:25-27), who offers rest (11:28-30) and discloses the ultimate meaning of the sabbath in view of his authority (12:8).<sup>273</sup> He upholds the law and imparts the true meaning to the law and the prophets (Matt 5:17, 18; 22:40). Moreover, he exposes the Jewish leaders who are usurpers of the chair of Moses (cf. 23:2-3), who are constantly plotting against Jesus (cf. 12:14; 22:15; 27:1; 28:12), and have claimed a position that solely belongs to the Son (cf. 11:27).

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<sup>272</sup> Donaldson proposes a balanced view in which the Torah and Jesus as fulfillment of the Torah coexist and inform each other, creating a community framework: "In the Gospel of Matthew a similar strategy of dissonance reduction provides a way for the evangelist to affirm two more basic convictions brought into conflict by the course of events, namely, (1) an ecclesiology in which the Torah is the material center of the people of God and recognized interpreters of Torah are the formal center, and (2) a christology in which Jesus is believed to be the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. By emphasizing the links that bound Jesus and his followers with the Torah community of the past, and by attempting to sever the Pharisees and their followers from the line of tradition in the present, Matthew strove to construct for his community a habitable world, one that would hang not by a hair but by the sturdier cords of God's promise and fulfillment." Donaldson, "The Law That Hangs," 709.

<sup>273</sup> Commenting on 12:8, Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* 2, 233, points out that there is no antithesis between love and Torah as taught by Jesus, as love is the center of the law without abolishing it: "Schon in der ersten und sechsten Antithese hatte Jesus durch sein souveränes 'Ich aber sage euch' die Liebe als Mitte des Willens Gottes der Mosestora gegenübergestellt, ohne diese aufzuheben." This is a point that the Matthean Jesus makes throughout the Gospel (e.g. 19:19; 22:37-40).

## **Eschatology, Rest and Sabbath in Matthew**

Throughout his Gospel, Matthew is consistent in proclaiming that with Jesus the eschatological era has been inaugurated, a new epoch prophesied by the law and the prophets until John (Matt 11:13). Matthew demonstrates that the Messianic age has been ushered in by quoting prophecies that he proposes are being fulfilled through Jesus' identity and mission (cf. 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35; 21:4; 26:54,56; 27:9). The Matthean Jesus, as the promised eschatological agent, comes to fulfill the law and the prophets (Matt 5:17), and Matthew announces this reality through several images of eschatological salvation prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures, now manifested and fulfilled through Jesus. In Matthew's Christological view of eschatology, the realities reserved for the end of the age are now available through Jesus in the present age. In the next section we propose four answers to the following question: what are the prominent images of eschatological salvation portrayed throughout this Gospel that converge in Matthew 11:25-12:14?

### Revelation and Recognition

The Jewish eschatological expectation of a greater knowledge of God was a promise made to Israel (cf. Jer 31:34; Dan 12:9; Hab 2:14). Isaiah had prophesied that God would reveal (ἀποκαλύπτω) his salvation and righteousness (cf. Isa 56:1); the arm of the Lord would be revealed through the suffering Servant (cf. Isa 53:1). And Daniel proclaimed that God was the one who revealed hidden things, including the mysteries of the future (cf. Dan 2: 18, 19, 22, 29).

Matthew affirms that the time of revelation has come. The verb ἀποκαλύπτω occurs four times in Matthew (10:26; 11:25, 27; 16:17), always from the mouth of the Matthean Jesus.<sup>274</sup> The first instance is Matt 10:26, and it is part of the instructions given by Jesus to his disciples: “Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed (ἀποκαλυφθήσεται), or hidden that will not be known” (Matt 10:26). The reason why they should not fear is that in the eschatological future, all things will be revealed. In this teaching, Jesus utilizes ἀποκαλύπτω as a parallel term to γινώσκω (Matt 10:26); cognates of both of these terms are found in Matt 11:27. In addition, the opposite term to ἀποκαλύπτω and γινώσκω used in 10:26 is κρυπτόν, also used by Jesus in his praise to the Father, because he has hidden (κρύπτω) these things from the wise and intelligent and has revealed them (ἀποκαλύπτω) to infants (11:25). In 10:26 Jesus is envisioning a future revelation and knowledge of things that are now concealed and hidden.<sup>275</sup> The subsequent three occurrences of the word ἀποκαλύπτω in Matthew (11:25, 27; 16:17) are used with the force of eschatological knowledge being revealed through the identity and mission of Jesus, and this force must be taken into consideration in Matt 10:26.

The next two instances of ἀποκαλύπτω are found in Matt 11:25, 27.<sup>276</sup> Following the denouncing of the Galilean cities that had rejected his ministry (Matt 11:20-24), Jesus

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<sup>274</sup> The noun ἀποκάλυψις does not appear in this Gospel.

<sup>275</sup> Cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 203: “Jesus now backs off from the frightening scenes he has just painted and directs the mind’s eye towards the grand eschatological future. He thereby puts everything in perspective and gives the true interpretation of the disciples’ predicament... on the last day God will see to it that the truth will be victorious (cf. the targum on Eccles 12.14). The eschatological judgment will be public and all lies exposed (cf. 2 Esdras 16.64-6). Therefore those on the side of truth need have no fear.” Also, cf. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 100, who proposes that the narrative context favors that the revelation refers to the final disclosure in the last judgment instead of the revelation of the success of their cause in the course of time: “...the Matthean context is full of references to the last judgment (10:15, 23, 28-31, 32-33, 39, 41-42) so that from that perspective this interpretation [eschatological] makes sense for the readers.” But the primary force of the Matthean use of ἀποκαλύπτω in Matthew refers to the identity and mission of Jesus (cf. 11:26, 27; 16:17), and this force must be considered.

<sup>276</sup> Cf. Chapter 3.

praises the Father for he has hidden “these things” from the wise and has revealed them (ἀποκαλύπτω) to infants (11:25). He goes on to explain that he is the exclusive agent who possesses full knowledge of the Father and that he is the only one who can fully reveal the Father: “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal (ἀποκαλύψαι) Him” (Matt 11:27). The understanding that the end-times secrets have been revealed in the person of Jesus, and that in him the eschatological hopes of a full knowledge of God are being realized (Jer 31:34; Dan 12:9), is consistent with Matthew’s Christological eschatology of present fulfillment: the promises and hopes of the end-times have started in the present, revealed through the mission and identity of Jesus. This passage (11:25-27) makes it clear that the apocalyptic knowledge of God, promised for the end of the ages, is now a present reality through the person of Jesus who, through his knowledge and mission,<sup>277</sup> mediates and reveals the eschatological mysteries to the infants/simple.<sup>278</sup> This Christological interpretation of eschatology for the present is a Matthean pattern that is also manifested through the other images of eschatological salvation that will be discussed in this chapter.

The last instance of ἀποκαλύπτω in this gospel is found in 16:17. This is a pronouncement of the Matthean Jesus regarding Peter’s understanding of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. The dialogue about the identity of the eschatological

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<sup>277</sup> As argued by F. Shaw, *Discernment of revelation in the Gospel of Matthew* (New York, N.Y.: Peter Lang, 2007), 222, who affirms that, “For Matthew, it is because Jesus has received full revelation from the Father, and because he has personal and reciprocal knowledge of the Father, that he is able to reveal the Father. Thus a godly life of obedience consistent with Torah is still needed, but the focus is different now that the eschatological Kingdom has broken in.”

<sup>278</sup> In agreement with Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 277, who propose that, “in our verse the eschatological revelation is not about the time of the consummation or, in fact, about any other future event. Instead, as 11.27 makes plain, the revelation is about the present: eschatological *gnosis* can even now be found in Jesus, who in his person and ministry has unveiled the end-time secrets (cf. 13.16-17). In brief, Mt 11.25-7 announces the realization of an eschatological hope.”

Jewish figure of Daniel 7:13 is initiated by Jesus: "...He was asking His disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?'" (Matt 16:13).<sup>279</sup> The first response of the disciples presents a list of notable figures who proclaimed eschatological hopes.<sup>280</sup> After the first response, Jesus poses the second question directed to the disciples: "But who do you say that I am?" (Matt 16:15). Peter answered: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (16:16). At this point Matthew inserts vv. 17-19 into the Markan account (cf. Mark 8:29-30): "And Jesus said to him, 'Blessed'<sup>281</sup> are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal (ἀπεκάλυψέν) this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." (Matt 16:17).<sup>282</sup> The revelation that Peter receives from the Father is about the identity of Jesus. There are similarities between this verse (16:17) and the previous two instances (11:25, 27) of the word ἀποκαλύπτω. Jesus speaks of "My Father" in both instances (cf. Matt 11:27; 16:17). The Father is Lord of heaven (11:25) and is in heaven (16:17). In Matt 11:27 the Son mediates and reveals the knowledge of the Father. In Matt 16:16, 17, the Father reveals the Son to Peter (cf. Son of the living God, v. 16), who becomes as one of the "infants" (cf.

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<sup>279</sup> The self-designation of Jesus with the title "Son of Man" will be analyzed in the following section (Christology) of this chapter. For recent studies on Matthew's use of Daniel 7:13-14, cf. H.D. Zacharias, "Old Greek Daniel 7:13-14 and Matthew's Son of Man," *BBR* 21 (2011): 453-465; M. Shepherd, "Daniel 7:13 and the New Testament Son of Man," *WTJ* 68 (2006): 99-111.

<sup>280</sup> 1) John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, who in Matthew appears proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt 16:14; cf. Matt 3:2), using the words of the prophet Isaiah (Matt 3:3; cf. Isa 40:3). 2) Elijah, who was prophesied to appear as an eschatological figure (Matt 16:14; cf. Mal 4:5-6), and was the theme of discussion between Jesus and his disciples as a prophecy fulfilled in John the Baptist (cf. Matt 17:10-13); and 3) Jeremiah, a prophet who proclaimed the eschatological hope of a new covenant (Matt 16:14; cf. Jer 31:31-34), at a time when the knowledge of the Lord would increase (cf. Jer 31:34). This last character is present only in Matthew, inserted between Elijah and the "other prophets" from the Markan and Lukan version (cf. Mark 8:28; Luke 9:19).

<sup>281</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 619, comments on the "beatitude" followed by a "because" clause (cf. 5:3-10) in this occasion (16:17): "... Jesus congratulates Peter on his exceptional insight, not in the sense that Peter has himself puzzled out the truth but that, like all knowledge about God and his Son (11:27), it has been revealed to him by God himself (cf. 11:25)."

<sup>282</sup> For a similar statement about revelation from God and not "flesh and blood," cf. Gal 1:16.

11:25). This reciprocal revelation of the Son and the Father is consistent with their mutual and exclusive knowledge of each other (11:27).<sup>283</sup>

Every time the verb ἀποκαλύπτω occurs in Matthew it relates to the mission and identity of Jesus; even the motives of those who reject the ones who teach about him and his mission will be revealed (10:26). The main force of ἀποκαλύπτω in this Gospel relates to the Father's revelation of Jesus and his mission (11:25; 16:17) and Jesus' revelation of the Father (11:27). Jesus is not only the eschatological agent who mediates the revelation from the Father, but his own identity and mission constitute eschatological revelation imparted by the Father.<sup>284</sup> The promised eschatological revelation of the arm of the Lord (ἀποκαλύπτω; Isa 53:1, LXX) through his suffering Servant, and the Lord's promise to reveal (ἀποκαλύπτω) his mercy (ἐλεός) when his salvation drew near (Isa 56:1, LXX), are now a reality in the present, through Jesus' mediation of revelation of the knowledge of the Father (Matt 11:25, 27). In Matthew, ἀποκαλύπτω is used in the context of an eschatological revelation of God, now a reality in the presence and mission of Jesus.

A related concept provided by Matthew is found in his use of the verb ἐπιγινώσκω with the primary force of recognizing Jesus as the eschatological agent of God. The verb ἐπιγινώσκω occurs six times in this Gospel (cf. 7:16, 20; 11:27 [twice]; 14:35; 17:12), four

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<sup>283</sup> In agreement with Nolland, *Matthew*, 666: " 'Revealed', 'Father', and 'Son' from Mt. 16:16 [7] cluster to provide an echo of 11:25-27, where the failure of the wise and understanding to receive the revelation functions in somewhat the same way as the failure of 'flesh and blood' to reveal does here... Where in 11:27 the emphasis was on the Son revealing the Father, here the emphasis is on the Father revealing the Son. But in 11:25 the larger picture is of the revealing activity of the Father, and what has been revealed about Jesus in 16:16 is that his presence and activity intimately reveal the presence and activity of the Father..."

<sup>284</sup> In agreement with Shaw, *Discernment of revelation in the Gospel of Matthew*, 240, who argues that, "Those who come to Jesus form a group whose members consist of those who have received and accepted Jesus' claim, not only to reveal God, but himself to be eschatological revelation."

of which relate to recognizing Jesus and his relationship with God (11:27 [twice]; 14:35; 17:12).<sup>285</sup>

The two occurrences of ἐπιγινώσκω found in Matt 11:27 are discussed in detail in a previous chapter.<sup>286</sup> The mutual level of recognition is exclusive between the Father and the Son.<sup>287</sup> No one else possesses this knowledge other than those to whom the Son wishes to reveal (ἀποκαλύπτω) this knowledge (v. 27). The content of the revelation is the exclusive recognition of the Father possessed only by the Son, and the exclusive recognition of the Son, possessed only by the Father. Matthew differs from the Lukan version in that the verb γινώσκω (Luke 10:22) is changed to ἐπιγινώσκω (Matt 11:27). This is a modification that is also present in Matt 7:16 (cf. Luke 6:44), and is added in Matt 17:12 (cf. Mark 9:13).

Matthew does not use these two verbs (ἐπιγινώσκω and γινώσκω) interchangeably;<sup>288</sup> there is a deliberate pattern in his use of ἐπιγινώσκω with the force of “to recognize or identify,” even when Matthew must go to the extent of modifying Q or Markan sources (cf. Matt 7:16; 11:27; 17:12).<sup>289</sup> The verb used twice in Matt 11:27 is representative of a mutual

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<sup>285</sup> The first two instances of ἐπιγινώσκω are found in Matt 7:16, 20 and relate to Jesus’ warning against false prophets and how to identify them. The exact sentence is repeated in both verses: ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν ἐπιγινώσσετε αὐτούς. The second occurrence serves as a summary of the teaching of Jesus about the way to identify false prophets.

<sup>286</sup> Cf. Chapter 3.

<sup>287</sup> The Son of Man has the authority to interpret Scripture because of his exclusive knowledge of God: “Aus seinem Wissen um Gott heraus legt er nach Matthäus in der Vollmacht des Menschensohns die Schrift aus, einer Vollmacht, in der er sich auch als Herr über den Sabbath erweist.” Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 322.

<sup>288</sup> Matthew uses the verb γινώσκω twenty times, and with various forces: knowing sexually (1:25); knowledge of thoughts and actions (6:3; 9:30; 10:26; 12:15; 16:8; 21:45; 22:18; 26:10); knowing the meaning of Scripture (12:7); general knowledge (12:33, 16:3; 24:32; 25:24), knowing a person (7:23) and knowing the signs of the end (24:33, 39, 43, 50) and the mysteries of heaven (13:11). Nevertheless, Matthew does not utilize the verb γινώσκω when describing the recognition of Jesus’ identity and mission.

<sup>289</sup> The verb ἐπιγινώσκω is used throughout Matthew with the exclusive force of “to recognize.” The father-son recognition is an exclusive knowledge of the Son by the Father and of the Father by the Son (11:27). Only the Son can reveal (ἀποκαλύπτω) the Father (11:27) and only the Father can reveal (ἀποκαλύπτω) the Son (16:17). Both of these verbs (ἐπιγινώσκω, ἀποκαλύπτω) are used with an eschatological force in Matthew. *Contra* Nolland, *Matthew*, 472, who proposes that, “the verbs are used interchangeably, so the translation preferred above is ‘knows’.”

recognition, not just knowledge of each other, and this recognition is exclusive between the Father and the Son.<sup>290</sup> Furthermore, this recognition is available to those who receive the revelation from the Father through the Son.

The next instance of ἐπιγινώσκω is found in Matt 14:35, 36; the immediate response of the crowd when they identified Jesus was to bring the sick to be healed and they were healed. Healing and restoration were activities associated with the eschatological Davidic king and will be briefly analyzed as images of eschatological salvation under the next sub-heading. When the people recognized Jesus, they immediately identified him as one who could fulfill their therapeutic eschatological expectations.

The last instance of ἐπιγινώσκω in this gospel is found in Matt 17:12, where Jesus responds that Elijah already came, "... and they did not recognize (ἐπέγνωσαν) him... So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.'" The verb ἐπιγινώσκω is a Matthean addition in this verse (cf. Mark 9:13), and its use in the negative explains why Elijah was rejected. Previously in this gospel, Jesus had announced that John was the expected Elijah (11:14). Now Jesus clearly states that when the eschatological Elijah came, they did not recognize who he was and that the reason why they treated him the way they did was that they did not understand his identity. Then Jesus adds a comparison to the Son of Man: "so also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands" (17:12); in other words, they will not recognize the Son of Man either. Jesus affirms a realized eschatology through the coming of the expected Elijah (cf. "already came;" 17:12), but he denounces the opposition with which

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<sup>290</sup> In her discussion of the verb ἐπιγινώσκω in Matt 11:27, Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom*, 36, agrees that, taking into consideration Matthew's use of the word, "...it may be concluded that in 11.27 it is not simply a question of *knowing* the Son and the Father, but of *recognizing* them... And thus Matthew's use of ἐπιγινώσκω must be seen as having theological significance as well as being a stylistic trait."



it was met. This affirmation is followed by a prophecy about the same fate for the Son of Man (17:12).<sup>291</sup>

Ἐπιγινώσκω is a verb utilized by Matthew primarily in the context of identifying Jesus as the eschatological agent who offers the promised knowledge of the Father whom he alone reveals: the recognition of the Son by the Father and of the Father by the Son (11:27), the recognition of Jesus by the crowd (14:35), and the failure to recognize the eschatological Elijah (17:12) (the failure of the recognition of the Son of Man is implied; cf. 17:12).

Throughout his Gospel, Matthew utilizes both ἀποκαλύπτω and ἐπιγινώσκω to proclaim that the eschatological era of revelation and knowledge of God has been ushered in through the person of Jesus. The use of these two verbs in Matt 11:25-30 offers a significant eschatological background<sup>292</sup> through which to interpret the following two-fold sabbath pericope (12:1-14).

### Healing and Restoration

Two other images of eschatological salvation promised by God to the people of Israel were restoration and healing; these are concepts associated with the promised eschatological rest: “I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest (ἀνάπαυσις),” declares the Lord GOD. “I will seek the lost, bring back the scattered, bind up the broken and strengthen the sick...” (Ezek 34:15, 16). The eschatological Davidic prince would bring about

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<sup>291</sup> In agreement with Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 400, who notes that, “the center of Jesus’ instruction is in v. 12b: The Son of Man Jesus must also go the same way of suffering that John the Baptist went.”

<sup>292</sup> In agreement with Shaw, *Discernment of Revelation*, 203, who proposes that discernment of revelation is a pervasive concern in this Gospel, and that the most significant episode of revelation is found in 11: 25-30, “where Jesus describes his personal relationship with God as the basis for his revelatory activity.” For the analysis of Matt 11:25-30 as a model of discernment, cf. Shaw, *Discernment of Revelation*, 203-241.

the promised healing and restoration (cf. Ezek 34:23, 24). Matthew often employs the verb *θεραπεύω* with messianic overtones (cf. Matt 4: 23, 24; 8:7, 16; 9:35; 10:8; 12: 10, 15, 22; 14:14; 15:30; 17:18; 19:2; 21:14). In Matt 11:3, when John, the forerunner of Jesus, had inquired of him: “Are you the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?” Jesus had responded by pointing to the miraculous healings and resurrections that he was performing, as proof that he was the eschatological agent that was to come (11:5; cf. Isa 35:5,6; 61:1). In Gennesaret, the people seem to recognize (*ἐπιγινώσκω*) Jesus as the expected eschatological healer (14:34-36). This type of eschatological therapeutic action is manifested in the healing miracle performed on the sabbath in the synagogue (12:9-14; cf. 11:5).<sup>293</sup> The Pharisees specifically ask if “to heal” (*θεραπεύω*) is permissible on the sabbath (Matt 12:10). Jesus eventually answers with an act of healing and restoration (v. 13). The miracle is reported in two words: *καὶ ἠπεκατεστάθη* (“... and it was restored,” v. 13), and a confirmation follows that the hand was restored to the point of being, “healthy as the other” (v. 13). This is a description only found in Matthew. Furthermore, Matthew uses the verb “to restore” only twice (Matt 12:13; 17:11). The second occurrence refers to the restoration preceded by the eschatological Elijah (17:11). The verb *ἀποκαθίστημι* is also used in the prophetic oracles to describe the restoration of Israel in the new covenant (e.g. Ezek 16:55; 17:24; LXX).

By performing a healing miracle that goes beyond the Pharisaic concession of “saving life” on the sabbath, Jesus is enacting the prophecy of the Davidic prince who was to come, who would strengthen the sick, bind up the broken and lead them to rest (cf. Ezek 34: 15,

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<sup>293</sup> Commenting on Matt 12:9-14, Hultgren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, 83-84, argues that, “the sabbath is understood here as an anticipation of life in the new age to come, which has drawn near, and therefore a shift of emphasis is made from the typological to the eschatological.”

16, 23, 24).<sup>294</sup> His offer of rest (Matt 11:28-30) is consistent with his healing activity<sup>295</sup> (Matt 12:9-14; cf. Ezek 34:15-16),<sup>296</sup> and it is not restricted to saving life, but it is expanded to “doing good” on the sabbath, a holy day that typified the coming age in light of Jesus’ identity and mission. Jesus argues about the interpretation of the sabbath laws through the new dimension of the messianic age, and acts according to his pronouncement by performing this non-emergency healing miracle on the sabbath day.

Matthew often utilizes the verb *θεραπεύω* in combination with the Christological title “Son of David” (cf. 9:27-31, 35; 12:22-24; 15:21-28, 30 ; 21:1-16), a title associated with the coming Christ (22:42). Jesus, the Davidic prince, had inaugurated the messianic age bringing healing and restoration, as is demonstrated by the Matthean Jesus in his one and only healing miracle on the sabbath in this Gospel (12:13).

### Rest and Sabbath

Rest (*ἀνάπαυσις*) was an eschatological promise that God made to the people of Israel, through the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 34: 14, 15, LXX), and is the most prominent image of eschatological salvation in the scope of this dissertation. God promised that he himself would give rest (*ἀναπαύσω*, Ezek 34:15, LXX) to his people, and that *ἀνάπαυσις* would become a reality through the eschatological Davidic prince (Ezek 34:23, 24, LXX). The same word, in the same person and tense, is used by the Matthean Jesus in his invitation to come to him: “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest

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<sup>294</sup> For the eschatological Shepherd’s mission in Ezekiel 34-37 (LXX) used by Matthew, cf. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd*, 297.

<sup>295</sup> Novakovic, *Messiah, the Healer of the Sick: A Study of Jesus as the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 190, argues that, “Matthew’s Gospel shows that the dominant feature of Jesus’ miracles, especially his miracles of healing, is their eschatological significance.” I agree that this proposal is strongly suggested by the Matthean use of the title “Son of David” in Jesus’ healing activity (e.g. Matt 9:27; 15:22; 20:30-31).

<sup>296</sup> For the Matthean use of *θεραπεύω* and restoration motifs, cf. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd*, 296-302.

(ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς).” (Matt 11:28). Rest as an image of eschatological salvation has been analyzed in detail in a previous chapter of this dissertation.<sup>297</sup> The eschatological age was prophesied as the upcoming God-given ἀνάπαυσις (cf. Isa 11:10; 65:9, 10) that would become a reality through the eschatological Davidic shepherd/ruler (cf. Ezek 34: 14, 15, 23, 24).<sup>298</sup> The eschatological future of Israel was promised by the Lord in the same manner: ἐγὼ ἀναπαύσω αὐτά (Ezek 34:15, LXX). The infants (11:25) to whom “these things” are revealed are the weary and heavy laden (11:28). And the rest (ἀνάπαυσις, Matt 11:28, 29) offered by Jesus is the new condition of those who have received Jesus’ revelation of the Father. The revelation of the Father is mediated through Jesus’ invitation and offer to accept his rest (11:28-30); and the anticipated eschatological rest is now available in the present, for the souls of his followers (11:29). With Jesus the eschatological age of rest has been inaugurated: the “rest” of the world to come at the consummation of the age, is now available individually through Jesus to all who will come to him.

In Matthew 11:25-12:14, following his offer of rest, Jesus challenges the Pharisees on their interpretation of what is lawful to do on the sabbath day (12:1-7), concluding with a pronouncement: “For the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath” (12:8). In the Jewish Scriptures, the sabbath rest was associated with creation (Gen 2:2, 3; Exod 20:8-11), redemption (Deut 5:12-15) and re-creation/consummation (Isa 66:22-23).<sup>299</sup> Rabbinic Judaism interpreted the messianic age as a great sabbath as well.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Cf. Chapter 3.

<sup>298</sup> Cf. Psalm 23:1 (LXX) where the same word is used by David as he envisions the rest that the Lord provides for his sheep: “waters of rest (ἀνάπαυσις).”

<sup>299</sup> The Book of Jubilees claimed that the sabbath related to the overall history of the world, and was honored in heaven as well as on earth. Cf. Jub. 2:18.

<sup>300</sup> “On Sabbath they used to say, a Psalm, a song for the Sabbath Day: a Psalm, a song for the time to come, for the day that will be all Sabbath and rest for everlasting life.” *Tamid* 7:4. For additional references to the sabbatical structure of time in the Old Testament and Jewish Literature, cf. A. Lincoln, “Sabbath, Rest, and

The eschatological background of ἀνάπαυσις and sabbath strengthens our proposal that the Matthean juxtaposition of the two terms in the narrative of 11:25-12:14 is deliberate and it emphasizes that Jesus has initiated the eschatological rest typified by the sabbath.<sup>301</sup> As is the case with the Matthean Christological hermeneutical principle of law interpretation, so the Matthean eschatological perspective is also fundamentally Christological, in that Jesus has inaugurated the messianic age, and therefore the eschatological benefits are now present through his identity and mission, available to those who come to him (Matt 11:28-30). Matthew argues that in Christ, the messianic age has “already” started, even though “not yet” consummated until the παρουσία (Matt 24:3, 27, 37, 39).<sup>302</sup> The new dimension of the sabbath commandment is that it ultimately points to Jesus’ rest, now experienced within the soul of the believer through Jesus’ presence (Matt 11:29), until the end of the age (Matt 28:20).<sup>303</sup> In other words, the Son of Man truly is the Lord of the sabbath (12:8), because he is the ultimate fulfillment of the law and of the Old Testament eschatological expectations.

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Eschatology in the New Testament,” in *From Sabbath to Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Investigation* (ed. D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1982), 198-200.

<sup>301</sup> In agreement with Shaw, *Discernment of revelation in the Gospel of Matthew*, 217, who proposes that “the future, eschatological age was understood to be a time of rest, and could also be thought of as a great sabbath. Given the eschatological fulfillment motif of chapter 11, as well as the debates about the sabbath immediately following in chapter 12, an interpretation of ‘rest’ as an eschatological sabbath seems likely. Again, it is only Jesus who is able to offer this kind of rest.”

<sup>302</sup> Cf. Lincoln, “Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology,” 214, who argues that, “The fact that the decisive turn of events has already occurred in Christ shows that the ‘already’ outweighs the ‘not yet.’”

<sup>303</sup> In agreement with Lincoln, “Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology,” 215, who summarizes this eschatological reality of the sabbath in Christ: “In short the physical rest of the Old Testament Sabbath has become the salvation rest of the true Sabbath that has already dawned. “ While I am in full agreement with Lincoln’s conclusion regarding the “transformation of meaning” of the sabbath rest, as well as other concepts that find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus’ identity and mission, I disagree with his assumption that the new dimension of meaning nullifies the physical rest of the sabbath commandment that pointed to this Christological reality (cf. 217). There is no indication in the Gospel of Matthew that the fulfillment of the law in Christ results in the abrogation of the sabbath commandment, which is again mentioned by Jesus in the eschatological discourse describing future events (cf. Matt 24:20). Cf. S. Maccarty, “The Seventh-Day Sabbath” in *Perspectives on the Sabbath: 4 Views* (ed. C. Donato. Nashville, Tenn.: B & H Academic, 2011), 23.

Mention of the Son of Man leads to discussion of a further aspect of eschatology in Matthew and that is the “coming” of the Son of Man.

### Παρουσία, Power and Authority

The term παρουσία is used four times in Matthew, all in the same chapter: 24:3, 27, 37, 39. At the beginning of chapter 24, the disciples ask Jesus a question about his coming (παρουσία) (24:3). The three times that Jesus uses παρουσία in his response (24:27, 37, 39) he does it in the sentence “the coming of the Son of Man,” (vv. 27, 37, 39).<sup>304</sup> Jesus talks about “these things” (24:3) that would come upon Jerusalem (e.g. the destruction of the temple (24:2), false prophets (24:4-6), war and tribulation (24:7-9)), before addressing his coming. The Sabbath is mentioned here, in the context of “these things”: “But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath” (Matt 24:20). Only Matthew mentions the sabbath here, in contrast to Mark’s version: “But pray that it may not happen in the winter” (Mark 13:18) and it is the only mention of the sabbath in the context of a future event by Matthew (Matt 24:20). The Matthean Jesus foresees additional restrictions in traveling during winter and sabbath.<sup>305</sup> In the light of the finding in the previous two chapters of this dissertation,<sup>306</sup> it is very unlikely that Matthew has inserted the sabbath in this verse with the purpose of admonishing his community to act in a way that would not create further opposition, as proposed by Stanton.<sup>307</sup> Even though the Matthean community

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<sup>304</sup> The “Son of Man” self-designated Christological title of Jesus will be discussed in a subsequent section of this chapter.

<sup>305</sup> Keener, *Matthew*, 580, comments on this passage: “Verse 20 also reveals foresight concerning the Sabbath and winter (whether Mk 13:18 may omit the Sabbath for theological reasons or Matthew may add it to the tradition is debatable). Commentators suggest that on the Sabbath city gates might be shut; one could also not secure animals for transport. Many Jews considered willfully riding horseback on the Sabbath a death worthy, almost unforgivable sin (e.g., p. Hag. 2:1, §9; 2:2, §6). While Jewish people agreed that one could break the Sabbath to save life (1 Macc 2:41...), only Jesus’ followers recognize the peril of their situation.”

<sup>306</sup> Cf. Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>307</sup> *Contra* G. Stanton, “Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath” (Matthew 24:20),” *JSNT* 37 (1989): 17-30, who concludes that, “Since the Matthean community did not keep the Sabbath strictly, it would

still kept the sabbath, their Christological new understanding of the sabbath would not prevent them from fleeing on the sabbath in case of danger. Nonetheless, in this passage (Matt 24:20) sabbath laws (and what is lawful to do on the sabbath) and the meaning of the sabbath are not discussed, and the sabbath comment by Matthew could be related to additional practical difficulties,<sup>308</sup> including possible differences in the orthopraxis of the sabbath laws within Matthew's community.<sup>309</sup> But the fact that Matthew redacts the Markan version to include the sabbath highlights that this commandment was still important in the Matthean community,<sup>310</sup> even though they possessed a new understanding of the meaning of the sabbath<sup>311</sup> in light of Jesus' identity and mission and his lordship over the sabbath (cf. Matt 12:8).

Following the description of "these things," Jesus speaks of his παρουσία (24:27).

The disciples need not be worried about failing to recognize his coming (Matt 24:3) because,

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not have hesitated to escape on a Sabbath; however, it knows that in so doing it would antagonize still further some of its persecutors... Sociological studies have shown that it is common for a minority group which has parted company with its parent body to exaggerate the threat posed by its rival. This may well have happened in Matthew's community," 26. Cf. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 192-206. In agreement with E. Wong, "The Matthean understanding of the Sabbath: a response to G N Stanton," *JSNT* 44 (1991): 3-18, who argues against Stanton's proposals that the Matthean redaction "on the Sabbath" refers to not increasing antagonism from outside: "To 'pray that your flights may not be... on a Sabbath' implies that at least some of the members of the Matthean community (probably some of the conservative Jewish Christians who still behave according to their tradition) would hesitate to flee on a Sabbath, even though their lives were thus in increased danger... Matthew wants to keep the community intact by taking care of the 'weak' ones (who might hesitate to flee even at the critical time)..." Wong, "The Matthean understanding of the Sabbath," 17.

<sup>308</sup> Cf. Yang, *Jesus and the Sabbath*, 239: "... the problem posed by the sabbath when persecution happens is not the impossibility caused by Jewish-Christian principles of sabbath observance which, if they existed at all, may more readily allow one to flee than rabbinic principles, but the difficulty caused by Jewish implementation of sabbath regulations—for example, shutting the gates of the cities, suspension of services to travelers, difficulty in purchasing supplies, etc." Cf. also Nolland, *Matthew*, 973; Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, 102-3; Gundry, *Matthew*, 483. For additional questions fruitful for further study of the meaning of this Matthean addition to the text, cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 915.

<sup>309</sup> Cf. Wong, "The Matthean understanding of the Sabbath," 17.

<sup>310</sup> In agreement with Wong, "The Matthean understanding of the Sabbath," 14, who notes that, "...the redactional addition 'on a Sabbath' must imply a certain understanding by the Matthean community about the Sabbath."

<sup>311</sup> "The Matthean community presumably observed the Sabbath. Verse 24:20 shows that this probably was done with consistency. Those who pray that the tribulation will not happen on the Sabbath show they are not willing to abandon the Sabbath command, even when their lives are in danger." Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 183.

unlike the false prophets and false Christs, the coming of the Son of Man would be self-evident, with signs across the sky. This is the first mention of the *παρουσία* in connection with the Son of Man, and two similar occurrences follow (24:37, 39).<sup>312</sup> “Son of Man,” an eschatological title derived from Dan 7:13-14, is used by Matthew more times than any other Christological title, and is most often utilized in this Gospel with eschatological connotations (thirteen times; cf. 24:27; 24:30 (twice); 24:37; 24:39; 24:44; 25: 31; 26:2; 26:24 (twice); 26:45; 26:64). When Jesus claims that the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:8), he is announcing a new dimension of eschatological interpretation of the sabbath commandment in light of his mission, because a new epoch has been inaugurated, an era that will be consummated in the *παρουσία*, when the Son of Man comes in glory (cf. 24:27, 37, 39). These statements culminate in Jesus’ depiction of his coming in power when answering the high priest’s question about his identity as the Son of God: “Jesus said to him, ‘You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.’” (Matt 26:64). Jesus’ ultimate glory and power as judge would be consummated in his coming. Nevertheless, he has already been given full authority over all things in heaven and on earth (cf. Matt 28:18-20). Therefore, his power, lordship, glory and authority that will be fully consummated in the *παρουσία*, have already been initiated on earth: authority to forgive sins (cf. 9:6-8); lordship over the sabbath (cf. 12:8), authority over sickness and evil forces (e.g. 12:13, 22, 28). Furthermore, his authoritative presence will be with his disciples until the end of the age (Matt 28:18-20).

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<sup>312</sup> For more on the eschatological dimension of “Son of Man,” see the following Christological section in this chapter.



The four images of eschatological salvation discussed above are the most prominent in Matt 11:25-12:14,<sup>313</sup> and provide the framework of a Matthean Christological eschatology: Jesus is the eschatological agent prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures and therefore the anticipated realities of the messianic age are “already” available through him, though they are “not yet” fully consummated until the end of the age (cf. Matt 24:3; 28:20). These four prominent images of eschatological salvation are: revelation and recognition, healing and restoration, rest and sabbath, and authority and lordship of the Son of Man.

The promises of greater knowledge (cf. Jer 31:34; Dan 12:9; Hab 2:14) and of revelation from God regarding his salvation and righteousness (cf. Isa 53:1; 56:1) are now a reality through Jesus. He alone is the eschatological agent who can reveal the Father (Matt 11:25, 27) and who is himself an eschatological revelation. The Son is known/recognized only by the Father, and the Father is known/recognized only by the Son (Matt 11:25-27), and by those to whom the Son reveals the Father. The end-time revelation of the mysteries of God is available now through his eschatological agent. Likewise, the prophecies regarding healing and restoration for the people of Israel through the Davidic eschatological prince (Ezek 34:15, 16, 23, 24), are now realized in the healing ministry of Jesus (cf. Matt 4: 23, 24; 8:7, 16; 9:35; 10:8; 12: 10, 15, 22; 14:14; 15:30; 17:18; 19:2; 21:14). The healing miracles of Jesus are the proof that he is the “expected One” (Matt 11:3, 5; Isa 35:5, 6; 61:1). Healing and restoration are eschatological realities typified by the sabbath, and therefore Jesus performs a non-emergency healing miracle on the day of rest (cf. 12:10), in accordance with the new Christological dimension of the law. The Matthean Jesus is recognized as the expected eschatological healer (14:34-36).

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<sup>313</sup> Other images of eschatological salvation are found in Matthew 11 and 12, and are not analyzed here because of the scope of this dissertation. These offer a fertile ground for further study of Matthean eschatology: e.g. judgment (Matt 11:20-24); the Lord’s Servant (Matt 12:15-21); feasting (Matt 11:16-19).

In particular, Matt 11:25-12:14 must be interpreted in the narrative context of Jesus' offer of the eschatological rest (ἀνάπαυσις) (11:28, 29; cf. Ezek 34:15). This rest was promised by God three times in the first person in the LXX (ἀναπαύσω), first to the Davidic representatives of Israel (2 Kgdms 7:11; 1 Chr 22:9), then to Israel through the eschatological Davidic prince (Ezek 34: 15; cf. 34:23-24). It is now offered by Jesus, also in the first person (ἀναπαύσω, Matt 11:28; cf. 11:29) to those who accept his invitation. The promised eschatological rest (ἀνάπαυσις) is now a present reality for the soul (11:29), through the recognition (ἐπιγινώσκω) of the Father, and revealed (ἀποκαλύπτω) in the Son (11:27). This recognition brings a full revelation of the meaning of the sabbath rest (ἀνάπαυσις; Matt 11:28-30) in Jesus, to whom the commandment was pointing (Matt 12:8); because the "Son of Man" is lord of the sabbath (12:8). The lordship of the Son of Man over the law (sabbath) and the prophets, and his authority on earth to forgive sins (9:6-8) and heal the sick and demon-possessed (e.g. 12:13, 22, 28; cf. 8:29) are eschatological realities now available in the present, that will be consummated at his παρουσία (24:27, 37, 39), and the end of the age (Matt 28:18-20).

### **Christology, Rest and Sabbath in Matthew**

Christology is the basis for both the Matthean law-interpreting hermeneutical principles and the Matthean eschatological perspective. Throughout his Gospel, Matthew indicates that the presence of Jesus on earth has brought about a new dimension of Jesus-centered law interpretation and a present eschatology that will be consummated in the coming of the Son of Man. There are two Christological titles explicitly used in the Matthean narrative analyzed in the scope of this dissertation (Matt 11:25-12:14): the Son (ὁ υἱός;

without a genitive of possession attached to the title), in relation to the Father, and Son of Man (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου). The latter is the most prominent Christological title for Jesus in Matthew<sup>314</sup> and it represents the most extended and pronounced Christological claim in this Gospel.

### Son of Man

This Christological title is a self-designation of Jesus, always spoken by Jesus, of himself, in the third person.<sup>315</sup> The title ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is used by the Matthean Jesus in a seemingly developmental and progressive manner, as he reveals the three main stages of his ministry to his disciples: his earthly ministry and authority, his death and resurrection, and his eschatological coming and rule.<sup>316</sup> The first emphasis is most prominent in the first half of the Gospel (8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:8, 32; 13:37; 16:13.), the second emphasis is most prominent in the middle of the Gospel (12:40; 17:9, 12, 22; 20:18, 28), even though the title is used three additional times in the actual narration of the passion events (26:2, 24, 45) and the third force, as the eschatological Son of Man, is most

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<sup>314</sup> J. Kingsbury, "The Title 'Son of Man' in Matthew's Gospel," *CBQ* 37 (1975): 193-202, proposes that in, "Matthew, the title Son of Man is 'public' in nature and is meant to complement the title Son of God, which is 'confessional' in nature." Kingsbury, "The Title 'Son of Man' in Matthew's Gospel," 193. But there are several problems with this proposal, such as the fact that Jesus uses this title for himself, whether he addresses his disciples, the crowd or his opponents, thereby not always "public" in nature; and that "Son of God" is a title used by the devil, demons and mockers as well as by the disciples and the Roman centurion, and therefore not always "confessional" in nature.

<sup>315</sup> A. Díez Macho, "La Cristología del Hijo del Hombre y el uso de la tercera persona en vez de la primera," *ScrTh* 14 (1982): 192, argues, providing several examples, that the use of the third person in all "the Son of Man" sayings is a case of asteism, or "courteous talk," common in the Galilean Aramaic: "El uso de la tercera persona en vez de la primera es un caso de asteísmo, de habla cortés. Existía en Palestina, de donde proceden todos los logia del Hijo del hombre."

<sup>316</sup> I disagree with U. Luz, "The Son of Man in Matthew: Heavenly Judge or Human Christ," *JSNT* 48 (1992): 18, who proposes that "The Son of Man" is not a Christological title, but that, "The 'son of the man' therefore is a christological expression." Nevertheless, I agree with the title's "horizontal dimension, by means of which Jesus describes his way through history," 18. The title is used in Matthew to bring about a gradual and developmental understanding of the identity and mission of Jesus, as well as the events that must happen before the full force of the eschatological Son of Man will take place. For the "gradual" element of the understanding of "Son of Man" in Matthew, cf. Luz, "The Son of Man in Matthew," 15.

prominent at the end of his teachings (10:23; 13:41; 16:27, 28; 19:28; 24:27, 30 (twice), 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:64), with a special emphasis in chapter 24 (cf. 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44).

There are thirty occurrences of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in Matthew<sup>317</sup> (8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8; 12:32; 12:40; 13:37; 13:41; 16:13; 16:27, 28; 17:9; 17:12; 17:22; 19:28; 20:18; 20:28; 24:27; 24:30 (twice); 24:37; 24:39; 24:44; 25: 31; 26:2; 26:24 (twice); 26:45; 26:64). The Matthean Jesus uses this title to describe himself and his pre-passion earthly ministry (seven times), his death and resurrection (ten times), and his future coming and power (thirteen times).<sup>318</sup> With the exception of one occurrence where Luke has Stephen use it in Acts 7:56, the title ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου does not appear outside the Gospels in the New Testament. The highest density of the use of this title in Matthew is found between 24:27 and 26:64, where twelve instance of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου are found, with a predominant eschatological force.<sup>319</sup>

#### a) Jesus' Earthly Ministry and Authority as Son of Man

The seven occurrences of this title used by Jesus to describe himself and his earthly ministry are found primarily in the first half of the gospel: 8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:8, 32; 13:37; aside from the pivotal instance found in 16:13, after which the force of the title is no longer concentrated in Jesus' pre-passion ministry. The introduction of this title in Matthew communicates a rather unexpected reality of Jesus' earthly life: he would not settle down in

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<sup>317</sup> Without counting Matt 18:11, "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost," not found in early manuscripts.

<sup>318</sup> Cf. Zacharias, "Old Greek Daniel 7:13-14 and Matthew's Son of Man," 453-465, who proposes that, "the OG [Old Greek] version of Dan 7:13-14 as found in Pap. 967 influenced Matthew's portrait of the SM [Son of Man]." 464. *Contra* Luz, "The Son of Man in Matthew," 8, who argues that, "Matthew did not draw on a Jewish apocalyptic expectation of a messianic figure called 'son of man'... there is no indication whatsoever that Matthew presupposed an apocalyptic meaning of 'the son of the man' among his readers, because there is no indication whatsoever that he himself was conscious of such a meaning besides his own Christian traditions about Jesus the son of the man."

<sup>319</sup> Cf. Luz, "The Son of Man in Matthew," 5.

one place, but would rather follow a life of self-denial<sup>320</sup>, that his disciples are expected to emulate (cf. Matt 8:20). The second appearance of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in this Gospel is the first of two occurrences of the title with the force of Jesus' authority and Lordship (cf. 9:6; 12:8). In this first instance, Jesus makes the pronouncement that "the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (Matt 9:6). The second of these occurrences (12:8) is the focus of this dissertation because it deals with the Son of Man's authority and lordship over the sabbath.<sup>321</sup> Jesus concludes his argument with the Pharisees, regarding what is lawful to do on the sabbath, with a pronouncement about his lordship over the sabbath: "For the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath" (12:8).<sup>322</sup> This conclusion moves the controversy to a Christological level. Matthew places "Lord" in an emphatic first place in the sentence (unlike the Markan version; cf. Mark 2:28), to reveal the Christological authoritative force of the pronouncement: "κύριος γάρ ἐστιν τοῦ σαββάτου ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου" (12:8).<sup>323</sup> The

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<sup>320</sup> The first occurrence of "the Son of Man" title offers a contrast with the later use of the same title as it refers to Jesus' glorious coming, after being used for his upcoming death. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 217, comments on this: "The Son of Man, elsewhere in the Gospel to be described in such exalted language (and mysterious language, too, for the predictions of suffering and death), lives here in fulfillment of this phase of his ministry in abject humility."

<sup>321</sup> These are additional observations regarding the remaining occurrences of "Son of Man" in this section of the Gospel. In 11:19, 20 Jesus describes himself in contrast to John, concluding his description with a pronouncement: "... Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." (v. 20). Jesus final conclusion is worthy of notice, because the title "Son of Man" is used in connection with wisdom, and it offers a wisdom Christology context for Jesus' offer of rest at the end of the chapter (11:28-30). In 12:32 Jesus explains the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. When he speaks of "a word against the Son of Man," Jesus is foreshadowing the rejection of his earthly mission by some. In 13:37 Jesus interprets that he is the sower of the good seed in the parable of the tares (13:36-43): "the one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man..." (v. 37). The use of "the Son of Man" in the beginning of the parable, describing his earthly ministry of sowing the good seed, is eventually linked to the eschatological reality at the end of the age, with the same title: "So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels..." (vv. 40, 41). The eschatological force of this Christological title is the primary force in this Gospel and it is emphasized in the second half of Matthew.

<sup>322</sup> This pronouncement is found in the main narrative scope of this dissertation (Matt 11:25-12:14) and has been dealt with in detail in the chapter entitled "Exegesis of Matthew 12:1-14."

<sup>323</sup> For Matthew's emphasis upon the Christological title suggested by the order of the words, cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 316.

emphatic Son of Man's lordship<sup>324</sup> echoes the preceding narrative context: the Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath (12:8) as the Father is Lord of heaven and earth (11:25). This is a Christological claim, proposing a new dimension and full revelation in the progressive and developmental meaning of the sabbath commandment, which now must be interpreted in relation to the Son of Man, who is Lord over it.<sup>325</sup> Because of its deliberate juxtaposition with Jesus' offer of ἀνάπαυσις (11:28-30) in the preceding verses, the Matthean approach to a new dimension of revelation, in light of the Son's knowledge of the Father (11:25-27), indicates that the full meaning of the sabbath commandment is "rest" (ἀνάπαυσις; cf. Matt 11:28-29) in Jesus,<sup>326</sup> who is the Son of Man and Lord of the sabbath.

The Son of Man, who now possesses authority to forgive sins (9:6) and lordship over the sabbath (12:8), is the same One who will send his angels at the end of the age (13:40, 41), in his coming in power and glory (24:27, 30, 37) after his passion and resurrection (e.g. 12:40; 17:9, 12, 22; 20:18, 28). Thus, the most prominent feature of Matthean Christology is that the Son of Man has ushered in the messianic epoch, starting with Jesus' authoritative identity and ministry on earth, and culminating in his authority at the end of the age.

The pivotal occurrence of this title is in Matthew 16:13; this is the last mention of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in reference to the earthly ministry of Jesus and it anticipates the two

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<sup>324</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 462, suggests that the universal authority envisioned in the title from Dan 7:13-14 is anticipated in this verse: "The Son of Man is already 'Lord'." And adds, "... this concluding pronouncement is christologically even more daring than what has preceded it in vv. 3-6. Not only is the Son of Man greater than David and the temple, but he is 'Lord' of the institution which is traced in the OT to God's direct command (Gen 2:3), enshrined in the Decalogue which is the central codification of God's requirements for his people, and described by God as 'my sabbath' (Exod 31:13; Lev 19:3, 30; Isa 56:4, etc..." France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 463.

<sup>325</sup> Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 228, proposes that the proclamation of the merciful will of God makes the Son of Man what only God is: the Lord of the Sabbath: "Die Proklamierung des erbarmenden Gotteswillens macht den Menschensohn – den auf Erden wirkenden künftigen Richter – zu dem, was nach Lev 23,3 Gott selbst ist, Herr des Sabbats."

<sup>326</sup> In agreement with the summary of this verse by Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 331: "The Son of Man is with his people as sovereign Lord and messianic king and acts as the final and infallible interpreter of the will of God as expressed in Torah and sabbath commandment. The rest and rejoicing symbolized by the sabbath find fulfillment in the kingdom brought by Jesus."

subsequent emphases on this title as it points to Jesus' passion predictions and eschatological announcements.<sup>327</sup> Only Matthew inserts the "Son of Man" title in this instance (cf. Mark 8:27; Luke 9:18), and it is the pivotal section in Matthew's developmental approach to the identity of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου: here, for the first time in this Gospel, the Son of Man is revealed as the Son of God (16:13; 16:16).<sup>328</sup> To Peter's assertion (16:16), Jesus responded that Peter's understanding was revealed (ἀποκαλύπτω) to him by his Father (16:17).<sup>329</sup> The title "Son of Man" in the Matthean narrative from this point on is used exclusively for Jesus' passion and resurrection, and his coming at the end of the age; the title is no longer used to describe Jesus in his earthly mission after this occurrence (16:13). It is in this pivotal juxtaposition of two Christological titles (16:13; 16:16) that Matthew reveals that the Son of Man who has authority to forgive sins (9:6) and who is lord over the sabbath (12:8) is actually the Son of God, and therefore his lordship over the sabbath is handed over to Jesus by the Father himself (cf. 11:25-27).

#### b) Jesus' Death and Resurrection as Son of Man

In Matthew, the title ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is used by Jesus ten times, in reference to his death and resurrection: 12:40; 17:9, 12, 22; 20:18, 28; 26:2, 24 (twice), 45. The first

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<sup>327</sup> Jesus asked his disciples: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (16:13). To this inquiry, Peter, after uttering several possible identities with eschatological echoes (e.g. John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah) eventually answered: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (16:16). The contrast between the people and the disciples in their recognition of Jesus is deliberate: "The effect of the question is heightened by the fact that here for the first time in his narrative Matthew contrasts the reaction of the people to Jesus with that of the disciples. The disciples... have a pre-knowledge of the 'Son of Man,' for Jesus himself has told them something about his role (10:23; 13:37, 41). The outsiders had thus far not understood Jesus' public sayings about the Son of Man (11:19; 12:40, cf. 8:20)... From this point on until the passion Jesus will no longer speak publicly of the Son of Man. Only in the great trial scene before the Sanhedrin... will he, once more, in response to the high priest's question whether he is the Christ and the Son of God, speak publicly of himself as the Son of Man (26:64)." Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 360.

<sup>328</sup> A similar juxtaposition will occur at the end of Matthew, in response to the high priest's question in 26:63, 64; in that instance the revelation of the double identity of Jesus will be rejected by the Jewish leadership.

<sup>329</sup> Before this, human beings had recognized Jesus as the Son of God only once (14:33) in the whole gospel of Matthew. However, after this "revelation" of the Father to Peter, the title "Son of God" plays a primary role in Jesus' passion (cf. 26:63; 27:40, 43, 54), even though it is utilized primarily in mockery and scorn, with the exception of the Roman guards (27:54).

occurrence with this force is found in 12:40: “For just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Following this prophecy, Jesus makes two statements that narratively link this pericope with 12:1-8: “something greater than Jonah is here” (12:41),<sup>330</sup> and “something greater than Solomon is here” (12:42). Therefore, the Matthean Jesus declares in chapter 12 that the Son of Man, whose identity and mission is greater than the temple (v. 6), greater than Jonah (v. 41), greater than Solomon (v. 42) and who is Lord of the Sabbath (v.8), will die and be resurrected (v. 40). These supremacy statements depict the Son of Man as greater than the temple, the prophets and the kings, and it is here that Matthew adds this new element in the developmental understanding of the Son of Man in this Gospel: the “greater than” and authoritative ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου must die on his path to glory. This is the only time, before Jesus’ question about his identity (16:13) and subsequent passion prediction (16:21),<sup>331</sup> that ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is used in reference to Jesus’ passion. That this reference to Jesus’ passion as the Son of Man’s death is found in the same chapter where Jesus declares the Son of Man’s lordship over the sabbath is significant. This occurrence of the title suggests that the eschatological rest offered by Jesus (11:28-30) and typified by the sabbath (12:8) would be achieved through this means. Jesus’ death was his path to glory and to the eschatological realities he offered his followers; therefore his death is discussed in conjunction with his resurrection.

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<sup>330</sup> Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 490, who comments on the crescendo effect of vv. 40-41: “The carefully balanced wording of the two clauses (the first being a verbatim quotation of LXX Jonah 2:1...) draws the typological parallel. So far it is simply a matter of *comparable* experience –the further typological element of repetition *on a higher level* will be added in v. 41.”

<sup>331</sup> Cf. J. Gibbs, “The Son of God and the Father’s Wrath: Atonement and Salvation in Matthew’s Gospel,” *CTQ* 72 (2008): 217-218.



This is the case with the next mention of this title in this context. Jesus and his disciples come down from the transfiguration mountain. On this occasion Jesus commanded them: “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead” (Matt 17:9). The statement reveals the developmental nature of the disciples’ understanding of Jesus’ identity as the Son of Man: they will only fully comprehend it in light of his death and resurrection and their understanding of the means through which Jesus would achieve the promised eschatological rest would become clear.<sup>332</sup>

Following several clear passion predictions that utilize the title Son of Man,<sup>333</sup> Jesus reveals the reason why he has come, and the purpose of his death: “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (20:28).<sup>334</sup>

This is the climactic pronouncement of Jesus regarding his passion and the reason for the

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<sup>332</sup> Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 713 argue that this verse [17:9], “makes the three apostles unique and authoritative bearers of the kerygma. They will proclaim after Easter things previously concealed.” That the disciples who witnessed this account would more fully understand the mysterious identity of Jesus after his resurrection reinforces my own argument that the Son of Man Christology, as it relates to the revelation of Jesus’ identity and mission, is developmental and progressive in the Gospel of Matthew.

<sup>333</sup> The third occurrence of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in the context of Jesus’ death and resurrection is found in 17:12: “So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” Even though in 17:9 Jesus reveals that the Son of Man will die, in v. 12 he mentions for the first time that the Son of Man will suffer at the hands of humans. Only one other time in Matthew the verb πάσχω is used in connection with Jesus’ death (16:21), but this is the only time (17:12) that it is connected to the “Son of Man” title. Jesus then announces that the Son of Man will be betrayed, killed and raised on the third day: “The Son of Man is going to be delivered (betrayed) into the hands of men; and they will kill Him and He will be raised on the third day” (17:22). This is the first time in Matthew that the title ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is used in connection with three separate actions related to Jesus’ passion: betrayal, death and resurrection. In addition to these actions, Matt 20:18, 19 is the first time that Jesus mentions, in conjunction with the title ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, specific groups of people that will carry out the events of his passion, i.e. chief priests and scribes, and Gentiles (20:18, 19), and adds several descriptive details not found before, such as condemnation, mockery, whipping and crucifixion. With the exception of 17:12, all the occurrences of the title “Son of Man” in the context of Jesus’ passion, also mention the resurrection (explicitly or implicitly; cf. 12:30; 17:9; 17:22; 20:18). Nevertheless, after 20:18, there will be no more mention of this Christological title in connection to Jesus’ resurrection.

<sup>334</sup> According to Evans, *Matthew*, 354-355, this saying is a blend of Daniel 7 and Isaiah 53: “The first part of this statement [v. 28] inverts what is said of the Son of Man in Dan 7:13-14, who approaches God (the Ancient of Days) and receives from him royal power, ‘that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.’ But according to Jesus, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve. On what grounds does Jesus invert the vision of Daniel 7? The second part of the statement answers our question. The Son of Man serves and gives ‘his life a ransom for many’ in his capacity as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53... By blending together Daniel 7 (which speaks of royal power and struggle) and Isaiah 53 (which speaks of suffering service and vindication), Jesus teaches that he, as the Son of Man, must first undergo suffering on behalf of his people before he experiences vindication and glory.”

death of the Son of Man, and it is the last teaching of Jesus foreshadowing his death in which he utilizes the title Son of Man. The last three instances of the use of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in the context of his passion in Matthew will be mentioned in the narration of the actual events (26: 2, 24, 45). In 26:2, the Matthean Jesus offers a time frame for the passion events: “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be handed over for crucifixion.” Immediately following Jesus’ prediction, the narrative informs the reader that the chief priests and the elders gathered together to plot against Jesus, “and kill Him” (26:3, 4). Following the account of Judas’ bargain to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (26:14-19), during the Passover meal, Jesus announces that one of the disciples is going to betray him (26:24). Even though Jesus had already claimed that the Scriptures had foretold the rejection of his mission (cf. Matt 21:42), in this saying Jesus explicitly explains that the fate of the Son of Man had been foretold in writing.<sup>335</sup>

### c) Jesus’ Future Coming as the Son of Man

The Matthean Jesus designates himself as the Son of Man thirteen times in reference to his future coming and power to rule (10:23; 13:41; 16:27, 28; 19:28; 24:27, 30 (twice), 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:64), of which six are unique to Matthew (cf. 10:23; 13:41; 16:28; 19:28; 24:30 (once); 25: 31), indicating a special interest of Matthew in the eschatological force of this title.<sup>336</sup> It also strengthens the view that the figure of “son of man” from Daniel 7 was part of the apocalyptic thought and literature of the first century.<sup>337</sup> The first instance is

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<sup>335</sup> The last use of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in the context of Jesus’ passion is at the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:45). In this final occurrence of Son of Man in reference to the sufferings of Jesus, those who would be responsible for his betrayal are labeled as sinners. The verb παραδίδωμι is used in five of the nine occurrences of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in Matthew in connection to Jesus’ death, reflecting the active role of human beings in his fate, even though his passion had been foretold (cf. 26:24). Nevertheless, the foretelling of this event does not excuse the one through whom this prophecy was to come about (Matt 26:24).

<sup>336</sup> Cf. Kingsbury, “The Title ‘Son of Man’ in Matthew,” 196.

<sup>337</sup> E. Adams, “The Coming of the Son of Man in Mark’s Gospel,” *TynBul* 56 (2005), 39-61, argues for the eschatological figure of ‘one like a son of man’ in Daniel 7 being used in the first century in apocalyptic

found in 10:23; this statement is an ongoing command to evangelize Israel with the good news of Jesus until the future coming of Christ. The event hereby described is a future event, reinforced by subsequent predictions of the Son of Man's coming at the end of the age (cf. Matt 24: 27, 37, 39); as is the next occurrence of the title in this Gospel, which describes the Son of Man sending his angels (13:41). The future event is contained in Jesus' explanation of the parable of the tares: The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks..." (Matt 13:41). In this case, the allusion to this event happening at the end of the age is explicit, and it depicts Jesus as the Son of Man with power, commanding his angels.<sup>338</sup>

Towards the last third of the Gospel, the eschatological force of the Son of Man title intensifies, as exemplified in 19:28. In this verse Jesus speaks of the disciples' reward and describes it as the disciples sitting upon twelve thrones, as the Son of Man will sit on his throne. This is the only use of the word regeneration or new age (παλιγγενεσία) in all four Gospels. Furthermore, Matt 19:28 is the only occurrence of παλιγγενεσία in the New Testament with an eschatological force,<sup>339</sup> and it is mentioned in conjunction with the Son of Man's reign.

The most noticeable cluster of uses of the title ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in this Gospel is found in chapter 24, where five instances of the title have an explicit eschatological context (cf. 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44). The term παρουσία is added by Matthew four times in

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literature, and suggests that, "1 Enoch 37-71 and 4 Ezra 13, [are] the two main pieces of evidence for first-century Jewish interpretation of Daniel 7:13," Adams, "The Coming of the Son of Man," 43. Cf. also Diez Macho, "La Cristología del Hijo del Hombre," 189. *Contra* Luz, "The Son of Man in Matthew," 8.

<sup>338</sup> The next two occurrences are found in a summary statement of Jesus' teaching on the cost of discipleship (Matt 16:27, 28). In the first verse of this statement (v. 27), the Son of Man shares the glory of the Father, and again is in command of the angels; and acts as prophesied of the Lord in Ps 62:12: "... For You recompense a man according to his work." The second verse (v. 28) mentions that some of those who were present in Jesus' audience would not taste death until the Son of Man came in His kingdom.

<sup>339</sup> The only other mention of this word in the New Testament is in Titus 3:5 in reference to the regeneration that the Holy Spirit produces in a believer's life.

this chapter (24:3, 27, 37, 39) and three of those times (24:27, 37, 39) it is spoken by Jesus in relation to the coming of the Son of Man. The term *παρουσία* does not appear anywhere else in the Gospels. In the first occurrence of the title in this chapter, the Son of Man's coming is compared to the visibility of lightning, from east to west (24:27). The second occurrence describes the coming of the Son of Man with terms found in Daniel 7:13 (Matt 24:30). Jesus will offer a similar description to the high priest's inquiry at the end of his life on earth (cf. 26:64). The third and fourth appearances of *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου* in this chapter compare the coming of the Son of Man with the days of Noah (v. 37, 39) and the last occurrence of this title in this chapter is 24:44: "For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will." The fact that no one knows the hour, not even the Son, has been previously discussed by Jesus in the same chapter (cf. 24:36). In v. 36 "Son" is used in place of "Son of Man," which is the preferred self-designation of Jesus throughout the chapter (24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44). The last occurrence of *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, included in the eschatological discourse<sup>340</sup> of the Matthean Jesus, is 25:31: "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne." In this verse, the Son of Man is depicted as a judge, coming in glory with the angels, and sitting on his throne.

It is in the context of his coming, in Matt 24:20, that Jesus mentions the sabbath as still significant at that point (cf. 24:20, 27). As we previously analyzed in the eschatological section of this chapter, only Matthew mentions the sabbath here, in contrast to Mark's account (Mark 13:18) and it is the only mention of the sabbath in the context of a future

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<sup>340</sup> Chapter 24-25 of Matthew constitute the entire content of the fifth and final discourse of Jesus in Matthew. The five discourses of the Matthean Jesus are: 1. The Kingdom's manifesto: chapters 5-7, 2. The Kingdom's mission: Chapter 10; 3. The Kingdom's parables: Chapter 13, 4. The Kingdom's community: Chapter 18, and 5. The Kingdom's future: Chapters 24-25. Each one of these discourses ends with the words: "When Jesus finished..."

event by Matthew (Matt 24:20). It is significant that the Matthean Jesus mentions the sabbath as still relevant in the context of his παρουσία (24:20, 27, 37, 39).

The last instance of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in the entire Gospel of Matthew is found in 26:64. It is Jesus' response, under oath, to the high priest's question regarding his identity as the Son of God (cf. 26:63). Jesus responds: "You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." (Matt 26:64). These two statements, which clearly allude to Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13 respectively, provide an eschatological description of the Son of Man's power as Lord, greater than David, in the context of Psalm 110:1 (cf. Matt 22:43-45), and the inauguration of his kingdom through the cross, as identified by the use of the words "from now on" (v. 64).<sup>341</sup>

Matthew's Christology is most prominently exemplified by the developmental use of the title Son of Man in his Gospel: first his authority on earth, then his passion and resurrection, and ultimately his coming in glory at the end of the age. The Matthean utilization of the Christological title is consistent with the author's proposed Jesus-centered hermeneutical principles of law interpretation in light of Jesus' identity and mission, and his "already" but "not yet" eschatological proposal. The Son of Man has come as the eschatological agent of God to inaugurate a new epoch, and he has come with authority to reveal a new dimension of the law and to make available the eschatological realities expected for the messianic age. On the other hand, in spite of his authority to forgive sins

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<sup>341</sup> Commenting on the drawing together of Daniel 7 and Psalm 110, Evans, *Matthew*, 442, draws this conclusion: "Presupposing the Jewish exegetical principle of *gezera shawa* ('and equivalent category'), Jesus has drawn together Daniel 7 and Psalm 110. Both passages envision the enthronement of God and judgment upon his enemies... The plural 'thrones' of Dan 7:9 and God's invitation to the Psalmist's 'lord' to sit next to him create the picture that Jesus envisions: As 'the Son of Man,' Jesus will take his seat next to God himself (Ps 110:1), he will 'come with the clouds' (Dan 7:13), the court will sit 'in judgment' (Dan 7:9), and his 'enemies' will become his 'footstool' (Ps 110:1)."

and re-interpret the law in light of his mission, the Son of Man submitted himself to suffer at the hands of human beings, because the ultimate eschatological realities, including the eschatological rest typified by the sabbath, would be achieved through his death and resurrection, and the cross would result in the fullness of his kingdom, to be consummated at the end of the age.

### The Son

The second Christological title used in the narrative of Matt 11:25-12:14 is ὁ υἱός and it is used four times<sup>342</sup> by the Matthean Jesus in reference to himself in relationship to the Father: 11:27 (twice); 24:36 and 28:19. These are the only three verses in Matthew where “the Father” and “the Son”, with definite articles, are used in pairs.<sup>343</sup>

The first two instances of this title in Matthew are found in 11:27 and they are the most significant for this dissertation.<sup>344</sup> Jesus pronounces the mutual reciprocal and exclusive knowledge of the Father by the Son and of the Son by the Father. He further announces that the Son is the only one who can mediate the revelation of the Father

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<sup>342</sup> In addition, there are four implicit occurrences of ὁ υἱός used by Jesus in reference to himself in Matthew; these are veiled self-references through the use of two parables. The first three occurrences are found in the parable of the vineyard and the tenants (Matt 21:33-44). After his lack of success in receiving his produce through the servants he sent in the time of the harvest (21:34-36), the landowner decides to send his own son, reasoning that the tenants will respect him (v. 37; υἱός is used twice in this verse). But when the tenants saw the son (v. 38), they reasoned that he was the heir and they decided to kill him to seize his inheritance (vv. 38, 39). Jesus concludes the parable addressing his audience in the second person plural: “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it” (21:43). The summarizing commentary (v. 45) reveals that the Pharisees and chief priests understood that he was speaking about them. The second parable containing a self-reference of Jesus as υἱός is Matt 22:2. In this parable a king gave a wedding feast for his son. As in the previous parable, the king sends out slaves to bring in the guests, who refuse to come, and mistreat and kill the servants (vv. 3-6). The king is enraged and destroys those who had murdered his slaves (v. 7). Nevertheless, the wedding continues and the slaves go out to find guests, both evil and good (vv. 8-10). In both the landowner and the tenants parable, as well as in the king and the guests parable, Jesus defines himself as the son (υἱός), in relation to his father (tenant/king).

<sup>343</sup> In agreement with Nolland, *Matthew*, 473, who points out that the identities of “the Father” as God and “the Son” as Jesus have been amply argued by Matthew when the narrative announces the first Father-Son pair: “The titular uses of ‘the Father’ and ‘the Son’ are striking. They are always paired by Matthew, and will be used again in 24:36; 28:19. Jesus has been identified as the Son of God from 3:17..., most recently at 8:29. God has been identified as Father from 5:16...”

<sup>344</sup> These two occurrences have been analyzed in detail in Chapter 3.

(11:27). Following this pronouncement, Jesus makes his invitation and offer of ἀνάπαυσις, in the first person, as Yahweh had done in the Jewish Scriptures. By offering his own rest, Jesus is revealing a unique and new dimension of eschatological knowledge of the Father. The Scriptural Father/Son tradition, with the force of God as father of the king of Israel (individual force, e.g. 2 Kgdms 7:12-16 (LXX); Ps 2:6-8), as a representative of Israel (corporate force, e.g. Hosea 11:1), contributes to an eschatological background for this passage where, as is emphasized by the definite article, Jesus is not only “a” son/king, representing Israel, but he is “the” expected son/Davidic king (Ezek 34:23, 24).<sup>345</sup>

The third utterance of ὁ υἱός by the Matthean Jesus is found in the eschatological setting of his coming at the end of the age (Matt 24:36). This statement of Jesus, regarding his lack of knowledge of the date of his own coming, seems to stand in contrast to the full knowledge he possesses of the Father (Matt 11:27). However ἐπιγινώσκω, in the latter reference, is a verb reserved by Matthew exclusively for the recognition of the identity of a person and knowing that person well; he does not use this verb for knowing times and upcoming events. Therefore, instead of these two statements of Jesus being antithetical, Matt 24:36 is a submission statement of the Son to the Father, in light of the Son’s knowledge of the Father (Matt 11:27).<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> Cf. Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 283-287, who argue for an eschatological Mosaic force in the mutual and reciprocal knowledge of the Father and the Son in Matt 11:27, with the background of Exod 33:12, where God knows Moses and Moses prays that he may know God, followed by a promise of rest. The succeeding discussions on sabbath laws (Matt 12:1-14) strengthen this view: Jesus is not only the eschatological Davidic prince through whom God would give ἀνάπαυσις to Israel (Matt 11:28; Ezek 34:15, 23, 24), but he is also the expected new and greater eschatological Moses who has an exclusive knowledge of God (cf. Exod 33:12-14; Deut 18:15, 18) and who reveals the fullest meaning of the law in light of his mission (cf. Matt 12:8).

<sup>346</sup> France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 940, addresses the paradoxical contrast between Matt 11:27 and Matt 24:36: “The structure of this saying [Matt 24:36] places “the Son” on a level above the angels, second only to the Father. But this high Christology (for which see further on 11:27) is combined with a frank admission of ignorance. This saying has accordingly been one of the main evidences used for a ‘kenotic’ Christology, which accepts the full divinity of the Son but argues that for the period of his incarnation certain divine attributes (in this case omniscience) were voluntarily put aside. Such arguments, however, belong to a much later period of Christian dogmatic development. For Matthew perhaps the paradox was not so much a matter of doctrinal

The last instance of ὁ υἱός spoken by Jesus, in relationship to his Father, is part of the “proto-trinitarian” formula of God, in whose name believers should be baptized into discipleship (Matt 28:19). Even though the three persons of what would later be called the Trinity are mentioned, “the name” (τὸ ὄνομα) is used in the singular, highlighting their equality and their unity.<sup>347</sup> This “proto-trinitarian” formula follows Jesus’ statement of his total and complete authority (Matt 28:18) and it is followed by the promise of his constant presence with his disciples, until the end of the age (Matt 28:20). The absolute titles “Father” and “Son” are used in an eschatological context here as well. All four instances of the title “Son” spoken by Jesus, in relationship to the Father, in revelatory (11:27) and eschatological contexts (24:36; 28:19), establishing a significant eschatological element to this Christological title in Matthew.<sup>348</sup>

That both Christological titles mentioned in Matt 11:25-12:14 (“the Son” and “the Son of Man”) are utilized prominently within eschatological contexts in this Gospel is revealing. The Son, who possesses a unique revelation of the Father, is also the Son of Man who, in light of his knowledge of the Father, offers a new dimension of law-interpretation and a present eschatological reality to be fully consummated in his coming at the end of the

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embarrassment... as of wonder at the relationship between Father and Son which is implied here and in 11:27; one which combines a uniquely close relationship with a recognition of priority or subordination...”

<sup>347</sup> Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1118, who argues for an important theological step being taken in this passage regarding “the Son”: “It is one thing for Jesus to speak about his relationship with God as Son with Father (notably 11:27; 24:36; 26:63-64) and to draw attention to the close links between himself and the Holy Spirit (12:28, 31-32), but for “the Son” to take his place as the middle member, between the Father and the Holy Spirit, in a threefold depiction of the object of the disciple’s allegiance is extraordinary. The human leader of the disciple group has become the rightful object of their worship. And the fact that the three divine persons are spoken of as having a single ‘name’ is a significant pointer toward the Trinitarian doctrine of three persons in one God.”

<sup>348</sup> Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom*, 38, has also noted the eschatological context in the three verses in Matthew containing the pair “Father” and “Son”: “So we must here note that the absolute titles ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ in both 24.36 and 28.16-20 occur in an apocalyptic setting. And so we should conclude that the use of ὁ πατήρ and ὁ υἱός in our passage [11:27] is apocalyptically influenced as well.” The use of ἀνάπαυσις (an eschatological rest promised by God to Israel; cf. Ezek 34:15, LXX) in Matt 11:28-30, following the revelation of the Father by the Son, encourages the notion that in Matt 11:27 “Son” and “Father” should be interpreted within an eschatological context.



age. It is in this light that the ἀνάπαυσις—σάββατον Matthean juxtaposition must be interpreted (Matt 11:25-12:8).

The two explicit Christological titles for Jesus used in Matt 11:28-12:14 are the Son (ὁ υἱός), and Son of Man (ὁ υἱός τοῦ ἀνθρώπου); nevertheless, two other Christological titles are implied in the background of this narrative: the Son of God (ὁ υἱός τοῦ Θεοῦ) and the Son of David (ὁ υἱός Δαυίδ), and we will briefly analyze these occurrences.

### Son of God

In Matthew, the title “Son of God” is utilized nine times to describe Jesus (4:3, 6; 8:29; 14:33; 16:16; 26:63; 27:40; 27:43; 27:54).<sup>349</sup> Of the nine occurrences, the first three are spoken by the devil/demons. The assertion made by the voice out of the heavens: “This is My beloved Son...” (3:17) is followed by the temptations narrative. The first two temptations employ the title ὁ υἱός τοῦ Θεοῦ in conditional statements requiring proof (4:3, 6), in spite of the voice heard from heaven stating that Jesus was the Son of God. The third time the title is used by the evil forces, this time in the country of the Gadarenes, Jesus’ identity is no longer questioned, but it is stated as a fact (8:29). Matthew adds an eschatological dimension to Mark and Luke’s version (cf. Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28) by adding the sentence “before the time.” The term καί ποτε is used with an eschatological force, of a time when the Son of Man comes in his glory and judges the devil and his angels (cf. Matt 25:31, 41). But in the exorcism that Jesus is now performing, the kingdom of God has already

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<sup>349</sup> In addition, implicitly Jesus is described as God’s Son when God speaks of Jesus as “his son” (cf. “my beloved son,” Matt 3:17; 17:5).

arrived.<sup>350</sup> The Matthean Jesus explicitly correlates the casting out of demons by the Spirit of God with the coming of the kingdom of God (cf. 12:28).

The next two instances of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ appear in the middle of the Gospel, spoken by the disciples (14:33; 16:16) as statements of faith. The first instance is found when Jesus walks on water, and calms the wind, and those with him respond in worship (14:33). The second instance, pivotal to the development of the Matthean Christology, is Peter's response to Jesus' question: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" (16:13). When Jesus then addresses the same question directly to the disciples in the second person (cf. 16:15), Peter answers: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."<sup>351</sup> Hence, for the first time in this gospel, the identity of the Son of Man is revealed as being the Son of God. To this assertion, Jesus responds with a blessing in recognition that the Father has "revealed" (cf. Matt 16:17; ἀποκαλύπτω) Jesus' identity to Peter. This verse contains both Christological and eschatological implications, as the identity of the Son of Man as the Son of God is a revelation on which Jesus will build his church (cf. 16:18).

The next three instances of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ occur during Jesus' trial and suffering (cf. 26:63; 27:40, 43). In 26:63, the high priest questions Jesus under oath, in the name of the "living" God (a description also found in Peter's response to Jesus in 16:16). Jesus

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<sup>350</sup> In agreement with Davies-Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 81, who recognized the eschatological context of the Matthean use of καὶ πός : "The evangelist has in addition given a new dimension to the subject matter: 'the time' refers to the great assize, when evil spirits, along with wicked human beings, will receive recompense from Jesus, the Son of Man (cf. 25.41; also 1 En. 15-6; Jub. 10.8-9; T. Levi 18.12). So here is an element of 'realized eschatology': the eschatological judge has already appeared, and evil is already being punished (cf. 12.28)."

<sup>351</sup> The phrase "living God" is unique to Matthew in the Gospels. Moreover, "living God" is mentioned two times in pivotal places in the narrative: in Peter's confession (16:16) and before the Sanhedrin (26:63). M. Goodwin, "Hosea and 'the Son of the living God' in Matthew 16:16b," *CBQ* 67 (2005), 265-283, claims that, "the Son of the living God" constitutes a biblical allusion to Hos 2:1 LXX... Peter's confession of Jesus' sonship carries the associations of Hosea's oracle and asserts that with Jesus comes the fulfillment of Hosea 2:1 and the dawning of future Israel." 266-267.

answers affirmatively, and continues with an eschatological pronouncement about the Son of Man, as described in Daniel 7:13, that we analyzed previously (26:64). Jesus responds to the question about being the Son of God with a statement about the coming of the Son of Man and his upcoming kingdom, establishing a clear connection between the two Christological titles.<sup>352</sup>

The last instance of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ in Matthew is uttered by the Roman guards, after witnessing Jesus' death and the subsequent earthquake (Matt 27:54). The final sentence is constructed in an identical format to the first statement of faith of the disciples using the Christological title: Ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ υἱὸς εἶ (Matt 14:33). The only difference is that the guards make the same statement in the past tense: Ἀληθῶς Θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος (Matt 27:54).

The Christological title of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, referring to Jesus, is recognized both by the evil forces (cf. 4:3, 6; 8:29), and by the disciples as a revelation from the Father (cf. 14:33; 16:16). The Jewish leaders receive this revelation from Jesus himself but they reject it, calling it blasphemy (cf. 26:63-65), and the crowds use the title to mock Jesus at the cross (cf. 27:40, 43). The only human beings to recognize that Jesus was the Son of God, aside from the disciples, are the Roman guards (cf. 27:54)<sup>353</sup> in a similar utterance to that of the

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<sup>352</sup> The following two instances of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ are utilized by the crowd to mock Jesus, as he is hanging on the cross. The phrasing of Matt 27:40 reminds the reader of the first and second temptations (Matt 4:3, 6). A similar case of use of the conditional εἰ is observed in 27:43, even though the construction of the sentence is different. In this passage, Matthew utilizes Psalm 22 (v.8) spoken by the crowd throughout the passion account (e.g. Matt 27:35 /Ps 22:18; Matt 27:38/Ps 22:7), then culminating in the words of Jesus (cf. Matt 27:46/Ps 22:1).

<sup>353</sup> That the Roman guards utter this title for the last time in this Gospel arguably foreshadows the inclusion of the Gentiles into God's people, that had been suggested throughout Matthew (2:1-12; 8:11-12): "The question whether Jesus is the Son of God receives an affirmative answer in the declaration of the centurion and the guards (Matt 27:54), and this answer is final. The fact that this confession is uttered by Roman soldiers probably foreshadows the inclusion of the gentiles in the covenant people," A. Angel, "Crucifixus vincens: the 'Son of God' as divine warrior in Matthew," *CBQ* 37, (2011), 303. "The recognition that has largely eluded him makes a powerful fresh beginning here precisely at the cross. The directive in 28:19 to make disciples of all

disciples (cf. 14:33). Jesus never uses this title for himself, even though he responds affirmatively to the high priest's question regarding his identity as the Son of God, and often encourages the link between the titles "Son of God" and "Son of Man" (cf. Matt 16:13, 16; 23:63, 64). Therefore, the title ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ expands the "Son of Man" Christology in Matthew by revealing the true identity of the Son of Man as Son of God, and strengthens the universal recognition (by evil forces, Jews and Gentiles) of his mission as the eschatological agent of God. It is as the Son of God that the Son of Man offers a new Christological law-interpreting principle and eschatological perspective. That the Son of Man title is used in apposition to the Son of God title emphasizes his authority from the Father to reveal a new dimension in the interpretation of the eschatological rest typified by the sabbath.

### Son of David

The title "Son of David" in reference to Jesus is used nine times in the gospel of Matthew (1:11; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30,31; 21:9; 21:15; 22:42). This is the most prominent title for Jesus in the mouths of those who need his healing power (cf. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31) and freedom from oppression (cf. 21:9, 15), offering a significant contextual background in the healing and restoration images of eschatological salvation (cf. Ezek 34:16, 15, 23, 24). It is rooted in the prophecies that a new Davidic ruler would appear, through whom God would feed, heal and give rest to the sheep of Israel (e.g. Ezek 34:11-15, 23-24). This title is introduced by Matthew from the beginning (Matt 1:1), in apposition to Ἰησοῦ

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nations –with the implication that efforts to do so will meet with success – will in some way be rooted in the present recognition of the significance of Jesus by the centurion and those with him." Nolland, *Matthew*, 122. Cf. also France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1085.

Χριστοῦ and υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ. The next use of the title is found in Matt 9:27: “As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, ‘Have mercy on us, Son of David!’” This is a typical usage of the title in this gospel, as it is used by those requesting mercy, healing, and freedom.

The third occurrence of ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ in Matthew is found in the confirmation of a healing/exorcism miracle of Jesus by the crowds (Matt 12:22, 23). This occurrence of the title is of particular interest for this dissertation because, even though the title is not explicitly found in the specific narrative scope of 11:25-12:14, this instance is found in its narrative context. This is the third conflict story between Jesus and the Pharisees since Jesus has invited the burdened ones to come to him for rest (cf. 11:28-30) in light of his complete and unique knowledge of the Father (cf. 11:25-27). Following this invitation, Matthew narrates the challenge in the grainfields (12:1-8), the healing on the Sabbath of the man with a withered hand (12:9-14) and the healing of the demon-possessed, blind and mute man (12:22-24), in which the “Son of David” title is found. Jesus is acting as predicted by the prophets regarding the eschatological Davidic prince (cf. Ezek 34). The crowds are receiving this revelation (cf. 12:23) while the Pharisees are rejecting it (cf. 12:24). In this instance, the Son of David title is directly linked with exorcisms and the explicit eschatological reality that the kingdom of God brings in that context (cf. Matt 12:23, 28). In other words, Jesus is the eschatological Son of David who has inaugurated the kingdom of God (cf. 12:28). In Matthew 11:25-12:24 three Christological titles are utilized: i.e. the Son (11:27); the Son of Man (12:8); and the Son of David (12:23), and these titles expand and interpret each other. In combination with Son of David, they show Jesus enacting his unique revelation of the Father in the new-dimension of law interpretation (12:8) and eschatological images of rest

(11:28-20; 12:8) and healing (12:13; 23, 28).<sup>354</sup> Jesus' mission is indeed greater than the temple (12:6), than the prophets (12:41) and the kings (12:42).

In Matthew, every time someone in need of healing addresses Jesus with the title "Son of David," the Christological title is uttered in conjunction with the request that Jesus may have mercy (ἐλεέω) on them. This verb is a cognate term of mercy (ἐλεος), a principle that Jesus constantly upheld when teaching how to interpret the law (cf. 9:13; 12:7; 23:23). Only once, in the gospel of Matthew, ἐλεέω is used without the title "Son of David" (18:33). Therefore, Matthew indicates a strong corollary between the title ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ and the verb "to be merciful" (ἐλεέω). God had promised that he would have mercy (ἐλεέω) as part of the eschatological realities of Israel's restoration (e.g. Ezek 39:25).<sup>355</sup> It is in this capacity, as the eschatological Davidic healer and restorer that Jesus heals the man with the withered hand on the sabbath (Matt 12:9-14). The eschatological rest, promised by God to Israel

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<sup>354</sup> A context of exorcism is also found in the next instance of the title, this time outside the territory of Israel, when Jesus went away into the district of Tyre and Sidon (Matt 15:22). After interchanging a riddle about bread (cf. vv. 26-27), which challenges the notion that Jesus was sent "only" to the lost sheep of Israel (v. 24), Jesus consents to heal her daughter and commends her faith (v. 28). Matthew adds "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David..." (v. 22) to the Markan version (Mark 7:26). This addition echoes the same phrase uttered by the two blind men in 9:27, and the two blind men in 20:30, 31.<sup>354</sup> The two blind men, sitting by the road as Jesus leaves Jericho, persistently ask Jesus, as Son of David, to heal them, in spite of the crowd telling them to be quiet (Matt 20:30, 31). These two men, as was the case in 9:27 and 15:22, request that Jesus may have mercy on them. These two events are comparable to those narrated in Mark 10:46-52 and Luke 18:35-43, even though in Mark and Luke the stories depict one blind man. Both of these instances also contain the title "Son of David" and the request for mercy. They also use the title in apposition to the name "Jesus;" a detail that is absent in Matthew's accounts, which seems to intensify his focus on the Christological title (cf. 9:27; 20:30, 31).

<sup>355</sup> The last three occurrences of ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ in Matthew (21:9, 15; 22:42) are employed with an expanded force than the healing context that surrounded the title up to this point, even though a healing activity is recorded after the king-like entry into the city (cf. Matt 21:14). The first two instances (21:9, 15) occur in the setting of the triumphal entry and the cleansing of the temple. Both times the cry "son of David" is preceded by the word Ὡσαννά. The word Hosanna is mentioned three times in the gospel of Matthew, and all three are found in these two verses (21:9 twice, 15). The praise of the crowd (21:9) which Matthew narrates in the context of a thanksgiving Psalm (cf. 118:26), ushers Jesus into Jerusalem in a royal parade (Matt 21:9, 10). Following the triumphal entry, Jesus cleansed the temple (cf. 21:12, 13) and healed the sick in the temple (v. 14). But the chief priests and scribes became indignant, not only because of what he had done, but specifically because of what the children were shouting: "Hosanna to the Son of David" (21:15). This is the core of their challenge to him: "Do you hear what these children are saying?" (21:16); to this inquiry, Jesus answered by quoting Psalm 8:2.

through images of healing and restoration (e.g. Ezek 34:15, 16; cf. 34:23-24), were now offered through Jesus, the therapeutic Son of David, fulfilling the ultimate significance of the sabbath rest (11:28-30; 12:9-14).

The last instance of ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ in Matthew is found in Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees, when he asked them a question about the identity of the Christ: "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, 'The son of David.'" (22:42). This answer from the Pharisees forms an inclusio for this title in Matthew, because this is the only time, aside from the first verse of this gospel, in which "Christ" and "Son of David" are revealed as synonyms, which is a significant Matthean Christological perspective on Jesus' identity from the very beginning (cf. Matt 1:1). In addition, it is the only time when the Pharisees talk about the Son of David. To this interaction, Jesus adds a theological discussion, based on Psalm 110:1, that points to himself as greater than David (22:43-45), which implicitly echoes his preceding "greater than" arguments (cf. 12:6, 41, 42).

In brief, each of the four Christological titles contributes to a different emphasis and highlights a unique dimension of Jesus' identity and mission in this Gospel: "The Son of Man," who has no place to rest his head, has authority on earth to forgive sins (9:6) and re-interprets the law in light of his mission (12:8); and yet he submits himself to be killed by human beings, after which he resurrects and eventually comes in power and glory in his παρουσία. "The Son" reveals the Father (11:27), because he is the only one who fully recognizes the Father and mediates this knowledge (11:25-27), offering his own eschatological ἀνάπαυσις in the present, for the weary and burdened who come to him (11:28-30). He himself is eschatological revelation of the Father (16:17). "The Son of David" is the therapeutic eschatological agent of God who brings healing and restoration, ushering

in the kingdom of God (12:23, 28; 21:9-14), and the Son of God is recognized by the spiritual realm (3:17; 8:29) and worshiped on earth by those who recognize him as such (14:33; 27:54). Furthermore, in the Gospel of Matthew all four Christological titles culminate in an eschatological setting: Son of Man (e.g. 24: 27, 37, 39), the Son (e.g. 24:36; 28: 18-20); Son of David (e.g. 12:23, 28); Son of God (e.g. 8:29; 26:63, 64). This strengthens the notion that Matthew's eschatology is based on his Christology, and that his Christology is based on his eschatology, creating a reinforcing effect.

In addition to "the Son of Man" title being utilized with a predominant eschatological force, the title "the Son" seems to be used in a revelatory and eschatological setting in all four instances (cf. 11:27 (twice); 24:36; 28:19) as well. In Matthew, the title ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ is used of Jesus as a healer and eschatological figure. The needy and sick address him this way, usually in conjunction with a request for mercy (cf. 9:27; 15:22; 20:30, 31) and it is used to praise him as a religious-political leader (cf. 21:9, 15). The majority of those who are healed in the context of this title are blind (cf. 9:27; 12:23; 20:30, 31). Ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ is Matthew's introductory Christological title for Jesus, which in turn is rejected by the religious leaders (21:15, 16; 22:42-46), even though they are aware that the Christ is the Son of David (22:42). Matthew confirms his introductory thesis through the assertion of the Pharisees (cf. 1:1; 22:42). The last revelatory pronouncement of the Matthean Jesus regarding his own identity using a Christological title answers the question about him being the Son of God with the consummation of his identity as the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven (Matt 26:63, 64).<sup>356</sup> The Gospel of Matthew concludes with a pronouncement of Jesus about

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<sup>356</sup> These are the only two times in the four Gospels that "the living God" is mentioned as a witness of such revelation (cf. Matt 16:16; 26:63).



his complete authority in heaven and on earth, in the present and the future in an eschatological setting.

Matthew's eschatological perspective and law-interpreting hermeneutical principles are primarily based on his Christological view. Jesus is the eschatological agent of God, who has inaugurated the kingdom of heaven on earth, and, therefore, has added a new dimension to the interpretation of the law, and, in light of his identity and mission, has made available in the present time those eschatological realities which were expected for the age to come.

Having noted how Matt 11: 25-12:14 relates to Matthew's law-interpreting principles, eschatological perspective and Christological emphasis in the Gospel as a whole, we conclude that our findings strengthen the case for our proposal that Matthew has placed Jesus' offer of rest (Matt 11:28-30) intentionally between 11:25-27 and 12:1-14 to indicate a new dimension of understanding of the sabbath commandment: ἀνάπαυσις in Jesus. This revelation, mediated by the only one who knows the Father and can reveal him (11:27), is not a revelation for the Matthean audience to "discontinue" the commandment to keep the sabbath,<sup>357</sup> but a new "developmental" dimension of understanding and keeping of the sabbath commandment in light of Jesus' eschatological presence, identity and mission: "Δεῦτε πρὸς με... καὶ γὰρ ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς" (Matt 11:28).

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<sup>357</sup> *Contra* Moo, "Jesus and the authority of the Mosaic law," 29, who argues that Jesus' authority has an abrogating effect on the Sabbath commandment: "Jesus' authority as the law's fulfiller stands even over the decalogue, as his claim of lordship over the Sabbath shows; and most believers have utilized that authority in refusing to 'honor the seventh day'." This claim is not supported by Matthew's development of the law.

## **Chapter 6 - Conclusion**

In this dissertation, we have analyzed the juxtaposition of Jesus' offer of ἀνάπαυσις in view of his exclusive prerogative to reveal the Father (Matt 11:25-30) and his subsequent proclamation of being the Lord of the σάββατον, and thereby ushering in a new dimension of understanding of the sabbath commandment (Matt 12:1-14) in light of his own identity and mission. In setting out this analysis, we also studied the LXX's use of the ἀνάπαυσις and σάββατον word groups and indicated how the results of such study illuminate the use of the terms in Matthew's account. We now offer a summarizing statement of our findings and suggest briefly their implications for recent discussion of the setting of Matthew's Gospel.

### **Developmental vs. Detrimental Approach**

Based on this research, we propose that Matthew presents a developmental and not a detrimental approach to the law and the sabbath commandment. In fact, he appeals to Scripture for his developmental approach. Matthew's Christological hermeneutics suggests a new and greater understanding of the Scriptures in light of the arrival of God's eschatological agent in the person of Jesus. The law and the prophets foresaw and "prophesied" about this new upcoming era (Matt 11:13), and the Matthean Jesus announces the ushering in of these eschatological expectations, including the fullest expression of the meaning of the law pointing to himself (Matt 5:17; 12:8). The new dimension introduced by Matthew is not antagonistic to what has come before; it does not abrogate or annul the Torah or the commandments (Matt 5:19). On the contrary, it proposes that the Scriptures develop a Messiah-centered approach to the law and the

prophets. Jesus himself becomes eschatological revelation, and his identity and mission surpass, and therefore are “greater than,” any previous understanding of the law and the temple (Matt 12:5, 6), the prophets (Matt 12:41) and the Davidic kings (Matt 12:42).<sup>358</sup> He is the new and greater Moses, prophesied in Deut 18:15, 18, and the eschatological Davidic prince through whom God himself promised rest (Ezek 34:15).

In keeping with Matthew’s developmental understanding of the law and eschatology, based on his Christological hermeneutics, we find that in Matt 11:25-12:14 he deliberately juxtaposes Jesus’ offer of rest and Jesus’ attitude to the sabbath. Two observations about the use of ἀνάπαυσις in the LXX provide an insightful background to our conclusion. In the first place, the terms ἀνάπαυσις and σάββατον are often juxtaposed in Exodus and Leviticus (LXX) in direct apposition, usually defining each other.<sup>359</sup> Secondly, Jesus’ offer of rest in Matthew 11:28, in the first person singular (ἀναπαύσω), while unique to the New Testament, is used only three times in the LXX, where the Lord promises “rest” to Israel, through the Davidic dynasty in the historic books (2 Kgdms 7:11; 1 Chr 22:9) and through the future Davidic king in the prophets (Ezek 34:15). Since Jesus is the coming eschatological Davidic prince who would bring healing and rest, breaking the yoke of the shepherds of Israel (e.g. Matt 1:1; 11:28-30; 12:23; cf. Ezek 34: 15, 16, 23-24, 27), we suggest that Matthew sets out a new developmental dimension in the understanding of the sabbath commandment in light of Jesus’ identity: ἀνάπαυσις in Jesus. The Matthean

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<sup>358</sup> Cf. L. Doering, *Sabbat: Sabbathalacha und –praxis im antiken Judentum und Urchristentum*. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 434, who proposes that the work and message of Jesus is the “something greater” that the Matthean Jesus announces: “Vielmehr ist die neutrische Form μείζων in V. 6 zu beachten, die kein grammatikalisch maskulines, sachlich personales Subjekt nahelegt. Was ist hier (ὧδε) größer als der Tempel? Die Parallelität mit Mt12,41f deutet auf eine Verbindung zu Wirken und Botschaft Jesu.”

<sup>359</sup> Cf. Chapter 2.

community continues to observe the sabbath commandment,<sup>360</sup> a fact further highlighted in Matt 24:20,<sup>361</sup> but with a new developmental understanding of its meaning: from that point on, the physical rest signifies not only a creation reality (cf. Exod 20:8-11), but also a redemption reality through Jesus (Matt 11:28-30; Matt 12:8; cf. Deut 5:15). This eschatological experience is available to the believer in the present (Matt 11:28-30). When the Matthean Jesus offers his easy yoke (Matt 11:30), he is not advocating the annulment of the Torah and the sabbath commandment, but a new Christological understanding of the full measure of fulfillment of the law in him.<sup>362</sup> The Matthean Jesus highlights and validates the Torah and the commandments (cf. Matt 5:17-19; 7:12; 11:13; 12:5; 15:3; 19:17, 22:38-40). On the other hand, the scribes and Pharisees concentrate on what is “permissible” or “lawful,” even while breaking the commandments to uphold their own traditions (15:3) and neglecting the weightier matters of the law (Matt 23:23). Jesus exposes such behavior as usurping the chair of Moses (Matt 23:2-7; cf. 23:13-33), while he himself asserts the authority of Moses (Matt 8:4; 17:3, 4; 19:8).

What then do these findings suggest about the setting of the author of Matthew’s Gospel and his audience within the early Christian movement’s self-definition in relation to Judaism?

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<sup>360</sup> The majority of scholars agree that sabbath observance was important for the Matthean community. Cf. Hultren argues that Matt 12:9-14, “would have been composed in a community which continued to observe that sabbath, but which raise the question of the extent to which Pharisaic law was applicable... the sabbath is understood here as an anticipation of life in the new age to come, which has drawn near, and therefore a shift of emphasis is made from the typological to the eschatological.” Hultren, *Jesus and His Adversaries*, 83-84. In this research, we have demonstrated that for Matthew the sabbath controversies surpass a halakhic concern and indicate the Christological developmental meaning of the sabbath as an eschatological reality.

<sup>361</sup> Doering, *Schabbat*, 435, argues that the Matthean community kept the basic rest from work: “... kann man davon ausgehen, daß in der mt Gemeinde zwar der Sabbat als ein Tag tendenzieller Arbeitsruhe durchgehalten wird (vgl. Mt 24, 20), daß nichtsdestoweniger aber eine festgelegte Sabbathalacha nicht in Geltung steht.”

<sup>362</sup> “Das Lernen von Jesus und sein angenehmes Joch meinen nun aber nicht, dass seine Tora-Interpretation weniger anspruchsvoll wäre, denn Jesus kommt, um die Tora zu erfüllen und fordert dazu auf, vollkommen wie Gott selbst zu sein (5,17.48).” M. Grilli, Langner, C. *Das Matthäusevangelium. Ein Kommentar für die Praxis*. (Stuttgart:Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2010), 191.

## Evolutionary vs. Revolutionary Self-definition in Matthew's Setting

In recent years, much of the discussion regarding the setting of Matthew's audience in relation to Judaism has focused on sociological aspects. Christology has not been a major focus in the significant research labelled the "new or emerging consensus,"<sup>363</sup> that proposes that the Matthean readership still exists within Judaism at the time of the writing of the Gospel, in the form of a "Jesus-centered Judaism,"<sup>364</sup> *intra muros*,<sup>365</sup> as reflected in the Matthean controversy stories,<sup>366</sup> and alienated from the larger Jewish community.<sup>367</sup>

On the other hand, a dissenting group of scholars have argued that the Matthean community is already a distinct group from Judaism and finds itself *extra muros*. Stanton proposes that the Matthean community has been alienated from Judaism and that the Gospel is written in an effort to create a new identity, providing "divine sanction for the parting of the ways."<sup>368</sup> Deines, who concentrates on the Messianic perspective of the Gospel of Matthew based in Matt 5:17-20, considers himself opposed to the *intra muros* "emerging consensus"<sup>369</sup> and creates an antithesis between the Torah and the Christological

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<sup>363</sup> Cf. Deines, "Not the Law but the Messiah," 57 regarding the "emerging consensus" and Christology not being a main factor in it: "Christology is not a main factor in this emerging consensus, and this is again one of the advantages of this approach, because the downplaying of Christology eases religious dialogue with Judaism and Islam." This research does focus on Christology and suggests that, *contra* Deines, it is possible to argue that the Matthean community is adopting a developmental approach to Judaism based on its Christology. Foster, *Community, Law and Mission in Matthew's Gospel*, 77, proposes that in broad terms the assessment of Saldarini, Overman, Sim and Repschinski (the emerging consensus) regarding Matthew's setting may be summarized as: "a deviant movement operating within the orbit of Judaism."

<sup>364</sup> Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis*, 414.

<sup>365</sup> Cf. D. Gurtner, "Matthew's Theology of the Temple and the 'Parting of the Ways,'" in *Built upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew* (ed. D.M. Gurtner and J. Nolland. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 153, who argues for an *intra muros* position due to the consistency of the Matthean data: "He stresses the authority of Scripture, acknowledges the importance of the Sabbath (though through Christological lenses) and now is in favor of the existence of the Temple, God's presence in it, and the legitimacy of its sacrifices... Matthew's Temple is surely an *intra muros* issue."

<sup>366</sup> Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew*, 343-349.

<sup>367</sup> Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 196-197.

<sup>368</sup> Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 378.

<sup>369</sup> Deines, "Not the Law but the Messiah," 57.

focus of Matthew in the very title of his article, “Not the Law but the Messiah.”<sup>370</sup> In the same manner, Foster argues that Matthew’s “attitude towards Gentile mission more naturally reflects a community that had stepped outside the bounds of Judaism.”<sup>371</sup>

Our research suggests that an “either-or” approach to Matthew’s setting is unfounded, and that, on the contrary, Matthew reflects an evolutionary approach to mainstream Judaism. As Hagner appropriately argues: “It is of course true that Matthew would never have thought of Christianity as a *new religion*... For Matthew, Jewish Christianity is the perfection and fulfillment of Judaism... There is no reason why the full Jewishness of Matthew cannot be given its due emphasis without denying the fully Christian identity of his community.”<sup>372</sup> Hagner goes on to propose, as we do, that the forming Matthean community, while self-identifying as Jewish-Christian, had broken with the synagogue even though it remains in close proximity to it.<sup>373</sup> We believe that the Matthean narrative indicates that Matthew is addressing an emerging and forming community within Judaism,<sup>374</sup> most likely a voluntary association,<sup>375</sup> but distinct from the synagogue. This community is forming primarily because of its Christological view-point.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Furthermore, Deines, “Not the Law but the Messiah,” 67, argues that, “Christology (‘something greater than the temple is here’) overrides the Sabbath.”

<sup>371</sup> Foster, *Community, Law and Mission in Matthew’s Gospel*, 79.

<sup>372</sup> D. Hagner, “Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?” *NTS* 49 (2003): 208.

<sup>373</sup> Cf. Hagner, “Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?,” 198: “My own conviction is that Matthew’s community *had* broken with the synagogue, but that it remained in proximity to the synagogue and inescapably in an ongoing situation of debate and controversy with it.”

<sup>374</sup> It is not within the scope of this dissertation to analyze if this emerging community is in its “forming,” “storming,” “norming,” or “performing” stage. For a discussion of these possible stages of the Matthean community, cf. R. Ascough, “Matthew and Community Formation,” in *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in Memory of William G. Thompson, S.J.* (ed. D. E. Aune; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 96-126.

<sup>375</sup> For a detailed study of “voluntary associations” in relation to the possible formation of the Matthean community, cf. D. Duling, “The Matthean Brotherhood and Marginal Scribal Leadership” in *Modelling Early Christianity: Social-scientific studies of the New Testament in its Context*,” (ed. P. Esler. London: Routledge, 1995), 159-182.

<sup>376</sup> *Contra* Ascough, “Matthew and Community Formation,” 102, who argues that, “For the Matthean group, the need to organize arose from the perception that the social well-being of those who identified themselves with the Messiah named Jesus was not being enhanced through continued contact with their former small

For the Matthean Jewish-Christian community, asking the question whether they are Jewish “or” Christian would resemble asking the question whether the tree is outside the seed. The seed is in the tree, and yet the tree is much more than the seed. Matthew’s stance within Judaism is not “revolutionary”<sup>377</sup> but “evolutionary.” He is asserting a new Christological dimension to Judaism, which he claims was prophesied in the Scriptures. In other words, instead of “Not the Law but the Messiah,”<sup>378</sup> Matthew proposes “the Law that points to the Messiah.”

When discussing the “self-definition” of Matthew’s implied readers in relation to Judaism, we conclude from the Matthean narrative that they would define themselves as representatives of the *true* Judaism that has found fulfillment in the identity and mission of Jesus.<sup>379</sup> Because of its Christological focus, the Matthean community is at odds with the Pharisees and any other Jewish leaders who reject God’s revelation of Jesus as the expected eschatological agent and it is in the process of formation as a Jewish-Christian community, probably separate from the synagogue and yet in close proximity to it. The ἐκκλησία is to be based on this Christological revelation from the Father (Matt 16:16-18) regarding the identity and mission of Jesus.<sup>380</sup> In his developmental approach, Matthew has found the

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group, i.e., the synagogue.” The sociological aspect of congregating with a group that dissents from Matthew’s Christological focus may be a secondary reason for the forming of a new community, but it is not the primary reason for this emerging community, taking into consideration the Christological focus of the Gospel of Matthew.

<sup>377</sup> *Contra* Hagner, “Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?,” 209, who proposes that Matthew was a “Revolutionary.”

<sup>378</sup> Cf. Deines, “Not the Law but the Messiah,” 53-84.

<sup>379</sup> In agreement with Hagner, “Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?,” 198, who agrees with this conclusion: “It seems quite probable that Matthew’s community thought of *itself* as Judaism - not as *a* Judaism, but as the *true* Judaism that brought the fulfillment of the promises to Israel.” Cf. also D. Senior, “Between Two Worlds: Gentile and Jewish Christians in Matthew’s Gospel,” *CBQ* 61 (1999): 3.

<sup>380</sup> Saldarini, *Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community*, 119, argues that the term ἐκκλησία in Matthew indicates “the assembly of Israel according to the teaching of Jesus” as distinct from “the assembly of Israel” (συναγωγή).

maximum expression and fulfillment of Judaism in Jesus.<sup>381</sup> He is clear and bold in proposing a new developmental dimension through Christological hermeneutics, not only because Jesus is the new mediator of the Torah and sets new messianic goals for it,<sup>382</sup> but also because Jesus himself is eschatological revelation and only through him the mysteries of God are revealed (Matt 11:25-27), including the redemptive meaning of the sabbath commandment in Jesus (12:8, 9-14; cf. 11:28-30).<sup>383</sup>

In this study we have demonstrated that Matthew sets out a new Jesus-centered Judaism which is not antithetical to the Torah, but is, instead, fulfilled in Jesus. This new dimension of Judaism is evolutionary, not revolutionary, and it offers a new yoke, the yoke of Jesus, that is easy and light, as it ushers in the expected eschatological realities and brings ἀνάπαυσις to the soul: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matt 11:28-30).

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<sup>381</sup> Cf. A. Saldarini, "Boundaries and Polemics in the Gospel of Matthew," *BibInt* 3 (1995):265, who argues that: "Matthew does not reject Israel or oppose Christianity to Judaism; he hopes to convince his fellow Jews to endorse a Jesus-centered Israel."

<sup>382</sup> Cf. Hagner, "Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?," 203; also Deines, "Not the Law," 83: "In other words, only as long as the Torah serves the messianic goal is the Torah valid." We are in full agreement with these statements that highlight the Christological mediation of the Torah. Nevertheless, we add that the identity of Jesus himself, not just his mediatory role of the Torah, is a new developmental understanding prophesied by the law and the prophets.

<sup>383</sup> Cf. D. Hare, "How Jewish is the Gospel of Matthew?" *CBQ* 62 (2000), 272, who opposes the "new consensus" and yet believes that Matthew encourages Sabbath observance, elevating Jesus as the Lord of the sabbath.



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