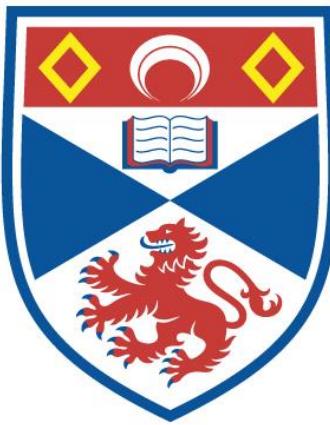


**RITUAL IN THE DAMASCUS DOCUMENT AND THE GOSPEL  
OF MATTHEW**

**Kathleen Helen Burt**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St Andrews**



**2014**

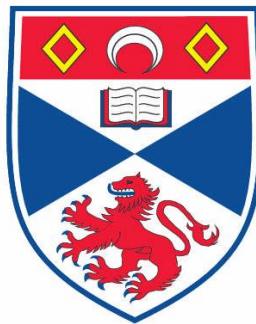
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Ritual in the Damascus Document  
and the Gospel of Matthew

K. H. Burt



This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD  
at the University of St Andrews

25.10.13

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the ritual content of the *Damascus Document* and the Gospel of Matthew, demonstrating how community identity is constructed and developed through the interpretation of the Law represented in each. The content is arranged according to the ritual typology of Catherine Bell, which organises ritual into six categories: calendrical ritual, rites of exchange and communion, political ritual, rites of passage, rites of affliction and rites of feasting and fasting. Analysis by type enables comparison and comment on the features and effects of ritual. I identify the Scriptural precedent for the discussions of ritual and any similar texts from the same period. These two ritually dense texts provide a great deal of material representing different perspectives on ritual function and obligations within a Jewish community setting. The *Damascus Document* is a non-sectarian legal text from the Second Temple period. The Gospel of Matthew presents the narrative of Jesus with considerable comment on ritual matters, reflecting an audience steeped in Jewish ritual praxis while looking towards an eschatological inclusion of Gentiles who adhere to Jewish obligations. Each offers an insight into a community dissenting from aspects of mainstream Judaism without withdrawing completely. Each community maintains traditional ritual obligations to some extent, but claims additional information clarifying the correct interpretations of the Law. This thesis analyses how they negotiate the practical, and often theological, issues that accompany their distinct practices, creating a community identity through ritual.

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Kathleen Helen Burt  
October 2013

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## INTRODUCTION

In the expansive Second Temple complex on Jerusalem's Temple Mount, the ancient observer would stand at the centre of Jewish society and the main focus of religious activity. The temple was a mark of Jewish identity and provided a point of contact between various strands of tradition during a particularly diverse period in the development of Judaism. It was also the focus of ritual debate and dissent. Two distinct strands of tradition are represented by the *Damascus Document*, a non-sectarian legal text found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Gospel of Matthew. The authors have very different outlooks and goals, but each text deals extensively with the ritual schemes of Second Temple Judaism, with the temple a shared locus of ritual action, though interaction with the temple is complex and often contentious. The use of Scripture, particularly the Pentateuch, in both texts demonstrates a perceived continuity with national and religious identity among the members of each community. That it is appropriate to use such texts as authoritative is taken for granted by their authors; it is through their use and interpretation of the Law that a sense of community identity may develop. Often, the same texts underlie the discussion on one type of ritual, but are used or interpreted quite differently in a manner that provides an insight into community concerns and preoccupations. Through a consideration of the ways in which each text interacts with these types of mainstream Jewish ritual and creates meaning and identity from the symbols of ritual praxis, a greater understanding of these texts in their context and usage emerges.

## 1. Why Ritual?

### a. Developments in Ritual Studies

Ritual is present when a routine part of life is invested with particular preferences or methods and the function occurs through attention to these habits, influenced by ideology.<sup>1</sup> Ritual has consistently been classified as ‘nonutilitarian and nonrational’.<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that ritual requires no practical function but that its primary goal transcends function; its aims would be sought irrespective of function, i.e. eating to mitigate hunger is not ritual but feasting in celebration of an identifiable purpose is, regardless of hunger. Ritual’s frequent crisis-averting nature reflects ‘existential anxiety’ underlying its development as a reaction to stress.<sup>3</sup>

For clarity, I use Catherine Bell’s terminology in defining ritual. I use “rite” to refer to a contiguous ritual event, involving a single action or several linked actions. “Ritual” exclusively denotes material referring to rites, while “ritualistic” denotes anything with features reminiscent of ritual action which is not in itself ritual. For example, the Passover rite is ritual, while Jesus’ healings (not being true ritual) are ritualistic.

The authority by which a rite is transmitted as tradition does not have any bearing on how ritual functions, though it may be of sociological interest. Ritual itself, however, can be ‘constructive’ to societal structure.<sup>4</sup> In community, obeying protocols creates a sense of participation and may contribute to the identity construction. Tambiah described ritual as ‘performative’ in that the words and actions involved are symbolic, representing assumptions about reality.<sup>5</sup> Ritual establishes a shared vocabulary of signs and symbols and aims to perpetuate favourable conditions.<sup>6</sup> Ritual is analogous to verbal argument in that components cannot be lost or rearranged without a significant

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<sup>1</sup> I. Gruenwald, *Rituals and Ritual Theory in Ancient Israel*. (Leiden: Brill, 2003). vii.

<sup>2</sup> C. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). 46-47.

<sup>3</sup> Gruenwald, *Rituals*. 26-27.

<sup>4</sup> Gruenwald, *Rituals*. ix

<sup>5</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 50-51.

<sup>6</sup> Gruenwald, *Rituals*. vii-ix.

(even definitive) loss of meaning.<sup>7</sup> Scholar of Ancient Israelite ritual Ithamar Gruenwald argues that ‘people do rituals to define and maintain existence.’<sup>8</sup>

Gruenwald claims that “the mind” creates ritual in a manner which complements its sense of ordered “reality”.<sup>9</sup> While I do not agree with Gruenwald that theology *never* occasions or explains ritual – ideas or symbols in Judaism often provide much of the impetus – I agree that the nature of theology does not necessarily dictate or influence the context or praxis of the rite.<sup>10</sup>

The social or mental origins of ritual action lie at the heart of modern ritual scholarship. Nineteenth century anthropologist Edward B. Tylor proposed that religion evolved from the notion of *anima*, an ongoing soul.<sup>11</sup> Old Testament scholar William Robertson Smith asserted the primacy of ritual in this process of evolution as socially generative activities from which abstract ideas were later extrapolated. Religion when it developed would then be rooted in the structure of society, a development that led to the rise of the “myth and ritual” school and Durkheim’s sociological approach.<sup>12</sup> Fustel de Coulanges and Robertson Smith inspired Emile Durkheim in his work *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, where he argued that there was a basic social function separate from the expression of beliefs, as beliefs defined properties of their object while ritual was an expression of relationship to that object and could not be extrapolated further with consistency.<sup>13</sup>

Durkheim’s conception of religion was as a system of classification of the sacred and profound with ritual an attempt to manage their presence.<sup>14</sup> Separation of the sacred and profane, managed by systems of purity and impurity, underlie the Levitical code. Durkheim argued that religion is a product of social organisation not the individual mind.<sup>15</sup> Radcliffe-Brown moved beyond Durkheim’s developmental approach to a largely ahistorical concern with social functionalism.<sup>16</sup> Radcliffe-Brown attributed ritual cohesion not to individual motives or instincts but to social interdependence;

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 30

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 24.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 24-25.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 28-29.

<sup>11</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 4-5. Cf. E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*. (New York: Harper 1958).

<sup>12</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 4-5.

<sup>13</sup> Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 15

<sup>14</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 24. Cf. E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. J.W. Swain (trans.) (New York: New York Free Press, 1965). 52, 56, 461.

<sup>15</sup> Durkheim, *Elementary Forms* Cf. Bell, *Ritual*. 24.

<sup>16</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 27.

society is organic with all the implied complexities.<sup>17</sup> Neofunctionalists emphasised the complexity of integrated social systems.<sup>18</sup>

Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, taking this further, effectively inverted the earlier principles as they challenged Durkheim's assumption of the primacy of belief, arguing instead that in highlighting the (often separate) social role of ritual, scholars demonstrated the role that ritual plays in determining belief systems and 'sacrilising' things.<sup>19</sup> Many scholars, in accepting the primacy of religious belief in determining ritual, therefore portray ritual as action devoid of thought but done habitually as an expression of inalienable beliefs. Edward Shils concluded that 'beliefs could exist without rituals; rituals, however, could not exist without beliefs' and Levi-Strauss draws this distinction, if anything, more sharply.<sup>20</sup>

Geertz, while in part reproducing this dichotomy between thought and action, moved further towards a view of ritual as distinct from belief but also able to have an impact upon it. With ritual as *ethos* and belief as *worldview*, ritual remains distinct as an expression of a group's belief that expresses their location and role in their world, but Geertz also argues that ritual can define this relationship and impact upon the belief system itself. As such, it functions as a source of understanding for observers, as a point at which conceptual belief interacts with action, providing a 'temporary resolution of a dichotomy'.<sup>21</sup> Far from accepting an irresolvable dichotomy between belief and action, Geertz validated the examination of ritual to understand the theoretical beliefs or worldview. Ritual is revealing, as it exposes the locus of meaning for its participants, in relation to underlying beliefs, and provides scope for theoretical interaction between participants (action) and observers (thought). The actors, expressing their relationship to the world in meaningful action, help the observer to analyse its meaningfulness, and the function and ethos of the rite.<sup>22</sup> Freud-inspired psychoanalytical approaches made one

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 28-29. cf A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (New York: Free Press 1964) (first published 1922)

<sup>18</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 29.

<sup>19</sup> Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 15

<sup>20</sup> E. Shils, 'Ritual and Crisis' in D. R Cutler, (ed.) *The Religious Situation*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968). 736; C. Levi-Strauss, *The Naked Man*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1990. 669-675, 679-684.

Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 15

<sup>21</sup>Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 26-27, Geertz, *the Interpretation of Cultures*, 44-45, 48, 89, 112-113, 127, 131, 137

<sup>22</sup> Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 28.

vital contribution to ritual interpretation: how people *explain* their ritual is not necessarily relevant.<sup>23</sup>

The structuralism of Evans-Pritchard and van Gennep conceived ritual as an observable externalisation of religious concepts; beliefs are made manifest through collective action, a wide range of individual responses within the overarching structure.<sup>24</sup> Van Gennep introduced a concept of ritual as not only a mobilisation of belief in social structure but generative of cosmological belief.<sup>25</sup>

For Douglas, ritual communicates social structure experienced in relationships.<sup>26</sup> Edmund Leach viewed ritual as not only reflective of social reality but crucial in managing potential transgressions of category to mediate social change while maintaining boundaries.<sup>27</sup> Max Gluckman argued that conflicts of intention must also be taken into account, with ritual a battlefield for orthodoxy and ambivalence.<sup>28</sup>

### **b. Ritual in Israel**

Despite the diversity of Second Temple Judaism, in function it corresponds to the ‘strong group, strong grid’ society in the model of Mary Douglas.<sup>29</sup> Ritual purity is a means of setting Israel apart, an aspect fundamental to a reasonable consideration of the ethical imperative contained within much of these two documents. Demarcation along purity lines is notably unelitist.<sup>30</sup> The moral impulse presupposes that the audience understands the different rules as an identity marker, not because they represent a moral absolute. There is no stigma to outsiders not complying, as outsiders. Following the

<sup>23</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 34-36.

<sup>25</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 37.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 44.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 38.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 43-45. M. Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations on Cosmology*. (New York: Random House, 1970). 49-50, 81.

<sup>30</sup> H. Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality: the Ritual Purity System and its Place in Judaism*. (New York : Cambridge University Press, 1999). 197. Cf. M. Douglas, *In the Wilderness: The Doctrine of Defilement in the Book of Numbers*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). 113

Law is a matter of identity, not right, and the ethical obligation is to maintain this identity.<sup>31</sup>

Sin (which Gruenwald prefers to “taboo” for its specific societal implications) is something which has a detrimental or degenerative effect on society due to improper disruption of that community’s relationship to the “cosmos” – the broad face of existence expressed metaphysically through ritual. Sin threatens order.<sup>32</sup> Morality comprises those responsibilities and imperatives which Israel shares with humanity.<sup>33</sup> Ritual does not provide the framework for morality but is subordinate to and limited by it. All universal moral principles apply.<sup>34</sup> Keeping holiness laws does not exempt Israel from morality, and prophets decried the observance of ritual where it interfered with moral behaviour.<sup>35</sup> Leviticus 19 uses explicitly moral terms to explain the universal morality to be demonstrated by Israel, distinct through its ritual life.<sup>36</sup> By extension, morality is universal, and God punishes non-Israelites for non-ritual transgressions – corruption (Gen 6:11), inhospitality, injustice (Gen 19), incest (Lev 18:24), human sacrifice (Lev 18:21) and violence (Jonah 3:8) – and virtue of non-Israelites comes from moral behaviour.<sup>37</sup>

The shift from nomadic to urban lifestyles determined the course of Israelite ritual development.<sup>38</sup> Such shifts determined the ‘ethos’ of society, leading to the praxes of religion as it develops.<sup>39</sup> Variations in ritual form are often divisive, but may (by virtue of instigating schisms) serve as identity markers, as an identifiable distinction between one group and another who share elements of their history. Indeed, Gruenwald attributes the split between the Sadducees and Pharisees to such a ritual disagreement, as the Sadducees believed the high priest should light the incense before entering the holy of holies, while the Pharisees believed it necessary to light it after entering.<sup>40</sup> While any split demonstrates wider disagreement, the decisive factor is often a matter of ritual form.

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<sup>31</sup> Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality*. 193.

<sup>32</sup> Gruenwald, *Rituals*. 15-16.

<sup>33</sup> Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality*. 193.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 195.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 194.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 205.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 194.

<sup>38</sup> Gruenwald, *Rituals*. 40-41.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 41.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 31.

Gruenwald's work occasionally rests on his central belief that ritual is a product of the mind rather than a conscious expression of symbols. While this may be a useful presupposition in an examination of ritual development, when looking at the function for society in Israelite tradition the "mind" in question is often caught up with an understanding of symbols and relationships which are well exposed and subjected to considerable self-analysis in the Scriptures.<sup>41</sup> This does not mean that what ritual achieves is limited to either the declared or a subconscious intention. The sources material to this project describe and exegete rites. Considering the function of a rite demands analysis of what its outcomes may be. Attempting to delve further into the mind behind these rites is not particularly helpful as, by virtue of their origins in two sources only, we need not reconstruct an all-encompassing societal view of ritual. These sources do not represent the society in which their dissenting views developed but arise from this context. They create a collective identity among those who practice ritual from a unified point of dissent. What they achieve is distinct and several stages removed from an instigating mental impulse, though through illumination of function we may grasp some of the significance with which such a mind hoped to imbue this ritual action.<sup>42</sup> Like Gruenwald's, however, my project provides a fresh perspective through the combination of Jewish ritual and ritual studies.<sup>43</sup> The language used in ritual studies tends to differ from theological explanations, examining the content of the rite and considering its inner logic, while theological examinations tend to explain the undigested rite in relation to the overarching theological context.<sup>44</sup> Theology may provide motivation but does not explain how the content of a rite achieves what it achieves in praxis.<sup>45</sup> Where collective action is present, the practitioners experience a sense of unity despite their individual "minds", and the focus on ritual content and action facilitates an examination of how this collective purpose affects the community. The central principle of Gruenwald's argument is that any rite is more than the sum of its parts, and that function may surpass or transcend its stated objectives.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 13.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Ibid. 13-14.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 20.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 21.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 32.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 18.

### c. What does ritual contribute?

While different approaches to ritual scholarship hold various views on the origin of ritual activity, each perspective acknowledges at a basic level that ritual has a function and tells us something about those who perform it.<sup>47</sup> A study of ritual in the *Damascus Document* and Matthew enables the exploration of life and practice in a target audience community. It facilitates a synoptic treatment of types of action rather than a study of comparative literature and raises questions about this activity through demonstrations of collective preoccupation rather than merely those things which the text plainly instructs.

This project utilises the typology of Catherine Bell in her book, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Bell organised ritual into six categories, generalising the different types of rites identified in the history of social and anthropological scholarship by focusing on their common features and functions recurring across societies. Based on this analysis, complex and extensive texts are more approachable and their detailed discussion of ritual is manageable. I use this typology to approach the *Damascus Document* and Matthew, identifying the rites contained in each, organising them according to the typology, and analysing them by type in comparison with each other to better understand the significance of ritual content in each.

Two articles by James R. Davila ('Ritual in the Jewish Pseudepigrapha,' in *Anthropology & Biblical Studies: Avenues of Approach* (ed. Louise J. Lawrence and Mario I. Aguilar; Leiderdorp: Deo, 2004), 158-83, and 'Ritual in the Old Testament Apocrypha' in *With Wisdom as a Robe Qumran and Other Jewish Studies in Honour of Ida Fröhlich* (ed. Dobos, K. D. and M. Koszeghy; Hebrew Bible Monographs, 21, Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 123-145), and Robert Kugler's article 'Making All Experience Religious: The Hegemony of Ritual at Qumran,' (*JSJ* 33 (2002): 131-52), utilise Bell's ritual typology in surveying the ritual of the Second Temple period to demonstrate how ritual was interwoven with scriptural influences and dominated daily life. Each of these compare a cross section of ritual contained in writings from the period and provide general conclusions as to the most important types

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<sup>47</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 3.

and their place in the social order. Relating Bell's typology specifically to the period and setting in question, one may examine texts such as the *Damascus Document* and Matthew in greater depth and relate them to the Second Temple ritual. This is the task that I take up in a comprehensive study of these two texts.

The typology of Ronald L. Grimes in *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1982) is more complicated and specific, lending itself less well to classification for the purposes of broad generalisation, but useful in some cases for an examination of the function of specific rites. He separates ritual into rites of passage, marriage rites, funerary rites, festivals, pilgrimage, purification, civil ceremonies, ritual of exchange, sacrifice, worship, magic, healing rites, interaction rites, meditation rites, rites of inversion and ritual drama.<sup>48</sup> Many of these fit into Bell's typology as subcategories within the different types, and I do not hesitate to subdivide the ritual content where helpful – for example, Grimes' categories of marriage and funerary rites fit comfortably as sub-sections within rites of passage, and examining all the marriage and divorce related material together reveals and strengthens the unity of the ritual outlook underlying all rites of passage within the two texts.

This topic provides a valuable opportunity to apply insights from the social sciences to the Second Temple period, and to use current and influential scholarship in ritual studies in examining two important texts. Ritual underpins Second Temple Jewish life and is woven throughout the *Damascus Document* and Matthew as exegesis, an expression of theology and a marker of identity; often it constructs identity through an embodiment of community distinctives. Identifying ritual as the focus facilitates a more comprehensive comparison of these texts in an examination of presupposition and attitude than might otherwise be possible, due to their length and complexity. Thorough analysis of ritual according to type is helpful, by gathering together rites of similar character and function, in revealing the effects of collective action within a target community and by extension the attitudes and presuppositions that underlie them. This enables a detailed consideration of specific points through case study without the problem of arbitrary limitation. The diverse rites are manageable when arranged so that they may be compared in appropriate combination.

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<sup>48</sup> R. Grimes, *Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in its Practice, Essays on its Theory*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990). 13-14.

**d. Catherine Bell's ritual typology**

Bell's typology allows the isolated information hinting at regular practice to contribute to a more comprehensive and wide ranging discussion of ritual life in the communities represented by these texts. The typology allows a framework for interpretation based not on the agenda of the text or the narrative but on the universal rhythms of life and activity. Bell's typology takes in to account activities in societies of varying ritual density ranging from present day ritual activity to prehistoric evidence taking in the relevant period of antiquity. It is not contingent upon presumed factors, nor does it espouse a particular philosophy or history. In this respect the typology is well suited to the historical critical method. As the categories are deliberately general I subdivide each of the chapters according to further logical groupings. For example, within calendrical ritual a large portion of the ritual material deals with Sabbath regulations so it is sensible to consider these passages as part of the same perspective. Sometimes these subdivisions overlap in the study of CD and Matthew, while sometimes such subdivisions highlight the fact that the texts, thought dealing with the same type of ritual, do not provide different perspectives on the same activities. The typology is helpful in facilitating an examination of underlying modes of thought in the same type of ritual although concerns may not in practice overlap.

Calendrical rites are rites performed regularly or at a set point in the calendar, and may be identified as one of the dominant types of ritual. Both the *Damascus Document* and Matthew draw upon a dense ritual calendar containing a variety of calendrical rites throughout the year. These are dominated by Sabbath concerns, but also include the Eucharist in Matthew, administrative rites in the *Damascus Document*, and festivals. These mark the passage of time in the established temporal cycle and relate it to society. The calendar can be lunar or solar, which can be significant in itself. Among the calendrical rites, there is a further distinction between seasonal and commemorative ritual. Commemorative ritual commemorates with regularity past events that have a particular significance for the society or community, while seasonal rites acknowledge the natural or agricultural calendar and bring the society into harmony with it. These

rites reveal the preoccupations of the communities represented by the *Damascus Document* and Matthew and the most important aspects of community life.

Rites of exchange and communion are usually offerings to God (or, in other contexts, gods) in expectation of the receipt of a gift or benefit in return. They may, however, consist of offerings that serve only to please God. These rites invoke the mutuality of the human-divine relationship. In the Judeo-Christian traditions, specifically, Bell notes that sacrifice brings about communion with the divine, a union of the natural and supernatural realms. As many sacrificial offerings are specifically calendrical, Matthew's rites of exchange and communion focus more on prayer and worship, whereas the *Damascus Document* displays a preoccupation with concerns over purity in sacrifice.

Political rites are rites which affirm, through action, the power of the authorities and in so doing effectively perpetuate, even create such power. They can be administrative or judicial rites that display an exercise of such power in keeping societal order. Both Matthew and the *Damascus Document* describe judicial proceedings and the correct protocol for related accusations, testimonies and sentencing. Matthew also describes non-Jewish judicial ritual which is interesting in comparison to the descriptions of the Jewish leadership and authority carried. The *Damascus Document* allows for a variety of methods of property recovery that fall under this category, through the making of oaths. Oaths appear in both texts. These rites demonstrate the submission of the community to the authority of others, and indeed, the *Damascus Document* details the agreement of those entering the community to submit to such authority.

Rites of passage mark major life events, specifically the change from one state to another. These tend to echo social rather than biological cues, and signify social recognition of a change in status. They mark a mixture of major and minor events. The *Damascus Document* and Matthew contain many references to rites of passage common across many societies, such as marriage, divorce and death rites. While incorporating elements of the society's religious beliefs, the function is primarily one of social ordering. The *Damascus Document* contains a rite of expulsion from a community, demonstrating how these rites can reflect the need for immediate social redefinition.

Rites of affliction are attempts to mitigate the negative effects of afflictions with a supernatural or metaphysical cause. These may be ‘morally neutral’, or they may be attributed to personal sin. The morally neutral rites address issues of purity in domestic circumstances, an ongoing task. In addition, physical impurity such as the pollution of menstruation and childbearing, discussed in the *Damascus Document*, and skin disease fall under this category. Exorcism, a theme in Matthew, demonstrates the supernatural afflictions countered. Afflictions need not be personal or domestic, but may be afflictions suffered by the whole society, such as drought or pestilence. The rites attempt to address the imbalance or impurity and restore order. They achieve this through rites of purification and cleansing, or, in the case of time-limited impurity, through a period of separation or seclusion to contain the impurity.

Feasting, fasting and festivals appear in both the *Damascus Document* and Matthew. While religious in nature, their character differs from other religious rites in that their primary function is not interaction with the Deity or rites which facilitate this, but is an expression of commitment to the religion and society. In the *Damascus Document*, all rites of feasting and fasting are also calendrical, and as their significance lies in their repeated celebration they will be dealt with as calendrical. In Matthew, however, there are several rites of feasting and fasting which are distinct from the other types, including the fasting of Jesus in the wilderness, the miraculous feedings of the and banquets.

## 2. Texts under consideration

### a. The Damascus Document

Discovered in the Cairo Genizah by Solomon Schechter in 1897, the *Damascus Document* is a legal text that, while it encompasses a range of genres, is largely didactic. Orthodoxy is key. Correct performance and interpretation is shown to be distinct. It does not only supply instructions for its readership but is highly informative in its explanations of how it differs from its mainstream counterparts. The *Damascus*

*Document* is particularly helpful as it repeatedly supplies explanations of how problems can be created or resolved to a proper understanding of ritual practice and supplies the rationale for their distinct types of interaction with the wider community. The *Damascus Document* also occasionally quotes from the Hebrew Bible which helps to demonstrate texts of interest and illuminates their exegetical work. Charlotte Hempel was one of the first to concentrate on the legal content of the *Damascus Document*. Prior to Hempel's work the most popular approach to CD was the attempt to reconstruct the history of the community with the help of the narrative contained in the Admonition.<sup>49</sup>

Eight manuscripts of the *Damascus Document* were found in Cave 4 at Khirbet Qumran.<sup>50</sup> The fragments 4QQ266-272 are written in a variety of hands, on animal skins (several confirmed to be sheepskin), and 4Q273 is written on papyrus.<sup>51</sup> Baruch Levine notes that since the Cave 4 fragments (subsequently linked to CD) were first studied as part of the Dead Sea discoveries, it has been a problematic document.

Defining the community in question is a complex task. The *Damascus Document* has much in common with “authentic” Qumran texts (i.e. those texts which many, often a majority, of scholars could attribute to a living and working religious community in the vicinity of the caves where the scrolls were discovered) but does not fit the model quite so well when it comes to the specifics of circumstance. The Admonition has a polemical stance emphasising the distinction between the insider community and outsiders and serves to explain the fracturing between the community and mainstream Judaism.<sup>52</sup> On this basis it would be easy to assume that the *Damascus Document* is a sectarian work; however the laws of CD do not generally reflect this polemic.<sup>53</sup> Other legal texts seem to contain instructions for a settled community, whereas the *Damascus Document* refers to the temple and to living among the towns of the land. However, the *Damascus Document* has much in common with the *Hodayot* and the *Community Rule*, both clearly sectarian works, and much about the consistency between “Qumranic” texts and the *Damascus Document* suggests, to Levine, a unity of sorts between the Cave 4

<sup>49</sup> C. Hempel, *The Laws of the Damascus Document: Sources, Tradition, and Redaction*. (Leiden: Brill, 1998). 3-4.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 2.

<sup>51</sup> B. A. Levine, ‘Qumran Cave 4-XIII: The Damascus Document 4Q266-273’ *The Journal of Religion* 78:4 (Oct 1998), 604.

<sup>52</sup> Hempel, *Laws*. 10.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 18-20.

manuscripts and fragments.<sup>54</sup> In CD III 20b – IV 4a the community calls itself the ‘sons of Zadok’.<sup>55</sup> However, there are no clearly literal claims that the community identifies itself with the temple priesthood. Hempel notes that the argument for a Sadducean origin is based on the attribution of views to the Sadducees in rabbinic literature.<sup>56</sup>

Levine notes that the instructions contained within the *Damascus Document* – in their fragments from cave 4 and in CD – do not, at first glance, provide a comprehensive portrait of a functional community.<sup>57</sup> The community described is certainly closer to the sectarians in outlook but there are significant points of departure that caution against an assumption of equivalence. Hempel notes that 1QS and reconstructions based on this text illuminate the circumstances of the *Yahad* but do not reflect the ‘parent movement’ likely represented in CD; the movement in CD uses Scriptural terms to refer to the community, talking of cities and camps rather than the *yahad* of 1QS and the sectarian works.<sup>58</sup> The inclusion of women in the community seems to reflect ‘a communal reality rather than a messianic vision’, as the rules are designed for everyday life among the rest of the population, rather than an eschatological hope or a description of a future sectarian community.<sup>59</sup>

The issue of the parent movement has recurred in debates about the origins of the sectarian community over the past decade. Grossman describes CD’s relationship to the sectarian texts as ‘intersecting but complicated’.<sup>60</sup> Grossman notes that sectarian movements are not necessarily best understood as schismatic movements; they stem from a common pool of tradition and share heritage with both the mainstream and other sectarian movements.<sup>61</sup> Equally, the community of the *Damascus Document* shares a common tradition with the sectarian *yahad* as well as further, significantly closer parallels. For example, the difficulties between the mainstream and parent movement regarding the calendar are the same between the mainstream and the *yahad*. The parent

<sup>54</sup> Levine, ‘Qumran Cave 4-XIII,’ 605.

<sup>55</sup> Hempel, *Laws*. 1.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>57</sup> Levine, ‘Qumran Cave 4-XIII’605.

<sup>58</sup> Hempel, ‘The Groningen Hypothesis: Strengths and Weaknesses,’ In G. Boccaccini, (ed.) *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005),251-253.

<sup>59</sup> Hempel, ‘The Groningen Hypothesis: Strengths and Weaknesses,’ 253.

<sup>60</sup> Grossman, ‘Cultivating Identity,’ 4.

<sup>61</sup> M. L. Grossman,‘Cultivating Identity: Textual Virtuosity and “Insider” Status,’ in F. García Martínez and M. Popović, (eds.) *Defining Identities: We, You, and the Other in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Fifth Meeting of the IOQS in Gröningen*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 2.

movement and *yahad* are in accord over this issue.<sup>62</sup> This will be explored further in the consideration of calendrical ritual. The relationship of the *yahad* to other members of the parent group who were not sectarian is not necessarily antagonistic – the polemic is against all Israel rather than the parent group specifically.<sup>63</sup> Hempel notes that there are methodological pitfalls to presuming that all ideas can be assigned to “the Qumran community” as it implies an isolated and completely insular community divorced from any parent movements and also makes it difficult to take on a nuanced view of progression.<sup>64</sup> It is more likely that a formative period saw the distinguishing of the group from Israel in general but during this period they were not so clearly cut off from the main stream of tradition.<sup>65</sup> A branch then may have split off to become a sectarian group within the parent movement represented by the *Damascus Document*.

The later sectarian texts actually have a lot of information to offer about this parent movement.<sup>66</sup> This implies a process of change that legitimises claims of a continuous if not strictly linear progression from non-sectarian to sectarian tendencies. Both the *Damascus Document* and 1QS have an admission procedure, but in 1QS 6.13-23 the procedure is longer and in more elaborate series of stages than the straightforward oaths described in CD 15.5-16.6.<sup>67</sup>

Accepting this as a broad model of community formation does not require subscription to the Essene Hypothesis (that the community of the text could be described as Essene based on identifying the description of the community in classical sources using similar classical sources) or even the Groningen Hypothesis, which are open to challenge.<sup>68</sup> Designating the communities described as “Essene” can hinder as well as help by shifting the focus of debate.<sup>69</sup> The Groningen Hypothesis synthesises (to a minimal extent) the information in CD and Philo, Josephus and Pliny’s descriptions of the Essenes to posit a larger, parent group from which the sectarians, represented in later

<sup>62</sup> Hempel, ‘The Groningen Hypothesis: Strengths and Weaknesses,’ 255.

<sup>63</sup> M. A. Elliott, ‘Sealing Some Cracks in the Groningen Foundation,’ In G. Boccaccini, (ed.) *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 264-265.

<sup>64</sup> Hempel, ‘The Groningen Hypothesis: Strengths and Weaknesses,’ 254.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 254. M. A. Elliott, ‘Sealing Some Cracks in the Groningen Foundation,’ 264.

<sup>66</sup> Hempel, ‘The Groningen Hypothesis: Strengths and Weaknesses,’ 252.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> M. A. Elliott, ‘Sealing Some Cracks in the Groningen Foundation,’ 264-268.

<sup>69</sup> Hempel, ‘The Groningen Hypothesis: Strengths and Weaknesses,’ 251.

texts and possibly in the ruins of Qumran, broke away.<sup>70</sup> Without extensive information on the Essene movement it is impossible to tell whether or not the groups described as Essene represent a cohesive movement with shared values. Determining whether or not the *Damascus Document* is an “Essene” work is less helpful for the purpose of ritual study than examining the content of the work and the sectarian texts from Qumran to find common preoccupations and ritual development.

Boccaccini’s Enochic-Essene Theory offers a portrait of this parent movement based on textual sources. He characterises this parent movement as “Enochic Judaism”, a movement that remained part of the mainstream for centuries while actively dissenting, able to function in opposition to elements of the priesthood as their leaders were involved in priestly activity.<sup>71</sup> Boccaccini argues that the influence of Enochic Judaism can be seen in the growth in belief in a disruptive influence of evil interfering in God’s relationship with humanity. This belief is reflected in Second Temple texts such as Jubilees, and in early Christianity.<sup>72</sup> This image of a parent movement unified by broad agreement over certain objections to the establishment fits the model of a movement moving towards sectarianism, sowing the seeds of irreconcilable differences while managing to go on, holding their loyalty and objections in tension.

Hempel avoided the pitfalls of the Essene Hypothesis by concentrating on the evidence of the texts. I take a similar approach; while I do not follow Hempel in tracing the relationship of the Damascus community to its parent movement I will examine the community based on the evidence presented in the text alone.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the study of its ritual may provide opportunities to explore the activities and structure of a community based on the *Damascus Document*.

Some basic assumptions about the target audience can be inferred from the text of CD. Here is a group that identifies itself as Jewish but has serious reservations about whether the mainstream has the correct interpretations of the Law. The author or authors clearly have a target audience in mind. Despite deep suspicion about mainstream orthodoxy they authors do not envisage a community that has turned its back on other

<sup>70</sup> A. I. Baumgarten, ‘Reflections on the Groningen Hypothesis,’ in G. Boccaccini, (ed.) *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 257-258.

<sup>71</sup> G. Boccaccini, ‘Introduction: From the Enoch Literature to Enochic Judaism,’ In G. Boccaccini, (ed.) *Enoch and Qumran Origins: New Light on a Forgotten Connection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 6.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>73</sup> Hempel, *Laws*. 6.

Jews; they still use the temple, live in towns and among the other people of the land and are only instructed to avoid dealings with Gentiles, never other Jews.<sup>74</sup> The *Damascus Document* is therefore not a sectarian work but the community has its own values and identity.

### **b. Matthew**

At first glance Matthew seems like an unlikely source of concrete ritual information. There are many references to ritual activity but the framework of Matthew's gospel is narrative, not instructive. However, form criticism served to identify different forms of communication within the text; Matthew contains teaching, prophetic oracle, liturgical forms and parables. With particular attention to teaching and liturgy Matthew is a very informative source of considerable ritual density.

I refer to the "audience" of Matthew rather than a readership. This reflects the common view that New Testament texts were written to be read aloud, a fact which is all the more significant in a ritual study due to the potential liturgical aspect of gatherings. Recent developments in performance criticism demonstrate that the performative aspect can be significant in understanding how a text could be received in context. Iverson notes that scholars are not only recognising the oral nature of Gospel performance but are beginning to acknowledge that this nature has a profound effect on the composition of the texts and their reception.<sup>75</sup> Iverson presupposes Cynthia Edenburg's argument that readers and listeners receive and process information differently.<sup>76</sup> For an audience to recognise concepts and vocabulary as references to other sources or events, the reference must be clear and explicit enough for the audience to do so while attentive to the performance, caught up in the temporal flow of

<sup>74</sup> Hempel notes that the laws 'seem to prescribe for the life of a particular organized community *within Israel*'. (emphasis mine). *Ibid.* 73.

<sup>75</sup> K. R. Iverson, 'An Enemy of the Gospel? Anti-Paulinisms and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew,' in C. W. Skinner, and K. R. Iverson, (eds). *Unity and Diversity in the Gospels and Paul: Essays in Honor of Frank J. Matera* (Atlanta: SBL, 2012), 26-27, cf. the discussions in R. A. Horsley, J. A. Draper & J. M. Foley, (eds.), *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory and Mark*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 27. This argument is set forth in C. Edenburg, 'Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Question of Readership: Some Preliminary Observations,' *JSOT* 35 (2010): 131-148.

performance requiring concentration for understanding.<sup>77</sup> It is therefore more difficult to argue that the audience would have recognised subtle intertextual references as intentional, rather than incidental, the further removed the content is from the vocabulary and familiarity of the original. Accordingly, I bear in mind the oral context and resist the urge to dwell on minor incidental correspondence, while I embrace the occurrences of narrated ritual as references to specific and repeated events in the life of the community.

Iverson argues (in his critique of contemporary intertextual preoccupations) that the conceptualisation of the Gospels as written texts is ‘rather limited’ and notes that interactions and points of concord between documents that we possess in written form may be most clearly observed through a consideration of how the work was received in a context of shared sources and cultural assumptions.<sup>78</sup> This in itself raises issues of how to measure genuine points of shared development distinct from mere echoes of the shared underlying cultural context, but for the purposes of this study it opens up the possibility of imagining a process of textual development in its *Sitz im Leben*, as a textual form of a work designed to be used in a context of orality. For example, Matthew could respond to Pauline concepts indirectly, aware of Paul’s writings through oral transmission, without including textual references easily recognisable through literary criticism of the written forms. Furthermore, implicit textual references also depend to some extent on the ability of the audience to recognise them as such, a feat much more difficult without parallel texts for reference. Accordingly, the audience are most likely not expected to recognise textual background from other first century sources.<sup>79</sup> Referring to the recipients as an audience rather than a readership is simply an attempt to keep this fact in view.

There is a general consensus that Matthew was written in Syrian Antioch in the 80s, reflecting a community with a strong Jewish character.<sup>80</sup> One could certainly argue for an urban setting based on the apparent proximity of Matthew’s community, Gentiles and Jews.<sup>81</sup> Antioch is a good pragmatic hypothesis, but is partly suggested because it is

<sup>77</sup> Iverson, ‘An Enemy of the Gospel?’ 28-30.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 11-13, 25, 26.

<sup>80</sup> D. Senior, *Matthew*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 21; G. Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 116.

<sup>81</sup> P. Foster, *Community, Law and Mission in Matthew’s Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 42.

one of the better known environments and Matthew happens to fit that environment. It could be situated equally well in another urban centre about which we can claim lesser knowledge.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, it need only be dated post-Mark; this allows a wider range of possible dates than the consensus would suggest.<sup>83</sup> Given these ambiguities, it is more helpful to focus on what can be determined from the text itself rather than projecting details that may prove to be based on an erroneous location of the work. The identity of the author is unclear. I use the name Matthew and male pronouns to denote an assumed single author, adopting the traditional ‘identity’ minimally in the absence of better information. I will consistently use the word “community” to describe the recipients of Matthew’s gospel. I do not make a judgement as to whether Matthew’s readership represented a single Christian congregation, or perhaps several interlinked congregations, but it seems clear that the author has in mind an audience sharing certain characteristics in their belief in practice. The ritual content of Matthew communicates information useful to those who would wish to reconstruct the life of this community, their setting and identity. This falls outwith the scope of the project but some of this information facilitates a cautious exploration of the ritual life of this community.

The Jewishness of Matthew’s gospel is one issue on which scholars seem to have reached a consensus.<sup>84</sup> Neusner believes Matthew to be a resource testifying to one type of Judaism present in the first century.<sup>85</sup> Matthew both shows much in common with Judaism in which it finds its origins and demonstrates ongoing conflict.<sup>86</sup> The gospel retains a maximalist view of the Law and yet he does not exclude from fellowship those who have a different background.

The appearance of Gentiles in the narrative does not confirm their presence in the Matthean community, nor do the references to the unrighteous nations indicate that they were rejected.<sup>87</sup> Given the relative openness to Gentile inclusion and the implication that this is still a future possibility, it is plausible that the mission to the Gentiles – including the insistence on an acceptance of the Law – was a current concern or topic of

<sup>82</sup> Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology*, 118.

<sup>83</sup> D. A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, (Waco: Word, 1993), lxxv.

<sup>84</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 31. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 139-144, 169-173. Davies, *Matthew*, 9-11, Senior, *Matthew*, 23.

<sup>85</sup> J. Neusner, *Judaism: the Evidence of the Mishnah*. (London: University of Chicago Press, 1981). 3.

<sup>86</sup> G. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992). 120-124.

<sup>87</sup> Foster, *Community, Law and Mission*, 40-41.

debate for the Matthean community.<sup>88</sup> Senior suggests that more Gentiles were seeking membership in the community, with the references to Gentiles in the Gospel preparing the community to incorporate these new members.<sup>89</sup> Sim argues that the limitation of mission in Matt 10:5-6 represents a rejection of Gentile mission.<sup>90</sup> However, Sim's argument is based on the idea that the statement in 10:5-6 overrides the implication of Gentile mission in 28:19, whereas the statements in favour of mission should perhaps not be dismissed too hastily.<sup>91</sup> The proclamation of the Gospel to all nations was an integral part of preparing for the eschaton. However, this does not necessitate a mission to the Gentiles in the style of Paul.<sup>92</sup> The contrast between 10:5-6 and 28:19 may indicate the development of mission in Matthew; having failed to incite a response among the Jews, the mission may now turn to the Gentiles who may be led to understanding.<sup>93</sup> Despite his rejection of a Matthean Gentile mission, Sim does concede that Gentiles are present in the community, but that through observing the Law and living as part of the community 'these people in a real sense cease to be gentiles'.<sup>94</sup> This fact is crucial; whether or not one accepts a wider Gentile mission as a Matthean priority, the central point is that becoming part of the community requires an acceptance and observance of the Law that is quite different to the Pauline mission to the Gentiles

He is not so charitable to Jews who fail to uphold the Law.<sup>95</sup> According to Maccoby, early rabbinic wisdom demanded proper attitudes and good intentions, and it is not only the Matthean audience who might have taken issue with the practices described.<sup>96</sup> Matthew draws a direct contrast between the followers of Jesus and other groups, by which he establishes that followers of Jesus must exceed others in righteousness.<sup>97</sup> Details of Matthew's narrative provide a distancing of Jesus and his disciples from others. Only Judas addresses Jesus as rabbi (26:25) in contrast to Matthew's source in Mark where many disciples address him as rabbi. Sim proposes

<sup>88</sup> Foster, *Community, Law and Mission*, 42; Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 77.

<sup>89</sup> Senior, *Matthew*, 28-29.

<sup>90</sup> D. G. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 236-240.

<sup>91</sup> Foster, *Community, Law and Mission*, 20.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>94</sup> D. G. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 208-209.

<sup>95</sup> A. F. Segal, 'Matthew's Jewish Voice' in D. L. Balch, (Ed.) *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-disciplinary Approaches*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). 20-21, 24.

<sup>96</sup> H. Maccoby, *Early Rabbinic Writings*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1988). 16.

<sup>97</sup> Stanton, *Gospel*. 81, 97, 321.

that Matthew's resistance to this title (cf. 23:5-7) shows a desire to distance his community and their authority structures from the Pharisees.<sup>98</sup> A difficult, 'wrenching' split between Jews and Matthew's community was underway, if not completed.<sup>99</sup>

The inclusion of Gentiles and the warnings to Jews take on particular significance in light of Matthew's eschatological dimension. The ministry of Jesus in conjunction with his presence (felt keenly through his preaching in Matthew) signifies a new era. Jesus promises fulfilment of expectations unfulfilled in previous centuries (as Jesus notes in Matt 13:16-17), with the new period of 'joy and blessing' inaugurated through a process of revelation begun in the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>100</sup> Senior argues that the discrepancy between 10:5-6 and Jesus' commission of his followers in 28:19 marks a shift in focus with Jesus ushering in a new era.<sup>101</sup> Matthew frames the coming of Jesus in terms of his eschatological fulfilment and inauguration of a new age.<sup>102</sup> Through this inaugurated eschatology, creation can be restored with Jesus' exposition of "Kingdom" ethics.<sup>103</sup> The theme of renewal characterises Matthew's attitude to Israel throughout the Gospel, with Jesus a more significant figure even than Solomon as the one who heralds and inaugurates the new era. Gruenwald argues that in many Second Temple texts contain rustic, wilderness elements in an appeal to the formative period of national identity.<sup>104</sup> The frequent references to Exodus are not accidental; the process of revelation experienced through the presence of Jesus is the birth of a new Israel, recalling the Sinai revelation and period of wilderness trial.<sup>105</sup> The desert provides a contrast to the urban setting of the Temple and establishment and denotes 'austerity and purity'.<sup>106</sup> This applies to John the Baptist and pastoral setting of Jesus' teaching. The Sermon on the Mount recalls the revelation on Sinai with the character of Jesus providing divine revelation of God's creative intentions.

<sup>98</sup> D. C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community*. (Edinburgh: T &T Clark, 1998). 122.

<sup>99</sup> Senior, *Matthew*, 30.

<sup>100</sup> P. Kea, 'The Sermon on the Mount: Ethics and Eschatological Time,' *SBLSP* 1986, 91.

<sup>101</sup> Senior, *Matthew*, 30.

<sup>102</sup> Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology*, 132-133.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>104</sup> I. Gruenwald, 'Apocalypticism and the Religion and Ritual of the "Pre-Sinaitic" Narratives,' 149

<sup>105</sup> Witherington, B, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 350-353; Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology*, 124-125; R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher*, (Exeter: Paternoster, 1989), 186.

<sup>106</sup> I. Gruenwald, 'Apocalypticism and the Religion and Ritual of the "Pre-Sinaitic" Narratives,' 150-151.

The person and identity of Jesus is not incidental to the narrative. Aspects of Matthew's Christology aid in interpreting Jesus' ritual actions and teaching with consideration of his unique position and qualities. Jesus himself appeals to his role as the fulfilment of the Law in 5:17-20 and his authority to teach in the Sermon on the Mount is unique. It is not merely a discussion of legal themes but a revelation imparting an authoritative perspective on the law, appealing to divine creative intentions. Jesus' authority surpasses, and is held in contrast to, that of his contemporaries.<sup>107</sup> His words carry divine authority. His statements in the antitheses are authoritative not because they appeal to Scripture or an external authority; they appeal to God's creative purpose, revealed to the audience by Jesus' declaration alone. Jesus intensifies the legal instructions but does not provide a rationale, basing the credibility of his teaching solely on his authority as one who can appeal to God's creative purpose. Thus, Jesus provides divine revelation verified by his intrinsic authority.<sup>108</sup> The repeated references to the Father and Son in 11:25-7, as noted by Kingsbury, emphasise the close relationship as a key component in revelation through Jesus, which Macaskill notes is 'suggestive of a very high Christology indeed' in which Jesus possesses an intrinsically high authority, able to reveal knowledge only revealed at the discretion of the divine.<sup>109</sup> This could imply equivalence between the authority of Jesus and that of God, while it certainly indicates that Jesus has the authority to make revelation.

The presence of Jesus has a notable effect on his context, and the Matthean Jesus is the climactic figure in his genealogy as the focus of Israelite history, and its fulfilment.<sup>110</sup> The contrast between Jesus and the Jewish leadership is sharpened as they reject him, at the same time as the narrative shows him to be the fulfilment of the Law to which they show commitment in other ways. With a response to the teaching of Jesus established as a measure of wisdom it diminishes the authority of these teachers in contrast to Jesus and his ongoing, eternal authority and wisdom. The disaster that befalls the temple serves as the culmination of Israel's rejection of Jesus' wisdom.<sup>111</sup> This catastrophic climax contributes to the motif of rejection and replacement in

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<sup>107</sup> Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology*, 126, 128.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 182-183, 127.

<sup>109</sup> J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 64; Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology*, 146-148.

<sup>110</sup> Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology*, 119-121.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 122-133, 179.

distinguishing Matthew's community from mainstream Judaism even as they continue to affirm the Law, and begins to create the opportunity for Gentile involvement, subject to equally respectful observance. Furthermore, the quotation from Mal 3:1 in Matt, that no one greater than John has ever existed, countered by the following statement that those in the Kingdom of Heaven will outstrip even John, implies a profound alteration in reality.<sup>112</sup> A new age has arrived, and Jesus brings the change.

Scholarly opinions on Matthew's utility as a source for Historical Jesus study vary.<sup>113</sup> Of course, the author and readers are removed from the original events described and the description of historical events need only be cross referenced with the other Synoptic Gospels to illustrate the clear differences in accounts possible even between people with broadly compatible understanding of events and their significance. These differences however illuminate the wider context of author and audience and throw into relief the unique concerns and preoccupations of those who wish to record an account of Jesus' ministry. It would be easy to over-interpret in an attempt to infill the comprehensive social world of Matthew's recipient community (or even their existence as a cohesive group) but it is nevertheless possible to infer some general facts about the recipient community especially through Matthew's interpretation of ritual symbols and practice.

### 3. Method

#### a. Identifying ritual content

I have identified the rites in the *Damascus Document* and Matthew that correspond to each type. This allows me to compare similar rites in one text in both content and function to assess whether any generalisations may be made which would allow thorough reflection on whether there is a unified function to each type of rite and whether each text deals with it consistently. Through this examination of the function of each type of ritual in the *Damascus Document* and Matthew, and a comparison between

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 139-140.

<sup>113</sup> Carter, *Margins*, xvii, Davies, *Matthew*, 9-11.

them, a clearer picture should emerge as to common themes in their function. Furthermore, an examination of these different texts may provide valuable insight into the function of ritual in Second Temple Judaism, as while distinct and at times dissenting both the *Damascus Document* and Matthew existed in such a context and took much of their content from it. Their identity-building activity occurs in reaction to this context to a considerable degree. Having built up a composite picture of how ritual types function, it is then easier to compare the same type of rite in the other text and in doing so see if a clearer picture emerges as to the use of ritual in the Second Temple period.

Bell also looks at activity that she counts as “ritualistic” i.e. it has much in common with ritual and often occupies the same ideological space but does not satisfy the requirements of the definition of ritual. Much ritualistic material exists in Matthew and must sadly be excluded from this study. Most notably, healing is an ambiguous activity that does not conform to ritual but is definitely ritualistic in its use of repeated action to achieve a purpose. Healing falls outwith the scope of this thesis as it is not ritual but raises interesting questions about an activity that could become ritual with further establishment.

### **b. Identifying biblical source texts**

Once a typologically categorised collection of ritual content is available, the next step is to identify scriptural traditions lying behind the instructions and ideas. Michael Fishbane’s analysis of the modes of biblical interpretation common in Jewish legal texts, in *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), asserts that in addition to the straightforward exegetical comment, the effects of scriptural commands and ideas on the life of the community were a form of indirect interpretation, and are worthy of equal attention. These actions reveal the influences and concerns of the community. It is therefore necessary to consider the scriptural passages upon which they draw, which teachings or commands are dominant and how they interpret these passages. Additionally, Fishbane’s analysis of the way in which the interpretation of biblical material becomes a secondary body of tradition to which

‘revealed status’ is ascribed is helpful in both the case of Matthew and the *Damascus Document*, as each claims authority while recognising that it is distinct from Scripture.

James Kugel’s book *In Potiphar’s House: the Interpretative Life of Biblical Texts* (San Francisco: Harper, 1990) contributes a further examination of this pattern most helpful for this project, demonstrating the process by which exegesis and interpretative claims accumulate and become definitive. Kugel notes that ‘students of Judaism are of course aware of the classical corpus of rabbinic learning, including the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds’ but he also notes the multiplicity of sources that undertake this work of interpretation which takes many different forms.<sup>114</sup> Often, changes to quoted Scriptures and various divergences and omissions are a form of biblical interpretation that may be illuminated through a comparison with the source texts.<sup>115</sup> Allusions to biblical stories and instructions where the original is paraphrased in a condensed manner can be revealing as they demonstrate which features were of greatest current or on-going relevance to the author or authors.<sup>116</sup> The accumulation of interpretive comments and texts may ultimately coalesce into a tradition that is well established but quite distinct from its scriptural antecedent.<sup>117</sup> Kugel uses a set of three procedures to examine texts which contain biblical allusions. He compares the text in question with its biblical sources, breaks down the different and specific interpretive ideas if there is more than one and deals with each motif separately in turn.<sup>118</sup>

Ithamar Gruenwald, in *Rituals and Ritual Theory in Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), provides a survey of the ritual context of the *Damascus Document* and Matthew, and argues that a understanding of ritual lies not in abstraction but in detailed attention to the content of each rite to understand its function. Gruenwald does however regret the tendency of current ritual study to neglect the study of Halakhah as a locus of interpretation through life and behaviour.<sup>119</sup> Following Gruenwald, I look for the motivation behind these rites in the details of their performance, but while he argues that motives for ritual are behavioural rather than theological, taking Kugel’s cue I consider the scriptural passages which have a strong link to the content of the text, and

<sup>114</sup> J.L. Kugel, *In Potiphar’s House: The Interpretive Life of Biblical Texts*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990). 2.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. 4-5.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. 19-20.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. 125.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. 5-9.

<sup>119</sup> Gruenwald, *Rituals*. 33.

examine the interpretation that is undertaken, explicitly in exegesis, or implicitly in practice. This provides an insight into the religious thought behind each rite, and allows the ritual content of these texts to be seen as constitutive of their theology, which in turn illuminates their function.

Kugel presents several reasons for the ongoing work of interpretation. The centrality of the texts in public life is a major motivation in a continual reinterpretation, as, while precision may not be required, the length of time over which the texts were in use ensured that many passages would fall into obscurity. Words became unfamiliar, identities became blurred, and customs seemed alien or inexplicable. Apparent contradictions came to light and required explanation or contextualisation. Some interpretation may be attributed to a desire to fill in detail, or to explain motivation. All of these motivations also contributed to the tradition of midrash.<sup>120</sup>

Kugel asserts that we can identify the earliest works of interpretation in books dating back to the second or third century B.C.E.. However he considers unlikely that the work of interpretation originated during this time, and suggest that within this body of traditions we can see the outworkings of much older tradition, passed down along with the texts themselves. Just as the texts were copied for hundreds of years, so they must have been interpreted. Kugel considers it unlikely that the text existed in a vacuum before the second and third century B.C.E. any more than they did at this time. Furthermore, we may be able to see, in the traditions of the second and third century B.C.E., remnants of far earlier tradition.<sup>121</sup> Kugel notes that in the recent history of biblical scholarship divergences from the known biblical text observed in many late Second Temple text were attributed to ‘imagination politics, simplification and even oversights’ whereas, in many cases, they should be seen as a common form of biblical interpretation. By attributing this interpretation to other motivations, one may miss out on the interpretive agenda of the author.<sup>122</sup> The work of commentary and interpretation starts as soon as texts are composed and copied and the biblical interpretation in the Dead Sea Scrolls may reflect a cumulative process of interpretation over several centuries.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Kugel, *Potiphar*. 1-2.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. 4.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. 4.

Kugel describes the ‘common midrashic disease of overkill’, which is often very helpful in illuminating the work of interpretation. For the sake of harmonisation, possibly too much information is given; the *Damascus Document* for example, principles of the Law may be interpreted through the prophets but this must be revised for legal rather than narrative applications.<sup>124</sup> The need to clarify texts through exegesis can result in an independent collection of ideas that can tell us much about the needs and preoccupations of the interpreters who sought to mobilise scriptural values into ritual ethics.<sup>125</sup> In practice, some of the biblical laws would be found to be incomplete or inadequately detailed for the purposes of those who followed them. The example of Sabbath law, where Exodus (20:10 and 35:2) forbids work and orders the punishment of those who violate this law, demonstrates the need to outline some clear principles for guidance.<sup>126</sup> Neusner’s work on the Mishnah is conducted on the premise that the Mishnah, as a utopian document, hints at the context in which it arose. It is a ‘mediator of Scripture’.<sup>127</sup>

Kugel certainly does not mistake the work of interpretation in early Christianity for innovation. He establishes early in his argument that biblical interpretation can and does occur throughout the history of Judaism. Most notably, he points out that the oldest evidence of this work of biblical interpretation can be found in the Hebrew Bible. Intra-biblical interpretation occurs when later books in the Hebrew Bible attempt to explain verses from earlier books or to interpret unclear passages. The work of textual criticism he includes in this process.<sup>128</sup> Kugel sees, in the early development of Christianity, a great deal of continuity with traditional methods of interpretation active in Judaism at the time not only did Christianity inherit a number of traditions about the meanings of specific passages of the Bible, but also a substantial number of Jewish assumptions about how interpretation should be approached. In early Christianity Kugel discerns a shared character between Judaism and Christianity centred on the exchange of these traditions.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid. 38.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. 151.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid. 214-215.

<sup>127</sup> Neusner, *Judaism*, x.

<sup>128</sup> Kugel, *Potiphar*. 1.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

### c. Identifying other early Jewish parallels

Using the Mishnah as a source text for comparison is fraught with difficulties. Portions of it are unmistakably much later and, despite the protestations of some New Testament scholars to the contrary, it could not be said to be clearly equivalent to pre-70 oral Torah. Neusner has helpfully compiled a fairly conservative list of regulations probably having pre-70 origins. Except where compelling evidence indicates a direct connection, for the most part I have confined my use of the Mishnah to only the most helpful texts indicating genuine pre-70 traditions or (with caution) those dating to the interwar period, thus hoping to avoid anachronistic statements and erroneous comparisons. Any material from later or undetermined strata is noted where used, and where Neusner does not assign material to one of the defined periods it is helpful to bear in mind that it may be too late to offer direct parallels and my conclusions are tentative. Accordingly even later works of rabbinic law are completely absent from consideration with later texts (from the late first or early second century only) only considered due to striking parallels in the absence of more contemporaneous sources.

Neusner places the strata of the Mishnah in its historical context which both explains the nature of its development and facilitates greater insight into the context of development.<sup>130</sup> It is of course possible to claim that the present state of the Mishnah provides information about those responsible for its ultimate condition. However the Mishnah itself attributes instructions to figures alive up to two centuries prior. Neusner was opposed to the uncritical adoption of all sayings attributed to early authorities as evidence of the state of Judaism in the time period claimed.<sup>131</sup> Neusner considers for example the opinions attributed to the Houses of Hillel and Shammai and assumes that these are traditions transmitted and developed over the two centuries originated in core ideas actually expressed by these houses.<sup>132</sup> Those who attributed sayings to earlier authorities may, or may not, have had an accurate picture of teachings in the period in question.<sup>133</sup> Neusner considered the authorities credited with various Mishnaic

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<sup>130</sup> Neusner, *Judaism*, 8-14.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid. 53.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. 16.

statements and correlated the authorship with the statements function in the document according to a plausible conception of ideological development.<sup>134</sup>

Identifying pre-70 traditions is not as simple as identifying those instructions which assume the presence of the temple and assuming in turn that they must originate before the fall of the temple. Neusner notes that the Division of Holy Things has to be post-140 but instructs on the proper activities of the sacrificial cult.<sup>135</sup> Neusner deals only with sayings from which he is able to glean enough information to make a judgement based on his own criteria. This excludes only a few sayings from his stratigraphy.<sup>136</sup> Neusner carefully limited his claims to “generations” of scholars and did not go beyond the evidence to claim a sub-stratification of authorities within the time period. He divides the Mishnaic material into three strata: material from before 70 C.E., material between the fall of the temple and the Bar Kokhbah War around 120 C.E., and material formulated after the war between 140 and 180 C.E..<sup>137</sup> Until the post war period Neusner argues it would be inappropriate to see the Mishnah as representative of, or even normative for, Israelite Society.<sup>138</sup> Certainly it would be unwise to import the totality of the Mishnah, a composite witness, into the pre-70 period especially when the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. constitutes such a devastating shift in Israelite ritual life.

The Alexandrian philosopher Philo provides a source of ritual information contemporaneous to the life of Jesus. In *Spec. Laws*, Philo presents an account of the Mosaic Law through the lens of the Decalogue, organised by commandment and harmonised between the books of the Pentateuch. His descriptions include references to the standard practices of his contemporaries and are therefore extremely valuable where they may help to illuminate the ritual context in which Matthew and his audience live.

The writings of Josephus originate later than those of Philo, with his life and activity contemporaneous to the spread of the gospel. Josephus provides much information on the state of Judaism in the first century in *Jewish War*, which describes the war against Rome and the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., and *Jewish Antiquities*, which offers his retelling of the history of the Israelites religion and society, with details that

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. 17.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. 16.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. 18.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid. 19-20.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. 45.

demonstrate some ritual development beyond the Hebrew Bible. These details will be used – not uncritically – to explore the development of tradition between the origins of the Law and its first century interpretation.

Wherever appropriate correlation occurs, I use works of Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha. Works generally held to have existed prior to the first century may reflect common or fringe practices and beliefs, but at least provide evidence that there was some precedent for some of the ideas contained in the *Damascus Document* and Matthew, or illustrate their unusual qualities. There is a vast corpus of primary literature classed as pseudepigrapha or Apocrypha, but the content of *Jubilees*, *1 & 2 Enoch*, and Sirach are particularly relevant, and appear most often.

Strack-Billerbeck is problematic because of its methodology – specifically the assumption that the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds represent a consistent enough cumulative tradition that they can directly be applied to texts that reach their final form considerably earlier.<sup>139</sup> Hence I avoid it in all but the most compelling comparisons.

The subtle differences or mutations within these traditions allow scholars to trace development in many cases, and to observe the same tradition in many forms. Examination of the biblical story of Joseph allows Kugel to analyse the development of these traditions and to begin to develop a method for dealing with the mutation of a tradition through a multiplicity of sources. This encompasses potential reasons for the development of that tradition with a clarification, extension or development of rules, which in the case of the Dead Sea Scrolls and particularly the *Damascus Document* applies to legal developments and a clarification of regulation. In the case of the *Damascus Document* we can see that many of these developments arise as a result of a desire to clarify certain rules, to extend their scope, or to apply principles gleaned from Levitical regulation to new situation. Kugel provides a methodological framework within which one can analyse and draw important conclusions about the origins of certain legal traditions within the *Damascus Document*. While the *Damascus Document* is a legal text, setting forth accepted interpretations of Scripture, this holistic approach to the Law ensures that the exegesis in ritual is recognised as a layer of tradition intended to be authoritative.

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<sup>139</sup> Segal, ‘Voice’ 3-4.

In most cases the ritual content of CD and Matthew did not sprout spontaneously from new ideas. In most cases there is some “scriptural precedent”. Generally this comes from what we now term the Hebrew Bible along with few other select texts, notably Jubilees as well as other apocryphal works. Occasionally there are direct quotes but usually the clues are found through similar vocabulary as well as the thematic links. For the most part only direct links are considered; there should be an indication that the text was in the mind of the author in composing the new ritual text.

In the case of the *Damascus Document* and Matthew, each is a self-contained work addressing a recognised audience, but they exist in a similar context, and each responds to that context by proposing a view that opposes or modifies the mainstream. It is noteworthy that despite the ritual density each remains detached from the temple. The *Damascus Document* is a Second Temple era non-sectarian text, the Qumran manuscripts of which date from the first century B.C.E. to the first century C.E. and as such place the *Damascus Document* in broadly contemporary use to the Gospel of Matthew, from the first century C.E.. The *Damascus Document* is a legal text, and Matthew a narrative, and this distinction in itself makes them interesting case studies to examine closely how these genres deal with the inclusion of ritual and their need to convey a particular attitude. Similar scriptural influences can be inferred from these works, and they deal with many similar concepts albeit with different conclusions in several cases. Through these differing conclusions, the identity and character of each community can be shown and even constructed in response to their shared context. The *Damascus Document* consists largely of ritually relevant content. Matthew is narrative, and less ritually dense, but contains frequent references to different types of ritual. As they are each dense in ritual content, but significantly different in genre and belief, a comparison of the attitudes contained in both, and their perspectives on contemporary society and religion, should be more helpful in reconstructing the context of each than either would be alone. This will provide valuable insight not only into the context of the *Damascus Document* and Matthew but into the Jewish ritual life of the Second Temple period.

## 1. CALENDARICAL RITUAL

### I. Introduction

The Gospel of Matthew and the *Damascus Document* are two ritually dense texts. With the ritual typology developed by Catherine Bell,<sup>140</sup> the calendrical rites (rites performed regularly or at a set point in the year) may be identified as one of the dominant types. Each of the texts in question draws upon a dense ritual calendar containing a variety of calendrical rites throughout the year.

Bell considers calendrical ritual to be most closely tied to rites of passages in social function and utility. They are similar inasmuch as they both mark the passage of time – in the case of rites of passage, with reference to the ‘biocultural life cycle’, while calendrical ritual takes the established temporal cycle and makes it ‘socially meaningful.’ This they do through a series of ‘re-beginnings and repetitions’ which may be described as both “periodical” and “predictable”. The routines may be determined by different means. Some rites are tied to the solar calendar, which would ensure that they fall on the same date each year, while some are determined by the lunar calendar, which causes their solar calendar dates to vary.<sup>141</sup> They can generally be divided into ‘seasonal’ and ‘commemorative’ rites, seasonal ritual varying depending on whether the society is predominantly pastoral or agricultural and commemorative ritual determined by the peculiarities of the society’s history. Commemorative rites serve to ‘recall past events and identify the group by the event remembered’ while seasonal rites ‘align a group with the natural, cosmic, or divine order’<sup>142</sup>; the social function of a particular rite depends not only on the category in Bell’s typology but on which of these subcategories the rite belongs to, and the type of society, whether pastoral or agricultural, to which the rite is meaningful. While the differences between pastoral and agricultural societies are manifold, broadly equivalent themes recur. These may be observed in parallel rites of sowing-raising and harvesting-slaughtering in these two types of society. Protection for the sowing of seed is sought by offerings to one or more ancestors or deities, while harvests are marked by a rededication of some of the fruits of

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<sup>140</sup> Bell, *Ritual*.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. 102

<sup>142</sup> Kugler R. "Making all experience religious: the hegemony of ritual at Qumran," *JSJ* 33 (2002) 143, Bell, *Ritual*. 103-104

the harvest to the Deity, along with a society-wide time of feasting and celebration. These events are mirrored in the rites of raising and slaughtering in a pastoral society. Calendrical rites ‘impose cultural schemes on the order of nature,’ and function as a microcosm of the relationship between humanity and nature. They ‘attempt to coordinate human activity with the state of the cosmos,’ in an attempt either to harmonise with or to assert control over nature.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 103

## II. The Damascus Document

### 1. Calendrical ritual in the Damascus Document

Calendrical rites are one of the dominant types of ritual represented in the *Damascus Document*. Consistently, calendrical ritual is cited alone of all the types, when reference is made to ritual observation in general. CD X, 14-XI, 18 is a large body of Sabbath regulations, detailing prohibited activities for the Sabbath day. CD XIV, 3-12 give instructions for an annual gathering, the session of the camps, which includes a procession and administrative procedure. 4Q267 2 II, 5 contains an instruction to observe the Jubilee Year, and 4Q267 13, 1-8 appears to provide some instructions for an offering of fruit, with mention of the harvest, which I consider calendrical due to its likely correspondence to the regular harvest offering. There are also two brief references to calendrical ritual, not prescriptive (CD III, 14-15; CD VI, 17-19), that provide valuable insight into the motivation for and understanding of calendrical observances. In light of these, and Bell's synthesis of calendrical functions, I investigate the functions of the individual rites and then consider whether there is an identifiable universal function to calendrical ritual in the *Damascus Document*.

### 2. Sabbath prohibitions in CD X, 14-XI, 18

CD X, 14-XI, 18 presents a series of prohibitions for the observance of the Sabbath. Kugler describes these as 'calendrically determined ritual *inaction*';<sup>144</sup> in addition to the rites that require the performance of actions at a given time, calendrical ritual also requires rites to be observed by those concerned refraining from performing certain actions for a specified temporal period. There is a rich tapestry of Sabbath law drawn upon in and resonating with the *Damascus Document*. However, while this is helpful to note, it is not necessary to examine every influence and it is sufficient to discuss the most directly corresponding biblical passages. The Sabbath is ruled to begin at sunset on the sixth day. The observant are not to chat idly with anyone. No one is to

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<sup>144</sup> Kugler, 'Experience.' 145.

lend anything to anyone else. Discussion of business, in any context, is forbidden. No one may undertake work of any description. Any walking is permitted only up to a distance of one thousand cubits from the city. It is forbidden to eat or drink anything other than what had been prepared in advance and is readily available. Drawing water from a well using a vessel is forbidden as it qualified as work. It is unacceptable for anyone to attempt to circumvent any of these regulations by instructing a foreigner to carry out a task on his behalf. No one may wear dirty or old clothing. Fasting – itself a calendrical rite in the *Damascus Document* – is forbidden on the Sabbath. No one may pasture an animal further than one thousand cubits from the city. It is forbidden to strike another person or an animal. No one may attempt to force an animal to move. Nothing may be removed from or repositioned in a house. It is forbidden to open a sealed vessel. Women must not wear perfume. No one may lift anything, including picking up a baby for any purpose other than to nurse it. Additionally, any attempt to encourage or force a servant to work is prohibited. If an animal is giving birth it must not be helped. Similarly, if an animal falls into a pit it is forbidden to retrieve it. The faithful must not allow themselves to be anywhere in the vicinity of Gentiles on the Sabbath. No one may rescue a person from water or a pit by means of any equipment intended for use in work (throwing a garment is suggested as an alternative). It is forbidden to offer any sacrifices on the Sabbath.

The declared beginning of the Sabbath mirrors that found in Neh 13:19, being sunset on the sixth day, to which the *Damascus Document* adds the specific time when the diameter of the sun in the sky appeared equal to its distance from the gate. Prohibitions on the discussion of business on the Sabbath, as well as business dealings in themselves, are also found in Exod 20:8-11 and Neh 10:31. In Exod 16:5 the Israelites in the wilderness are told to gather manna before the Sabbath and this partly forms the basis of the tradition that all food to be eaten on the Sabbath be prepared in advance. Exod 16:23 gives more specific prohibitions on food preparation for everyday life, while there is a potential accompanying prohibition on cooking to be found in Exod 35:2-3 where the assembly and lighting of a fire on the Sabbath qualifies as work.

Likewise, there is a biblical witness for the prohibition on instructing foreigners to undertake forbidden tasks during the Sabbath. Among the commandment to observe a Sabbath day of rest (Exod 20:8-11, Deut 5:14) is the specification that any slaves or

servants also observe the Sabbath, even if they are not Israelites. The other category of non-Israelite included in this commandment is the foreigner residing among the people. Thus there is ample precedent both for foreigners being encompassed by the requirement for ritual inaction, and for an order to work or request for work to be prohibited as a breach of the Sabbath. Additionally, there is some precedent for the later instruction to remain apart from Gentiles on the Sabbath to be found in Neh 10:31 and 13:16. The relationship between 13:16 (itself not didactic, mentioning men of Tyre who would sell to Jews on the Sabbath) and the *Damascus Document* is distant, but serves as further evidence of a traditional separation from Gentiles on the Sabbath.

There is no biblical precedent for a universal prohibition on wearing old or dirty clothes or for a specific prohibition on wearing such garments on the Sabbath. There are a few examples of instructions to don new clothes as part of a larger purification process, notably Gen 35:2, Exod 19:10-11, Lev 6:11, but these do not focus on the change of clothing, and the last refers specifically to priests, though it is related to ritual purity in this case, forming part of the rubric for burnt offerings. Lev 14:8-9 includes a change of clothes in a larger purification rite, but does not condemn old clothing, nor does the context have any connection to Sabbath prohibitions or rites. Similarly, Lev 13:47-59 contains instructions on the purification of contaminated clothing, but has little bearing on this context. Two narratives involve a change of clothes; in the vision of Zech 3:1-9, Joshua is given clean clothes by an angel (3:3-5), although again he is the high priest, and in Gen 41:14, Joseph can only go before Pharaoh once he has changed his clothes.

Jer 17 provides the only prohibition on moving objects found in the Hebrew Bible, and it is similar to the statute of the *Damascus Document* in the prohibition of moving objects across a boundary, with 17:22 concurring on its ban on lifting objects in and out of a house. There is an emphasis on the Exod 16:29 prohibition on carrying anything in or out in CD, which is broadened to a complete prohibition on the movement of objects.<sup>145</sup> The law is upheld in CD, but an increase in stringency may be observed. This may also be seen in the prohibition on work, where no implement not for Sabbath use may be lifted; not only may no work be done, but no soil or rocks may be handled (CD XI, 11), echoing the account in 1 Macc 2:36 of Jews who, in the time of

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<sup>145</sup> J. Baumgarten, *Qumran Cave 4.XIII. The Damascus Document (4Q266-273)* DJD 18 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996). 21-22

Mattathias, fled into the wilderness but would not even block up their hiding places or repel their pursuers by throwing stones.<sup>146</sup>

The offering of any sacrifices that are not characterised as the regular sacrifices of the Sabbath (Num 28:9-10) is forbidden, based on the interpretation of Lev 23:37-39 (stating that during the festivals that fall on a Sabbath, the festival sacrifices should be offered “apart from the Sabbaths of the Lord”) found in the *Damascus Document*. In the *Damascus Document*, the word מילבד is interpreted to mean “except” so that the instruction would be to offer the festival sacrifices on each day of the festival “except from [on] the Sabbaths of the Lord.” This is a reading of מילבד found also in *Tg. Ps.-J*, which likewise prohibits the offering of festival sacrifices on the Sabbath. A possible alternate meaning of this phrase in the Pentateuch is “in addition to,” meaning that the festival sacrifices should be offered on the Sabbath “in addition to [the regular sacrifices offered on] the Sabbaths of the Lord.” The CD reading, however, is not idiosyncratic and is echoed by the School of Hillel.<sup>147</sup> That the *Damascus Document* prohibits festival sacrifice on the Sabbath implies that the Sabbath neither counted as one of the festival days nor fulfilled any ritual obligations.<sup>148</sup> Furthermore, it supports the view that the community of the *Damascus Document* used a calendar, like the solar calendar, which ensured a holy day never fell on a Sabbath.<sup>149</sup> There would then be no reason to allow for festival ritual obligations to compete with Sabbath ritual obligations. This supposition could be countered by the presence of the unexplained specification; it is possible that this was mentioned not only to reiterate the instruction of Lev 23:37-39, but because there were occasional clashes between the Sabbath and other calendrical rites, and unlike those who advocated the reading “in addition to”, CD was required to articulate unequivocally the precedence taken by the Sabbath. Thus the interpretation of this phrase in the *Damascus Document* does not have a definitive influence on the determination of the calendar actually in use, but merely indicates that the community of the *Damascus Document* did not offer festival sacrifices on the Sabbath.

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<sup>146</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 23

<sup>147</sup> C. Werman, ‘CD XI:17: ‘Apart from your Sabbaths’,’ in: E. G. Chazon *et al.* (eds.) *The Damascus Document* (Leiden: Brill, 2000). 203.

<sup>148</sup> Y. Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1983) 1.130-131, Werman, ‘Sabbaths’, 202

<sup>149</sup> Werman, ‘Sabbaths’, 202-203.

Much like the Sabbath regulations found in later rabbinic oral law, the Sabbath regulations of the *Damascus Document* are intended to preserve Sabbath observance and safeguard its appreciation and significance by enhancing its sanctity through a proliferation of stricter rules, or “fences.”<sup>150</sup> These rules have echoes in the Mishnah, and post-biblical rabbinic literature, along with many additional rules that support stringency and purity concerns as motivation.

### **3. Other ritual content**

#### **a. CD III 14-15 – Calendrical ritual as spiritual measure**

CD III, 14-15 contains a brief reference to calendrical ritual. It occurs in the Admonition where the main theme is the election of the community by God. The explanation given for this election is the faithfulness of the community, and the contrast between this faithfulness and the unfaithfulness of Israel. God has revealed wisdom to the community because of their faithfulness, including the laws contained within the *Damascus Document* and the protocol for the observance of ritual. The only rites that the Admonition highlights in particular are the revelation of Sabbath celebration and feasts. Thus the correct interpretation of the instructions for observing calendrical ritual was privileged information imparted on account of faithfulness.

The theme of election and privileged revelation is familiar from much of the biblical literature, but the Admonition goes further in specifying Sabbath and festival regulations as part of the revealed wisdom. Sabbath instructions with a similar, general exhortation are to be found in the Law and Prophets,<sup>151</sup> and relevant, less didactic references to the Sabbath may also be found throughout.<sup>152</sup> As so many references resonate with the content of CD III, 14-15, it need only be noted that there is a significant web of scriptural precedent for Sabbath law and it will be most helpful to concentrate on those which have a direct thematic or semantic link to the content of CD III, 14-15.

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<sup>150</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 21-23

<sup>151</sup> Exod 31; Lev 16:31, 19:3, 19:30, 23:3; Deut 5:12, 5:15; and Jer 17

<sup>152</sup> 1 Chr 9:32, 23:31; 2 Chr 2:4, 8:13, 31:3; Neh 9:14, 10:33; Isa 58:13-14; Ezek 44:24, 45:17

Exodus 31:16 particularly links the revelation of the rules concerning the Sabbath to the Israelites' election. It is the only example of Sabbath law that expresses it in such terms, and as it falls amid the establishment of the Sabbath in Exod 31, the primary source of Sabbath regulations, the semantic links are a strong indicator of influence. It presents the revelation of Sabbath laws, specifically, as a sign that God had chosen the recipients for a privileged placement among humanity. There are two less direct references to calendrical ritual and the theme of revelation as a source of authority that are worth noting.

Nehemiah 9:14, like CD III, 14-15, links Sabbath rules to the theme of revelation in general. Thus there is ample biblical support for CD III, 14-15 in claiming a special status through knowledge of calendrical ritual.

Ezekiel 44:24 places all under priestly authority regarding the Sabbath, and although it is not immediately clear that the Sabbath is in affirmation of priestly authority it is certainly worth noting that, while the priest is given authority over the upholding of all laws, it is only the calendrical rites – the feasts and the Sabbath – that are considered important enough to mention independently. This emphasis on calendrical ritual as a key indicator of election and, by extension, faithfulness is so similar in content to Exod 31:16 and CD III, 14-15 that it strongly indicates a connection of these themes in ritual consciousness.

Finally, in addition to the Sabbath-specific texts addressed, there is a thematic linking in Ezekiel of revelation as a sign of election and the withholding of such a symbol of acceptance because of unfaithfulness.<sup>153</sup>

In this case, the references do not have a concrete ritual function in establishing the observance of ritual, but serve to reinforce the privileged position of the community in having the knowledge of the correct calendrical observances. Making ritual the measure of their relationship to God also helps to bear witness to the importance of ritual generally in the life of the community, and with only calendrical rites mentioned, it confirms the relevance of calendrical ritual specifically in confirming their status. This also establishes the observance of calendrical ritual as a reliable indicator of the spiritual state of the community, corresponding to Bell's understanding of the function of the typical calendrical rite, maintaining, demonstrating and perpetuating a sense of

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<sup>153</sup> Ezek 20:1-3, 22:26, 23:38

community wellbeing as well as keeping current the awareness of the community's election.

**b. CD VI 17-19 – Exhortation to observe calendrical ritual**

Added to this is the evidence of CD VI, 17-19. CD VI, 17-19 contains an exhortation on the observance of calendrical ritual. The community addressed is instructed to observe the calendrical rites in strict adherence to the interpretation of each found in the *Damascus Document*. Again, it is the Sabbaths and feasts that are specified. For these calendrical rites, the key element is timing. To observe the components of the rite at the wrong time is not to observe it at all. There is a reference to one specific festival, the "day of fasting", which is the Day of Atonement.

Lev 16:2-34 (cf. also Num 29:7-11) prescribes an annual act of atonement. A young bull and a ram are sacrificed in a mitigating rite for Israel's sins. One goat is to be sacrificed and another is to be the scapegoat. The atonement cover, altar and tent of meeting are to be sprinkled with blood from the offerings to cleanse it of the uncleanness of the Israelites. The sins of the Israelites are then borne by the scapegoat which is driven into the desert. The purpose of this is to atone for the sins of the community and to be found ritually clean and sinless. This is all to take place on the tenth day of the seventh month, and on that day the Israelites and any aliens among them must fast and refrain from doing any work.

The origins of the "day of fasting" designation are to be found in Lev 23:26-32, where, again, the tenth day of the seventh month is to be the Day of Atonement. The people bring an offering by fire. The reference to this festival in CD VI, 17-19 reminds that there is an opportunity for the people to atone for all their collective sin since the previous Day of Atonement. Without the Day of Atonement to restore righteousness, the collective sin would prevent the successful observance of other rites. This affirms the vital function of calendrical ritual in facilitating all other types of ritual.

c. **4Q266 6 iv 1-8 - Fragment referring to fruit offerings**

4Q266 6 iv 1-8 (now 4Q266)<sup>154</sup> contains instructions that are at least in part relevant to fruits offerings. While the text is too fragmented to discern the details, the reference to fruit offerings is preserved, and this would typically be an example of a calendrical rite. The description implies a consecration of the fruits in the land in which the celebrants live, which in turn could be interpreted as a reference to a harvest dedication or one of the possible rites that marks a key point in the agricultural year. Despite the skeletal nature of the material available, it is nevertheless helpful to know that there was a prescribed annual offering made.

There is ample biblical material on offerings from the harvest to be made annually. Lev 23:40 prescribes an annual offering of fruit and period of rejoicing very similar to that found in the *Damascus Document*. Lev 19:24-25 suggests that offering more would increase subsequent harvests, and Neh 10:35 details the offering of firstfruits made at the harvest.

It is also worth noting the complex of tradition relevant to fruit offerings. Fruit is presented as an example of (and even represents) divine providence and protection (Lev 25:19). In the Pentateuch, fruit was repeatedly presented as the key sign of God's blessing and confirmation in the promised land to come,<sup>155</sup> including the renewal of blessing after the exile.<sup>156</sup> Furthermore, it was used as a symbol of return itself in exilic literature,<sup>157</sup> and was taken as evidence of election.<sup>158</sup> In less prescriptive texts, fruit was thematically bound to safety, with the production or lack of fruit (real or metaphorical) indicating the security of the land.<sup>159</sup> Proportionate giving, instructed here, was familiar from the instruction to tithe found in Lev 27:30.

Conversely, the tradition is as consistent when it comes to the absence of fruit production; Lev 26:20, following the previous chapter's establishment of the correlation between fruit and divine blessing, asserts that the unfaithful will have land that does not produce. There is a precedent for the supposition that unfaithfulness would hit the fruit

<sup>154</sup> See the discussion of fruit offerings as a rite of exchange on p65.

<sup>155</sup> Num 13:20-27; Deut 1:25, 7:13; taken up later in Neh 9:36

<sup>156</sup> Isa 65:21, Amos 8:5

<sup>157</sup> Jer 2:7, 31:5, 40:10, Amos 9:13-14

<sup>158</sup> Isa 37:30, Zech 8:12

<sup>159</sup> Lev 25:19, Ezek 34:27, 36:8, 36:30, 47:12

harvest directly, found in Isa 32:10-12. Jer 4:26 states that the anger of the Lord leads to desolation and specifically mentioned fruitful land laid waste, as do Jer 7:20 and 49:4. exile is linked to fruitlessness in Jer 48:32, and Ezek 25:4 states that those who dominate will eat the fruit of the land.

The most likely topic of this reference is a harvest offering. The text definitely refers to an offering that may comprise of any combination of grapes, berries and olives. Although the text is fragmented, the offering is not presented as a rite of exchange and communion that would act as a mitigating rite for sin or ritual impurity. Rather it appears to be cast as a rite acknowledging provision in a harvest of fruit, most likely related to the agricultural calendar, rendering it an example of calendrical ritual. Rather than being a voluntary offering prompted by piety, the instructions suggest a dedication of part of the harvest. The language used aids this understanding. The quantities prescribed for offering are fixed, but in terms of proportion rather than by item. Thus the offering is explicitly linked to the quality of the harvest; in the liturgical language of the community addressed, the offering of fruit as a tribute is an acknowledgement of and thanksgiving for the divine provision of the land in the harvest, given in proportion to that which they have received.

Such rites also confirm the continuation of community wellbeing and self-sufficiency. In the Admonition, the *Damascus Document* asserts the divine appointment of those who remained faithful in Israel's time of unfaithfulness. There are many fruit metaphors outwith the Pentateuch – especially in Ezekiel and Hosea – relating to faithfulness, which are perhaps echoed in the Admonition's link between calendrical ritual and faithfulness. A harvest offering is a tangible marker of the seasons, emphasising the passage of time, and is also a means of concretising the phases of the agricultural year. The rite ties the religious calendar to that of the farming work done by the community members, and it aligns the practices of the community to the natural world. This rite embodies Bell's proposal that calendrical offerings are held to be directly responsible for the subsequent well-being of the community, both in their many exegetical links to themes of provision and safety and in the proportionate thanksgiving for that already received.

**d. CD XIV, 3-12 – the session of the camps**

CD XIV, 3-12 provides detailed instructions for the session of the camps. The session of the camps is an annual rite that requires the gathering together of all members. The people are instructed to enter when called by name, in order of status. The priests come first, having the highest status. They are followed by the Levites, then the rest of Israel, and last of all the proselytes (the correct identification of this group is a subject of debate). The senior priest (aged between thirty and sixty) is to question everyone, accompanied by the Overseer, by whose authority each member will enter. They are then to bring any matter about which a judgment or guidance is required to the Overseer. Additionally, each is to donate at least two days' worth of their monthly salary to the Overseer and judges, who will then distribute it to those they consider to be needy.

In Exod 18:13-26, Moses sits and judges the camps, by sitting and having the people come to him daily. His father-in-law, Jethro, suggests that his time should not be consumed by this, and proposes that he appoint able men to a hierarchy, each having authority over numbers reflecting the level of authority he possesses. They will then refer the major matters to him, and Moses will teach the laws so that the people will understand what is expected. Subsequently, in Exod 19:7, Moses gathers the elders and tells them of God's instruction to obey the covenant. Exod 23:17 is an instruction for all the men to appear before the Lord three times a year, but there is no judicial or administrative content. Court proceedings are advocated in Deut 25:1, however, demonstrating that the judicial role has its origins in the Pentateuch.

A rite of ordination for Aaron and his sons may be found in Lev 8:1-9:24, a gathering of all the people in an assembly to proclaim their priestly authority. However, this is a rite of passage and it is not prescribed as a repeated act. Num 1:16-19 explains the method used to conduct the census commanded in 1:2. In two aspects it is similar to the session of the camps in CD XIV, 3-12. Men are appointed to have jurisdiction over a section of society (in this case, each of the twelve tribes), and the entire community is gathered together and announced by name. Num 26:1-4 describes a second census. However, this does not explicitly indicate a regular occurrence as it is specifically linked to the plague of Num 25:8-9. It does, however, serve a social function as the

information was used to distribute the land according to inheritance, from which a loose parallel may be drawn to the distribution of resources to the needy in the session of the camps.

Thus there is precedent in the Pentateuch for a regular gathering of the people, and for the authority and judgment of the priests, but the two concepts are never combined as they are in the *Damascus Document*, and it cannot be said that the session of the camps is based on or reinterprets a single biblical model.

The gathering of all members of the community is, above all, a reinforcement of group identity. Physical togetherness is an embodiment of unity. That those who were members are gathered together is a demonstration of unity and a restatement of the community's "otherness"; they are distinctive in that they submit to the authority of leaders and a judicial system not of the making of the political administration or the temple, although reverence for the temple is in evidence elsewhere.

Space is made in the liturgical year for the demonstration and reassertion of the authority of the leaders and to reaffirm the status of each member in relation to all the others. The priests have the highest status, followed by the Levites, then the rest of Israel go in together and the proselytes are decisively put in last place. Again, this is an actualisation of the social order.

The contribution of two days' salary served as an indicator of interdependence and fellowship. It is in the tradition of care for the poor, as the stated end is to give it to the needy. Again, it is the Overseer and judges who decide who qualifies, and the rest of those present must submit to their authority.

The primary function of the holding of court in this rite is administrative and judicial. It is also an opportunity to air grievances publicly and to receive a definitive answer on any matter. In this way it acts as a further reaffirmation of the status of the senior priest and Overseer, who keep tight control on the process. The questioning of each individual member reinforces the authority of the senior priest over each individual and also affirms the stringent grip of the Law on every aspect of life. It is a reminder that each person is accountable and that individual purity is important to the community.

e. **4Q267 2 II, 5 – observance of the Jubilee Year**

4Q26 2 II, 5 consists of an instruction to observe the Jubilee Year with respect to the redemption of property.<sup>160</sup> It is not a lengthy instruction, however it is an excellent passage in providing clear scriptural source material and capturing the complex of motivations, theological and community driven, behind calendrical ritual in the *Damascus Document*. The *Damascus Document* establishes the observance of the year of Jubilee as a measure of integrity. The section dealing with the Jubilee Year is based on Lev 25, with a close relationship between this line and Lev 25:28 seeming likely, as the obligation highlighted is the recovery of property. There are a few notable scriptural passages that deal with the Jubilee Year, every fifty years, and the seven Sabbath years that lead up to it.

Exod 23:10-11 introduces the concept of the Sabbath year where agriculture was concerned, mentioning the benefits for the poor (thus there is some economic, interpersonal relevance) but says nothing about the redemption of property. Leviticus 25:8-55 provides the most relevant set of instructions for the observance of the Jubilee Year. 25:1-7 reiterates the instruction for the Sabbath year, and the rest of ch 25 establishes the Jubilee Year every fiftieth year. Baumgarten considered that this was inspired by Lev 25:47-55, but Hempel proposes Lev 25:28, which has more direct terminological links to line 5.<sup>161</sup> This would clarify whether the “property” to be dealt with was land or human, i.e. indentured servants and slaves. Lev 25:28 is certainly the source for the concept of property redemption in 4Q267, and it is reasonable to suppose that there is a link. Leviticus 25:23-31, applying to land and houses, instructs those who sold property to adjust prices based on the number of years until the Jubilee Year, and those who bought property to return it in this year. Lev 26:14-46 is helpful in illuminating the reasons for the observances, concentrating on the need for obedience in what is instructed. There are manifold benefits for those who observe the calendrical cycle, and terrible punishments meted out to those who do not obey. This suggests that perhaps covenant faithfulness is being subtly referenced for the audience, as it constitutes the rationale for the community’s election in CD III, 14-15. Consequently the threats of abandonment and exile would resonate particularly in this context, and

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<sup>160</sup> Hempel, *Laws*, 64

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. 67, cf. Baumgarten, *Cave 4*, 176.

reinforce that calendrical observances must continue as they are integral to the wellbeing of the community and the maintenance of a healthy relationship to God.

The two indirect references to the Jubilee Year are as helpful in reconstructing the motivation of the *Damascus Document* as the direct instructions. 2 Chronicles 36:21, taking place during the exile, pointedly draws attention to the land's enjoyment of the appropriate Sabbath rests, not faithfully observed before. This is the strongest thematic link between calendrical ritual and the ongoing prosperity of the celebrants, adding plausibility to the impression drawn from the *Damascus Document*, that calendrical ritual could be regarded as integral to a community's sense of righteousness. Nehemiah 10:31 and 4Q267 agree that the Sabbatical year was not automatically upheld as part of the ritual calendar. Despite the instructions in the Pentateuch to observe seven Sabbatical years followed by a Jubilee Year, both texts support the view that the honouring of the Jubilee Year was a prospect worth comment. Nehemiah 10:31 also links the decision to leave the land unfarmed with the cancellation of debts.

Interestingly, there are few details on the agricultural life of the addressees within the *Damascus Document*; apart from the references to animal husbandry and fruit offerings, there is no specific information on the lifestyle envisaged. Most scriptural passages that are at all relevant focus more on agriculture, and the seven Sabbath years that precede. There are, however, no references to agriculture in conjunction with the Jubilee Year in the *Damascus Document*, which is consistent with Lev 25, and strongly supports the use of this chapter, as it contains a specific instruction about the return of property referenced as authoritative in 4Q267. Therefore, 4Q267 advocates the restoration of property and justifies this reminder on the grounds that such an action constitutes definitive evidence of the spiritual state of the community. Its immediate function is to achieve social justice, in the assessment of Lev 25, and as the community would be based on the Mosaic law this would be an important obligation to fulfil.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The calendrical rites of the *Damascus Document* consist of the Sabbath prohibitions of CD X 14-XI, 18, the session of the camps in CD XIV, 3-12, the Jubilee Year in 4Q267 2 II, 5 and the fruit references of 4Q267 13 1-8, almost certainly a harvest offering. In addition to this, the brief references of CD III, 14-15 and CD VI 17-19 have been helpful in reconstructing the attitude to calendrical ritual and its social relevance in the *Damascus Document*.

The references in CD III 14-15 and CD VI 17-19 help to contextualise the prescriptive texts. CD III 14-15 in particular focuses on the history of the group to advocate their election, citing the revelation of the calendrical observances as evidence of their faithfulness. Additionally, the calendrical observances act as a spiritual barometer, providing a tangible measure of their righteousness and consequently their status in relationship to God. This in turn provides the group with an opportunity to gauge their future, in relation to their faithfulness in observing the rites. With this background, the prescribed rites universally affirm the temporal and social order. The temporal affirmation lies in the marking of the passing seasons, both through the weekly observance of the Sabbath and through the common celebration of the agricultural year in the harvest. The social affirmation comes through the affirmation of group identity in the session of the camps and the jubilee instruction which focuses on group integrity and righteousness. Each of these affirmations can be described as the tangible demonstration of a “reality” – whether a metaphysical reality concretised, a social reality demonstrated or an ideal potential reality acted out in prefiguration. This affirmation is intended to perpetuate the observance of the same rites, and the intensification in stringency that may be observed in the Sabbath laws indicates the desire to ensure the preservation of Sabbath observance in a visible, enacted affirmation of purity concerns. The session of the camps affirms the authority of the priests, which in the content of the rite can be seen to serve an essential judicial function, preserved by its observance. The harvest offering is an acknowledgement of divine providence and the affirmation of both the covenant and the security of the promised land, with proportionate giving a further link to wellbeing, symbolising continued residence. The function is to represent favourable circumstances and through their affirmation to ensure

the perpetuation of the rites that have ensured these circumstances. The system of cause and effect in operation is intentionally circular, in reflection of the cyclical nature of the calendar.

Thus, calendrical ritual in the *Damascus Document* can be understood most clearly as a series of acts of representation, affirmation and perpetuation. Through positive representation of the social system, the *Damascus Document* envisions calendrical rites as a form of systemic affirmation. The apparent dedication to the laws, as evidenced by their frequent use, shows that they are held as the highest point of the relationship between God and humanity. Because of their past faithfulness, the addressees were elected and the particulars of ritual observance were revealed, which in turn are a measure of their continued faithfulness. The rites repeatedly remind of and reinforce the social order, and in particular the structure of the community with regard to those with authority and responsibility. In these sources of righteousness and in acknowledging continuing divine providence, the intention is to preserve these systems and to ensure the perpetuation of community wellbeing.

### III. Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew displays considerable ritual density. Almost all of the references to calendrical ritual found in Matthew are Sabbath-related. There are two related disputes over the role and significance of Sabbath observance which illustrate first-century debates. In keeping with the narrative context, there are several references to Sabbaths which provide temporal setting, and the Sabbath is mentioned in the warning of Matt 24. The Passover festival recurs in the Passion Narrative as it provides the theological meaning.

#### 1. Sabbath Activity

##### a. Matthew 12:1-14 - Sabbath Controversy

The Sabbath disputes of Matt 12 explore, through two examples of conflict, the issue of Sabbath observance and its continuing relevance for those who follow Jesus. In Matt 12:1-8, Jesus and his disciples are criticised for plucking grain on the Sabbath, and in 12:9-14, Jesus finds himself in conflict with the Pharisees over his healing of a man on the Sabbath.

##### i. vv1-8 – Plucking Grain

Matthew 12: 1-8 parallels Mark 2:23-28, though Matthew's reference to something greater to the temple in vv5-7 is originally Matthean.<sup>162</sup> Matthew 12:1-8 exposites the differing views of Sabbath observance in the reckoning of Jesus and the Pharisees. Jesus and his disciples walk through grain fields on the Sabbath. The disciples are hungry, so they pick the heads from the grain and eat them. The Pharisees witness this and criticise Jesus for allowing this action, which they consider to be

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<sup>162</sup> G. R. Osborne, *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, Volume 1: Matthew*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010). 449.

prohibited on the Sabbath. Jesus cites Scripture in their defence. He argues that David and his companions went into the house of the Lord and ate the consecrated bread, breaking the Law as only the priests would be permitted to do this. He also said that the priests desecrated the Sabbath but are not reprehensible. Jesus cites Hos 6:6 – “I desire mercy, not sacrifice” – and accuses the Pharisees of lacking a true appreciation of the words. He then declares “the Son of Man” to be “Lord of the Sabbath.”

The plucking of grain (as long as a sickle is not used) belonging to someone else was permitted in line with Deut 23:24-25, as long as it is eaten and no produce removed from the field or vineyard. There was no prohibition on taking from the field of another, so the disciples were not stealing. The issue may have been instead that their actions were interpreted as reaping, possibly understood as work in Exod 31:14-15.

Leviticus 24:8 gives instructions for the baking of consecrated bread that is to be set forth each Sabbath. The observation of this rite is attested by several sources, including 1 Sam 21:1-6, containing the incident to which Jesus refers in vv3-4.<sup>163</sup> The narrative is not explicitly set on the Sabbath. A reading of Lev 24:8 demonstrates that consecrated bread was set out on each Sabbath, but remained throughout the week, so David and his companions did not necessarily take and eat the bread on the Sabbath.<sup>164</sup> The Sabbath could be broken in life-threatening situations. The situation of David and his companions could be construed as life-threatening as they were hungry, and there is a correspondence to the hunger of the disciples in Matt 12:1, though theirs is not presented as starvation. No specific Sabbath rite was violated, but only the priests were entitled to take and eat the bread.

Matthew indicates that the Pharisees believed there were some ritual obligations that would override others in Sabbath observance.<sup>165</sup> The key issue is that the offering of Sabbath sacrifices in the temple required the priests to violate the rest command. Their antecedent may be sought among the scriptural Sabbath commandments. Numbers 28:9-10 commands that sacrifices of lambs, drink and grain be offered on the

<sup>163</sup> The genealogy of 1 Chr 9 lists a number of Levites who were charged with this responsibility following the exile (vv31-32). Nehemiah 10:32-33 is, similarly, a vow to assume this responsibility along with the pre-exilic ritual requirements. Solomon’s message to Hiram of Tyre in 2 Chr 2:4 also lists the consecrated bread among the ritual obligations to be observed in the new Temple.

<sup>164</sup> Sanders’ assertion that the actions of David and his companions cannot be excused comes largely from his assumption of a Sabbath setting, by no means certain or even the more likely option. Cf. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies*. (London: SCM Press, 1990). 21.

<sup>165</sup> J. P. Meier, *Matthew*. (Dublin: Veritas, 1980). 129.

Sabbath. Matthew 12:5-6 demonstrates that there was a common perception of the rest command as subordinate to temple obligations. Jesus argues that the priests in the temple are subject to such obligations that override the rest command. Jesus argues not that the Sabbath should not be upheld, but that he is exempt from guilt in the same manner as the priests.<sup>166</sup> As the questioning of integrity is prompted by the behaviour of his disciples, Jesus seems to be asserting their authority to break the Sabbath.

In Philo (*Spec. Laws* 2.253), religious leaders are described as zealous guardians of tradition, a characterization consistent with their portrayal in Matthew, though here they are cast as antagonists to Jesus. Hosea 6:6, as quoted in Matt 12:7, reads, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice,” with the second half of the verse of ritual interest in this context. It urges recognition of God beyond ritual offerings. As further evidence that ritual observances were not considered to be monolithic in adherence to the Law, similar sentiments are found in Proverbs 21:3, which is not as vehement in its denial of the value of sacrifice, though it echoes the call for mercy and justice through attitude and non-ritual action to be prioritized above ritual obligations. Hos 6:6 and Prov 21:3 were used in the time of Matthew to explain the destruction of the temple.

In Matt 12:1-8, it would be possible, if not necessarily convincing, to argue that the hunger of the disciples was adequate justification for a Sabbath violation. The account in Matt 12 makes it clear that the man, whatever his discomfort, was in no mortal danger. Without being able to claim the refuge of life-saving action, again this becomes a discussion of acceptable praxis for the keeping of the Sabbath.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> While the orthodoxy of Jesus and his followers may be challenged here, the argument for their justification comes from the Law itself and the practices of contemporaries who would consider their interpretations to be orthodox. Bultmann, *History* 16, Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* 266

<sup>167</sup> As noted above, it certainly does not constitute a fundamental attack on Sabbath observance. Meier, *Matthew* (vol 3) 129. Indeed, the central debates among the first Christians were not about whether the Sabbath was to be kept so much as about *how* the Sabbath was to be kept, and Matthew reflects this in a less individualistic context. Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*, 367; Sanders, *Law*, 6-23.

## ii. vv9-14 – Healing

The pericope immediately following the debate about grain plucking focuses on a further, distinct aspect of Sabbath observation. Matthew 12:9-14 contains an account of another clash of ideas. Following his altercation with the Pharisees, Jesus enters the synagogue. As there is a man with a shrivelled hand there, the Pharisees continue to question him, asking him if it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath. He says that as they would not fail to rescue a sheep trapped in a pit on the Sabbath, and as a man is more valuable than a sheep, it is lawful to “do good” on the Sabbath. He instructs the man to stretch out his hand, and as he does so it was restored. The Pharisees are then said to be plotting to kill Jesus.

Jesus’ argument concerning the sheep appears in Matt 12:11. Matthew 12:9-14 parallels Mark 3:1-6 but Matthew adds the illustration of a sheep falling into the pit in verse 11-12.<sup>168</sup> While Exod 23:12 is the only reference to animals and the Sabbath, commanding animals also to rest on Sabbath, this is not the source for this principle. Matthew 12:11 indicates that in Matthew’s understanding Jesus and the Pharisees shared knowledge and approval of this common practice, whereby the Sabbath could be broken to rescue an animal, where the circumstances do not involve a threat to human life.<sup>169</sup>

## b. Matt 24 –The Coming Tribulation

In the apocalyptic prophecy of Matthew 24, there is a brief reference to the Sabbath (24:20), when describing the inevitable flight that follows the abomination of desolation, as an instruction to pray that the flight will not take place on the Sabbath or during the winter, due to the coming tribulation. In verses 9-14 Matthew adds uniquely Matthean material having earlier adapted Mark 13:9-13 in Matthew 10:17-22.<sup>170</sup> Matthew 24:15-22 is similar to Mark 13:14-20 and Matthew 24:23-25 parallels Mark

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<sup>168</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 457.

<sup>169</sup> CD XI 13-14, in contrast, prohibits the rescue of an animal.

<sup>170</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 872.

13:21-23. Verse 26 is uniquely Matthean while verses 27-28 parallel Luke 17: 24,27, which suggests a common source for these sayings in Q.<sup>171</sup>

The most convincing explanation of the difficulty faced, should the tribulation arrive on the Sabbath, comes from an insurmountable problem of the regulations concerning a Sabbath day's journey. The instruction to rest on the Sabbath comes from the commandment in Deut 5:14-15, concerning the observant as well as their foreign servants and guests. Similar instructions, along with the specific prohibition on working oxen and donkeys on the Sabbath, are found in Exod 23:12. Leviticus 23:3 also commands rest. These would certainly have an impact on the imagined flight of Matt 24:20, however the proposition that the difficulty comes from these verses, and specifically from the length of the journey permitted, is less secure. None of the biblical sources specify the length of journey for the Sabbath. Rather, the length appears to originate outside the canon. However, there is clearly a common perception of a fixed length for a Sabbath day's journey during the New Testament era. Little can be determined about a common regulation for the length of a Sabbath day's journey.

The Mishnah (*m. 'Erub.* 4.1-5.9, dating from between the wars)<sup>172</sup> specifies a distance of two thousand cubits for a Sabbath day's journey. Implicit in this may be Josh 3:4 as the basis of the tradition, which gave a distance of two thousand cubits to be observed around the Ark of the covenant, later taken to refer to the city and hence the distance to be travelled on the Sabbath. Numbers 35:5 instructs that the land around the city, to a distance of two thousand cubits, should be pasture land for those living in the city.

Despite the lack of a biblical precedent for the Sabbath day's journey, it is mentioned in Acts 1:12, although in a narrative, rather than didactic, context. The disciples' return to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives is described as "a Sabbath day's journey". Therefore it is certainly possible that difficulties were anticipated because of contemporary Sabbath ethics. Why these would prove to be so problematic is unclear, although Meier imagines that this testifies to a conflict of contemporary relevance to Matthew. Here, Sabbath observance would function as a marker of identity, distinguishing these Christians from other Jews. Had Sabbath observance been an obstacle to escape, then Matthew could be highlighting the danger to those who are not

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<sup>171</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 882.

<sup>172</sup> Neusner, *Judaism*, 90.

Christians.<sup>173</sup> This is however dependent on the assertion that Sabbath observance is not advocated in Matthew, which is implausible based on the evidence of Matt 12. It is difficult to reconstruct a satisfactory explanation as to why the Sabbath would be a source of such difficulty, if not that flight would be impossible for ritual reasons. Thus it seems most likely that the difficulty envisaged would be the impossibility of flight while keeping the Sabbath.

### c. Matt 27:62 - Day of preparation

There is a reference to the day of preparation in the uniquely Matthean 27:62, as the day upon which the chief priests and Pharisees go to Pilate is described as the day after the day of preparation, which would be the Sabbath. Preparation for Sabbath meals in advance of the Sabbath is mandated by Exod 16:22-30, when the gathering of manna for the Sabbath was carried out on the sixth day. The prohibition on kindling a fire on the Sabbath, necessitating preparation for meals, is found in Exod 35:3. Work is prohibited in Exod 20:8-12, and discussion of business in Neh 10:31, both possible if unverifiable transgressions on the part of the chief priests, should their discussion with Pilate qualify as “business”.

It is noteworthy that Matthew identifies the day circuitously, as the day after the day of preparation, rather than as the Sabbath. As noted in Matt 12:5-6, 11, those with overriding obligations were effectively exempt from the Sabbath restrictions. However, it does not appear likely that their actions here would qualify as ritual obligations. After the Sabbath disputes of Matt 12, it would seem hypocritical of the Pharisees to break the Sabbath after Jesus was already dead, particularly as according to Matthew their dispute with Jesus on this subject provided the justification for their plot against him. The attitude to Sabbath can be seen to be an indication of a person’s integrity, serving as a marker between the righteous and unrighteous.

Nevertheless, should this be a straightforward criticism of the authorities and an indictment of their integrity, it remains strange that it is not stated more explicitly. Matthew is oddly reticent about drawing attention to the Sabbath violation. Such lack of

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<sup>173</sup> Meier, *Matthew* (vol 3) 284

comment may indicate his awareness of a tradition placing these events on the Sabbath, and of the perhaps unlikely nature of the account.<sup>174</sup> This passage is fairly uninformative about the day of preparation itself, using it instead to place events on the Sabbath. The prospect of the Sabbath functioning as a measure of righteousness and indicating the transgression of the chief priests and Pharisees is attractive for the narrative, as it highlights the difference between Jesus and his opponents, but this is called into question by the circumspection employed by Matthew.

#### d. Matt 28:1 – Embalming on the Sabbath

In Matt 28:1, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at Jesus' tomb on the first day of the week, not having been able to on the Sabbath. This picks up the narrative of burial from ch. 27, where Jesus was entombed and possibly embalmed (27:57). Mark 16:1-2 seems to inspire this as Matthew adopts Mark's temporal setting.<sup>175</sup>

There are several possibilities as to why the women did not go to the tomb before the morning after the Sabbath. Acts 1:12 demonstrates that there was an established teaching or tradition which specified the distance one was permitted to walk, but the distance neither originates in nor is provided by any biblical texts. It is possible that the tomb was too far to travel in a "Sabbath day's journey" (possibly two thousand cubits, as in *m. Erub* 4.1-5.9), but as this explanation is not based on any biblical regulation regarding the precise distances that may be travelled on the Sabbath it is impossible to determine whether the tomb would be an unacceptable distance away, even if it were possible to know where the tomb was. Additionally, *m. Šabb.* 23.4–5<sup>176</sup> allows some parts of the embalming process to take place on the Sabbath, but does not allow the body to be moved, which precludes burial. It is therefore very likely that it may have been understood by some as prohibited work on the Sabbath. This would be one motive for first-century women to stay away from a tomb on the Sabbath. The

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid. 356-357

<sup>175</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 1061.

<sup>176</sup> Neusner does not make any judgement about the date of this material. Neusner, *Judaism*, 358.

account of Jesus' burial does not mention embalming, stating only that the body of Jesus was wrapped in a clean sheet. The most plausible suggestion is that were the women planning to embalm or anoint the body, they would have been carrying jars for this purpose, contravening the instruction of Jer 17:22 which prohibits lifting and carrying on the Sabbath, and also the movement of objects across a boundary, such as a threshold or a city gate.

The precise state of the body of Jesus with regard to ritual obligations is difficult to reconstruct from Matthew's Gospel. The suggestion that the women were to be carrying jars across a boundary is convincing. It is impossible to verify the distance to the tomb. Thus it is impossible to ascertain Matthew's reasons for asserting their ritual restriction. However, such a detail is clearly secondary in the narrative to the resurrection which follows. The assertion that the women had to wait until after the Sabbath, for either of the more plausible reasons, demonstrates that Sabbath observance continued. This supports the conclusion that Jesus in Matt 12:1-14 does not seek to demolish Sabbath observance but challenges the contemporary method and priority surrounding Sabbath observance.

#### e. Sabbath Conclusions

In light of his teachings in 12:1-8, and 12:9-14 above, it is clear that Jesus displayed no opposition to the Law *en bloc*, certainly not advocating the dismissal of many rites integral to its observation, as his argument was presented in ritual language and with the support of ritual obligations which compete with other obligations. Thus, the most likely explanations focus not on his dismissal of the Law, but on his interpretation of the Sabbath command and the question of whether Jesus, in Matthew, was suggesting a reinterpretation of the Law, implying that the Law demands observance in a manner different to the endorsement of fences as law, or a change in praxis and priority, implying that the Law had been correctly interpreted but may be observed in a different way. Furthermore, Matthew's Jesus consistently affirmed the relevance and importance of the Law in general and ritual obligations in particular. The Sabbath as a day of rest was affirmed and upheld by Jesus, with the caveat that

observance of the prohibitions does not take priority over ritual obligations, nor should good works be postponed.

### **3. Other ritual content**

#### **a. Matt 26:2, 17 – Passover references**

There are two passing references to the Passover setting of the Passion Narrative.<sup>177</sup> A brief reference to the Passover celebration occurs in Matt 26. In v1, Jesus told his disciples that the Son of Man would be given over to crucifixion at the Passover, two days hence.<sup>178</sup> The chief priests and elders of the people gathered in the house of Caiaphas, the chief priest, and further developed their plot to kill Jesus (26:4). However, they decided not to pursue their goal during the Passover as they feared that this would spark a riot (26:5). The second reference occurs in 26:17, on the first day of the feast. The disciples asked Jesus where he would like to observe the Passover so that they could make arrangements. He instructed them to speak to “a certain man” in the city and tell him that the Teacher says “my appointed time is near” and that he was going to celebrate Passover at his house. They did so and made the necessary arrangements for the celebration that evening. The Passover narrative is found in Exod 12:1-30.<sup>179</sup> Matthew takes Mark 14:12-26 as his source for Matthew 26:17-30 and imports the first day of the feast from Mark 14:12.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> See the discussion of the setting as a rite of feasting on p206.

<sup>178</sup> It is worth noting that Matthew’s use of the calendar here clearly does not align to the traditional cultic start to the day, in the evening, but the popular reckoning of the morning, hence this reference placing the events on Wednesday. U. Luz, *Matthew 21-28: a commentary*. J. E. Crouch (trans). (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2005). 329, S. T. Lachs, *A rabbinic commentary on the New Testament: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke*. (New York: KTAV, 1987). 398

<sup>179</sup> The Passover is found in Exod 12:1-30, the Passover restrictions established in Exod 12:43-49 and are also found in Lev 23:4-8, Num 9:1-14, Num 28:16-25, Deut 16:1-8 and 2 Chr 35:1-19 (which includes sprinkling of blood, v11, appearing nowhere in the Passover instructions in the Pentateuch)

<sup>180</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 962.

**b. Matt 26:26-29 – The Eucharist**

Matthew 26:26-29 describes the founding of the Eucharist.<sup>181</sup> While the disciples are still eating, Jesus takes bread, breaks it, describes it as his body and invites them to eat. Then he drinks wine, offers it to his disciples and instructs them to drink. He describes the wine as his blood, which is blood of the covenant spilled for the forgiveness of the sins of many. He says he will not drink of the “fruit of the vine” again until he drinks it with his disciples in his Father’s kingdom.

There are elements of Passover ritual contained within the Last Supper, with Jesus’ speech corresponding to the explanations given by the head of the family after the Passover meal, the similarity of the bread to the matzo and the cup to the cups of the Passover rite. However, this only confirms the Passover *setting*. There are, however, parallels to the Passover in terms of forgiveness and divine intervention, and to the prophets in terms of covenant renewal. It is noteworthy, however, that while Jesus established this rite at Passover, it is not a Passover rite.<sup>182</sup> Matthew displays little interest in the details of the meal or the Passover rite, and his Last Supper is the least Passover-like in the Synoptic Gospels, with few usual elements of a Passover rite.<sup>183</sup> Additionally, the scriptural passages echoed here do not deal with the Passover rite but the confirmation of the covenant.

In confirming the covenant in Exod 24:8, Moses read the book of the covenant to the Israelites who reaffirmed their commitment to it. Then he took the blood from the fellowship/peace offering and sprinkled it on the people. In Matt 26:26-29, the wine, representing blood and described as “the blood of the covenant”, the phrase found in Exod 24:8, recalled the confirmation of the covenant and restates it. Jesus took on the role of Moses in the rite, as the giver of the Law who sealed the covenant between God and the people and in doing so asserted their chosen status. The sacrifice alluded to in the sacrifice of Jesus is a mitigating rite for the collective sin of the people. The second notable reference to blood in a similar context comes from Zech 9:11, which presents it

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<sup>181</sup> See the analysis of the Last Supper as a rite of feasting on p206.

<sup>182</sup> Even Jeremias, who classed this as a Passover rite, acknowledged that there was at least some reinterpretation in Matthew’s account. Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* 412, J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*. N. Perrin (trans.), (London: Eerdmans, 1966).

<sup>183</sup> Though possibly alluded to, the matzo bread and the cups are not explicitly mentioned. Meier, *Matthew* (vol 3) 310

as a freeing element. The blood is specifically referred to as “the blood of the covenant”, as in Matt 26:28, which in Zech 9:11 is credited with the release of prisoners. God would release prisoners from “the waterless pit” because of the blood of the covenant. This combines the ritual significance found in the covenant confirmation rite with prophetic promises. It is telling that this rite corresponds far more directly to the covenant confirmation than the Passover, as it testifies to the new initiative of the Eucharist. The crucifixion was not restricted to a substitutionary act prefigured in the Passover celebration and entirely encompassed by it, but a new covenant was established, which came with a new rite of confirmation in which Matthew invited his audience to share.

Matthew’s language was inspired by Isaiah 53:11-12, in the fourth Servant Song, with the references to the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28). The forgiveness of sins does not appear in the Eucharist of Mark or Luke (Mark 14:24, Luke 22:17, 20). The servant of Isa 53 is made a guilt offering, i.e. one that atones for the sin of the people as he, like a sacrificial animal, assumes the guilt of many. “Many,”<sup>184</sup> “poured out” and “sin” are the semantic links between the passages, and it is this that links the concepts of propitiation and large-scale atonement in the sacrifice of Jesus. The life of the servant is “poured out” in the same manner as the blood of Jesus was in Matthew, and it is helpful to note that there is a conceptual precedent for the substitution of a human, Jesus, for the animal sacrifice. It strengthens the parallel to the confirmation of the covenant in making explicit the atoning quality of the rite.

Matthew’s Eucharist is the only account that includes the phrase “the forgiveness of sins” in expressing the purpose of Jesus’ blood. In Matthew, forgiveness is not an element of other events or rites, such as the baptism of John, as may be seen in the other synoptic gospels (Mark 1:4, Luke 1:77, 3:3).<sup>185</sup> Matthew ascribes the ritual forgiveness of sins exclusively to Jesus’ death (26:28) and its sole commemoration is found in the Eucharist.<sup>186</sup> That the account is presented as an instruction and a narrative may indicate that Matthew’s purpose was to present the rite in a prescriptive way; the actions of the disciples in response to the instruction of Jesus are not recorded, so the audience may understand that this is an instruction to all Christians to complete the

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<sup>184</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 21-28. 364.

<sup>185</sup> Theissen & Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 204, 416-417 Meier, *Matthew* (vol 3) 317-318.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. Mark 14:24 and Luke 22:17, 20.

actions, and not only to the disciples. Thus the rite is presented both as part of the narrative, and as the template for a rite commemorating this event in a narrative manner.

The disciples, and later Christians who celebrated the rite, were participating in the saving death. In this, they were confirmed as belonging to the covenant established in Matt 26:26-29. Matthew did not assert the actual presence of Christ in the elements, but the celebrants were able to share in the ritual recitation of his words, representing the breaking of his body and the spilling of his blood, and the atonement and confirmation received through them.<sup>187</sup> This makes the celebration of the Lord's Supper more than an intellectual metaphor while not suggesting that the saving death is repeated in actuality each time the rite is performed. Rather, it is a ritual actualisation in which those who celebrate the rite share. It symbolises their participation in the death of Jesus and the propitiation that occurs through his death, which they receive through the blood (sprinkled in the Mosaic account, represented by wine in Matthew), simultaneously serving to restate and confirm the covenant entered into.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The majority of calendrical rites mentioned or alluded to in the gospel of Matthew are related to Sabbath observance. There are two discussions of Sabbath regulations illustrating contemporary conflicts over observance, and the Sabbath appears in the warning of destruction and the Sabbath before the resurrection. There are passing references to the Passover festival and the establishment of a rite celebrated by early Christians.

The Passover references are used to date the Last Supper in relation to the celebrations. They also facilitate descriptions of discussions among the chief priests as to what they would or would not do during the festival, explaining that the threat of a backlash from the festival crowds prevented earlier action. These references are not particularly revealing as ritual references, and function only in service of the narrative, as Matthew uses them to contextualise teaching and to illustrate conflicts of theology.

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<sup>187</sup> Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 383

The Sabbath controversies attest to additional Sabbath regulations, “fences”, implicit in the discourse of the Pharisees. The additional regulations are intended to prevent transgression of the Sabbath and the disputes focused on the function and importance of these regulations. Jesus challenged their prioritisation of Sabbath rest over all else. The Sabbath was not to be abandoned. Sabbath observance remained important, but just as ritual obligations took priority for the priests in the temple, so were those who follow Jesus to subordinate the rest command to further obligations, including the instruction to do good works. As Jesus was “something greater than the temple,” his instructions count as ritual obligations that override the Sabbath command. Matthew 12:1-14 constitutes a re-examination of the minutiae of Sabbath observance, which leads to the fundamental reconfiguration of Sabbath observance in an altered context. Sabbath observance can function as a measure of righteousness, although to observe the Sabbath command at the expense of goodness or ritual obligations is to err. Human need, even if not life-threatening, takes priority over rest.

The Matthean account of the Eucharist is descriptive and prescriptive, constituting both an account of an event and the establishment of a rite. The confirmation rite for the new covenant establishes Jesus as the central figure, and his purpose as salvific. The new initiative is emphasised, with the atonement central to the function of Jesus, and the rite of the Eucharist is a means of sharing in that.

Matthew displays a definite endorsement of calendrical ritual and validation of its ethical relevance. Matthew’s Jesus was affirmative of both the Law and ritual obligations falling within the Law, advocating strict adherence but proffering a challenge to traditional interpretations in terms of both praxis and priority. Calendrical ritual in Matthew functions primarily as a measure of character, reinforcing identity and assessing integrity. The key concepts on which Christian theology is to be based are established through the Eucharist, and issues of priority in conduct are explored in the Sabbath disputes.

#### IV. Conclusions

Both the *Damascus Document* and Matthew draw upon the same source texts from the Pentateuch for their approach to the keeping of the Sabbath, and this is in evidence in their collective affirmation of the importance of Sabbath observance. That the Sabbath must be kept is not in question; rather, it is the nature of this observance that is explored. The Sabbath commandment (Deut 5:14-15, Leviticus 23:3) underlies each. In addition, the *Damascus Document* and Matthew reflect the texts which prohibit work and discussion of business (Exod 20:8-12, Neh 10:31), affect domestic life (the requirement to prepare food in advance necessitated by Exod 16:22-30 and 35:2-3) and command Sabbath offerings (lamb, drink and grain in Num 28:9-10). The prohibition on lifting objects across town boundaries (Jer 17:22) can be inferred from instructions in both the *Damascus Document* and Matthew.

The *Damascus Document* and Matthew differ in their use of the traditional “fences”, lists of specific actions which are considered inadmissible on the Sabbath. In the case of the *Damascus Document*, the fences are detailed and presented as safeguards against transgression. The Sabbath prohibitions are listed to prevent transgression of the Sabbath commandment. Additional regulations are provided to facilitate this, such as the instruction to prepare food for the Sabbath on the previous day. The fences are to be observed, by means of which the Sabbath will be kept. The *Damascus Document* codifies the fences and establishes them as law. This type of development is analogous to that of the Mishnah later.

In relation to Sabbath the *Damascus Document* is characterized by its didactic nature, its function to codify the fences, which, while distinct from the Law, are imbued *de facto* with a similar authority. Beginning with the explanation of the Sabbath commencement made more specific than Neh 13:19, a far greater number of texts are utilised as the *Damascus Document* clarifies and intensifies their instructions. From Neh 13:16, all contact with Gentiles on the Sabbath is prohibited. Beyond the Jer 17:22 prohibition on lifting anything across a town boundary, also found in Matthew, the *Damascus Document* demonstrates the domestic concern of Exod 16:29, which prohibits the movement of objects across any threshold. By extension, all movement of objects is prohibited. To the prohibition to work, the *Damascus Document* prohibits the

handling of soil or rocks, seen as close to work. As a point of clarification, the *Damascus Document* interprets Lev 23:37-39 as a prohibition of festival sacrifices on the Sabbath. One additional purity requirement, the wearing of clean clothes, is appropriated from Sabbath and non-Sabbath ritual in Gen 35:2, Exod 19:10-11, Lev 6:11 and Lev 14:8-9, and while this can be regarded as a fence inasmuch as it contributes to the holiness of the Sabbath, it does not directly prevent against transgression of the rest command or any specific prohibition.

Matthew does not treat the fences as carrying legal authority, rather, in relation to the law they are potentially facilitating. The tensions created by minor distinctions in regulation are illustrated in Matt 12:1-14 which demonstrates how the act of plucking grain, permitted on the Sabbath in Deut 23:24-25, is interpreted as the act of reaping, prohibited in Exod 31:14-15. The story about David and the consecrated bread (Lev 24:8) comes from 1 Sam 21:1-6. The primary emphasis in Matthew is attitudinal, drawing upon Hosea 6:6, demanding mercy, not sacrifice, and the teaching of Proverbs 21:3 that conduct that leads to justice is more important than sacrifice. The attitude of Matthew to the Law is one of absolute respect – to the limits of that actually prescribed in the Law. Matthew details the fences used to avoid transgression of the Sabbath but does not assert that observance of these fences is a key requirement. Without voicing criticism of rest, he notes that avoidance of the prohibited activities does not represent the successful keeping of the Sabbath. Matthew does not hold the fences in equal regard to the Law, but rather as examples of behaviour. That one such fence, the Sabbath day's journey, was upheld can be inferred from the description of the Day of Tribulation in Matt 24. Only those actions prohibited within the Hebrew Bible are unambiguously avoided when the opportunity arises (for example, the apparent use of Jer 17:22 preventing the women from anointing the body of Jesus on the Sabbath) – and even this does not provide a comprehensive guide to Sabbath observance in Matthew's opinion, but suggests a positive attitude towards the prohibitions in the Pentateuch.

In Matthew, the fences are acknowledged as guidance but the observance of the fences does not constitute Sabbath observance, nor does failure to observe a fence constitute the transgression of the Sabbath. Furthermore, the prioritisation of human need over these fences (the consecrated bread, healing and arguably plucking grain on the Sabbath in Matt 12) emphasises that Matthew's Jesus, while affirming Sabbath

observance, viewed the fences as fulfilling a facilitating role and that to focus on the fences would be to miss the benefits for humanity. In keeping with the relevance of calendrical ritual to societal function, however, there is an appeal to common practice in the case of the animal having fallen into a pit – this is in direct opposition to the order of CD XI 13-14, which specifically prohibits the rescue of an animal. Thus the fences may be employed, but are not to be treated with the same respect as the Law itself. They exist apart from the Law but do not become part of it.

Much of the distinction between Matthew and the *Damascus Document* in their use of Scripture lies in their distinct styles – while the *Damascus Document* is didactic and is dedicated to a detailed discussion of the Law, Matthew is narrative and while it deals with the Law it does so in less density, picking up points of conflict between Jesus and his contemporaries.

Matthew and the *Damascus Document* each establish one calendrical rite unique to these texts. Matthew establishes the Eucharist, while the *Damascus Document* establishes the session of the camps. Both of these have some biblical precedent, but as inspiration rather than as model. Each has significant resonance with key rites in the Pentateuch, and capitalises on these references for their meaning.

Matthew draws upon the rite of covenant renewal in Exod 24:8 to cast the new rite in covenantal terms. Employing the language of Zech 9:11 and Isa 53:11-12, the Eucharist evokes the freeing and forgiveness of the death that the rite will commemorate. The *Damascus Document* takes inspiration from Exod 18:13-26, in which Moses presides over the people, to form the session of the camps, in which the people are to gather together, and draws upon it also when additional leaders are set in positions of authority over sections of the people. The census established in Num 1:16-19 and its successor in 26:1-4 describes such a hierarchy, and demonstrates that the session of the camps closely follows gatherings in the Pentateuch while being modelled on none, exclusively.

However, while there are similarities in how Matthew and the *Damascus Document* have made use of existing ritual tradition, the content is quite different. The Eucharist fulfils a commemorative function, rather than an administrative function, and the significance of the event commemorated is entirely contained within the Gospel of Matthew. This bears witness to the fact that Matthew's message is not one of legal

reformation but is establishing something original in the Eucharist. It does, however, remind of the covenant renewal ceremony and establishes this rite within the ritual conceptions of the first. The session of the camps, in gathering the community together, reminds of the common way of life as well as affirming the authority structures and providing a forum for the airing of grievances and conflict resolution. It is reminiscent of the gathering of the camps to Moses, but it functions as an affirmation of authority not imparted by the Pentateuch, and indeed quite independently of the temple.

The *Damascus Document* appears to describe an annual offering of fruit, proportionate to harvest, apparently similar to that accompanied by a period of rejoicing in Lev 23:40 and the firstfruits offering in Neh 10:35. The principle of proportionate giving is found in Lev 19:24-25 and Lev 27:30, which command harvest offerings and monetary tithes, respectively. A greater harvest may be attributed to greater giving, as fruit is a sign of blessing in return for faithfulness (Lev 25:19, Lev 26:20, Isa 32:10-12, Jer 4:26, Jer 7:20, Jer 49:4). The *Damascus Document* contains an exhortation to return property in the Jubilee Year, after Lev 25:28. Despite the command in Lev:25:28, both 4Q267 and Neh 10:31 indicate that it was not automatically observed. Observance of this instruction was a measure of righteousness in obeying the command, which was to achieve social justice. These calendrical rites indicate that in addition to the Sabbath observance there was a variety of calendrical ritual woven into community life. Similarly, with the mention of Passover and the day of preparation, although they function merely to place the events described in time, Matthew demonstrates that there was a varied calendar of ritual commanded in the Pentateuch underpinning daily life.

The attitudes toward Sabbath to which Jesus appeared to be responding in Matthew seem at first to be similar to those found in the *Damascus Document*. The *Damascus Document* not only codified the fences but ascribed a high level of authority to them. While the use of the Pentateuch to justify the regulations (as in the case of Lev 23:37-39) indicates that the *Damascus Document* did not regard the fences as equal in authority to the Pentateuch, in presenting the fences as legal requirement the fences were, *de facto*, given the same status as the Mosaic law. The Pharisees, in Matthew, are portrayed as supporters of fences which, in the case of the Sabbath in Matt 12:1-14, are similar to the Sabbath fences of the *Damascus Document*. However, in the case of the priests in vv5-6 and that of the sheep in v11, the challenge from Jesus indicates that

there was an understanding that the fences did not carry the legal weight of the Pentateuch. It is, therefore, difficult to determine the mainstream view on calendrical ritual (if one can even be presumed) with any degree of accuracy. However, each illustrates that even a view presented as distinguished from the mainstream drew on the collective tradition from the biblical material and respected the absolute authority of the Law. Each has an ambiguous relationship to the temple, Matthew as it may reflect post-70 C.E. ritual and the *Damascus Document* as it does not mention the temple in relation to calendrical ritual, and even establishes the authority wielded in the session of the camps independently of the temple.

The observance of Sabbath is key. Neither Matthew nor the *Damascus Document* presents anything approaching a challenge to the principle of Sabbath observance. In Matthew, the Pharisees and Jesus each affirm Sabbath observance, but clash on how the fences are to be employed. They do, however, each agree that some degree of prioritisation is necessary. Similarly, in the *Damascus Document*, while the instructions for the Sabbath are intended to ensure that the community observe Sabbath correctly, and other views are treated with suspicion, these instructions do not seem to be significantly at odds with their contemporaries. However, in the *Damascus Document*, the fences are listed to provide a definitive guide, and awarded legal status, which differs considerably from the decidedly non-legalistic treatment of the fences in Matthew.

Likewise, the traditional festivals are assumed in the *Damascus Document*, as it instructs on their observance, while in Matthew nothing is commanded with regard to festival observance but the festivals are used in the narrative to set events within the ritual year. This demonstrates that the calendrical rites underpinned the social calendar, and lends credence to the suggestion that the continuing function of society was caught up in the cycle of calendrical ritual. The calendrical rites of Matthew and those of the *Damascus Document* serve similar purposes in perpetuating the wellbeing of the society. The successful fulfilment of calendrical observance is a sign of continuing faithfulness, which in turn leads to blessing. While they differ in their praxis, and in both nature and purpose of those rites unique to each, they clearly draw not only on a common textual tradition of Law but on a contemporary respect for, even dependence upon, calendrical ritual.

## 2. RITES OF EXCHANGE AND COMMUNION

### I. Introduction

Bell's definition of offerings encompasses all actions which may be considered to "praise, please, and placate" a divine being. For the purposes of this study, all instances of prayer will be dealt with as rites of exchange and communion. While in many of these no details are provided about the nature or content of these prayers, as a point of contact with the divine at least one component may be assumed to satisfy this definition.<sup>188</sup>

Despite the tendency noted earlier to consider manipulative dynamics "magical" and disinterested devotion as "religious," these distinctions and their associated examples tend to break down when scrutinised more closely. In ritual, it is probably safe to say that no act is purely manipulative or purely disinterested. Ritual acts of offering, exchange and communion appear to invoke very complex relations of mutual interdependence between the human and the divine. In addition, these activities are likely to be important not simply to human-divine relations but also to a number of social and cultural processes by which the community organizes and understands itself.<sup>189</sup>

Bell, after Hubert and Mauss, seeks to distinguish sacrificial activity through the intrinsic process of sanctification that these rites contain. In this respect they are unlike offerings that do not involve at least partial destruction in the transference of the offering to its divine recipient. It is sanctification that defines sacrifice.<sup>190</sup>

The rites of exchange and communion in the *Damascus Document* centre chiefly on issues of sacrifice. CD 3:20-4:2 quotes Ezekiel 44:15 which describes those among the priests who continued to offer sacrifices in periods of national departure from tradition. They are exhorted to continue to offer sacrifices, following the example of righteous patriarchs. In addition to sacrificial obligations a right attitude to the Law is required. A quotation in CD VI 12-14 mentions the altar, and IX 14 the relationship of the offerings to the priesthood. 4Q266 provides two examples of offerings. 13:1-8 contains instructions relevant to fruit offerings and Fragment 11 5:1-7 affirms the sacrifice of sin offerings in an acceptable manner which is demonstrated by sole obedience to the principles of the Law.

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<sup>188</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 108.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid. 109.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid. 112-114. Cf. H. Hubert, and M. Mauss. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions*. (Trans. W.D. Hall; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1964). 66.

The rites of exchange and communion in Matthew cover a more diverse collection of topics. Matthew also addresses the issue of sacrifice in 5:23-24 during the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus instructs anyone bringing a sacrifice to the altar, who knows that someone has a grievance against him, to abandon the gift until reconciliation has been achieved. Several sections of Matthew address prayer. Matthew 6:5-7 cautions against the practice of public prayer when it is undertaken for public recognition – the practice which he attributes to the “hypocrites”. In Matthew 6:6-15 Jesus provides the Lord’s Prayer as an exemplar for his followers, the form and content of which is helpful in understanding the themes of Matthew’s rites of exchange and communion. Matthew 14:23 forms part of a narrative in which Jesus prays alone up a mountain. Finally in 21:22 Jesus promises the efficacy of prayer. There are two brief mentions of the blessing of food in 14:19 and 15:36. Minor details about collective worship are present in Matthew. Jesus criticises the Pharisees for wearing broad phylacteries and taking seats of honour in the synagogue. The awkwardness and hypocrisy of the Pharisees is a major theme in Matthew’s approach to rites of exchange and communion. Finally Matthew 26:30 states that the disciples sang a hymn after the Last Supper before going to Gethsemane.

## II: The Damascus Document

### 1. Offerings

#### a. CD III 20 – IV 2 – the Priesthood

The priesthood of the community is mentioned in CD III 20 – IV 2, which contains a direct quotation from Ezekiel 44:15:

The priests and the Levites and the sons of Zadok who maintained the service of my Temple when the children of Israel strayed far away from me, shall offer the fat and the blood.

It is a description of those who remained faithful in their observance of the sacrifices and the instruction that they continue to do. The context in the Admonition is the description of Israel's failure, first in general misconduct and poor attitude towards the revealed Law, "failing to keep their Creator's precepts," inflaming God's wrath (II 6-21), and second in specific failures to live in accordance with that which was revealed to them (III 1-18). The quotation refers to the established priesthood and the sin or guilt offerings made in the sacred space of the temple.

The narrative of column II lists individual righteous men whose legacy was spurned by subsequent generations. Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were faithful, but their descendants "strayed" – it is to the discontinuity with this legacy that CD attributes the nation's time in the wilderness, and their later defeat by foreign powers in the exile. Despite this, God has established his covenant with Israel and although many turn away, they are condemned, and those who remain faithful to God's precepts will live.

In the *Damascus Document* Israel refers to those to whom correct interpretations have been revealed but also to the wider context of Israel as a nation and Judaism.<sup>191</sup> Within mainstream Jewish identity, disagreements over specifics may mean that mainstream Judaism must be condemned as worldly and intra-Jewish boundary markers become necessary.<sup>192</sup> The *Damascus Document* establishes an identity for a group in the process of departing from the mainstream.<sup>193</sup> However, it also shows that the community has not yet reached the level of true sectarianism. The community still used

<sup>191</sup> Stanton, *Gospel*. 97-99.

<sup>192</sup> L. M. White, 'Crisis Management and Boundary Maintenance: The Social Location of the Matthean Community' in D. L. Balch, (Ed.) *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-disciplinary Approaches*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). 223.

<sup>193</sup> Stanton, *Gospel*. 93.

the temple, even though in CD III 21, the interpretation of Scriptures referring to priests, Levites and sons of Zadok are applied to the community, who saw themselves as ‘the proper guardian of cultic matters’.<sup>194</sup> The quotation of Mal 1:10 in CD VI 12-14 promises that those within the covenant will not undertake temple offerings – “kindle the altar” – in vain, implying that the community envisaged guards not only the correct interpretations but the key to effective sacrifice. Wacholder notes that Enoch and Jubilees also use a sectarian calendar but do not try to incorporate the regular temple activities into their own calendrical observances. Thus the sectarian calendar is established as the correct framework for temple sacrifice and the 364 day calendar would see the festivals falling on the same day each year.<sup>195</sup> It is clear from the range of instructions contained in CD that the ‘precepts’ do not encompass only ritual, but the full complement of legal stipulations contained in the Torah; “covenant-faithfulness” is, in this respect, more complex than simple fulfilment of ritual obligations. However, the quotation from Ezekiel affirms the concept of observance of the sacrifices.

Furthermore, the references to the minority who remain faithful appears to be equivalent to the “remnant” elsewhere, the community of CD (ideal or otherwise) who are righteous while the rest of Israel has been found lacking. Zadokite priests were clearly relevant to CD (they are also considered relevant to other authors in 1QS 5.2 and 1QSa 1.2,2.3). In the practice of temple ritual, hereditary priests were directed by Pharisee sages.<sup>196</sup> While Sanders correctly notes that the presence of lay leaders in CD may indicate a decline in educated priests, it does not follow that the priests to whom CD refers must be laymen.<sup>197</sup> The fact that those holding the lay roles are identified by special titles suggests that a degree of distinction would have been maintained between the priesthood and the lay leadership.

However the quotation and description of the priesthood are vague and may not necessarily represent the literal state of the priesthood. The distinction between those who fulfil their responsibilities and those who have, despite knowing better, fallen away from proper observance is a key theme in the self-identifying narrative of the Admonition. Preceded by the list of righteous patriarchs, the priests who continue to

<sup>194</sup> P. R. Davies, *The Damascus Covenant*. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983). 130

<sup>195</sup> B.Z. Wacholder, *The New Damascus Document: The Midrash on the Eschatological Torah of the Dead Sea Scroll: Reconstruction, Translation and Commentary*. (Leiden: Brill, 2007). 178.

<sup>196</sup> Maccoby, *Writings*. 10-11.

<sup>197</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 B.C.E.-66 C.E.*. (London: SCM Press, 1992). 173-176.

maintain the temple cult are praised for their faithfulness in contrast to the persistent backsliding of which Israel is accused. Wacholder suggests that the sanctuary in this passage is a future sanctuary rather than its literal contemporary temple and notes that Ezekiel 44 is part of Ezekiel's nine-chapter closing depiction of a new sanctuary.<sup>198</sup> Hempel notes that with the scriptural citation of a passage referring to temple sacrifice it is always possible that the assumption of participation in the temple cult is taken from the scriptural context and not from community realities. It is possible that the community may not participate in temple worship because of a belief that the temple has become corrupted but would continue to have regulations for temple worship.<sup>199</sup> What is clear from CD is that the authors can envisage participation in the temple cult whether or not this reflects a historical reality, which is impossible to determine from the text. Little can be definitively claimed about the particulars of community relations to the priesthood, but the spirit of this passage strongly implies an endorsement of the temple as a locus for ritual and establishes that the priesthood is sufficiently orthodox so as not to interfere with community observance through the temple.

### c. CD XI 18-21 – Ritual purity in sacrifice

CD XI 18-21 (4Q271 5 I 12-17) provides a note on ritual purity in sacrifice. It prohibits the sending of a sacrifice to the altar by the hand of another who is ritually impure (cf. discussion of Matt 5:23-24). This illuminates concerns about ritual purity – in this case, the concern is not merely that the sacrifice would be invalid when sent by the impure, but that an impure person would actually defile the altar in the process of enacting the ritual. It also goes some way towards accounting for the preoccupation with purification, as it is clearly vital, in this case, that the celebrant in rites of exchange and communion is pure enough to be a part of the exchange, at the point of interaction with the divine.

The “house of prostration” is mentioned in 4Q271 5 I 15. *M. Mid.* 1.1 and 2.6 (outside Neusner’s stratigraphy) refer to custom of prostration using בְּנֵי when referring

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<sup>198</sup> Wacholder, *Damascus Document*. 180-181.

<sup>199</sup> Hempel, *C. Laws*. 37-38.

to the chambers of the temple, and Baumgarten proposes that the “house of prostration” refers to an area of the temple in which pilgrims would prostrate themselves during sacrificial ritual.<sup>200</sup>

The involvement of temple sacrifice is expected and the fact that that state of the altar being an issue indicates that it is still a valid ritual location.<sup>201</sup> The *Damascus Document* is highly suspicious of the temple cult and its lack of orthodoxy, by their own reckoning (CD IV, 18) and CD VI, 16 contains a warning to stay away from the wealth of the temple.<sup>202</sup> Davies argues that the temple altar could be used (in theory, as this would suggest that some members were in the unlikely position of being temple priests) and instructions state how things should be done.<sup>203</sup> It is therefore reasonable to claim that cultic obligations remain important but the temple is reduced to the means of achieving this only.

The warning not to offer sacrifices via unclean persons emphasises the importance of proper ritual purity in sacrifice.<sup>204</sup> The community must not fail in proper observance and purity requirements, even though others may not satisfy the requirements.<sup>205</sup> To neglect purity poses a risk to all potential celebrants, with a community responsibility to maintain purity for the collective good. The rites of exchange and communion are only valid if observed correctly and the purity of the altar is linked to communal wellbeing, due to the fundamental requirement that its purity be maintained

#### **d. 4Q266 6 iii 4 – iv 8 – Fruit offerings**

4Q266 6 iii 4 – iv 8 appear to contain some instructions that are at least in part relevant to fruit offerings.<sup>206</sup> The text is too fragmented to discern details of the offering itself, but types of produce are listed and some consecration is instructed. 4Q266 6 iii 4-

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<sup>200</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4.182*

<sup>201</sup> Davies, *Damascus*. 90-91, 136

<sup>202</sup> Ibid. 140

<sup>203</sup> Ibid. 135, 139.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. 135

<sup>205</sup> Ibid. 139

<sup>206</sup> See the treatment of this passage as a calendrical rite on p34.

5 describes grapes from a vineyard and their gleanings (the precise numbers are fragmented). Line 6 appears to distinguish between the formal measures of grapes and seeds and fallen grapes that should not be offered. Lines 7-8 describe olives and olive oil resulting from their crushing. 4Q266 6 iv 2 describes vineyard plants and trees, including fruit trees. Line 3-4 states that this applies to those Jews “on holy soil” or in their land of residence and makes an obscure reference to buying and selling. Lines 4-5 contain the only clear instruction: something that a man has planted he may not eat in the fourth year but must instead consecrate it. The reason for permitting planting but not eating the produce is not because they are “holy”. Leviticus 9 23-25 commands the offering of fourth year produce and this is given to the priests according to Jubilees 7:35-37 and 11QT<sup>a</sup> 60 3-4. Hempel notes that מְנֻלָּה in line 2 probably refers to the priests; the produce was to be given to them.<sup>207</sup> The produce is to be removed from its normal role as food and dedicated to God in recognition of his provision with the hope of future prosperity.

The offering is described as a “sacred offering in the land of sojourn”. Baumgarten notes that the phrase “land of sojourn” is used in Ezekiel 20:38 to refer to the exile.<sup>208</sup> Line 3 refers to the “land of holiness”, reconstructed based on Zechariah 2:16 referring to Palestine generally. Ezekiel 20:38 refers to the land of Israel similarly alongside “the land of their sojourn”. A precedent for a large, coordinated food offering is found in Deut 26:1-11. The men of a town or region gather the first fruit to ripen and bind them with grass. The later Mishnaic text *m. Bik.* 3.1-4 provides a retrospective account of the offering of the firstfruits. This is not stratigraphically early so does not pass on firsthand knowledge of this rite, but reiterates most of the features found in Deut 26:1-11. The rite described presumes the continued existence of the temple as it describes a procession to Jerusalem led by an ox. They are welcomed by the authorities and craftsmen and are preceded by a flautist as they process to the temple Mount where men of every status offer their basket of fruit. The Levite priests sing Psalm 30. Those involved in the offering must remain in a state of ritual purity. The account includes even the King humbling himself to follow the instruction of Deut 26:2-4.<sup>209</sup> An offering analogous to this one may be inferred, but further details are impossible to confirm.

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<sup>207</sup> Hempel, *Laws*. 55.

<sup>208</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave* 4. 9

<sup>209</sup> Maccoby, *Writings*. 78-81.

While there is a reference to exile, the rite appeals to the sense of settlement in the land divinely set aside for the Israelites. It envisages a happy and productive existence in the land and in this way proposes a ritual embodiment of this ideal, seeking its continuation. The offering of fruit constitutes a dedication of produce to God and implies divine provision of the fruit. An offering facilitating communion with God ensures the continuation of production and wellbeing, both personal and national.

#### e. 4Q266 11 V 1-7 – Sin offerings

4Q266 11 V 1-5 instructs those who have sinned to present sin offerings, and they are to rend their heart, not their clothes (Joel 2:13) repenting “in tears and in fasting” (Joel 2:12). This is presented as a positive remedy to their sin and also as a means of accepting the precepts – according to this fragment a sure sign of good discipline and a right heart. The quotation from Leviticus 26:31 reiterates the unsatisfactory nature of Israel’s sacrifice, a theme established in the Admonition with the exposition of Israel’s failure to live up to Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in faithfulness. Acceptance of God’s precepts and discipline is a defining characteristic of the CD community. 4Q266 11 V 8 calls to mind CD XIV 6-10 which implies that the priest “over the many” is not synonymous with the Overseer. The priest must administer the sacrifice, ensuring its efficacy. This locates the sacrifice in the temple as a classic sin offering, with an animal brought to the temple and sacrificed on the altar.

A “sin” offering, despite the connotations of the term, is a purification offering marking the resolution of morally neutral impurity. Josephus (*Ant.* 3.230-232) and Philo (*Spec. Laws* 1.226, 234-238) distinguish between sin offerings and guilt offerings, reserving guilt offerings for conscious transgressions, while sin offerings are suitable for impurity and unwitting sins.<sup>210</sup> A man bringing a sin offering would kill the animal himself (Lev 4:29-33).<sup>211</sup> CD IX 14 mentions an offering, noting the convention of offering an animal as a sin offering apart from making restitution, and that unclaimed goods become the property of the priesthood.

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<sup>210</sup> Sanders, *Judaism*. 108-109.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid. 109.

The unwitting sin incurring its own penalty (4Q266 11 V 1) is familiar from Lev 4:2, 27, and Num 15:27. Baumgarten draws the comparison with the sin offering,<sup>212</sup> though it is worth noting that this refers exclusively to those sins committed without intention and as such remains separate from the sin offering with its implicit moral judgement. Ignorance may not be an excuse, but it *is* a mitigating factor, or at least denotes a separate category of culpability, indicating a qualitative difference between transgressions. The *Damascus Document* seems to be part of a tendency to nuance the definitions to clearly delineate sacrificial responsibilities arising from different qualities of guilt. The references to God withdrawing in 4Q266 11 V 3-4 are not direct quotations.<sup>213</sup> However, the phrasing and vocabulary come from Deut 30:4 and Lev 26:31. Sin perpetuates distance from God, and whatever its provenance it must be addressed. This rite of exchange ensures that future acts of communion may be effective.

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<sup>212</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 77

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., Baumgarten. ‘A “Scriptural” Citation in 4Q Fragments of the Damascus Document’. *JJS* 43 (1992) 95

### III: Matthew

#### Rites of exchange and communion by topic

##### a. Offerings (5:23-24)

Matthew 5:23-24 addresses the bringing of offerings to the altar, and the effects of attitudinal and relational issues upon the praxis of sacrificial ritual. The passage from the Sermon on the Mount describes a person bringing a gift to the altar, then remembering that someone has a grievance against them (v 23). Jesus instructs him to leave the offering where it is, before the altar, and not return to the sacrificial rite until he has achieved reconciliation with the wronged party (v24).

The context described would be the altar in the temple, and the offering seems to be a burnt offering, which is consistent with the description of *m. Ker.* 4.1-3 (a provisional guilt offering should be offered in the case of undetermined, but suspected, sin) and 3.6-10 (multiple facets of guilt resulting from a single act may require multiple offerings.).<sup>214</sup> The situation of the altar in the temple's inner forecourt is described by Josephus in *War.* 5.225-6 and is also mentioned later in Matt 23:18-20 in which Jesus notes that the altar is greater than the offering.<sup>215</sup> Despite the initial impression of a sparse description, the text actually offers several descriptive features helpful in the examination of the rite in question. It features the carrying of an offering towards the altar, and the aborted rite implies that its completion entails the placing of the offering upon the altar. It could, therefore, seem surprising that there is no mention of a priest to intervene and undertake the placing of the offering.<sup>216</sup> However, the temple priests do not play a large role in Matthew and in Lev 4:29-33 a man bringing a sin offering kills it.<sup>217</sup>

The example uses a second-person singular pronoun, which suggests that the implied audience of Jesus in Matthew would be making such offerings.<sup>218</sup> The presupposition of certain practices is convincing evidence for their wide spread

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<sup>214</sup> This text dates to between the wars, according to Neusner's stratigraphy. Neusner, *Judaism*, 97.

<sup>215</sup> H. D. Betz, *The Sermon on the mount : a commentary on the Sermon on the mount, including the Sermon on the plain (Matthew 5:3-7:27 and Luke 6:20-49)*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). 222.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> S. Van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*. (Leiden: Brill, 1972). 4; Sanders, *Judaism*, 109.

<sup>218</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 222.

acceptance; no major arguments in either direction indicate their mainstream nature.<sup>219</sup> Jewish followers of Jesus criticised non-Christian Jews for their failure to accept Jesus as a sacrificial atonement, not for an association with the temple.<sup>220</sup> Between 30 and 70 C.E., despite having very little data Sigal argues that there is no cause to suspect that Christian Judaism diverged sharply from mainstream Judaism.<sup>221</sup> Given that Matthew appears to be writing to a Christian Jewish community, the inclusion of a temple rite is significant and this does seem to confirm the claim in Acts (2:46, 3:1, 5:15 et al) that many followers of Jesus were situated conveniently close to the temple, prior to its destruction, to continue to use it as a locus of sacrifice and communion with God.<sup>222</sup>

There is no suggestion that the offering was in any way corrupted by poor ritual observance, or incorrectly offered. However – consistent with Matthew's preoccupation with attitude – the undesirable conflict between the parties prevents a *pleasing* ritual observance. The spirit in which the gift is offered is important enough that an offering under the wrong circumstances should be halted rather than corrupted by a poor relationship. Theology and ethics are not necessarily a prerequisite for ritual development and it is common for later philosophical developments to focus on the rightness and efficacy of this ritual. Ritual does not necessarily meet the religious needs of its practitioners and in Matt 6:1-18 we find satirical depictions of erroneous religious practice. However it is not the ritual itself that is called into question but its practice with action that does not conform to its requirements.<sup>223</sup>

The only hints about the nature of moral defilement from the Division of Damages in the interwar period are ‘random facts’ helping to illuminate specific cases in which people may wrong one another. *m. B.Qam.* 2.5 explores courses of action when an apparently harmless animal causes damage or injury, *m. B. Bat.* 3.1-2 proposes a form of “squatters’ rights” based on the suggestion that any legitimate claim against residents would be made during the period allowed, and *m. B. Bat.* 4.2 delineates items that are integral to a purchased item e.g. if one buys a house one can reasonably expect also to own the door. There was clearly some discussion about resolution and restitution

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<sup>219</sup> Sanders, *Judaism*, 195.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> P. Sigal, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth According to the Gospel of Matthew*. (Atlanta: SBL, 2007). 26.

<sup>222</sup> D. L. Turner, *Matthew*. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008). 169-170.

<sup>223</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 332.

but nothing that Neusner considers to be analogous to established civil law.<sup>224</sup> However, the text of *m. Yoma* 8.9 states that the Day of Atonement provides a sufficient opportunity to atone to God for transgressions against God but atonement is only possible in the event of transgressions against humans if satisfactory restitution has been achieved.<sup>225</sup> This text is not dated by Neusner but contributes general principles to the issue seemingly consistent with the interwar material, rather than specific ritual instructions.

The memory of an outstanding conflict interferes with ritual performance. As no details are given, it is not the precise quality of animosity but the fact of its existence that interferes with the performance of the sacrifice. Nor are the reasons for making the offering delineated. Resolution should take place before the sacrifice can be completed.<sup>226</sup> Betz notes that the Sermon on the Mount

is most determined at this point. Special attention must be given to the question of righteousness because without it all religion is improper, the product of degeneration and superstition, if not blasphemy. Paradoxically, religious activities performed as a matter of course or without awareness of their inherent dangers are the greatest source of offence against God. They will certainly evoke God's wrath.<sup>227</sup>

The moral obligation here is mutual, and culpability is ambiguous.<sup>228</sup> harbouring dispute violates the Law, and the illustration regarding sacrifice provides a concrete example of the commitment required.<sup>229</sup> Successful worship is dependent on reconciled relationships, as anger is a barrier to communion with God.<sup>230</sup> Human forgiveness is necessary for divine forgiveness, as 'An unreconciled brother means an unreconciled God, and no amount of liturgy can change that fact.'<sup>231</sup> This instruction is ultimately intended to reconcile the protagonist to God. Osborne adds that an audience familiar with the conventions of temple worship would fully understand the effort involved given that the offerings at the temple would happen at most once or twice annually and they may well have had to queue to reach the altar in the first place. The imperative to go implies a journey of some eighty miles to achieve reconciliation before

<sup>224</sup> Neusner, *Judaism*, 95-97.

<sup>225</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 225.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. 223.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid. 333.

<sup>228</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 191. Gundry, *Matthew*. 85-86.

<sup>229</sup> J. A. Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis: The Gospel According to Matthew*. (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996). 81-82.

<sup>230</sup> W. Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: Socio-political and Religious Freedom*. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000). 145. Turner, *Matthew*. 169.

<sup>231</sup> Meier, *Matthew*. 51-52.

returning to the temple. Nevertheless as worship may be compromised by animosity among his followers Jesus is establishing the principle stated in 6:14-15; that forgiveness from God is dependent upon forgiveness to others.<sup>232</sup> The practicalities of leaving a gift before the altar are ignored as the point is that conflict undermines the rite. The importance of reconciliation for correct observance is reflected in Philo (*Spec. Laws* 1.234) who argued that the Law required righteousness in thought and the absence of enmity. The Didache (3.2) also warns against anger, which may lead to murder.<sup>233</sup> Leviticus 19:18 (also behind Matt 5:43) probably lies behind the condemnation of resentment. Leviticus 6:1 describes deception of a neighbour as a sin against God. Reconciliation is also addressed in 1 Cor 7:11 and Rom 5:8-11. The Didache (*Did.* 14.2-3) contains a similar teaching concerning the Eucharist where quarrels must be resolved lest the gathering be rendered impure in some way. Betz notes that the Didache does not take Matthew as a source and argues that this indicates the persistence of the idea in the mainstream traditions of the Second Temple period.<sup>234</sup>

The convention of referring to Matt 5:21-48 as the “antitheses” is unhelpful in this case, as Jesus does not teach concepts antithetical to the Law but intensifies and expands Mosaic teaching.<sup>235</sup> Consistent allusion to Moses throughout Matthew establishes Jesus as another giver of law, a role that is most relevant in the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount in which he extends the principles of the Law.<sup>236</sup> The exhortation to reconciliation provides a life ethic for members of the community and establishes this as a distinctive requirement for members.<sup>237</sup> Leviticus 5 is concerned with making restitution with a wronged party as part of ensuring the efficacy of a sacrifice as a guilt offering to God. Milgrom suggests that putting man before God in matters of restitution was a common practice in the Second Temple period.<sup>238</sup> Leviticus 6:1-7 requires restitution before a guilt offering for sins against others, and it is possible that, in light of the impression that this instruction is an expansion or innovation, Jesus

<sup>232</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 190-191.

<sup>233</sup> Sanders, *Judaism*, 192. Betz, *Sermon*. 219.

<sup>234</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 224.

<sup>235</sup> D. L. Balch, ‘The Greek Political Topos περὶ νόμου and Matthew 5:17, 19, 16:9.’ In D. L. Balch, (Ed.) *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-disciplinary Approaches*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). 77. Sim, *Gospel*. 129-130, 141,208-209. Stanton, *Gospel*. 301. Turner, *Matthew*. 165. Sigal, *Halakhah*. 25-26.

<sup>236</sup> Stanton, *Gospel*. 80.

<sup>237</sup> Sim, *Gospel*. 141.

<sup>238</sup> Milgrom, Jacob. *Cult and Conscience: The Ashan and the Priestly Doctrine of the Repentance*, (SJLA 18; Leiden: Brill, 1976). 110-111.

must therefore be demanding that even a thanksgiving sacrifice should not be offered before interpersonal tension has been addressed.<sup>239</sup>

For Matthew, acceptance of Jesus is not necessarily a gateway to full participation in Jewish ritual and as a result an exploration of the distinctions between Jesus' followers and mainstream Judaism becomes necessary. Nevertheless, Matthew has a favourable view of the Law which probably reflects community practice. In modifying Mark, Matthew always displays a greater concern for the Law.<sup>240</sup> Matthew's community could be described as a 'deviant Jewish community'.<sup>241</sup> However inclusion in the deviance of the community requires membership and deviation from norms in the manner prescribed in Matthew.<sup>242</sup> Matthean boundary markers are still essentially Jewish. To become righteous in Matthew's eyes is to become part of the true Israel.<sup>243</sup> The sacrificial setting grounds Matthew's audience in the temple traditions, with a healthy regard for their practice, including the location of ritual activity and the actors involved.

## **b. Prayer**

### **i. 6:5-7 – the hypocrites**

Most scholars believe that the Lord's Prayer is a Matthean expansion of Q material. Minor differences between the Lukan and Matthean accounts could be attributed to multiple instances of this teaching in the life of the historical Jesus rather than a Matthean agenda; however, the introduction of the prayer with words of censure towards "hypocrites" (vv5-7) is unique to Matthew.<sup>244</sup> Matthew 6:1-18 contains three sections in which a ritual act is described and is followed by a prohibition of the rite performed incorrectly. This structure affirms rather than dismisses the ritual action

<sup>239</sup> Davies, M.. *Matthew*. 53.

<sup>240</sup> Sim, *Gospel*. 137. Segal, 'Voice' 4-5. A. J. Saldarini, 'The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict' in D. L. Balch, (Ed.) *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-disciplinary Approaches*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). 41-43.

<sup>241</sup> Saldarini, 'The Gospel of Matthew and Jewish-Christian Conflict' 44-45.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid. 48.

<sup>243</sup> White, 'Crisis' 224. Sim, *Gospel*. 142.

<sup>244</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 224.

while warning against improper practice.<sup>245</sup> In Matthew 6:5-7, Jesus instructs his audience not to pray in public in the same manner in which hypocrites seek attention rather than praying for God alone. He describes this attention as their full reward for their prayers (v5). Instead, Jesus commands prayer in secret so that God will hear and reward publicly (v6). He also cautions against repetitious, overblown speeches – comparable, apparently, to the heathen – employed in a vain supposition that verbosity will garner more attention from God (v7). The “hypocrites” pray standing and seek to communicate with God by addressing their remarks directly to him. Their verbose prayers suggest that they alter their speech when addressing God, but Jesus criticises this aspect of the rite.

The fact that Jesus exhorts his listeners to adopt practices of discretion when it comes to prayer does not mean that the practice is unimportant. Indeed, one may infer that for the act of communion with the divine to be performed it must be performed correctly. No indication is provided of the content of private prayer.<sup>246</sup> The precise format of group prayer is obscure; even the existence of set prayer does not then guarantee that it was said in unison.<sup>247</sup> Anecdotal evidence from Ezra and Daniel suggests that prayer may have been undertaken at the third and ninth hours when sacrifices were offered (Ezra 9:5; Daniel 9:21) with some praying a third time (Daniel 6:10).<sup>248</sup> The custom of praying at a “time of prayer” – understood to be three in the afternoon on the basis of Acts 3:1 – allowed hypocrites to plan on being somewhere public where they could attract most attention by stopping to pray.<sup>249</sup>

The “babbling” attributed to the heathens is reminiscent of inarticulate utterances made by oracles in the (much later) Greek Magical Papyri and reflects warnings against such pagan styles of prayer and mystical experience found in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>250</sup> Other texts include warnings against unconsidered or repetitive prayer (Ecc 5:2, Isa 1:15, Sir 7:14).<sup>251</sup> Warnings against pagan assimilation may be common in

<sup>245</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 350.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid. 362-363.

<sup>247</sup> Sanders, *Judaism*, 206-208.

<sup>248</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 225.

<sup>249</sup> R. H. Mounce, *Matthew*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991). 54-55. R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution*. (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1994). 103.

<sup>250</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 364.

<sup>251</sup> Turner, David L. *Matthew*. 185.

Judaism, but this specific warning is unique in the New Testament.<sup>252</sup> The etymology of the “babbling” is obscure, but even if it refers only to verbosity it clearly implies a prayer devoid of meaningful content.<sup>253</sup> An attempt to manipulate a god through language, particularly the repetition of divine names, would be uncomfortably similar to pagan practices of magic.<sup>254</sup> The characterisation of Gentile prayer demonstrates the low regard in which Gentile prayer was held, with the Gentiles in question praying in vain through fruitless speeches, while the Jewish God had a parental role and anticipates need.<sup>255</sup> The derogatory Gentile reference in 6:7 is Matthean material.<sup>256</sup>

Betz suggests that the teaching on prayer in 6:5-7 could imply the movement of Jesus’ followers away from collective prayer to private prayer only.<sup>257</sup> However 6:9-13 implies a collective prayer, so whether or not these two portions of Chapter 6 come from Q material or other sources, it would be unfair to suggest that Matthew’s aim is a denigration of collective prayer; rather, it is the hypocrisy of a rite of communion performed without proper and pious attention to the object of prayer. Sim suggests that the Matthean community may have had personal knowledge of what it was like to encounter the Pharisees in the streets on a regular basis, hence the descriptions of their public prayer, but this is speculative and impossible to confirm.<sup>258</sup>

The receipt of recognition is characterised in transactional, economic terms ( $\delta\pi\epsilon\chi\omega$ ) which recall a receipt paid in full. This not only implies the completion of the reward’s delivery but the reward-seeking intentions of those who undertake these rites for the wrong reasons. Those in question intentionally seek out busy places in which to display their piety, for which God is the appropriate audience, not humanity, so to which he will not respond.<sup>259</sup> The reward from God is a gift rather than a salary.<sup>260</sup> The majority of commentators interpret the statement as a warning against seeking rewards which lie at the heart of bad motives and should not be sought. The term  $\psi\pi\kappa\rho\tau\alpha\iota$  implies a direct opposition between appearance and reality, a juxtaposition between

<sup>252</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 367.

<sup>253</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 226.

<sup>254</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009). 65. Gundry, *Matthew*. 103-104.

<sup>255</sup> Carter, *Margins*. 162-163.

<sup>256</sup> Stanton, *Gospel*. 160.

<sup>257</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 361.

<sup>258</sup> Sim, *Gospel*. 152-154.

<sup>259</sup> B. Charette, *The Theme of Recompense in Matthew’s Gospel*. (JSNT 79: Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992).

<sup>260</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 220, 225. Meier, *Matthew*. 57.

<sup>260</sup> Meier, *Matthew*. 57.

outward appearances and inner true motives.<sup>261</sup> While the rewards of the hypocrites are derided, implicit in the mention of reward is the acceptability of a hope for future, divine recompense. Reward is not only an acceptable motive for righteousness – when it is a non-public, divine reward – but it serves both to emphasise that God takes these efforts seriously and to affirm Jesus as part of a divine reward tradition woven into Israel's history.<sup>262</sup>

The reference to the private inner room in 6:6 has no sacred function but conveys consistency with the theme of secrecy, being a private place. The singular pronoun in 6:6 indicates the required privacy for individual prayer.<sup>263</sup> Hare considers the prayer accompanying the afternoon sacrifice to be ‘essentially private’. However the opposition is not to the principle of collective worship, nor does the reference to an inner room have to be literal; it is praying for human recognition that precludes divine response.<sup>264</sup>

No particular sacred place is required for prayer. 1QS9.26-10.1 instructs prayers on rising and going to bed.<sup>265</sup> Multiple postures for prayer are found including ‘standing (Luke 18:11), sitting (2 Samuel 7:18), kneeling (Luke 22:41), and prostrate on the ground (Matt. 26:39)’.<sup>266</sup> Matthew’s account does not suggest that standing for prayers is itself wrong nor is collective prayer condemned. The disciples stand while praying in Mark 11:25. The prohibition is on hypocrisy while praying in public not on public prayer itself. The fact that those performing these acts are described as hypocrites may indicate that Matthew’s community practised these same acts without the condemned attitude.<sup>267</sup> Based on this it is hard to support a hypothesis that Jesus’ teachings were somehow radically out of step with the spirit of mainstream Judaism, with Jesus apparently affirmative of these practices.<sup>268</sup> Whether or not these rites should be performed is not in question; the nature of proper practice is the issue. Matthew condemns ritual undertaken purely for the purpose of being seen to perform it by others.

<sup>261</sup> Van Tilborg, *Leaders*. 11-13, 21-22.

<sup>262</sup> Charette, *Recompense*. 66, 83-84, 100. Antoinette Clark Wire, ‘Gender Roles in a Scribal Community’ in David L. Balch, (Ed.) *Social History of the Matthean Community: Cross-disciplinary Approaches*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). 100-101.

<sup>263</sup> Carter, *Margins*. 162.

<sup>264</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. 64-65.

<sup>265</sup> Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 116. Betz, *Sermon*. 362. Sanders, *Judaism*, 197.

<sup>266</sup> Meier, *Matthew*. 59. Osborne, *Matthew*, 224.

<sup>267</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 185. Overman, *Crisis*. 89-90. Gundry, *Matthew*. 103.

<sup>268</sup> Sigal, Philip. *Halakhah*. 9, 188.

A love of being seen is wrong.<sup>269</sup> This does not preclude its performance for the right reasons.

### **ii. 6:8-15 – The Lord’s Prayer**

In Matt 6:8-15 Jesus provides an example of appropriate prayer. Verse 8 states that this is to distinguish his followers from the hypocrites described in 6:5-7. The prayer involves direct speech but is fairly brief, in contrast to the prayers of the hypocrites. The prayer takes the form of a direct address to God who is identified as “Father”, with a blessing (v9). Verse 10 refers to the coming of the kingdom, which is a recurring theme in Matthew and the central thrust of the Sermon on the Mount. Verse 11 is a petition for provision. Verse 12 returns to the theme of reciprocal responsibility for maintaining relationships, using the transactional language that reflects Jesus’ earlier illustrative examples from the antitheses in chapter 5. Verse 13 contains a request for deliverance from evil, an expected occurrence, but also, tellingly, contains a request not to be led in to temptation. This has resonance with Jesus’ teachings on anger in the antitheses and the attitudinal components of personal adherence to the tenets of the Law. The reciprocal theme is continued in vv14-15, wherein Jesus states that forgiveness is dependent on one’s willingness to forgive others. The Lord’s Prayer comes at the centre of the Sermon on the Mount and reflects its main themes: divine providence, the kingdom of heaven, and the importance of attitude in adherence to the Law.

The Lord’s Prayer is an intentionally terse prayer that nevertheless conforms to familiar forms. Verse 9 provides an invocation addressing God with a description of attributes. Verses 9-13 contain two sets of petitions, the first set petitioning God to fulfil his promises while the second set describes human needs. Finally it is noteworthy that there is no epilogue.<sup>270</sup> Having raised multiple questions for the audience in vv5-7, vv8-13 answer any questions about the appearance of true prayer.<sup>271</sup> Verses 9-13 counter the negative examples of prayer that preceded the Lord’s Prayer.

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<sup>269</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 352-353. Turner, *Matthew*. 184. Gundry, *Matthew*. 103. Carter, *Margins*. 161.

<sup>270</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 375-376.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid. 367-369.

The plural pronouns in v 8 confirm that this is a group prayer and the first person plural of “Our Father” unifies those praying the prayer together.<sup>272</sup> Jesus’ consistent reference to God as Father in his prayers causes them to appear less formal than some other prayers. Betz attributes the reference to God as “Father” to the customary Jewish avoidance of uttering the divine name.<sup>273</sup> The sanctification of God’s name recalls Israel’s ritual obligations as established in Exod 20:7 (cf. Lev 22:32, Isa 29:23).<sup>274</sup> The opening Doxology places this before petitions for human needs. Prayer should seek to glorify and promote God; 6:9-10 demonstrates that reward should not be sought.<sup>275</sup>

There is no reason to suppose that the bread described in verse 11 is any kind of ritual bread. It is a synecdoche, a representation of essential human needs.<sup>276</sup> Hare resists the interpretation of the bread as a metaphor for daily needs as he considers it to be an over-allegorisation of a literal concept. He attributes this petition to the precipitous financial location of rural Galilean peasants, working as manual labourers, who would be paid daily.<sup>277</sup> However it seems implausible that such a hard pressed peasant, praying in the most literal terms, would pray only for bread. Hare’s resistance seems to stem from the belief that the allegorical interpretation originates in the wealthy Western churches, whereas commentators who propose bread as a synecdoche do so with the understanding of the level of material need in first century Galilee. The “daily bread” provides a semantic link (unique in the New Testament) to God’s provision of manna during the exodus, while dependence on God and divine provision has a conceptual, but not etymological, link to Proverbs 30:8.<sup>278</sup> This does not imply that those praying it are given licence to pray “gimme, gimme, gimme” (as Osborne puts it) but that Jesus’ followers should acknowledge their dependence on and trust in God.<sup>279</sup> The daily bread, if it refers to the coming day’s bread may reflect morning and evening

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<sup>272</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 106. Betz, *Sermon*. 369, 388-389.

<sup>273</sup> Lachs, *Rabbinic Commentary*, 119. Betz, *Sermon*. 386-388. It is worth bearing in mind that childhood in this context represents a period of vulnerability, threat and marginalisation, reiterating the believer’s total dependence on God. Carter, *Margins*. 164.

<sup>274</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 389-390.

<sup>275</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 186-187.

<sup>276</sup> Carter, *Margins*. 163-164. Turner, *Matthew*. 188. Gundry, *Matthew*. 107. Betz, *Sermon*. 377.

<sup>277</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. 68. Turner, *Matthew*. 188.

<sup>278</sup> Mounce, *Matthew*. 57. Carter, *Margins*. 166-167.

<sup>279</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 229.

prayer and the perpetual supply of bread establishes a concept continued in the next petition where perpetual forgiveness is also a theme.<sup>280</sup>

The characterisation of obligations as debts in v12 is uniquely Matthean (cf. 18:27), emphasising the mutuality of human obligations.<sup>281</sup> Accordingly it is fitting that restitution, resolution, and conciliation always appear in Matthew as mutual obligations (Cf. 5:23-24, 18:15-17). Turner also notes financial implications of debt. He argues that sin in this case is a failure to meet transactional obligations, setting the tone for the interpersonal forgiveness condition on divine forgiveness.<sup>282</sup> Debt here may be a financial term but does not have to mean a loan, nor does the forgiveness of debt have to imply the Jubilee Year.<sup>283</sup> It also grounds the discussion of human sinfulness in the relationship to others rather than ritual obligation.<sup>284</sup> The concept of forgiveness being granted proportionately to one's forgiveness of others also appears in the parable of the unforgiving servant (18:23-25) and the parable of the vineyard (20:1-16). The relation of reconciliation with God to the reconciliation of others is a familiar theme in Matthew (5:23-24).

The text of Matthew 6:5-15 shows an internal multiplicity of approaches to prayer. Underlying tensions are presupposed between methods of prayer, the integrity of Jewish prayer, distinction from pagan practice and a questioning of how Matthew's community should approach prayer. The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is almost identical to the version found in the Didache (*Did.* 8.2) but differs significantly from the much shorter text of Luke 11:2-4. Jeremias attributed this difference to the needs of the audience; in his estimation, Luke teaches Gentile Christians how to pray while Matthew addresses those who are already familiar with the convention of prayer but, in accordance with the warnings of 6:5-7, may need guidance in appropriate prayer.<sup>285</sup> As a prayer it is traditional in nature but distinctive and original in composition and theology.<sup>286</sup>

Matthew's Lord's Prayer indicates ritual development to the point where this prayer is a regular feature of community worship and encapsulates the values of the

<sup>280</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 107-108.

<sup>281</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 402-404, 416.

<sup>282</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 188.

<sup>283</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 229-230.

<sup>284</sup> Carter, *Margins*. 167. Hare, *Matthew*. 68. Betz, *Sermon*. 380, 401.

<sup>285</sup> Jeremias, J. *The Prayers of Jesus*. (London: SCM Press, 1967). 88. Cf. Betz, *Sermon*. 372.

<sup>286</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 349.

community in which it serves to educate its members.<sup>287</sup> Matthew's well developed version of the Lord's Prayer makes it very suitable for collective worship.<sup>288</sup> Several scholars note the similarity of the Kaddish in support of its institution as a liturgical prayer, though that it also provides a template for the life of Jesus' disciples and the twofold focus implicit in the structure, towards God and towards others, mirrors the Decalogue in structure.<sup>289</sup> The implicit liturgical form in Matthew and Luke could suggest that each was recited by an audience community.<sup>290</sup> *Did.* 8:3 envisions the Lord's Prayer as a ritual substitute for the traditional Jewish prayers, instructing its recital thrice daily, but Matthew's version contains no more imperative than to use the prayer as a model.<sup>291</sup> The prayer addresses God directly in the hope that this humble prayer will provoke a favourable response from God. There is nothing exclusively Christian about the Lord's Prayer and it contains many parallel to Jewish Scriptures. However in form as a whole it has no parallel and is clearly an innovation of the Gospels which reflects more strongly the teachings of Jesus as exemplified in the Sermon the Mount.

### **iii. 14:23 – prayer on a mountain**

In 14:23 Jesus prays. After escaping from the crowds he ascends a mountain and prays alone, directly addressing God in speech. Osborne considers prayer to be a major activity of Jesus.<sup>292</sup> For Jesus at least prayer does not have to form part of a collective worship experience. This is presumably also the case for Matthew's audience, consistent with Jesus instruction in 6:6. This illustrates Jesus' adherence to his own principles and provides Matthew's audience with a tangible example to follow. Moreover this appears in contrast to the hypocrites and heathens described in 6:5-7, demonstrating Jesus' righteousness with regard to established Jewish practice.

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<sup>287</sup> Overman, *Crisis*. 93-94.

<sup>288</sup> Meier, J. P. *Matthew*. 60.

<sup>289</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 227; W. D. Davies, and Allison, D. C., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (ICC: 3 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988, 1991, 1997). 1:595-597. Cf. Turner, *Matthew*. 186. Gundry, *Matthew*. 104.

<sup>290</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 104-105.

<sup>291</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. 65-66. Osborne, *Matthew*, 227.

<sup>292</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 573.

Meanwhile in v24 the disciples are many stadia away enduring rough seas, combining prayer with motifs also found in the Psalms: water (Ps 18:16-17; 32:6; 69:2-3 & 15), night (Ps 91:5; 107:10-12), and storm (Ps 107: 23-32). In the miraculous story of Jesus' walking on water which follows, Jesus demonstrates divine power, leading to the declaration that Jesus is God's Son, resonating with the stories of Moses.<sup>293</sup>

Carter suggests that the prayer on the mountain is an allusion to worship on Zion as in Isaiah 2:2-3.<sup>294</sup> However, further, stronger parallels to Moses are found in the setting on a mountain. Matthew's modification of Mark in v22 shows a concern for geographical setting, and Luz notes that the mountain is a 'place of special closeness to God' (cf. 17:1-8).<sup>295</sup> The mountain has an obvious Mosaic parallel in Moses' encounters with God on Mount Sinai, found in Exod 24:1-16, but with a particular relevance to Moses' transfiguration in Exod 34:29-35.<sup>296</sup> The mountain reappears in Jesus' transfiguration narrative in 17:1-13. It also calls to mind 4:8-10 in which Satan offered Jesus political power. The meeting of God on the mountain provides a contrast to this image (Matthew has already referred back to the temptation in Jesus' address to Peter in 16:23).<sup>297</sup> Luke's transfiguration account (Luke 9:28-29) has Jesus and the disciples ascending the mountain to pray.<sup>298</sup> In their final encounter with Jesus, the disciples meet him on a mountain in Matt 28:16-20. The mountain is a locus of divine presence where the devout may commune with God.

#### **iv. 21:22 – fulfilment of prayer**

Matthew 21:21-22 contains Jesus' comments on the fig tree which he had cursed previously. In verse 22 Jesus promises that his followers will experience the fulfilment of their prayers. In Matthew it is not only faith that brings about miracles but faith actualised in the form of prayer (8:10-26; 9:27-29; 14:30-31; 15:25-28). The miracle of

<sup>293</sup> U. Luz, *Matthew 8-20: a commentary*. James E. Crouch (trans). (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001). 318-323

<sup>294</sup> Carter, *Margins*. 309.

<sup>295</sup> Luz, *Matthew 8-20*. 318

<sup>296</sup> Mounce, *Matthew*. 168. Luz, *Matthew 8-20*. 395-396

<sup>297</sup> Luz, *Matthew 8-20*. 398

<sup>298</sup> Ibid. 402

the fig tree symbolises the miraculous outworkings of unconditional faith expressed through prayer.<sup>299</sup> This doubt described in 21:21 does not imply a lack of belief but rather a division within the self in which one only trusts God partly.<sup>300</sup> Therefore the belief of 21:22 is a practiced faith of reliance on God. His audience are exhorted to show true faith in prayer. This incident demonstrates that prayer works; God responds, even in miraculous ways.

### **c. Thanksgiving before food (14:19, 15:36)**

Matthew 14:15-20 contains an account of the feeding of the five thousand men, with numberless women and children.<sup>301</sup> Verse 19 contains a reference to “blessing” the food. In 15:20 Jesus once again feeds a multitude by giving thanks for a small quantity of food. Jesus gives thanks for the five loaves and two fish before breaking them and feeding the multitude. The two components of the miracle are the expression of thanks to God and the breaking of the bread. It is unclear whether the prayer of thanks is intended to evoke a particular ritual practice. However this may reflect the common prayers which would precede meals in Matthew’s audience community. The crowd is moved to praise God.<sup>302</sup> The complicating factor is that this action appears to constitute the active part of the miracle being performed and is not therefore merely a report of standard ritual practice. Nevertheless as giving thanks for food is a familiar theme in Scriptural texts and there are no peculiar features noted, this suggests that it is the intention of Jesus, rather than the thanksgiving itself, which inaugurates the miracle. It is at most a vehicle for miraculous power and in both cases is incidental to the narrative. However together they serve to confirm thanksgiving for food as an accepted component of orthopraxy and Matthew’s assumption that his audience would be familiar with the convention is indicative of its established nature. The provision of

<sup>299</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 21-28. 24.

<sup>300</sup> Osborne, *Matthew* 770-771.

<sup>301</sup> See this rite as a rite of fasting on p196.

<sup>302</sup> While the statement in 15:31 that the crowd praised the God of Israel could be an apt illustration in the context of chapter 15 of Gentiles being included in Jesus’ ministry and praising Israel’s God, Turner notes that there is ample Biblical precedent in which the same phrase is used in reference to Israel (Exod 5:1, 1 Kgs 1:48, 1 Chr 16:36, and Ps 41:13 among others). In 1 Kgs 4:42-44 Elisha feeds one hundred miraculously. Overman, *Crisis*. 219.

food in 14:20-21 provides an answer to the request for bread in 6:11 and recalls the manna feedings of Exod 16 and Deut 8:3. The link to Moses underlines Matthew's typology in which Jesus fulfils a Mosaic role.<sup>303</sup>

The looking to heaven (also found in Luke 9:16) is a possible gesture of Jewish prayer, but as it is not attested elsewhere in the first century there is no reason to assume that it was customary.<sup>304</sup> It is nevertheless implicit, therefore, that as both writers include this, presumably from their common source, without comment it was a gesture that would be intelligible to their audiences. The gesture of thanksgiving, however, is better attested. In Matthew 15:36, Jesus does not bless the food as in the Markan and Lukan accounts (Mark 8:7 and Luke 9:16). This could be attributed this to Matthew's Jewish sensibility in which God rather than food should be blessed, were it not for the use of "blessing" in 14:19.<sup>305</sup> Debates about prayer and the blessing of food in *m. Ber.* reflect contemporary issues between the wars, while the convention of thanksgiving over wine and Sabbath sanctification is pre-70 in Neusner's stratigraphy (*m. Ber.* 7:5, 8:1-8).<sup>306</sup>

There is a strong procedural link to the actions performed at the Last Supper in 26:26-27.<sup>307</sup> This is emphasised through the omission of any reference to Jesus' handling of the fish. Matthew omits this from Mark 8:7, which is, otherwise, his obvious source material, which makes the omission demonstrably deliberate.<sup>308</sup> Again in 15:36 the fish are omitted after the introduction and Jesus' thanksgiving and breaking happens to the bread alone. With Matthew's source (Mark 8:7) otherwise faithfully rendered, it is all the more noticeable that Matthew introduces the fish in each version of this miracle but does not mention them in Jesus' distribution.

The breaking of bread and omission of any action with fish as the object suggest the Lord's Supper.<sup>309</sup> The words of thanksgiving prior to the breaking of bread are

<sup>303</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 369-370. Luz, *Matthew* 8-20. 312

<sup>304</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 8-20. 314

<sup>305</sup> Ibid. 314-315

<sup>306</sup> Neusner, *Judaism*, 53, 85-86.

<sup>307</sup> Meier describes Jesus' heavenward gesture as 'so obviously Eucharistic'. Meier, *Matthew*. 163. Carter, *Margins*. 307.

<sup>308</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 321.

<sup>309</sup> Meier, *Matthew*. 163. Gundry, *Matthew*. 293-294. Overman, *Crisis*. 219.

analogous to the Lord's Supper as it may have been experienced by the early church.<sup>310</sup> Turner also notes the strong eucharistic overtones in 14:19-21 but he cautions against its interpretation purely as a prefiguration of the Eucharist rather than a separate miracle story with deliberate similar vocabulary.<sup>311</sup> However, the prayer of thanks in 15:36 is even closer to the Pauline eucharistic account (1 Cor 11:23-26) and taken together these instances of thanksgiving appear to be strongly reminiscent of the Eucharist.<sup>312</sup>

In Matthew's narrative the Last Supper is yet to occur, so this minimal description is in no way a similar establishing rite. However, the features of thanksgiving and breaking bread recur in chapter 26, where the Eucharist is established, and the resonance is clear from the vocabulary. An audience would recognise the features as part of their own communal meal.

## e. Collective worship

### i. 23:5-6 – Pharisees honoured

In Matthew 23:5-6, Jesus criticises the scribes and Pharisees for enjoying the perks of status and seeking out public honour.<sup>313</sup> Of ritual interest are the references to the Pharisees sitting in the high seats in the synagogue, and their wearing of tefillin and fringes. These details serve the overall thrust of the polemic against the Pharisees, but the significance of these ritual features also requires some exploration. The criticisms imply a tense relationship with the Pharisees and their areas of jurisdiction.

Matthew conflates the Jewish leadership throughout his gospel, something that Van Tilborg proposes as an aid to his portrayal of a monolithic Jewish identity against which Jesus is thrown into relief.<sup>314</sup> According to Josephus (*Ant.* 13.293-296) the Pharisees' regard for oral law is their greatest difference from the Sadducees.<sup>315</sup> There

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<sup>310</sup> Luz, *Matthew 8-20*. 345. Notably, major ancient commentators showed no eucharistic interest in Jesus' gestures. M. Simonetti, (ed.) *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament Ib: Matthew 14-28*. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2001). 8, 34-37.

<sup>311</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 369.

<sup>312</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 608.

<sup>313</sup> A discussion of the seats of honour at feasts may be found under Feasting and Fasting, p204.

<sup>314</sup> Van Tilborg, *Leaders*.6-7.

<sup>315</sup> Maccoby, *Writings*. 9.

could exist a considerable level of dissent even within this cohesive group with general acceptance of, and debate about, oral law – thus, oral law is important but open to debate.<sup>316</sup> The Pharisees as a group was broad in outlook to the point where significant differences could be held in tension, and indeed a great deal of debate reported between the houses of Hillel and Shammai, even as these two groups were both major parts of the Pharisaic movement.<sup>317</sup>

That Matthew's arguments are based on what is distinctive about his community is consistent with Maccoby's characterisation of early rabbinic literature, which collects the dissenting views to probe at possible interpretations of the Law.<sup>318</sup> Van Tilborg claims that elements in first century Judaism had a strong anti-Pharisee bent (Cf. *Ass. Mos.* 7.3-10), while Josephus also claims that Pharisaic religious practice was a source of pride to the Pharisees (*Ant.* 17.41).<sup>319</sup> The accusation of appearance-obsessed self-righteousness is not unique to Jesus in Matthew, with accusations against authority figures acting only out of concern as to how they will be perceived also found in John 5:44 and 1QpHab 10,11.<sup>320</sup> Tomson suggests that Jesus' non-Pharisaic teachings, such as the debate over handwashing in 15:1-20 show an 'affinity to non-Pharisaic Judaism'.<sup>321</sup> The Judaism of the first century C.E. was in reality very diverse, encompassing the followers of Jesus (in source and tradition, even if many were Gentile), but Boccaccini argues that late in the century the diversity was beginning to crystallise into two distinct, even mutually exclusive strains: Christianity and Pharisaism. Matthew's gospel was likely to address Jesus' followers, in a period of tension when Jewish Christians were being "edged out" of Judaism, during which the movement was also becoming predominantly Gentile.<sup>322</sup>

The high seats may refer to the seats close to the scrolls from which authoritative teaching was delivered.<sup>323</sup> Consistent references to synagogues in Matthew as "your synagogues" designate these as alien loci in the worship of the

<sup>316</sup> Ibid. 3-4.

<sup>317</sup> E.g. *m. Ned.* 3.4; *m. B. Meṣ.* 3.12; *m. 'Abot* 1.12-15. P. J. Tomson, 'Jewish Purity Laws as Viewed by the Church Fathers and by the Early Followers of Jesus' in M.J.H.M. Poorthuis & J. Schwartz *Purity and Holiness: The Heritage of Leviticus*. (Leiden: Brill, 2000). 79-80. Maccoby, *Writings*. 42-43.

<sup>318</sup> Maccoby, *Writings*. 3.

<sup>319</sup> Van Tilborg, *Leaders*.17. Carter, *Margins*. 453.

<sup>320</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 21-28. 103.

<sup>321</sup> Tomson, 'Jewish Purity Laws' 85-86.

<sup>322</sup> Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism* 16-17, 214-215.

<sup>323</sup> M. 'Abot. 1.1 describes the authority of Moses given to those teaching in the synagogues. Mounce, *Matthew*. 213-214. Turner, David L. *Matthew*. 546-547. Osborne, *Matthew*, 838.

Matthean community. In the unique Matthean material this serves to distance his community from the synagogue, which he associates with the Pharisees.<sup>324</sup> Matthew finds its source in mainstream Judaism but is separating in ritual practice.<sup>325</sup> Therefore, the implicit rejection of the synagogue does not indicate a departure from Judaism, contra Stanton. During this period of fluidity in Judaism the concept of Jewishness could incorporate dissenting groups such as the sectarians described in texts found at Khirbet Qumran.<sup>326</sup> A rejection of this one aspect of ritual practice provides a point of distinction useful in the definition of Matthean community identity in contrast to those decried as “hypocrites”, mostly identified as Pharisees in Matthew’s gospel.

The tefillin described in 23:5 reflect Exod 13:16 and Deut 6:8. Mounce proposes that the broadening refers to wearing tefillin for as long as needed to ensure public notice.<sup>327</sup> However, while the broadening of the tefillin is an obscure expression, it may well be literal, referring to phylacteries of the sort found at Khirbet Qumran which are rectangular and contain a greater number of scriptural passages than normal.<sup>328</sup> Luz suggests that Matthew may have been reflecting a degree of typical non-Pharisaic scepticism found in mainstream Judaism towards the tefillin.<sup>329</sup> However, the critique of the long fringes and broad phylacteries is based on their wearing primarily for attention.<sup>330</sup> It is unlikely that the wearing of fringes is themselves controversial, given that Jesus himself wears fringes in 9:20 and 14:36. Notably, the criticism in Matthew 23:5 against the broad phylacteries of the Pharisees does not condemn them for wearing them.<sup>331</sup> The existence of “best seats” demonstrates that people of various status in society gathered together in one place for ritual purposes. However while a passing comment again it is the love of attention that draws criticism. While the existence of superior seats in the synagogue is not condemned it is not good that the Pharisees wished to use them as a method of gaining attention, and undesirable that the resulting acclaim should be foremost in their minds in a context of worship. The scepticism regarding the tefillin encompasses the love of a good seat as a visible sign of righteousness.

<sup>324</sup> Sim, *Gospel*. 143-144. Stanton, *Gospel*. 97, 128-129.

<sup>325</sup> Stanton, *Gospel*. 130-131.

<sup>326</sup> Sim, *Gospel*. 145-147.

<sup>327</sup> Mounce, *Matthew*. 214-215.

<sup>328</sup> See *DJD* 2, pl. xiv, 4 for examples. Meier, *Matthew*. 264.

<sup>329</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 21-28. 104.

<sup>330</sup> Carter, *Margins*. 453.

<sup>331</sup> Sanders, *Judaism*, 196.

## ii. 26:30 – hymn singing

Matthew 26:30 contains a brief reference to Jesus and the disciples singing a hymn. This places collective singing among the standard acts of worship and would probably be familiar to Matthew's audience. Singing can be another form of address to God and allows the experience of unison for those participating. Its inclusion here indicates that singing was part of worship among the early followers of Jesus.

Later church exegetes propose a Christian hymn of thanksgiving in accordance with the preceding Eucharist as aetiological for the early followers of Jesus.<sup>332</sup> However, a majority of modern scholars suppose the hymn to be the Hallel, Psalm 114-118, that would have been recited on festivals (based on *m. Pesah* 10.6-7).<sup>333</sup> This would be consistent with the Passover narrative. The singing of the Hallel during the Passover festival would imply that Jesus and the disciples are grounded in the first century Jewish context in ritual observance.

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<sup>332</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 21-28. 387.

<sup>333</sup> Neusner does not draw any conclusions about the dating of this passage. Neusner, *Judaism*, 361. However, several scholars consider it reasonable to accept this use of the Hallel over a long period, generally and not as a fringe practice. Turner, *Matthew*. 626. Osborne, *Matthew*, 969. Meier, *Matthew*. 321. Gundry, *Matthew*. 529. Maccoby, *Writings*. 36.

#### IV. Conclusions

The *Damascus Document* and Matthew each provide several examples of rites of exchange and communion. These either constitute contact with the divine or illuminate issues relating to the practice of such rites. In the *Damascus Document* each of the passages dealing with rites of exchange and communion address issues of sacrifice. In Matthew a more diverse collection of ritual is found.

The *Damascus Document* addresses the nature of priesthood in CD III 20 – IV 2. The exegesis of a quotation from Ezekiel 44:15 both criticises and affirms the priesthood, while affirming the importance of sacrifices to God. Israel has strayed but there remain some who are faithful to the Law. Israel's failure makes God angry and includes failure to fulfil the Law in matters of sacrifice. The *Damascus Document* exhibits a suspicion that mainstream Judaism is corrupt but this has not yet led to sectarianism to the extent that the temple must be dismissed as illegitimate. Ritual impurity of a person offering a sacrifice at the temple altar is prohibited, showing that the temple is a vital ritual location but is reduced to the function of the altar with the temple cult incurring deep suspicion. Sacrifice is still central and must be undertaken properly, in ritual purity. It affirms the role of the priests but emphasises the necessity of proper sacrificial ritual. There remains a distinction between priests and lay leaders.

A brief reference to fruit offerings demonstrates that this traditional offering was observed, as are sin offerings, whether for intentional or unwitting transgressions. The appropriate dedication of produce and animals to God maintains the relationship between Israel and the divine.

The *Damascus Document* displays a great concern with sacrificial ritual and despite the suspicion of outsiders within Judaism, as the temple cannot be jettisoned, they take care to intensify specific purity conditions required to safeguard the ritual of the faithful remnant.

Matthew's approach to offerings (5:23-24) contains a few minor, but helpful, details about the offering of sacrifices in the first century. The offering is to be brought to the altar and there is no mention of a mediating priest figure. We can infer that the offering is a guilt offering and the altar to which Matthew refers is the altar of the temple in Jerusalem. That the temple had already been destroyed in 70 C.E. is

inconsequential for Matthew, as the focus of this teaching is on the impact of an improper attitude towards sacrifice. In accordance with the principle that the extent of an object's capacity for defilement is directly proportionate to its capacity for holiness, the altar is vulnerable to the impurity resulting from the celebrant's failure to uphold the whole Law, including its obligations to others. Restitution and reconciliation take precedence over sacrifice, not implying primarily that man is more important than God but that a guilt offering to God without addressing the interpersonal issue lying behind it is not only dysfunctional but defiling. Accordingly there is no explicit or implicit condemnation of sacrificial practice in Matthew 5:23-24. Sacrifice is presupposed. Modified Markan material tends to be intensified in the direction of legal orthodoxy as the essential Jewish character of Jesus' teaching dominates. Jesus' message for the early church is a call to become part of the true Israel.

Multiple teachings on prayer are found throughout Matthew's narrative (6:5-7,6:8-15,14:23,21:22,24:25). The convention of addressing God directly through speech is affirmed and explored. Public prayer for the sake of public recognition is condemned. Jesus commands private prayer, simple in style, to distinguish his followers from hypocrites and pagans. Their acceptance of individual prayer in Matthew's community can be inferred. However the example of the Lord's Prayer in 6:8-15, with its first person plural address of God, indicates that collective prayer would also be acceptable – if it were patterned after Jesus' example and not conforming to the supposedly hypocritical Pharisaic model. The Lord's Prayer exemplifies two recurring themes in Matthew's treatment of rites of exchange and communion: reliance on divine providence in the most practical matters and reciprocity in community problem resolution. The warnings against imitating pagan prayer in 6:1-7 speak to the distinctly Jewish sensibility of Matthew's gospel. Jesus teaches that faithful prayer may bring about miracles (21:22). This statement follows his cursing of the fig tree, and Jesus own prayer precedes his walking on water and the miraculous feeding of chapters 14-15. Matthew assumes his audience's familiarity with the practice of prayer.

In 14:23 Jesus prays on a mountain. Jesus' transfiguration (a profound instance of communion with God) also takes place on a mountain, calling to mind the encounter between Moses and God in Exod 24:1-16. The disciples will later meet with the resurrected Jesus on a mountain in 28:16-20. The setting of Jesus' communion with

God provides a recurring motif of closeness beyond the obvious parallels to Moses' transfiguration and the analogous quotation "giving of the law" in the Sermon on the Mount.

The thanksgiving before food is found in Matthew 14:19 and 15:36. The looking to heaven is an obscure gesture, but the convention of giving thanks before eating is widely reported in contemporary sources. The breaking of bread, coupled with the omission of the fish, calls to mind the Lord's Supper and provides a connection to the ritual practices of the audience. Matthew 26:30 indicates that hymn singing was familiar theme to Matthew's audience, which indicates continuity with Jewish practices.

Each document negotiates the task of distinguishing a group from the mainstream, while refraining from executing a complete break. The themes are similar; the heritage is shared but each exhibits a strong suspicion of the influential parties who do not share their views. With sacrifice and collective worship the meeting point for these diverse groups, purity becomes paramount. The proper observance is crucial to ensure that God is not angered, as the consequences for the whole fellowship could be dire.

### 3. POLITICAL RITUAL

#### I. Introduction

The *Damascus Document* contains significant judicial material detailing the internal structures and authority relationships within the community. The complex of oaths surrounding the rite of admission is described very thoroughly in CD XV 5-6, 8. These oaths appeal to divine judgement but serve to enforce community boundaries and consolidate the sense of shared outlook. Further oaths occur in scenarios of judgement. CD IX 9-12 contains instructions for making a maledictory oath, where the person swearing invokes judgement on false witnesses. In CD XVI 7-12 oath-making is restricted to situations where the authorities are present, and it is unlawful to compel someone to make an oath in any other context. CD IX 2-8 provides acceptable circumstances for capital accusations, while CD IX 16 – X 3 provides rules for testifying in a capital case, including the requirement to be a full member in good standing. CD XII 22 – XIII 10 describes the Overseer, a supplementary officer who officiates in certain contexts.

In Matthew, approximately half of the references to political ritual refer to judicial rites and authority. The rest address societal subdivisions and interpersonal relations under the Law. Political rites demonstrate underlying power relationships and consist of tangible demonstrations of power. Several interesting pericopes address judgement. Two are scenes from Jesus' trial, before Jewish (26:57-68) and Roman authorities (27:11-26). These illuminate the relationship between these two spheres of influence and how their interplay reveals their authority in Jerusalem. Jesus raises the possibility of judicial persecution for his followers (23:34, 37; 24:9), and testifying before rulers (10:18-20). He urges the resolution of conflicts before judicial intervention becomes necessary (5:25-26) and employs judicial metaphor (5:21-22).

The remainder of Matthew's political commentary is non-judicial, or tangentially judicial. The arrest of Jesus (referred to in 21:46 and 26:5, with its account in 26:47-57) facilitates the judicial ritual to follow, but falls under a broader political ritual heading. Similarly, the chief priests and teachers of the law consider Jesus' apprehension and execution (20:18). None of these constitute political ritual. However,

Jesus discusses three distinct legal and political issues: oaths (5:33-37), almsgiving (6:2), and gathering (18:18-19).

## 2. Political Ritual in the Damascus Document

### a. CD XV 5-17 – Admission to the community

Anyone who enters the covenant which this community upholds is instructed to make his sons swear the oath of the covenant. Before judges, the new member subjects himself to the curses of the covenant and to the authority of the Overseer, that he might become an educated member of the community. This functions politically, as “insiders” and “outsiders” are separated by knowledge, similar to the separation of pure and impure things. A systematic education in the interpretation of the precepts is available only to those who have a contractually demonstrable commitment to the community and abandoned a “path of corruption”. The presence of the council of judges declares from the outset that they hold the authority.

For the main participant, the initiation is a rite of passage, an oath that facilitates social movement from outside to inside the group. This public declaration demonstrates the loyalty of the new member and bolsters the authority of the leaders through a declaration of submission. Additionally, oaths are established in the Hebrew Bible as a measure of righteousness.<sup>334</sup> The breaking of oaths is common but brings dishonour, a principle that applies in Ezek 17:13-21. Because of this breach (v18), the kingdom will not survive (v13-14, 21). The demonstration of corruption through false oaths recurs in Hosea 10:4 and 9-15, where guilty parties are destroyed (vv10, 13).

CD is, among other Qumran texts, an exhibition of the common structure of ‘covenantal nomism’.<sup>335</sup> Successful laws and commands maintain the cosmic order of an obedient creation.<sup>336</sup> This encompasses faithfulness through constant mindfulness – to forget is to betray the covenant, and Josephus imbues the sacrifice of Numbers 28:15

<sup>334</sup> Psalm 15 contains a catalogue of positive attributes, specifically, good behaviours, that allow one to dwell in sacred places, among which is the keeping of oaths even when it is inconvenient or unpleasant (v4). This is placed among the number of qualities that indicate righteousness (v2). Proverbs 29:24 describes the accomplices of thieves as being afraid to testify under oath. Elsewhere, the need for reform is evidenced by insincerity of oaths (Is 48:1). God says that the breaking of the covenant is despising his oath in Ezek 16:59-63, and says that he will, nevertheless, remember the covenant, which should make those who broke it feel ashamed. Here, again, the attitude towards an oath is used as a benchmark of righteousness.

<sup>335</sup> Sanders, *Judaism*, 377

<sup>336</sup> Boccaccini, G. *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought, 300 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991). 90-91. Reflected in references to laws governing cosmos – Sir 42:21-23, 43:9-10; 1 En 79:1, 80:1-6; Ecc 3:1-9 in refs to appointed times

with this significance, saying that the goat will be offered for sins committed through forgetfulness (*Ant.* 3.238), and difficulties are attributed to such negligence (*Ant.* 3.12-16, 11.143).<sup>337</sup> Without procedures to keep behaviour in check, failure will result; CD exhibits the decline of optimism regarding the adequacy of human effort.<sup>338</sup> This is consistent with the emphasis on the curses of the covenant, and the necessity of entire families being submitted to the covenant upon entry. When Solomon installs the Ark of the Covenant in the temple in 1 Kgs 8:31-32, the making of oaths is a central function in his plan. Notably, it is also the act of judging whether or not someone has upheld their oath and of holding them to account that is the imperative.

Nehemiah 10:28-29 provides the closest Hebrew Bible parallel to CD XV 5-6, 8. Verse 28 notes that the men set themselves apart from all their nearby nations to follow the law of God, in accord with the intra-national separation of CD XV 5-6, 8, where those who follow the commands carefully (cf. v29) separate themselves from those whom they regard as less faithfulness. The direct correspondence continues with the binding through oaths and curses (v29) and the submission of their wives, sons and daughters to the same oaths (v28). Finally, in v28 it is worth noting that the submission of other family members is contingent on their ability to understand. Therefore, it is not a dynastic commission led by the head of the family, but a conscious, collective submission.

CD XV 15-17 lists those not allowed to enter the congregation excluding the mentally ill, blind, deaf, physically disabled and minors. Similar list of exclusions are found in 1QSa II 3b-10 and 1 QM VII 4b-5a. The *War Scroll* lists several age and competency requirements for those who manage supplies, loot and weapons (1 QM VII 1-3). Along with the ritually impure those prohibited from going to war include lame, blind and paralysed and those with permanent scars or visible marks (1 QM VII 4b-5a), attributed to the presence of angels in the battle (line 6). 1QSa II 3b-10 offers a more detailed list of various types of physical infirmities, adding the mute, visibly blemished and insufficiently ambulant elderly (those who cannot stay upright unaided). These members of the community are permitted to approach the leaders in private but are not allowed to join with the whole congregation. This helps to clarify that exclusion from the congregation refers to exclusion from the general gathering, not exclusion from

<sup>337</sup> Boccaccini. *Middle Judaism*. 242, 244-245

<sup>338</sup> Ibid. 259-260

community membership. Throughout the Dead Sea Scrolls, therefore, restrictions on membership are commonplace.

A degree of separation from an essentially corrupt society is desirable, and the greater that degree the more secure the chosen people may feel. To this impulse Boccaccini credits the desire to separate from the Gentiles seen in Jubilees (22:16, 30:7-15) and from Jews who do not belong to the sectarian community of 1QS (5:10-18).<sup>339</sup>

In the Hebrew Bible, the curses of the covenant are mentioned almost as frequently as the covenant itself. As the covenant is renewed (Deut 29:1-18), the people are warned that to assent to the oath being taken or to invoke it while not honouring its terms will bring disaster as the curses of the covenant (v20) will be visited upon them. In Deut 29:18, the Israelites are instructed to excise the “root” that will poison the community. This accounts for the casting out of those who fall short, according to the standards found in CD. In Joshua 9:20-23, the Gibeonites become servants to the Israelites because they have broken an oath. These consequences are seen as a just punishment for their behaviour in transgressing the covenant that they made, even though it is not *the* covenant between God and his chosen people. Likewise, in CD, there is no reason to suspect that the covenant made with the community in any way overrode or substituted for the covenant between God and his people, but curses and divine enforcement can still be called upon, as oaths in general have their own enduring importance as seen throughout the Hebrew Bible (1 Kgs 2:36-46, 2 Chr 6: 22-23, Judg 21:1-25). With such episodes creating a backdrop to the threat of curses contained in CD XV 5-6, 8 it should be clear that curses associated with oaths are not an idle threat in the history of the Israelites.

The oath is not only a means of calling down judgement, however. The swearing of the oath also grants the new member access to hidden knowledge. There are multiple references throughout the Hebrew Bible to revealed mysteries, and the “chosen” status of those who have true understanding of hidden things. The revelation of right practice to those who enter the community is part of a “return” to an orthodoxy revealed to Moses and the priests, even though it was not found in mainstream religious texts.<sup>340</sup> 4Q270 6 ii 7 states that Abraham was circumcised on the day of his knowing, echoing *Jub.* 15:25-32 in which circumcision binds one to obedience lest one become vulnerable

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<sup>339</sup> Boccaccini. *Middle Judaism*. 260-262

<sup>340</sup> Sanders. *Judaism*. 377-378

to the angel Mastema, and *Jub.* 15:24 where Abraham takes pains to circumcise his entire household on the day upon which the covenant between him and God was made.<sup>341</sup>

As in CD XV 5-17, several Hebrew Bible passages provide a precedent for oaths binding family members with positive outcomes (Gen 24, 26:3, Ex 33:1, Num 32:11, Deut 4:31, 6:18, 23, 8:1, 19:8, 26:15, 31:20-23, Josh 2:12-21, Jer 11:5, Mic 7:20). There are further examples of curses visited upon family members who did not honour a relative's oath (1 Sam 14:1-48, 2 Sam 21:1-9). In CD XV 5-6 and 8, the sons are not bound by an oath taken by others, but by their own oath. There is, in other words, no leeway for the community to be lenient or imprecise in their execution of their sworn obligation, as was seen in the case of Jonathan (1 Sam 14:45). Furthermore, 1 Sam 14:40-43 indicates that the knowledge of the guilty party was revealed to Saul through a process of divination – the casting of lots – thus there is a parallel to the entry into the community which guarantees special knowledge through revelation, including the correct interpretations of the Law.

Finally, curses can also be called upon oneself in a demonstration that one believes oneself to be innocent, and the oaths made in CD XV 5-17 constitute a public declaration of fitness for membership, with all of the responsibilities that this entails.<sup>342</sup>

The main features of the entry rite are original but not innovative as they combine elements of oath-making found elsewhere – the calling of curses down upon the one swearing, the revelation of special knowledge only after entry, and the extension of oaths to family members. The making of these oaths of initiation is at once an acknowledgement of the power of those with the authority to witness and confirm oaths and the *de facto* placement of the community's security and future in the hands of the individual members.

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<sup>341</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 179

<sup>342</sup> In 2 Sam 3:6-11, the phrase "be it ever so severely" is used by Abner in the confirmation of his loyalty to the oath he made to David (v9). In 2 Sam 3:35-37, it appears in David's oath to fast (v 35) as a guarantee of innocence. In 2 Sam 19:9-15, when David returns to Judah, he appoints Amasa commander of the army (v13) and swears that this appointment is for life or else God may punish the king. This guarantee, along with the king's assertion that the elders were his family, won over the people who had been arguing about why the king was not being returned (v9) and caused them to issue a call for the return of David and his men (v14-15).

### b. CD XVI 7-22, IX 1-12 – Oaths before judges

CD XVI 7-12 quotes directly from 1 Sam 25:26, which instructs no one to do justice with their own hand. An oath must be made before, preferably at the instruction of, judges. Anyone who forces another to make an oath “in the open field” transgresses the scriptural principle. Anything outside the acceptable ritual location threatens the sense of divine order. The *Damascus Document* confirms that the leaders (appointed by strict rules delineated in CD – cf. X 4-10) are divinely endorsed and a legitimate instrument of authority.

The judges are put in charge of judging the proceedings, examining the testimony of any party who claims to have been wronged (4Q270 6 iii 13-15). 4Q266 8 ii 1-7 shows that this passage refers to the application of a penalty of one-fifth as restitution for misappropriating another’s property and denying it under oath. The one-fifth surcharge also appears in Lev 5:16, 22:14, 27:13, 27:19 but appears to fit with the circumstance in Lev 6:1-6. Baumgarten notes that the author of the text does not make any clear distinction between the functions of vows and oaths, which allows one to regard the description of “one who vowed” in lines 5-6 (*חנוך*) as a clear parallel to “one who swore” in Lev 6:5 (*עבש*) – the reference to women’s vows in CD XVI 10 uses the root *עבש* to refer back to vows in Num 30:4, showing that the author regarded them as broadly equivalent.<sup>343</sup>

In the oath to return to the covenant (CD XVI 7-8 and 4Q271 4 ii 3-4, based on Exod 34:27) the emphasis is on the obligation to keep the oath of renewed faithfulness, while Deut 29:14 and *m. Šebu*. 3.6 view such oaths as irrelevant in praxis, noting that all Jews are already bound by the Sinai covenant.<sup>344</sup> *M. Šebu*. 3.6 lies outside Neusner’s stratigraphy so is quite possibly too late to be directly applicable, but in agreement with Deut 29:14 it demonstrates a consistent sentiment over centuries. The instruction to keep oaths even where the consequences are unpleasant is also a feature of Ps 15:4. Baumgarten notes that this parallels Josephus’ description of the Essenes (*War* 2.143) in which they are bound to abstention from impure food even where they may die.<sup>345</sup> He also notes that the Qumran writings are noteworthy for their lack of a provision for the

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<sup>343</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 66

<sup>344</sup> Ibid. 179

<sup>345</sup> Ibid. 179

annulment of oaths by sages or teachers, while rabbinic literature makes such a provision (*m. Hag.* 1.8, though outside Neusner's stratigraphy).<sup>346</sup>

A woman's vow may be annulled by her husband or father, if it is deemed to bear a transgressive relationship to the covenant (4Q271 4 ii 10-12). The principle of a woman's oath being subject to evaluation by a husband is similar to the principle of *m. Ned.* 10.4 (outside Neusner's stratigraphy so possibly very late) in which the woman is subject to a 'blanket nullification of all the pre-nuptial vows', though in 4Q271 4 ii 10-12 each oath must be examined individually.<sup>347</sup> All of this emphasises the primacy of the Law outwith CD.

The fact that a person with authority *can* compel someone to take an oath is seen in Neh 13:23-31. Making someone make an oath is not frowned upon in this context, but coercing someone into making an oath in an improper situation is prohibited. The *Damascus Document* emphasises that the proper place for oath making is in a context in which judges can gauge the propriety of the oath being made and ensure that it is upheld.

### c. CD IX 8-12 – Maledictory oath

CD IX 10-13 stipulates that a "maledictory oath" (שׁבּוּעַת הָאֵלֶּה) may be made by the owner of an item of stolen property, calling for those with knowledge of the theft to come forward. This oath of imprecation appears in Num 5:21, where it is used to indict a woman accused of adultery. In both cases, it functions as an involuntary subjection to inevitable divine punishment should the object be guilty of the suspected transgression. The oath should be made in the assembly (so those who are affected may hear it) under the supervision of the judges. By making this oath, the property's owner calls guilt upon anyone who knows who stole the item yet refuses to admit this. This is a common theme in CD, where oaths are concerned, that to submit to an oath is not only an affirmation of faithfulness, but also a submission to the wrath that may result from a failure to uphold covenant obligations. Rather than making amends through restitution

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid. 180

<sup>347</sup> Ibid. 180

or sacrifice, in this case, the one swearing the oath invokes the curse on all in earshot, which is less typical and implies a sense of collective responsibility.

4Q267 9 I 2-5 warns not to charge someone with a capital offence out of anger or vengeance, nor to make someone swear an oath in the open field. “Let not your hand help you” is not, as implied, a scriptural quotation, but is arguably representative of an idea which the author may have derived from Scripture. It is certainly implied that one should avoid resorting to such things in Judg 7:2, 1 Sam 25:26, 31, and 33 where is the image is used of violence. Also, as in Gen 14:22, the expression might warn against raising a hand to make an oath.<sup>348</sup>

In 4Q270 6 iv 11-15, anyone considered guilty can be excluded from purity. This means that they would not be permitted to share in the pure meal that signifies full membership of the community.<sup>349</sup> Where property is concerned, two reliable witnesses are required to establish guilt, but only one to exclude someone from purity. These witnesses must be of age to be full members of the community and must be of good standing as “God-fearing” men. 4Q270 6 iv 15-19 specifies a quorum for judges – ten men from the community, four from Levi and Aaron and six from Israel. They must be familiar with the “Book of Meditation” and between the ages of twenty-five and sixty. Exclusion from purity means denial of the privilege of sharing in the pure food, which appears consistently as a punishment in the *Damascus Document* (CD 1X 21, CD 1X 23, CD XIV 20, 4Q266 10 i 14, 4Q270 6 iv 11, 4Q270 7 i 6). The Dead Sea Scrolls display a common concern that impurity can be easily transmitted through moisture (4Q274 3 ii 4-7, 11QTa XLIX 5-10). Magness notes that archaeological discoveries in the caves at Khirbet Qumran support the existence of separate food stores kept in jars with moisture-free seals to protect the food from impurity, and suggests that this is one method of addressing purity concerns that may have been common among those who shared this outlook.<sup>350</sup> Apart from punishment, it is likely that an additional concern would be the defiling qualities of the guilty person, rendered impure by the nature of their transgressions (Cf. 4Q274 3 ii 8).

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<sup>348</sup> Ibid. 106

<sup>349</sup> See oaths as rites of affliction, p169.

<sup>350</sup> J. Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.) 84-88.

#### d. CD IX 16 – X 3 – Testimony in a capital case

CD IX 16 – X 3 provides complex and detailed instructions for testimony in a capital case. When a person commits a capital sin, the witness must accuse him in person (to his face) before the Overseer, on the same day as the deed was done. The Overseer must record it, and if another individual accuses him, he is condemned. However, if two accuse him of different offences, their character is to be taken into account. This detail clarifies the role of the Overseer and claims the existence of a written record of accusations. Unusually, the judges are not mentioned. It is possible that the judges and the Overseer would be present, and the Overseer is mentioned specifically due to the requirement that he record proceedings, but this cannot be confirmed from the text. To protect the members from outside accusation only full members may testify in a capital matter. The witness must have been purified from any transgressions. These are a series of safeguards to try to ensure that injustice is not done.

4Q266 8 ii and 4Q270 6 iii do not refer to the administration of a capital case or witnesses but provides further helpful information on community procedure where a member has a grievance, and refers to handing someone over to the Gentiles in a capital case. Anyone who gives someone over to the Gentiles to be put to death by their laws is to be put to death (4Q270 6 iii 16). The same vocabulary is found in Micah – the use of מְנֻחָה to describe one who hands over another to his death is also used in Mic 7:2. 4Q270 6 iii 17-18 explains that to bring a malicious charge against another member is classed as taking vengeance or bearing a grudge. This is paralleled in 4Q266 8 ii (which in turn parallels CD XVI 17-20 and IX 1-2, specifically) and paraphrases Lev 27:29.<sup>351</sup>

The authority of the leaders is confirmed as arbiters of justice. This teaching expands on the privileges and responsibilities of membership. Only members are competent witnesses, which bolsters their status. Furthermore, they must have completed all initiation stages. Their character is also crucial, which provides another incentive for righteousness and respecting authority.

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<sup>351</sup> Baumgarten, ‘Citation,’ 95-98.

### f. CD XII 22 – XIV 2 – The Overseer

A figure which appears in the rite for dealing with skin diseases is called the Overseer, or Inspector (*מִבְּקָר*). CD XII 22 – XIV 2 deals with the appointment of these authority figures and the structure of authority within the community. There are references to priests, as might be expected of a Second Temple document, but the noteworthy feature is the prominence of a figure known as the Overseer. The role is a distinctive feature of the *Damascus Document*. Although there are short references to the role in the fragmented texts of 4Q275 3 3 and 5Q13 4 1, it is integral only to the *Damascus Document* and *Community Rule* (1QS VI 19-20, 1QS IX 21). The Overseer provides guidance on ritual where the priest has legal authority but the Overseer explains the interpretation of the Law (CD XIII 5-7 and 4Q267 9 iv 1-3). This may reflect the evolution of the role in the life of the community where this innovative role expanded considerably from an advisor to *de facto* leader.<sup>352</sup> The title comes from the root *בְּקָר* meaning “to inquire”. It can denote an intense looking, as in Ezek 34:11-12 where God promises to seek out his sheep. It is also the term used in Lev 13:36 where the priest examines skin diseases and is used in Prov 20:25 to describe reflective thought after making a vow.

E.P. Sanders attributes the references to priests to an acknowledgement of the presence of ‘aristocratic and well-educated Zadokites’ among the community at one stage, and suggests that as those members died out the level of expertise declined and the role of the Overseer was developed to incorporate educated lay leaders.<sup>353</sup> However, as the *Damascus Document* represents a non-sectarian community that is, in Sanders’ paradigm, yet to experience this decline, it remains revealing that the laity are given significantly greater responsibilities across a more diverse range of situations than any priests. In CD XII 22 – XIV 2, they are a presence in ritual situations where legal discernment is required.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Werrett, *Purity*, 100-101. Hempel, *Laws*, 75-100.

<sup>353</sup> Sanders, *Judaism*, 171, 179, 364

<sup>354</sup> Sanders’ description of priests as ‘professionals’ and ‘non-priestly Pharisees’ as ‘amateurs’ establishes a false dichotomy, attributing this practice to post-70 C.E. based on his acceptance of the rabbinic, Mishnaic account to be the sole line of tradition, neglecting entirely the *Damascus Document* in which the distinction between priests and the Overseer is drawn not through relative authority, but in the scope of their roles which are not competing. Sanders, *Judaism*, 178, 180-181

The responsibilities of the Overseer extend into multiple areas of ritual. He has authority in administrative matters, primary responsibility for the admission of new members and settling disputes, able to demand a meeting with anyone in the community, including judicial situations. He has a pastoral role and the responsibility to address emotional problems or deprivation as the natural teacher of the community, a one who is learned in the Law. The priest has none of these claims on authority and is clearly not expected to be learned in the Law as a key function of his role (though priests could also be sages),<sup>355</sup> whereas the Overseer must be well-trained and competent.

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid. 11; Priests, when not serving in the temple (one week in 24) were often scribes – e.g. Ezra, in Ezra 7:6; Zadok the scribe in Nehemiah 13:13. Priests in 2 Chr 19:5-11, Deut 31:9, 17:18 are referred to as “teachers of the nation” Sir 45:17. Authority figures teaching is widely attested: Isa 56:7, Sir 50:16-18, Philo in *Spec. Laws* 1.97, *Moses* 2.133. Sanders. *Judaism*. 80, 170-171

## **1. Political rites in Matthew**

The Gospel of Matthew contains a considerable corpus of material on political rites, which I have subdivided into judicial ritual, and other material. Judicial ritual addresses issues of authority and accountability, with the narrative accounts of Jesus' trial from the Passion Narrative supplemented by warnings about corrupt officialdom and instructions about addressing interpersonal conflict. The other two pericopes contain an unusual, probably metaphorical, reference to almsgiving being accompanied by the blast of trumpets, and provide instructions for dealing with conflict within the community.

## **2. Judicial ritual**

### **a. 5:25-26 – debtors in court**

Matthew 5:25-26, unique to Matthew, consists of advice given to those in debt. Implicit in this account is the practice of exchanging money in loan and debt. The designation "brothers" implies that the target audience of this instruction are peers. They are counselled to settle debt issues as soon as possible, before the case comes before the judge, lest prosecution result in imprisonment. Although the instructions seek to avert its necessity, it suggests a potential judicial rite involving both parties appearing before a judge to put forward their arguments; presumably the lender would make his accusation and the debtor would be expected to answer, with imprisonment a possibility should satisfactory resolution not be reached before the judge.

This allows us to gain an insight into the judicial practice that would lead to imprisonment in the case of unpaid debts. The debtor is being taken to court, where the judge may order a prison sentence. This is not merely punitive but is to encourage the repayment of the debt; release appears to be contingent upon the repayment, suggesting that the imprisonment is a form of security to ensure compliance rather than to punish disobedience. It suggests that the law was not one where all debtors were automatically subject to the requirement to pay, but where prosecution was at the discretion of the

lender. There is no implied criticism of the desire to have one's loans repaid or invoices paid, but it does suggest an element of discretionary prosecution. The onus is on the debtor. The power, however, appears to lie with the "adversary". The advice is to address such shortcomings before further unpleasantness results. Once the prosecution begins, the one who has made the complaint does not control the proceedings. The advice centres on preventing this chain of events, and there is a measure of pragmatism to this advice.

The text of Matt 5:25-26 does not seem to condemn the actions of either party as dishonourable. While the court scenario is deemed undesirable, it is not because of the lender who is attempting to recover his funds is condemned. Ezekiel 18 demands that the righteous man not lend at usury. Should this be followed, no instruction from the Hebrew Bible is being ignored simply because this transactional relationship exists, and that suggests that the debt described in Matt 5:25-26 is not a matter of interest, but refers to the "last penny" of the original amount loaned.

Precedent and parallels can be found in the Hebrew Bible, as Jesus is not challenging contemporary beliefs in Matthew's account.<sup>356</sup> They consider Matt 5:25-26 to form part of a dual triad structure encompassing vv21-48. The first triad (vv21-26, 27-30 and 31-32) they see as alluding to the text of Deuteronomy while the second triad (vv33-37, 38-42, 43) alludes to Levitical texts, each sub-topic introduced as either an ordinance (supported by the use of the form *πᾶς ὁ*) or an imperative; vv21-32 represent the former and vv33-48 the latter. This presents a compelling case for comparing the instructions of Matt 5:25-26 with potential Deuteronomical precedents.<sup>357</sup>

There are several indications from the Hebrew Bible that lending should be done in a compassionate manner and with appropriate concessions to the borrower's circumstances. Considering the clear set of antecedents in 5:21-33, Deut 15:1-11 is the key passage here. It explains the ethical impulse towards lending money and a rationale for doing so. Deuteronomy 15:4 states that there should be no poor as the Israelites are to be richly blessed in the land; verse 5 qualifies that this will only be the case should they follow these instructions precisely, lending freely and without concern for the imminence of the seventh year, when debts would be cancelled (v7). This is to ensure

<sup>356</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*. 506

<sup>357</sup> Ibid. 504-506; Betz also divides the declarations of 5:21-48 into two groups of three. Betz, *Sermon. 200*

that they will lend money to many other nations but will not have to borrow, and will rule over many but not be ruled over (v6).

At first glance, this seems to contradict entirely the teaching of Jesus in Matt 5:25-26, describing as it does a land not under foreign domination, and issuing instructions solely to the lender. However, the passage does indeed describe lending, rather than gifts, so the suggestion of repayment is not, in itself, an indication of harshness. The promise about never falling under foreign domination (Deut 15:6) is a conditional promise, should the people follow the law exactly, and is also a warning of what might occur should disobedience follow. Furthermore, the fact that someone is lending money at all in Jesus' teaching is significant as it is an example of someone following this law.

Deuteronomy 15:7-11 instructs each to give freely, without regard for the ability to repay. The question is whether taking someone to court qualifies as a "grudging heart" (Deut 15:10). Verse 9 warns against declining to lend because the seventh year is approaching, which suggests that acceptance of the convention of writing off debts is a central part of the lending contract. The likelihood that the debt may not be repaid before the seventh year is not a satisfactory excuse for not lending in the first place. This does not mean that debts owed should not be claimed or contested in a judicial context, but it demonstrates that there is a moral obligation on the money lender to forgive debt in some circumstances. Proverbs 22:7, 22-23 and 26-27 state that God will take up the case of the needy who are exploited by the rich in court.

The Hebrew Bible assumes divorce and oaths and does not forbid them, but does not command them. Therefore Jesus is not rejecting commandments, and obeying Jesus' teaching would not lead to a conflict with the Law.<sup>358</sup> Betz holds to the more traditional view of Jesus' teachings being in opposition to interpretation but agrees that his source and conclusions are not antithetical.<sup>359</sup> Contrast is provided by δέ rather than ἀλλά, which would be more oppositional. Davies and Allison, therefore see 'not contradiction but transcendence' in Matthew – Jesus' teachings are in addition to the Law, not an alternative. In fact, they accept that something similar to the rabbinic "hedge" or "fence" may be found here.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid. 507

<sup>359</sup> Betz, *Sermon*. 209

<sup>360</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*.507

This teaching is only one of the references to debt in Matthew. Notably, 18:25 contains a reference (in the context of a parable) to a debtor's family being sold to repay a debt. It is notable that this parallels the threat of imprisonment in Matt 5:25-26. From this one may deduce that debt was a major concern for Matthew's audience. While Deut 24:6 prohibits the taking of a millstone as security on a debt, as it would endanger the livelihood of the debtor, there are references to the practice of seizing a person as security.<sup>361</sup> There is, however, no Jewish precedent for throwing a debtor in prison.<sup>362</sup> Davies and Allison note that 5:25-26, as with the whole of vv21-30, aims for 'purity of intention'.<sup>363</sup> The instruction is to make peace with everyone. Betz also suggests that the unresolved tensions may be the issue, as the exhortation to come to terms - εὐνοεῖν (v25) – indicates that the need for mutual reconciliation is at the centre of the teaching, and notes that, with vv21-26 based on the command not to murder, the teachings urge the audience to address its 'root cause' – anger and antipathy.<sup>364</sup> References to the story of Cain (Gen 4:2-16) may be found in Matt 18:22 and 23:35. In 5:21-26, therefore, it is worth noting the echoes of this story in that the central problem addressed is that of anger between "brothers" and one of its manifestations is in a conflict occurring during sacrifice.<sup>365</sup> Betz notes that this is all good advice for someone who is in the more vulnerable position (the advice to reconcile is 'simple prudence' – cf. Num 16:16 and Job 9:32).<sup>366</sup> While the pragmatic nature of reconciliation is somewhat at odds with Matthew's overarching advocacy of peace to please God in vv21-24, Davies and Allison argue that this is simply because Matthew received the tradition (cf. Luke 12:57-59) and used it as an imperfect but relevant analogy for the teachings on peacemaking.<sup>367</sup>

The theme of debt recurs in Matt 6:12, in the Matthean Lord's Prayer, when Jesus instructs the disciples to pray that they be forgiven as they have forgiven their debtors; this indicates that debt forgiveness is desirable and comes with divine rewards. This forms a centrepiece of chapters 5-7 in which we can see a 'kingdom manifesto'

<sup>361</sup> In 2 Kgs 4:1-7, Elisha saves a widow's sons from slavery. There are references to the practice of seizing the child of a debtor as payment in Job, notably Job 24:9 in which this practice is referred to alongside the seizure of a fatherless child; this parallels the situation in 2 Kgs 4:1.

<sup>362</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*.520

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.* 507

<sup>364</sup> Betz, *Sermon..* 228-230

<sup>365</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*. 510, Betz, *Sermon.* 205

<sup>366</sup> Betz, *Sermon.* 226-228

<sup>367</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*. 520.

(mirrored chiastically in Matt 24-25 when talking about the future kingdom). The Jesus of the gospels is seeking to reform Israel.<sup>368</sup>

In practice, Jesus' instructions in Matthew are not entirely dismissive of the court procedure in the event of debt settlement, but they press the audience to seek resolution outwith this ritual context. In doing so, he issues a challenge to address the underlying source of the debt conflict rather than resort to judicial intervention. This demonstrates a movement in Matthew towards a community which does not rely on external judicial ritual for satisfactory resolution of internal problems, and a cautionary note on the consequences of dealing with this kind of political authority.

### **b. 10:17-20 – testimony before rulers**

In Matthew 10:1-16, Jesus sends out the twelve disciples. In vv17-20, he warns them that men will turn the disciples over to local councils, they will be flogged in synagogues, and that because of Jesus they will be brought before governors and kings to be witnesses to the Gentiles. He also instructs them, however, that they will be inspired in their answers. These cross-examinations by officials and the subsequent public punishments are examples of political ritual and demonstrate the power of these authorities. This power is somewhat subverted in interpretation, with the punishments that should express the shame and helplessness of the victim actually demonstrating their favoured place in the divine order.

This pericope contrasts the less tangible ideals of the kingdom of heaven with the very present threat of the suspicious authorities. Beyond the immediate dangers, however, Jesus encourages the disciples to see this as an opportunity. Jesus gives the disciples an interpretation of risky events which places it among appointed activities and planned works towards the kingdom. Jesus addresses those whom he brands their persecutors in 23:29-39.

Floggings, and other public punishments, are political rites as they constitute a tangible demonstration of political power.<sup>369</sup> Through this, the authorities can make a

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<sup>368</sup> N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997). 275.

<sup>369</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 136

public statement about their continuing power, and 2 Sam 7:14 implies that flogging could be an earthly means of divine punishment. This is in evidence throughout the Hebrew Bible, with the caveat that unjust punishment is acknowledged as a possibility.<sup>370</sup> In this manner, Jesus' warning does not overturn any fixed notion of the political authorities as enforcers of divine will, but it does challenge any assumption to that effect.

Matthew 10:18-20 parallels Mark 13:10-12, and it is clear that the fear of judicial persecution is not unique to Matthew's church.<sup>371</sup> Acts and the Epistles contain several references to the risk of flogging in the early church, beginning in Acts 5:40-41 where apostles are glad to have been counted worthy of flogging. In Acts 16:22-23 Paul and Silas are flogged as troublemakers, though by Gentiles – brought by Gentile authorities as in Matt 10:17-20. In Acts 22:25 Paul is threatened with flogging, though his declaration of his Roman citizenship prevents it. In 2 Cor 11:23-24 Paul describes his sufferings under persecution, which includes being flogged by the Jews on five occasions. In Heb 11:36, among the attributes of significant figures in the history of Israel, those who were severely flogged are held up as examples of those who have suffered and kept faith. Added to these experiences is the Passion Narrative contained in all four gospels, in which Jesus himself is flogged and crucified by the authorities (Mark 14:65; 15:15; Luke 22:63; 23:16; John 19:1). It is unsurprising, therefore, that Matthew's gospel conveys this sense of suspicion towards the righteousness of political authorities with regard to justice and tolerance. More general issues of persecution are dealt with below, and the nature of conflict with Jewish authorities.

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<sup>370</sup> Flogging is permitted in Deut 25:1-3, if a judge has deemed this appropriate, but with a limit of forty lashes lest the person being punished be diminished socially. Psalm 89:32-33 warns of punishments for violating commandments. Proverbs 17:26 is useful as it inhabits the difficult ground between Jesus' statement in the gospel and the events of Acts. The statements in 2 Sam 7:14 imply flogging is a divine instrument, and while Prov 17:26 does not challenge this directly, it condemns the punishment of the innocent or those who have demonstrated integrity.

<sup>371</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 384.

### c. 23:34, 23:37, 24:9 – judicial persecution

More general persecution appears later in Matthew. In Matthew 23:29-39, Jesus (as part of the “seven woes” passage) rails against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who, in his opinion, have a false image of their own righteousness. Matthew 23:37-39 is almost identical to Luke 13:34-35, strongly indicating a Q source for this lament.<sup>372</sup> Jesus’ tirade against the Pharisees centres on his accusation that, while revering the prophets, they (like their ancestors) would have persecuted and killed them. Jesus promises that they will experience the same situation, *in order that* they will act with equal dishonour against prophets and sages and will condemn themselves as hypocrites. The test is presented perhaps solely to expose their character, even to themselves.

The references to the types of punishment inflicted include death, specifically by crucifixion, and flogging in synagogues (v34) as well as a later reference to stoning (v37). The parallels with Matthew 10:17-20 indicate that it is those whom Jesus addresses there who will encounter the Pharisees, and a comparison of these pericopes helps to illuminate the details of 23:29-39, in which the key omission in Matthew 10:17-20 when taken with this pericope is the reference to crucifixion. The consideration of whether Matthew sees the Jewish authorities and teachers as complicit in crucifixion requires a nuanced distinction of the roles played by the Pharisees, temple authorities and Romans. The references to the judgement scenario is not specific; all that can be determined is the presence of the authorities.

In 20:18, Jesus has already predicted that the chief priests and teachers of the law will condemn him, but will turn him over to the Gentiles. This is an indication that the will of these Jewish officials is that he be killed, but that there is something lacking in their power to carry out his execution. Apart from fleeting glimpses, Pharisees are largely absent from Matthew’s Passion Narrative.

Jesus speaks for a third time to the disciples about persecution in Matt 24:3-14. Matthew 24:4-14 broadly parallels Mark 13:5-13 closely in verses 4-8 and more loosely in verses 9-14 with the insertion of M material verses 10-12. The account of this teaching indicates that in response to the disciples’ question about the signs of his

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<sup>372</sup> Verse 34 appears to be originally Matthean, however. Osborne, *Matthew*, 861.

coming and the end of the age (v 3). Luz argues that in this case it is simply used to express continuity; as Israel will reject Jesus' followers, so will all nations.<sup>373</sup>

Matthew makes clear to his audience the dangers of the political authorities and This lack of a constructive relationship between the Christians and the authorities is a familiar theme (Luke 4:14-30; 6:22-23; Acts 5:17-42; 6:8-1, 12:1-5, 14:19-20, 16:16-24; 2 Cor 11:23-26; Gal 4:29), but it is particularly notable in Matthew with this threefold warning. The cumulative effect is to establish the expectation of unjust punishment and persecution, which comes to a head in the Passion Narrative but may also resonate with the audience who experience varying degrees of persecution. The Jewish authorities are targeted in Matthew, despite their declining power with the fall of the temple in 70 C.E. Indeed, with Matthew's community far more likely to experience persecution from the Roman Empire, the Jewish authorities are a "safe" target and Matthew's community distance themselves from this problematic group.

#### **d. 26:5, 26:47-57 – the arrest, and 26:57-68 – Jesus before the Sanhedrin**

In Matthew 26:5, the chief priests and elders decided not to arrest Jesus during the feast (Passover) due to the risk of public outcry. The Passion Narrative has theological significance as much as historical claims, so these concerns dominate, but several features help to explain Matthew's understanding of the political rites in use. Verses 3 to 4 indicate that the power of the chief priests and elders was, first, subordinate to that of the Romans However, it also demonstrates that (at least in Matthew's understanding) they and their representatives had the power to arrest, detain and try individuals. Jesus' arrest in 26:47-57 and specifically vv54-56 state that events are unfolding in this precise manner in order that Jesus' plan (v1) should be fulfilled.

The account in Matt 26:57-68 describes his arrest, his delivery to Caiaphas and Peter's presence at the trial. The Sanhedrin's accusations, perhaps significantly, do not focus on the purity concerns that appear in the conflict with the Pharisees (as in Matt 12) but on fundamental issues of blasphemy.<sup>374</sup> Verse 60 states that the crucial turning

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<sup>373</sup> Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 192-193.

<sup>374</sup> For detailed discussion of the charge under oath, see Rites of Affliction, p167.

point was when two witnesses confirmed his perceived blasphemy. Prior to the Passion Narrative, the conflict in Matthew between Jesus and the religious leaders focuses on purity in body and Sabbath observance.<sup>375</sup> The accusations in Jesus' trial centre on his apparently divine claims. Josephus (*War* 2.571) describes a (quite possibly idealized) seven-man committee who handled judicial matters, but there are few details regarding procedure contained in Matthew's account. Sloyan makes the case for the author of Matthew having some awareness of historically accurate details (if not the whole trial) in the mention of Pilate, Caiaphas, Annas (Hanan), the Jewish requirement for witnesses in concord, 'speaking against the temple' as an offence and its consequences, capital punishment for bandits and rebels, and Pilate's tendency towards 'swift and severe' penalties.<sup>376</sup> His claim in relation to the witness requirement is that Gospels tend to ignore biblical instruction for two witnesses to testify in agreement from Deut 19:15, with Matthew the exception – 18:16-20 – but this does not arise in context of the trial.<sup>377</sup> However, v60 clearly states that the trial could not proceed until two reliable witnesses were found to make compatible accusations. Therefore, the trial narrative maintains the two-witness requirement.

Matthew creates a narrative in which the temple authorities adhere to the demands for two witnesses and are concerned with their duty to challenge blasphemy. Once again, Matthew portrays the authorities as operating within the established bounds of the Law but with disastrous consequences for the righteous victim. The cumulative effect is to warn the audience of the likelihood of persecution, perhaps with the reassurance that they follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

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<sup>375</sup> It is conceivable that Jesus' teachings were dramatically out of step with the popular observances and beliefs. However, Antipas built his capital on a graveyard, so anyone living in Tiberius would be rendered impure, which Sanders suggests indicates a level of apathy towards the law; however, he also notes that Antipas did not put images on his coins, which at least suggests a token observance. Sanders, *Law*, 17; Far more pertinent I find the question of why purity laws would be so strictly enforced outwith the orbit of the Temple. When the local ruler situates his capital on a graveyard, it becomes harder to envisage the people of Galilee immersing themselves in the mikveh on a daily basis to ensure a level of purity not required this far from the Temple.

<sup>376</sup> Sloyan, *Trial*, 12-13.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid. 5-6

### e. 27:11-26 – Jesus before Pilate

Matthew 27:1-26 blends Markan and Matthean material to create a Passion scene with distinctly Matthean concerns; vv 24-26 is Matthean and vv 11-23 closely parallel Mark.<sup>378</sup> Here we find an example of the non-Jewish judicial ritual, but not one that is widely attested in other sources. Matthew claims that this was customary, in verse 15, for the governor to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. The scene depicts Pilate sitting in authority, while Jesus the accused is subjected to questioning, with the public as witnesses.<sup>379</sup>

Pilate asks Jesus to confirm his self-declared status as king of the Jews, focusing not on the accusations of blasphemy but on the political issue. In verses 21 to 23 Pilate gives the crowd a choice as to whether they want Barabbas or Jesus to be released to them. The crowd responds in favour of Barabbas. Pilate refers to Jesus as the one who is called Christ, and they demand crucifixion. Pilate objects in verse 23, but they continue to demand crucifixion more vehemently. Arguably, Pilate is being portrayed as weak-willed. However, given that Matthew clearly believes Jesus to be innocent in his narrative, it also serves to distance Pilate from the injustice; he was not an enthusiastic participant in the persecution and death of Jesus.

This pericope hints at Matthew's relationship to the Roman authorities. Matthew's unusual level of implicit approval of the Roman Empire and structures of power, compared to his rejection of Jewish authority even as his portrayal of Jesus focuses on the Jewish and ritual aspects as integral, may be adequately explained when one considers the threat to the early church from the Roman Empire. Conceivably, Matthew's portrayal of the early church as obedient to and respectful of the Roman Empire could be an indication that one can follow Jesus and still function as a citizen or subject of Rome.

This would be particularly significant and helpful for the early church in a time of accusations of sedition, sabotage or a lack of respect for Rome. Brandon suggests that the lack of a political dimension to accusations against Jesus in the Gospels is due partly to their religious nature (a genre issue) and, indeed, to protect Christians in late first century from widespread belief of Jesus as an insurgent. The Sanhedrin was less

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<sup>378</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 1008.

<sup>379</sup> For discussion of the handwashing motif, see Rites of Affliction, p182.

powerful than Rome, especially after the temple destruction.<sup>380</sup> Arguably, the idea of revolt or political concerns also became subordinate to a saviour figure as nationalism was of less general relevance after 70 C.E., accounting for the almost exclusively religious nature of Jesus' political acts in Matthew.<sup>381</sup>

In verse 26 Pilate has Jesus flogged and, given the level of intra-gospel references in Matthew, I would not dismiss its inclusion here as incidental. That Jesus had previously referred to flogging by authorities as a sign of innocence is reinforced by his own punishment by Pilate when the audience of Matthew's gospel believes him to be innocent. The Passion Narrative relies heavily on Ps 22 and 69, which also contain the suffering of the innocent.<sup>382</sup>

If the persecution of Jesus reaches its climax in the Passion Narrative, so does the thread of Matthew's commentary on earthly authority. The sceptical attitude to authority betrays a context in which persecution precludes a portrayal of the political powers as divinely authoritative, and by extension it requires an alternative view of the ways in which they choose to exercise that power. The example of Jesus' suffering, along with the teachings throughout Matthew's gospel, demonstrates to the audience that punitive ritual is not necessarily synonymous with divine will, and moreover it should be expected.

### 3. Other political material

#### a. 6:2 – trumpet with alms

In Matthew 6:2, Jesus cautions against doing righteous acts to be seen to do righteous acts, as this will bring no reward from God. Specifically, he claims hypocrites announce charitable giving with trumpets, and have received their reward. Giving done secretly will bring divine rewards. The unusual details of the trumpets accompanying almsgiving may not be literal, but the depiction deserves exploration. The exhortation is to do good secretly, not merely for secrecy's sake, but in contrast to those who give to

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<sup>380</sup> Sloyan, *Trial*. 6-7.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid. 8.

the poor so that they are seen to be giving to the poor. When he states that they have received their reward in full, he implies that acclaim is the reward. However, where good works are not done for acclaim, God will reward this in heaven.

This material is unique to Matthew. The key area of ritual interest is the question of whether or not Matthew believed that any who gave alms to the poor actually did so while announcing it with trumpets – whether this is a literal description of common practice or merely hyperbolic language. 2 Chronicles 15:10-15 demonstrates that actions performed with trumpets were to attract attention, though there is no specific parallel to Matt 6:2.<sup>383</sup> Davies and Allison argue strongly that the trumpets are purely metaphorical, though they do point to Joel 2:15 as evidence that trumpets were blown on feast days, when alms were being requested.<sup>384</sup> However, if any custom such as that described in 6:2 existed, it is certainly not widely attested, and this suggests that Matthew was unlikely to be commenting on a common practice.

There is no challenge to the practice of almsgiving. Deuteronomy 15:11 makes it mandatory, and Betz notes that almsgiving, ὅταν οὖν ποιῆσις ἐλεημοσύνην (“whenever you do almsgiving” in 6:2), is taken for granted as a regular act (cf. Sir 7:10, Tob 1:3) and Davies and Allison characterise a potential challenge to almsgiving as ‘unthinkable’.<sup>385</sup> With no precedent of trumpets being involved in almsgiving, it seems clear that the caution is against drawing attention to almsgiving. Betz considers the characterisation of the hypocrites to be satirical exaggeration of attention-seeking practices, and proposes that, while glory to those who give generously is not misplaced, the donor should first offer glory to God.<sup>386</sup> This kind of attention-seeking changes the act of giving from a selfless transfer of goods into self-glorification. Such self-glorification will prevent divine reward for the same action. While this may retain the principle that one helps the poor for one’s own reward, the alteration of the reward from an immediate public recognition of apparent virtue to a deferred divine vindication removes the immediacy of this self-gratification. As in Matt 5:25-26, motive behind ritual is key, and it is the attitude that must be adjusted.

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<sup>383</sup> 2 Chronicles 15:14 describes the taking of an oath with fanfares. However, the oath is the objective rather than the transfer of wealth for some further purpose.

<sup>384</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*. 579

<sup>385</sup> Ibid. 578, Betz, *Sermon..* 353-354

<sup>386</sup> Betz, *Sermon.* 354-358

### b. 18:18-20 – the gathering of believers

Matthew 18:15 to 17 instructs that if the "brother" sins against one, one is to show him where he is wrong in private and to be happy if he accepts this (v15). If he does not listen (v16) the wronged party is instructed to take one or two witnesses so that there are two or three in agreement as to the situation. This refers back to the legal requirement for two independent witnesses (Deut 19:15), a theme in Matthew's judicial ritual. If this does not work (v17) the community is the next authority in the matter and they are to be included. This is a departure from traditional Pharisaic or Jewish ritual in that the one judging is not appointed priest or Overseer. This may be significant in relation to the position of the church in the Roman Empire, but it may also be attributed to the fall of the temple in 70 C.E. and the discontinuity with traditional Jewish judicial structures.

Verse 18 links earthly actions with heavenly rewards, while vv19 to 20 states that the agreement of two people reads to results. Politically, this seems to preclude monarchical or dictatorial structures of power. This may fit in with the suggestion that the portrayal of Pilate as an unwilling participant in the trial of Jesus is intended to soften the perception that the early church was opposed to the Roman Empire. A nominally democratic power structure within the early church avoids the establishment of the church as a competing locus of power within the Roman Empire. The requirement for two witnesses in agreement is in accordance with the instructions for determining a sentence of death in *m. Sanh.* 7:8 (though this text is outside Neusner's stratigraphy and therefore probably not pre-70 C.E.), *only* with the testimony of two witnesses who had *first* warned him.<sup>387</sup>

The change in interpersonal behaviour in v17 is a concept linked to the joining and casting out from the community seen in CD XV 5-17. The word used in v17 to describe the church, εκκλησία, is used in Greek Old Testament versions to refer to the people of Israel gathered together, utilised by Matt in 19:28. It is perhaps most significant that it was used of wandering Israelites in Deuteronomy (e.g. Deut 4:10, 5:22, 9:10, 18:16, 23:2-9, 31:30), where it is consistently used to refer to the gathering

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<sup>387</sup> Sanders, *Jewish Law*, 18-19

of the whole people, as Matthew's gospel sketches a church in formation, with the formative teaching of Jesus developing a correct understanding of the Law, during a transitory period for Judaism following the fall of the temple.

#### 4. Conclusions

The primary function of the political rites in the *Damascus Document* is in asserting in the written form the different roles fulfilled by those in authority over the community to whom the document is authoritative. This reveals some underlying authority structures that are in use. Priests are clearly authoritative but the situations in which they are invited to exercise that authority are limited. Instead, much of the teaching authority lies with the educated laity, epitomised in the role of the Overseer. This role is an innovation of the *Damascus Document*. However, there is ample precedent for an empowered laity in the Pharisaic movement, who were, like the Overseer, teachers of law and community leaders.

Admission to the community in the *Damascus Document* is granted through the swearing of an oath of the covenant before the community judges. The sons of each new member must also submit themselves to the oath. It incorporates familiar features from biblical oaths. The person swearing calls down the curses of the covenant, submitting themselves to just punishment from God should they break their oath. They also submit themselves to the authority of the leaders and are at risk of expulsion for transgression. In return they learn the right interpretations of the Law that are revealed to the members, aligning themselves with those who have the correct knowledge.

As full members of the community, further instances of oaths and judgement take into account the submission of all members to the authority of the community leaders. Judgements about guilt and innocence are made by community leaders, with severe retribution for those who submit fellow community members to the laws of the Gentiles. The Overseer and judges regulate formal interpersonal relations. Their involvement is facilitated by the codification of such formal relations into independently verifiable forms, hence the extensive employment of oath-making for situations encompassing marriage, property rights and even the community covenant itself. Each example of political ritual in the *Damascus Document* reinforces the central principle: the community are to become and remain separate from corrupt society, even as they continue to live among others. They have their own judges who provide the only valid sources of authority and judgement.

Political ritual in Matthew consists of judicial material and other types of ritual. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus urges his followers to settle interpersonal conflicts without judges. This is an interesting juxtaposition to the *Damascus Document*, where it is expected that every resolution will be achieved by the community leaders. Jesus advises the settlement of matters before both parties lose control by turning over the matter to a higher authority. There is no negative judgement on the court procedure involved, nor is the injured party condemned. The overall message is one of pragmatism rather than legalism. Furthermore, it establishes the theme of resolution without intervention by the authorities and serves as an illustration of Jesus' preaching that the emotions underlying breaches of the commandments must also be addressed.

Where the *Damascus Document* is a didactic text that instructs the community how to resolve formal matters, Matthew contains teaching that is directed towards the people who are not in positions of authority. Here, there is no direct conflict, merely a notable change in function, with Matthew acknowledging the decisions that must be made before seeking external validation. However, it remains significant that the *Damascus Document* places its emphasis entirely on the efficacy of the authority structures, which demonstrates the necessity of confirming that these are the correct and divinely endorsed methods of securing justice.

Matthew, meanwhile, addresses an early Christian movement that found itself in conflict with the authorities and displays a more ambivalent attitude to the powerful. The audience of Matthew's gospel would have been familiar with flogging as an instrument of divinely endorsed punishment from the Law and found throughout the period of monarchy, but in Jesus teaching he challenges this view by stating that unjust punishment is guaranteed for his followers. Instead of bringing shame, it is a confirmation of righteousness. Matthew provides an insight into the persecuted movement that had to reconsider the authorities as divinely appointed ministers of justice, and acknowledged the conflict that might occur.

This challenge to authority is mirrored in the attack on the integrity of the Pharisees, whom Jesus accuses of being as hostile to prophets as their ancestors. This also serves to account for their opposition to Jesus; the teaching about the authorities in Matthew makes it clear that Jesus' crucifixion is not a sign of his guilt or a

dishonourable occurrence, but can be interpreted through the assurance that the authorities may be hostile to those in the right.

The trial of Jesus brings Jesus into conflict with the Jewish and Roman authorities, respectively, and offers some insight into how this conflict was understood by Matthew.

Significantly, this provides insight into how Jesus' early followers expected to be treated by the authorities. Most significantly, the oft-noted softness of Matthew's attitude to the Romans, contrasted with the challenge to the Jewish authorities and teachers, reveals much about the status of Matthew's audience in relation to the Roman Empire. That Jesus was condemned by the Romans is acknowledged, but the motivation for his crucifixion comes from the Jewish leaders, and Pilate is portrayed as reluctant to condemn Jesus, which subtly undermines his authority without speaking out directly against the empire. Otherwise, the lack of condemnation of the Roman authorities may be accounted for by the vulnerable position of Christians in the Roman Empire. Matthew demonstrates that they are no threat to the Romans.

## 4. RITES OF PASSAGE

### 1. Introduction

Rites of passage mark major life events, specifically the change from one state to another. These tend to echo social rather than biological cues, and signify social recognition of a change in status. They mark a mixture of major and minor events. The *Damascus Document* and Matthew contain references to rites of passage common across many societies, such as marriage, divorce and death rites. While incorporating elements of the society's religious beliefs, their function is primarily one of social ordering. The *Damascus Document* contains a rite of expulsion from a community, demonstrating how these rites can reflect the need for immediate social redefinition. There is, in addition, a fragmented mention of divorce in CD XIII 16-20, but there is no ritual content or reference to the divorce or wife at all and this will not be dealt with here.

Matthew contains instructions for the procedure to be used when dealing with conflict between members of the church community. The rest of the considerable material relevant to rites of passage deals with marriage- and death-related rites. On marriage, some basic assumptions about the betrothal procedure and status of that relationship may be inferred from the Nativity story. Jesus teaches directly on divorce. Some details about a first-century wedding are implied in the parable of 25:1-13, and the potential for a historical referent is worth considering, though in a parable it is wise to be cautious about overstating historicity. The death rites include the burial of Jesus and anointing for burial in 26:12, and Jesus instruction to "let the dead bury the dead" (8:21-22), the interpretation of which greatly benefits from a ritual approach. A brief mention of hired mourners implies the acceptance of their craft.

## 2. Rites of Passage in the Damascus Document

### a. CD XX 1-13, 4Q266 10 ii 1-15 and 11 1-21 – expulsion from the community

CD XX 1-13 and 4Q266 10 ii 1-15 provide an explanation of the reasons for expulsion, which helps to explain the features of the rite in 4Q266 11 1-21, which involves the judges, the congregation and the expelled member. Anyone who enters the congregation (presumably fulfilling the requirements where oaths and education in the regulations are concerned) yet shows a disdain for the authority of the leaders and does not uphold their interpretations will, if found to be reprehensible, be expelled until such a time as he may be found to have changed his ways. This is a fuller account of the process of finding someone guilty of transgressions which merit expulsion. It instructs loyal members to disassociate themselves “in wealth or work”, as those who acknowledge the transgressor may also be expelled, in 4Q266 11 1-21. The expulsion ceremony is a self-contained section concluding the *Damascus Document* according to the extant sources from Cave 4.<sup>388</sup>

CD XIII 12-13 states that permission from the Overseer is required for any new members to join the camp. The new members are accountable to the leadership of the community. CD XV 1-13 reiterates the necessity of adherence to the oaths of the covenant, with curses for departure from these oaths. 4Q266 10 ii 1-15 provides a list of transgressions for which exclusion or punishment is due.<sup>389</sup> Malicious accusations in capital cases, insults, unseemly speech, interruption or disruption, sleeping during sessions, leaving without permission, public nudity, unbridled laughter, gestures with the left hand and slander are all valid reasons for exclusions from purity for a fixed period ranging from ten days to a year. One can infer that none of these actions, taken in isolation, would justify permanent expulsion.

According to the explanation for decisive expulsion in 4Q266 11 1-20 (paralleled incompletely in 4Q270 7 i-ii), a more comprehensive rejection of the regulation is required. This refers to the underlying attitude to the teachings rather than specific misdemeanours. One found guilty of despising the Law must be expelled. The priest praises God, denouncing those who transgress his precepts. The expelled member

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<sup>388</sup> Hempel, *Laws*. 177-178.

<sup>389</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*.74-75.

must leave, along with anyone who supported him or benefited from his sins. Accepting the judgement of the community is described in 4Q266 11 1-4 as analogous to offering a sin offering or guilt offering (see Lev 4-5 for sin offering).<sup>390</sup> Having the expelled member present enables a symbolic rejection culminating in physical departure. The citation is a compiled paraphrase of Deut 30:4 and Lev 26:31 followed by a citation of Joel 2:12-13.

The passage linking these two lists of punishments is found in 4Q270 7 i 6-16 and gives further detail as to some specific offences that would merit expulsion. Slander against the community, despising the Law, disrespectful speech about the elders and forbidden sexual contact are all grounds for expulsion. Hempel notes that coming at the end of the penal code in which expulsion is the most severe punishment mentioned this rite could be considered the fulfilment of that threat, but the preamble to the expulsion rite attributes it to a disdain for the authority of the community more generally.<sup>391</sup> The reaction of the community even to potential apostates is severe. Philip Davies describes it as

an insecure community, obsessed with the fear of apostasy, directing its hostility equally towards those of the parent community who reject it, and those within it who, though still physically members, may be secretly renegades.<sup>392</sup>

It is the policing of thoughts of apostasy, and actions that imply such thought, that distinguishes this teaching from the clear series of actions and consequences that characterise the *Damascus Document*.

In the rite of expulsion, the priest recites praises to God (4Q266 11 9-21) for the establishment of their ancestors in righteousness with the revelation of the Law and correct interpretations. This is the typical form of blessings from Qumran liturgical texts.<sup>393</sup> The priest praises God for setting boundaries through the Law which brings a curse upon those who transgress them (12-13). The cursing of the transgressive establishes the faithful as blessed in contrast. Philip Davies calls the community narrative in CD ‘a Qumran community *Heilsgeschichte*’, and the characterisation of their relationship to outsiders is consistent with this attitude.<sup>394</sup> Accordingly, the maintenance of this distinction is important in preserving the community of the blessed

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<sup>390</sup> Hempel, *Laws*. 176-179.

<sup>391</sup> Ibid. 180.

<sup>392</sup> Davies, *Damascus*. 200.

<sup>393</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 77.

<sup>394</sup> Davies, *Damascus*, 198-200.

and ensuring that God continues this blessing.<sup>395</sup> Contact with those who have been excluded constitutes a fundamental threat to the prosperity and righteousness of the community. Any inquiry after, or exchange with, expelled members is grounds for punishment. Annual cursing will befall those who depart from the Law.

Hempel suggests that the annual festival at which the cursing occurs may have provided the context for the expulsion ceremony itself.<sup>396</sup> Having the expulsion ceremony at this event would not only punish the guilty but would publically admonish the community who were henceforth to shun the expelled member. Hempel is justly resistant to the notion that the community would expel their most severe offenders together only once a year.<sup>397</sup> This assumes a reading of line 17 as the setting for the expulsion, while the preceding line announces the completion of the censure. The context of lines 17-21 is the assembly of the camps who curse the transgressor. Nowhere in this description is the presence of the transgressor or concurrence of the expulsion required.

The rites of expulsion and the rules governing expulsion reveal a community concerned with control of its members' attitudes to their founding principles. At the heart is respect for the leaders, used as a measure of reverence for God. To revere God and the uniquely blessed community is to recognise its place in creation, above those who are cursed through ignorance. Thus, irreverence towards this fundamental relationship is a threat to the integrity and continuation of the correct relationship to God, with all the blessings it entails. The rites of expulsion and subsequent cursing enact the community's total rejection of the transgressor and dissociation from their society. This rejection cements the integrity of the righteous and chosen community, ensuring the perpetuation of the divine blessings. In this way, the identity and security of the members is emphasised through the exclusion of those who act as outsiders.

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<sup>395</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 191-197.

<sup>396</sup> Hempel, *Laws*. 183.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid. 180.

### 3. Rites of Passage in Matthew

#### a. 18:15-17 – Church Discipline

The diplomatic method of dealing with conflict outlined in Matt 18:15-17 is intended to resolve interpersonal tensions between members of the church community. The instruction describes a process beginning with a personal approach by the wronged party, encouraging the culprit to make positive steps towards reconciliation. This may be followed by a discreet visit with two or three witnesses, and if necessary by taking the problem to the whole church. Except for the last resort, this is done privately with no set ritual location depicted. In the event that the process is unsuccessful, the party considered to be at fault is to be excluded, taking on the same status as a tax collector or Gentile. This denotes a change in status that marks this as a rite of passage. Although 18:15 is Q material paralleled in Luke 17:3-4, vv16-17 are uniquely Matthean, so may be expected to reflect a Matthean attitude to church relationships. These Matthean verses provide a structured approach to conflict.

The placement of the church at the centre of the procedure in 18:17, and the attempted reconciliation, demonstrate a wider responsibility, but judgement is nevertheless enforced only by the immediate community and in accordance with 5:25-26 does not involve outsiders.<sup>398</sup> The ideal outcome is full reconciliation achieved privately and while only the local congregation should be involved greater numbers may be called upon as the situation escalates.<sup>399</sup> Jesus quotes the requirement for two or three witnesses from Deut 19:15, which originally referred to criminal matters, but is here applied to the community issues. Osborne suggests that the two or three witnesses may have indicated the inclusion of community leaders in the confrontation. The witnesses confirm the guilt of the accused in an unwillingness to listen and repent accordingly.<sup>400</sup> Despite this more confrontational approach, this is still done privately.

“Brother or sister” indicates that church relationships are the issue. Leviticus 19:17-18 teaches the importance of reproofing without grudge, a conciliatory spirit evident in Matt 18:15-17. The practice of discipline is redemptive because it seeks to

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<sup>398</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 686.

<sup>399</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 444-445.

<sup>400</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 686.

restore the relationship between a wronged party and the perpetrator and between the perpetrator and God.<sup>401</sup> The immediate context emphasises the conciliatory tone, with the goal of this teaching the recovery of lost sheep (18:10-14).

The reference to Gentiles and tax collectors places Matthew in Jewish context with no real connection to ‘the Gentile mission’.<sup>402</sup> The most widespread interpretation of how this might have functioned within a church context – in question not least because of its uneasy situation between the Good Shepherd in 18:10-14 and the forgiveness exhortation of vv 21-22 – is that this instruction reflects a rare and extreme situation.<sup>403</sup> The church is exhorted to initiate the conversation about sin, which affects the whole church.<sup>404</sup> As in Lev 19:17, the community does not want to share culpability. This instruction reduces the former member to outsider status. It suggests that the community of those who are righteous carries its own authority.<sup>405</sup> Senior suggests that they may still be an object of ministry and pastoral interest.<sup>406</sup> The fact that there is a definite change in status indicates that there are certain requirements of a member in the church community. However, there is no mention of office bearers, nor are there any specific details about a rite of expulsion. While a clear process is given, there is no delineated rite at the point where the change of state occurs.

## b. Marriage and Divorce

### i. 1:18-19 – betrothal and divorce

Matthew 1:18-19 introduces Jesus’ birth narrative. Mary is said to have been betrothed to Joseph, but was found to be pregnant. Joseph was planning to divorce her discreetly, as Mary would have been disgraced had Joseph publicised their divorce. The account of betrothal is vague – the only confirmation that a rite has taken place is the report of the betrothal – with the only feature of ritual interest the implication that

<sup>401</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 685-686.

<sup>402</sup> Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 449. Osborne, *Matthew*. 686.

<sup>403</sup> Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 450-451

<sup>404</sup> Ibid. 451

<sup>405</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 445. Osborne, *Matthew*. 686.

<sup>406</sup> Senior, Donald P. *Matthew*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998). 210.

betrothal was formal enough that it required a formal divorce with certificate. These details are M material. Engagement was common for girls around the age of twelve and the bride was considered under her husband's authority once the marriage contract had been negotiated, though the bride would commonly remain at home for a further year or more, reflected in *m. Ketub* 5.2 and *m. Ned* 10.5, from the interwar period.<sup>407</sup> The pledge of marriage constitutes a legally binding contract and the reference to Joseph as "husband" in 1:19 demonstrates the strength of the pledge of marriage. Two parties are considered to be husband and wife after betrothal; if the husband were to die before the marriage took place his fiancée would be considered a widow.<sup>408</sup> Implicit in the description of Joseph as Mary's husband and the requirement for divorce is the completion of this initial stage.<sup>409</sup> The blurring of the lines between betrothal and formal marriage demonstrates the continuity of the two concepts and the strength of commitment required in an engagement.

This strongly implies that Mary's perceived infidelity constitutes a charge of adultery and Joseph is clearly entitled to a divorce, necessary and reasonable on the basis of Deut 24:1. He planned to proceed discreetly, and while it is true that according to Deut 22:20-21 she could be tried for adultery, his pursuit of a divorce rather than prosecution may have saved her from this.<sup>410</sup> Joseph is righteous for his wish not to expose Mary to shame. Joseph's reported righteousness relates to his willingness to act with justice based on his knowledge of the circumstances.<sup>411</sup> Deuteronomy 24:1 allows for his discretion being expressed through his giving her the certificate of divorce with two witnesses only.<sup>412</sup> Joseph abides by the Law but his compassion tempers his use of the Law in wishing to be as discreet as possible.<sup>413</sup>

In Matthew's narrative, clearly Mary is not to be held culpable as her innocence is affirmed. However, Matthew's favourable description of Joseph's mercy suggests that his forbearance is desirable not only because of her blamelessness but because mercy in response to even blatant sin might also be desirable. While there are few legal

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<sup>407</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 65. Neusner, *Judaism*, 92.

<sup>408</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 75.

<sup>409</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 65.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid. 66.

<sup>411</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 75-76.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid. 75-76.

<sup>413</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 65.

details to be gleaned, this narrative is helpful in informing the study of his approach as a whole.

## ii. 5:31-32 – Sermon on the Mount: teachings on divorce

Jesus' teaching on divorce in the Sermon on the Mount in 5:31-32 is Matthean material. Jesus quotes the teaching of Deut 24:1 that a man may divorce his wife and must give her a certificate of divorce. However, he counters this with the assertion that a man should not divorce his wife except for infidelity, as otherwise he makes her an adulteress and any future husband an adulterer. Jesus affirms the teaching of Deut 24:1, and by implication the qualified efficacy of the Law as it stands (or as far as it goes), but also adds to it. Divorce is still permissible, though the man must still give the woman a certificate of divorce. The issuing of the certificate as a rite of divorce, and Jesus' implicit judgement about its efficacy, is the chief area of ritual interest.

Betz classifies δίδωμι ἀποστάσιον (give a bill of divorce) as a technical expression, short for βιβλίον ἀποστασίου (found in Matt 19:7 and Mark 10:4). He asserts that its origin was as the certificate relinquishing ownership of property, as after a sale.<sup>414</sup> Matthew upholds the Mosaic concession from Deut 24:1 where adultery occurs. In all other situations, divorce is equated with adultery, and Matthew is concerned that the commandment prohibiting adultery be upheld.<sup>415</sup> Jesus' view is similar to that of the school of Shammai in the previous century, according to *m. Git.* 9.10, outside Neusner's stratigraphy.<sup>416</sup> The first century debate on divorce centred on the interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1 in providing adequate grounds for divorce. The school of Shammai took a conservative interpretation reserving validity only for the more extreme behaviours while the school of Hillel allowed almost any cause, including burnt food or the husband finding someone more attractive.<sup>417</sup> The act of handing over such a certificate for an approved reason dissolves the marriage and renders both parties

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<sup>414</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 245.

<sup>415</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 251.

<sup>416</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 171.

<sup>417</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 200.

capable of remarriage. For the woman, the certificate also confirms the legitimacy of this marriage for a future suitor.

The woman is passive in this paradigm, as the object of the actions (including adultery; her subsequent husband is held responsible for her status in that event). That only the woman is capable of committing adultery against her husband, and that he cannot violate his own marriage, Luz describes as a ‘basic Jewish conviction’.<sup>418</sup> Matthew presupposes that divorce is a male prerogative. Indeed, in the Matthean community, Luz proposes that adultery would have automatically dissolved the marriage; to stay married would be wrong.<sup>419</sup> Mark 10:12, meanwhile, phrases the parallel teaching in reverse, with the woman divorcing and leaving the marriage to remarry. Arguably, this reflects a Greco-Roman practice, while Matthew reflects common Jewish practice, in which there is very little to suggest that women had any control over divorce.<sup>420</sup>

It should be noted that *πορνεία* in this instance is a reason for the dissolution of legitimate marriage rather than a reason for invalidity from the outset; thus, as Luz points out, it is not easily dismissed as incest or a similar concern that would render the marriage invalid.<sup>421</sup> Indeed, it is difficult to narrow it down, as it could encompass a number of activities and a range of circumstances including indiscretions and ongoing flagrant adultery.<sup>422</sup>

The argument that divorce would cause the woman to become an adulteress means that an innocent divorced woman could be branded an adulteress. The tone and content of this pericope indicates that in first century Judaism, the practice of divorce is so inextricably linked to female infidelity that to be a divorced woman is a tacit acknowledgement of sexual guilt. Jesus is not only criticising the practice of divorce, but he also establishes as undesirable any act that causes another person to fall into sin or the appearance of sin.

The prohibition on remarriage for a divorced woman is the feature that makes it more difficult to understand the teaching as a protection for women. Receiving a certificate of divorce would leave a woman free to remarry, essential to financial

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<sup>418</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 250-252.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid. 255

<sup>420</sup> Betz, *Sermon*, 244-245.

<sup>421</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 254. (Contra Osborne, *Matthew*. 200.)

<sup>422</sup> Ibid. 254.

security.<sup>423</sup> The prohibition against marrying any divorced woman is an expansion of Deut 24:4 which prohibits marriage to one's own ex-wife and calls to mind Leviticus 21:7, 14-15, in which priests are forbidden to marry divorcees, with Jesus extending prohibitions to all men.<sup>424</sup> As in 11QT 57:17-19, it is more likely that Jesus' teaching is intended to convey the ideal: that divorce should vanish from society because it is displeasing to God.<sup>425</sup> Jesus concern to prohibit divorce finds its origin in Genesis, looking to preserve God's original intention.<sup>426</sup> In this spirit, Jesus' teaching in Matthew could be seen as provocative and challenging, intended to convey God's displeasure and pressing for the ideal.<sup>427</sup> The certificate seems to be the minimum requirement for divorce, and the dichotomy employed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount implies that, while the marriage *contract* may be terminated by a certificate, marriage itself is never dissoluble.

### iii. 19:3-12 - Pharisaic question on marriage

In Matt 19:3-12, Jesus responds to Pharisaic questions about marriage laws. They ask if it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife for all possible reasons. The Pharisees then question why Moses allowed divorce, based on Deut 24:1, where the giving of this certificate constituted the divorce rite. Jesus reasserts that anyone who divorces his wife and remarries commits adultery, except where infidelity was involved.

This pericope is taken almost verbatim from Mark 10: 1-9. The notable addition is in adding the question about the reasons for divorce to Mark 10:2 (Matt 19:3). The Pharisees here seem to be baiting Jesus, as the Law does not allow divorce for all reasons. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 instructs that after a divorce attributed to the husband's displeasure with his wife due to some "indecency" (*עִנְיָנָה*, "nakedness") on her part (v1), if she remarries but is divorced again or widowed, her first husband must not marry her again (v4). Verse 4 describes this as "detestable" (*תֹּאכֵל*, an abhorrence) in God's eyes

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<sup>423</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 199-200. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*. 252.

<sup>424</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*. 256.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid. 252.

<sup>426</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 172.

<sup>427</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*. 252-253.

and defiling the land with sin. Jer 3:1 uses this practice as a metaphor for the defilement of the land. Matthew 19:9 specifies that the divorcing husband is equally guilty should he remarry. Additionally, it raises the question of what the Pharisees would conceptualise as all “possible” reasons and what kind of indecency the Pharisees have in mind. Several passages from the Law illuminate the issue of impurity after divorce and facilitate a consideration of the moral implications of impurity. Leviticus 21:7 & 14 states that a priest may not marry a divorced woman (or prostitute), as priests are “holy to their God”. Despite the implication of purity concerns for the priests, if their daughter is divorced she may return to live in his house and eat of his food, unlike any other unauthorized person (Lev 22:13). This suggests that the mere fact of divorce did not indicate any general impurity borne by women who are divorced. It is possible here that Jesus is extending this priestly rule to all men; while divorce may be legal, it is certainly not desirable.

The fact that the Pharisees asked Jesus about legality turns this in to a cross-examination on the Law.<sup>428</sup> The further question implies that Jesus has made an error by contradicting the Law of Moses as well as exploring the implications of Jesus’ statement.<sup>429</sup> The notion that the Pharisees are solely being provocative in their interpretation, however, is problematic given the content of *m. Git.* 9.10 (outside Neusner’s stratigraphy), which, while reporting the ruling of the school of Shammai that the only circumstance in which a man may divorce his wife is if he finds her “unchaste”, notes that the School of Hillel believes adequate justification includes poor cookery, while R. Akiba allows divorce if a man considers another woman to be more attractive. Justification based on displeasure is the attitude found in Josephus (arguably *Ant.* 4.253, 16.198, *Life* 426), which suggests that this may have been a widespread interpretation. The consistent demand for a certificate of divorce across these sources suggests that this was, at least, acknowledged as good practice.

The Pharisees want Jesus to contradict Moses. Jesus’ response implies that the Pharisees have not properly understood creation in Genesis.<sup>430</sup> This quotation constitutes an appeal to the earlier stage of creation and therefore to greater authority by

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<sup>428</sup> Ibid. 703.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid. 704.

<sup>430</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 459.

appealing to a principle more fundamental than that being raised by the Pharisees.<sup>431</sup> The reference back to Genesis 1:27 is an argument that God's creative plan did not include divorce.<sup>432</sup> Jesus' teaching centres on his assertion that God's original desire i.e. monogamy is normative rather than the divorce law which was only ever a concession to human sinfulness.<sup>433</sup> The reference to one flesh in 19:6 makes divorce into a mutilation.<sup>434</sup> Jesus' answer to the Pharisees clarifies that the teaching of Moses was not a command but a concession with Moses' attempt to regulate divorce about limiting an action that is contrary to God's creative purpose.<sup>435</sup>

#### **iv. 22:23-33 – Sadducean question on marriage**

The Sadducees (identified as those who do not believe in a resurrection) asked Jesus about the teaching of Moses that should a man die leaving a wife but no children, his brother must marry her and have children with the wife. They give an example of seven brothers dying and each leaving their wife to the next brother. The Sadducees ask whose wife she will be at the resurrection. Jesus tells them that this shows their ignorance of the Scriptures. He claims that, at the resurrection, people will not marry but they will be like angels. Jesus tells them that God – who described himself as “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (22:32 – echoing Exod 3:6) – is not the God of the dead, but of the living. This passage is a minimally condensed version of Mark 12:18-27.

The fact that those who do not believe in life after death ask about the afterlife portrays them as needlessly antagonistic, consistent with Matthew's portrayal of the Jewish authorities. They also appear to be learned, but according to Matthew's Jesus, this is superficial. They try to discredit Jesus through a caricature ridiculing belief in the

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<sup>431</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 703.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid. 703-704.

<sup>433</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 461.

<sup>434</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 704.

<sup>435</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 463. Osborne, *Matthew*. 704.

afterlife.<sup>436</sup> Jesus proceeds to challenge the Sadducean disbelief in life after death. Marriage is irrelevant in the afterlife, which will create ‘a new set of relationships’.<sup>437</sup>

The convention to which the story refers is levirate marriage, in which a childless widow is passed to the next unmarried brother in line to provide the deceased brother with offspring.<sup>438</sup> Weisberg notes that there is very little mention of levirate marriage during the Second Temple period.<sup>439</sup> Philo (*Spec. Laws.* 2.127) does not mention levirate marriage and details the various potential heirs by rank where there is no offspring, rather than offering levirate marriage as an alternative attempt to produce an heir. The rite of *halitzah* (in evidence in the first century in the writings of Josephus) indicates that undertaking levirate marriage was not seen as mandatory. Genesis 38:8 introduces the concept, in narrative, of levirate marriage. Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21 prohibit marriage to the wife of one’s brother, but the fact that a rite is necessary in Deut 25:5-10 for a man to refuse to undertake this duty indicates that it is assumed.

Deuteronomy 25:5-10 contains instruction for the rite releasing the *levir* from his obligation, though not without disapproval. After the man states, before the elders, that he will not marry his brother’s wife, the rejected widow takes off the shoe of her brother-in-law and spits (25:9). In Ruth 4:7-8, taking off one’s own shoe denotes the relinquishing of the right to contract levirate marriage, where Ruth’s late husband’s closer relative agrees to let Boaz marry her instead of him. Josephus paraphrases this in *Ant.* 5.332-337 where Ruth is described as the one taking off the shoe and spitting. The Mishnaic rites of *halitzah* allowed a brother in law to refuse to contract a levirate marriage with his deceased brother’s wife (*m. Yebam.* 12.1-6, an interwar text). The judges provide a witness that he refuses the levirate duty. The descriptions of the rite indicate that it is common but the man is not regarded as righteous for refusing to contract a levirate marriage (nor is he deprived of the right to refuse). *Halitzah* is a pragmatic practice and suggests that levirate marriage was not as automatic as the Sadducean question implies; it would presumably be a very rare event not only to be widowed multiple times but on each occasion to be taken in levirate marriage.

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<sup>436</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 531. Osborne, *Matthew*. 816.

<sup>437</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 817-818.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.* 815-816.

<sup>439</sup> D. E. Weisberg, *Levirate Marriage and the Family in Ancient Judaism*. (Waltham, Mass: Brandeis University Press, 2009). 37.

Levirate marriage as discussed by Josephus in *Ant.* 4.254-25 is intended to protect the inheritance of the deceased brother and to provide for the widow; Deut 25:7-10 demonstrates that this is a matter of honour. Similar situations to that described in vv24-28 (with up to four husbands) appear in the discussions of *m. Yebam.* 2.1-2, 6-7; 3.1-9 (all from the interwar period), which try to unravel series of levirate marriages and specify all the circumstances in which it must be undertaken, as well as detailing divorce procedures for these eventualities. Additionally, the story of the woman with seven husbands is strongly reminiscent of the story of Sarah in Tob 3:8-15.<sup>440</sup> Luz believes the challenge to Jesus is a Sadducean attempt to illustrate absurdity of belief in future resurrection.<sup>441</sup> In the event of the dead returning to life, a ridiculous situation such as this could occur. Jesus' response indicates that while marriage may be indissoluble during one's lifetime, it does not persist after death.

#### v. 25:1-13 – The wedding parable

In Matt 25:1-13 Jesus tells a Matthean parable which describes some features of a wedding rite. The bride has several young women waiting to greet the groom. The women accompany the bride as the groom comes to collect her and take her to his house, where the wedding celebrations take place. It is possible that the account includes features of genuine wedding customs, in the groom's journey to collect the bride at her home and to take her to his.<sup>442</sup> The only difficult feature for using it as real wedding tradition is the late arrival of the groom, in the middle of the night, but Luz argues that this is consistent with the note of eschatological expedition introduced in v 13.<sup>443</sup> Though it is not specified in the text, Jeremias suggest that a plausible reason for the groom's late arrival would be inevitable negotiations about the dowry.<sup>444</sup> However, this is inconsistent with Turner's insistence that the contract would be agreed and

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<sup>440</sup> Luz, *Matthew 21-28.* 70

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid. 228-230.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid. 231.

<sup>444</sup> Jeremias, J. *The Parables of Jesus.* London: SCM Press, 1972, 172-173.

fulfilled so the wedding celebrations marked the beginning of married life together.<sup>445</sup> The most straightforward answer to the confusing contractual details is that this is a parable and not intended to provide a comprehensive portrayal of contemporary wedding ritual. The assumptions about and implied features of wedding ritual may nevertheless illuminate broad customs.

The light sources mentioned in the parable are often translated as “lamps” or “lanterns”, but the word λαμπάς translates as “torches”, which suits the outdoor setting.<sup>446</sup> It also provides a link to wedding customs, as torches feature in the very limited available sources referring to wedding ritual. Rashi’s commentary on *m. Kelim* 2.8 (see Str-B 1.969) does not provide contemporary evidence, but it is interesting to note his claims that a custom in Israel is the accompaniment of the bride to her bridegroom’s home by ten torches.<sup>447</sup> The torch lit processions accompanying the wedding serve to glorify the couple getting married. The parable refers to the first night of the seven day marriage celebration with the groom collecting the bride. Young unmarried women would attend the bride and indeed, here the bridesmaids are sent to meet the groom.<sup>448</sup> The location of the women is unclear but if they are at the bride’s house they could be expected to process to the groom’s house where the feast will take place.<sup>449</sup> Judges 14:10-12 describes a week-long feast thrown by the husband, which lends credibility to this detail.<sup>450</sup> The fragmented text of 4Q502 97 also mentions the seven-day period, possibly in the context of a wedding rite.<sup>451</sup> While there is little evidence to support a presupposition that the parable in Matt 25:1-13 provides a complete account of a wedding rite, the features mentioned do seem to be consistent with the limited evidence available.

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<sup>445</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 595.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid. 596.

<sup>447</sup> Jeremias, J. ‘ΛΑΜΠΑΔΕΣ’ Mt 25 1. 3f. 7f., ZNW 56 (1965) 197-198.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid. 914. Turner, *Matthew*. 595.

<sup>449</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 596.

<sup>450</sup> Tobit 7:15 also mentions a feast. Cf. J. R. Davila, *Liturgical Works*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 186.

<sup>451</sup> Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 205.

### c. Mourning and burial rites

#### i. 8:21-22 – “Let the dead bury their dead”

A disciple, called by Jesus, asks to be allowed to bury his dead father before leaving to follow him. Jesus instructs the disciple to follow him immediately, saying that the dead can bury their own dead. This raises questions about the procedure for burial and implies that the son has an important role in the funerary rites. Matthew 8:21-22 is a Q saying, paralleled in Luke 9:57-60. Luz argues that Matthew preserves the original placement of ἀκολούθει, while Luke places the imperative “follow” first to conform to his formula for calling disciples. Matthew contains the *lectio difficilior* as the request makes more sense when it occurs following the call. Matthew seems to acknowledge this by adding κύριος, a word that dominates chapter 8.<sup>452</sup> Accordingly, the difference between these interpretations is that Luke establishes the call first. Matthew has the request come from an established disciple. The Q parallel in Luke 9:60 clarifies the instruction to proclaim the kingdom instead of burying his father, and follows it in vv61-62 with a similar rebuke to someone who wishes to plough his field before following. Matthew, however, ends the short account with the blunt statement “let the dead bury their dead”. Luz calls the instruction ‘radical to the point of disrespect,’ representing the living embodiment of the call to live in opposition to the world.<sup>453</sup> Elsewhere in Matthew (10:35-36), Jesus notes the inevitable conflict between obligations to earthly family and the divine Father.

The rejection of seemly mourning traditions is reminiscent of 2 Sam 12:23. In 2 Sam 12:15-19, David fasts and prays for his dying son, but in 20-23, after learning of his death, he continues life as normal to the consternation of his servants. He claims that there is no point in fasting after the death and focuses on comforting his wife (v24). Jesus urges his follower to eschew burial rites in favour of more pressing concerns. Both David and Jesus display a preoccupation for the living in these events. David’s rejection of social mores indicates that it is not entirely shocking that Jesus would reject the burial duties of a son. Matthew 8:21-22 comes as a buffer between miracle stories

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<sup>452</sup> Luz, *Matthew 8-20*. 16.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid. 16-17

which indicate the considerable costs of discipleship.<sup>454</sup> Immediately prior to this incident, Jesus describes the trials of an itinerant teacher. The hardships of this existence come in tandem with the harshness of his teaching on burial. Jesus' challenge to established social obligations is based on a sense of urgency and a preoccupation with the living.

This is something of an innovation; in contrast, when Elijah calls Elisha in 1 Kgs 19:20-21 Elisha is permitted to return to his family and to undertake other tasks first. The urgency of Jesus' call is notable and is highlighted by the harshness of the instruction to abandon filial responsibilities. McCane proposes that if one dismisses the speculative interpretation of the dead as spiritually dead, and considers a more literal reading, the common practice of secondary burial makes the saying intelligible and instructive.<sup>455</sup> The history of secondary burial, a distinctly Jewish practice, began with late Bronze Age families collecting ancestral bones in one area of their burial chambers.<sup>456</sup> Second Temple Jewish tombs borrowed the Hellenistic *loculus*, a niche used for depositing bodies, which was repurposed for secondary burial. Ossuary burials developed in response to Greek and Roman stone or pottery containers for cremated remains.<sup>457</sup> This context is more satisfactory than the common interpretation which requires two interpretations of the word νεκρούς as the connection via the word ἐστον connects the two occurrences as synonymous.<sup>458</sup> He notes that an interpretation consistent with contemporary burial customs will always be far more convincing.<sup>459</sup> Less literal over-interpretations water down the shock value of this harsh teaching. In light of the coming kingdom this teaching introduces an element of urgency and communicates the extent of the sacrifice demanded.<sup>460</sup>

The text does not address whether the father is already dead or just about to die. One key problem for the common interpretation – that the father is lying dead and must be buried or be left in the open – is the convention of carrying out burial immediately. It is a reasonable assumption that one responsible for the burial would not enter into a

<sup>454</sup> Meier, *Matthew* 86-87

<sup>455</sup> B. R. McCane, 'Let the Dead Bury Their Own Dead: Secondary Burial and Mt. 8:21-22' *Harvard Theological Review* 83 (1990), 31.

<sup>456</sup> B. R. McCane, *Roll Back the Stone: Death and Burial in the Word of Jesus*. (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2003). 8.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid. 7-10.

<sup>458</sup> 'What the text has joined together, let no interpreter put asunder.' McCane, 'Dead', 39.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid. 39.

<sup>460</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 306.

conversation about discipleship rather than preparing the body.<sup>461</sup> The Gospels depict burial as an immediate requirement (Mark 5:48, John 11), a preference reflected in *m. Sanh.* 6.5, in which a corpse may only be left unburied overnight if required materials, such as grave clothes, are unavailable.<sup>462</sup> Honouring parents includes burying them; a son would be responsible for carrying out secondary burial or at least for overseeing its proper performance.<sup>463</sup> In *War* 2.1, Josephus reports the general disdain towards the son of Herod whose mourning for his father seemed insincere, being accompanied by wild parties.<sup>464</sup> Filial burial duties are reflected in Gen 50:5-6, Tob 6:14-16, Lev 21:10-11 and Num 6:6-7, which allows only a high priest or Nazirite to neglect this duty.

McCane argues that the Tannaitic tractate *Semahot* is a valid source of information about first century burial despite its third century origins for two reasons: burial practices changed very slowly, and archaeological evidence in early Roman Palestine confirms much of its content.<sup>465</sup> I use this source where corroborated by archaeological evidence.

Death ritual reflects the need to address its threateningly transgressive nature, which leaves not only a physical absence but a social void consisting of the various roles that the deceased fulfilled. It is important to address death, as in removing a person with a social role the societal structure suffers a loss and its stability is undermined.<sup>466</sup> Secondary burial has a transitory function, marking the absence of the deceased as they gradually join the “society” of the dead. Decomposition allows the dead to withdraw from living society.<sup>467</sup> Ossuaries, popular from the time of Herod the Great until the early second century, allowed some sense of identity to remain through individual preservation.<sup>468</sup> Total decomposition signified complete atonement and the soul of the deceased being at rest.<sup>469</sup> The custom of caring for the decomposing and depositing their skeletal remains in ossuaries is called *ossilegium* and was undertaken by family

<sup>461</sup> McCane, ‘Dead’ 39.

<sup>462</sup> McCane, *Roll Back the Stone*, 30-31.

<sup>463</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 305. Turner, *Matthew*. 239, McCane, ‘Dead’ 37.

<sup>464</sup> McCane, *Roll Back the Stone*, 3.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid.30-31. B. R. ‘Bones of Contention? Ossuaries and Reliquaries in Early Judaism and Christianity’ *The Second Century* 8 (1991), 239. 235-239. McCane, ‘Dead’ 31.

<sup>466</sup> McCane, *Roll Back the Stone*, 43-44, 65.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>469</sup> McCane, ‘Bones’ 241. E. M. Meyers, ‘The Theological Implications of an Ancient Jewish Burial Custom,’ *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 62:2 (1971), 105, 110.

members.<sup>470</sup> *Semahot* 12.4 implies that a period of mourning continued throughout the period of ossilegium (a full year for a parent), with gradual changes in the requirements over this period allowing social reintegration having addressed and acknowledged their bereavement.<sup>471</sup> Secondary burial concluded mourning ritual; the later rabbinic discussion in *m. Mo'ed Qat.* 1.5 (not included in Neusner's stratigraphy) indicates that secondary burial was a time for mourning and rejoicing as the last day on which mourning was appropriate.

*Semahot* 12.6-7 indicates that secondary burial was only appropriate after complete decomposition.<sup>472</sup> Only in the later Second Temple era does significant archaeological evidence permit a confident reconstruction of the process.<sup>473</sup> In some First Temple period tombs in Jerusalem similar customs were in evidence, with bones relocated to under-bench repositories after desiccation. This predates the advent of ossuaries but reflects the same sensibilities.<sup>474</sup> The practice of ossilegium arrives in the first century C.E. as a paradigmatic expression.<sup>475</sup>

Knowledge of secondary burial makes the setting more coherent, with the son having completed the initial month of mourning. Burial could be a few days or eleven months in the future.<sup>476</sup> In this interpretation the father is in the tomb decomposing and shares that space with the bones of his ancestors, and possibly other deceased family members. There are two modes of "being dead" in first century burial practices. Those who have completed their atoning process of decay may look after those who are at an earlier stage in their journey to rest from judgement.<sup>477</sup> To be "gathered to one's fathers" is an idiomatic acknowledgement of the ritual reality instigated by death; this may be a reference to secondary burial (Gen 25:8, 25:17, 35:29, 49:29-33, Num 20:24-26, 27:13, 31:2, Deut 32:50, Judg 2:10).

It is important to note that the issue is temporal; the disciple does not refuse to follow Jesus but requests a brief delay in order to satisfy obligations. This ironic undermining of a burial custom seemingly required by the honour commandment

<sup>470</sup> Meyers, 'Implications' 95. McCane, 'Bones' 237-238.

<sup>471</sup> McCane, *Roll Back the Stone*, 38-39. Meyers, 'Implications' 111. McCane, 'Bones' 240-241. McCane, 'Dead' 35.

<sup>472</sup> McCane, 'Bones' 239.

<sup>473</sup> Meyers, 'Implications' 95.

<sup>474</sup> McCane, 'Dead' 32.

<sup>475</sup> Meyers, 'Implications' 95. McCane, 'Bones' 240-241.

<sup>476</sup> McCane, 'Dead' 40.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid.

emphasises the urgency of discipleship due to the imminence of the kingdom.<sup>478</sup> Concern for even the most immediate conflicting obligations could result in spiritual death.<sup>479</sup> To “let the dead bury their dead” is to focus on the living and respond to the immediate call for action.

The pericope also provides several clues about funereal customs. A son is expected to fulfil his primary ritual obligations. This intensifies the conflict of interest. Abandoning the practice of *ossilegium* means abandoning his father a transitory state. Furthermore, he would be curtailing his period of mourning that signified his return to a normal place in the social order. In Matthew, Jesus cuts across this period of liminality as an inferior concern when the kingdom is coming. The practice of secondary burial makes this story a coherent representation of the ritual reality of death in first century Palestine.

## **ii. 9:23 – the ejection of hired mourners**

In Matthew 9:23, a passing reference to funereal ritual implies that professional mourners are present as a family grieves. Jesus enters the house of a dead girl where a noisy crowd gathers, including flute players (absent from the Markan source, Mark 5:38), which suggests professional mourners. Jesus dismisses them and tells them that the girl is not dead. A reference to wailing mourners in 11:17 demonstrates that hired mourners were common enough to be used in metaphor. They supplied a culturally appropriate acknowledgement of the deceased, ensuring that death was marked properly. The requirement to bury a body within the day explains the rapidity with which these professionals were summoned.<sup>480</sup> The convention appears in Ecc 12:5, which refers to mourners going about the streets when someone dies, and Jer 9:17, which calls for skilful wailing women. Their ubiquity is corroborated by Josephus' mention of hired mourners with instruments in *War.* 3.9.5, and *m. Ketub* 4:4 also notes that two flautists and a mourning woman were expected. Even the poorest families were

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<sup>478</sup> Ibid. 38, 40-41.

<sup>479</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 239-240.

<sup>480</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 350.

not exempt from this obligation.<sup>481</sup> There is Hebrew Bible precedent for professional musicians at funerals (Jer 9:17-22, Amos 5:16).<sup>482</sup> Loud mourning was an expected feature of a funeral.<sup>483</sup>

The chaos of the scene of which Jesus takes control indicates his authority, and her death is inconsequential as he has the power to restore her. From the ritual perspective, it functions as a subversion of the girl's reported death, by rejecting the funereal customs on the basis that the girl should not be treated as a corpse, given her imminent resurrection. The episode demonstrates the underlying expectation that mourners were to be hired in the event of death.

## **ii. 26:12– anointing for burial**

Jesus explains the motivation or function of the actions of the woman who came to anoint Jesus with her perfume (26:12): she was doing so to prepare him for burial. This comes from Mark 14:8, which Matthew has shortened to focus on Jesus' forthcoming burial rather than her motives. The anointing of corpses was commonly undertaken with aromatic oils to disguise the smell of decomposition as embalming was not a Jewish custom.<sup>484</sup> It demonstrates the care taken in burial to ensure that the practice of *ossilegium* was not unpleasant, as family members would frequent the tomb during their period of mourning. It is only in Matthew's account that the women do not go to the tomb to anoint Jesus after the Sabbath (cf. Mark 16:1).<sup>485</sup> Instead, the woman provides Jesus with a sufficient anointing, according to Matthew, which does not necessarily reflect her intentions.<sup>486</sup> The episode functions in Matthew as a corpse anointing before Jesus has been executed. Jesus interprets her extravagant gesture as a prefiguration of his actual burial. For Matthew this anointing *constitutes* Jesus' anointing as no further anointing is described. Matthew redacts Mark's account to remove the reference to the

<sup>481</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 8-20. 43, Gundry, *Matthew*, 175, Meier, *Matthew*, 98

<sup>482</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 259. Osborne, *Matthew*. 350.

<sup>483</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 350.

<sup>484</sup> cf. John 19:39 where Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus anoint Jesus with seventy pounds of myrrh and aloë. Osborne notes that the extravagance of this transforms the burial of Jesus in to something akin to royal burial. Osborne, *Matthew*. 952.

<sup>485</sup> Meier, *Matthew*, 312

<sup>486</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 21-28, 336-338

women going to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body.<sup>487</sup> Jesus urges his disciples to focus on the living, and denies that the anointing is extravagant. Corpse anointing is accepted as an expected part of burial rites.

#### **iv. 27:57-61 – the burial of Jesus**

Matthew 27:57-61 is the account of the retrieval and burial of Jesus' body. The wealthy Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate for the body of Jesus. Joseph wraps the body in a clean linen cloth and has it placed in his own new tomb. He leaves a large boulder in front of the entrance.

It is striking that there is no anointing or washing in Matthew's burial pericope.<sup>488</sup> It happens while Jesus is alive, in 26:12. Under normal circumstances, the first requirement for burial is washing, sufficiently important that it could be performed on the Sabbath.<sup>489</sup> The wrapping, usually strips of linen, would accompany the placement of perfumes and spices within the shroud. Osborne argues that Joseph would have been unable to perform all parts of the burial rite alone and suggests the involvement of servants.<sup>490</sup> Everyone involved in handling a corpse would be unclean for seven days and exclude them from further participation in Passover ritual. Joseph, unaided by disciples, provides the location for burial and handles the process.

Typically traditional Jewish tombs in the first century would be sealed with a round stone between four and six feet in diameter which was secured in a through by short walls. The preparation described would have most likely taken place in the preparation room designed for this purpose as part of the burial chamber. Intact bodies could be stored during the decomposition process in burial niches in the preparation room or a burial chamber. The tomb may contain an ossuary, like many which have been found by archaeologists.<sup>491</sup> The discovery of loose bones on a shelf along the sides of the chamber in one example from the Kidron Valley suggest that bodies were placed

<sup>487</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 952.

<sup>488</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 619. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 578

<sup>489</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 1049.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid. 1049-1050.

<sup>491</sup> McCane, Byron R. 'Burial Practices, Jewish' *DNTB* 173-175. McCane, 'Dead' 32.

on this shelf for the duration of decomposition with bones later being collected and stored in ossuaries in the *loculus*, a channel carved deep in to the tomb wall.<sup>492</sup> The family tomb carried great significance for familial unity and union with ancestors. Middle Bronze Age communal burial sites exhibit the desire to be united with family or tribe in physical proximity. In Iron Age Israel bones were deposited together but were not necessarily contained in discrete receptacles.<sup>493</sup> Where a shelf was unavailable Jewish tombs contained a shallow central pit used as a temporary grave during the period of decomposition.<sup>494</sup> The land, even physical contact with the earth, was valuable as part of the atoning process.<sup>495</sup>

Bodies had to be buried by the Sabbath.<sup>496</sup> McCane argues that, even if Joseph were not a disciple of Jesus, the Jewish authorities would have wanted to ensure a timely burial in accordance with the instructions in Deut 21:22-23.<sup>497</sup> *Semahot* 2.6 forbids the performance of ritual for executed criminals, but Jewish custom is distinct from the Roman practice of refusing burial to executed criminals.<sup>498</sup> The discovery of the crucified Yehohanan at Giv'at ha-Mivtar demonstrates that it is possible for a crucifixion victim to be released by Roman authorities and buried in a family tomb.<sup>499</sup> *M. Sanh.* 6.4-6 describes the burial of the bones of executed criminals, though not necessarily in the family tomb. However, a distinction in the type of burial afforded to the shamed also seems likely. In his paraphrase of Josh 7 (*Ant.* 4.4) Josephus describes a dishonourable burial given to the condemned. Punishment via burial apart from family occurs in 1 Kgs 13:21-22 and *m. Sanh.* 6.6.<sup>500</sup> Placing Jesus in a new tomb demonstrates that, in death, the shame of crucifixion creates a boundary between the crucified and society. McCane argues that any first century Jewish audience would recognise Jesus'

<sup>492</sup> McCane, 'Bones' 237.

<sup>493</sup> Meyers, 'Implications' 96.

<sup>494</sup> McCane, 'Bones' 240.

<sup>495</sup> One Jerusalem ossuary carried an inscription explaining that perforations in the ossuary were to facilitate unity with the earth. *Ibid.* 98, 103, 116.

<sup>496</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 1049.

<sup>497</sup> McCane, *Roll Back the Stone*, 93-95. Examples of executed enemies being buried by sunset may be found in Jos 8:29 and 10:27 while Josephus notes that the Jewish population of Jerusalem would bury the crucified by sunset (*War* 4.317).

<sup>498</sup> Meyers, 'Implications' 108-109f.

<sup>499</sup> McCane points out that only through a technical problem extracting the nail from the cross was any evidence of crucifixion left on the skeleton. This indicates that the bodies of crucifixion victims are not otherwise easily identified and it is impossible to estimate the number of crucifixion victims buried in family tombs. McCane, *Roll Back the Stone*, 93, 107.

<sup>500</sup> McCane, *Roll Back the Stone*, 95.

burial as shameful without comment from the author. To be buried separately indicates a dislocation from an extended family and societal norms.<sup>501</sup>

The burial of Jesus underscores the reality of Jesus' death. Most often a concession to Jewish sensibilities, the Romans would eschew their own custom of refusing burial to a crucified person and would bury them in a mass grave, a burial which was dishonouring.<sup>502</sup> Even so, the burial is not a family burial and does not honour Jesus in death.

#### **d. A sacrifice denoting purification (8:1-4)**

The purification of the leper in Matt 8:1-4 is discussed in greater detail in relation to skin disease ritual.<sup>503</sup> However, the sacrifice described merits a brief mention here. Once Jesus has healed the man's skin disease, he tells him that he must now present himself to the priest and make a sacrifice, in accordance with Lev 14:1-32. The rite is an embodiment of the two states between which he finds himself until the obligation is completed. Without being in a state of ritual purity, the man could not approach the altar and would be a contamination risk. This sacrifice is an offering to mitigate the impurity with which he was formerly afflicted, but it provides in itself a demonstration of the restored purity. That Jesus instructs the man to undertake this rite suggests that Matthew is presenting a favourable view of the temple and the tradition of sacrifice.

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<sup>501</sup> McCane, *Roll Back the Stone*, 98-102.

<sup>502</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 1048-1049.

<sup>503</sup> See Rites of Affliction, p179.

#### 4. Conclusions

Rites of passage mark the transition from one state to another, and often provide the vehicle for such transformation. In the *Damascus Document* this takes the form of expulsion from the community (CD XX 1-13 and 4Q266 10 ii 1-15, 4Q266 11 1-21), constituting a major life change not only for the member expelled but also for the community. The distinction between transgressions for which exclusion is due and those for which expulsion is mandatory reveals the areas of greatest concern to the community.

That the attitudinal deficiencies of a member are grounds for expulsion denotes the fragility of community identity. Scepticism regarding the leaders' authority constitutes a threat to the whole community, whose separation from others in knowledge and righteousness depends on the members' acceptance of the community narrative. The importance of expulsion is a result of this community narrative, in which God chooses those to whom the Law will be revealed, then selects the community as those who will receive the true interpretations of this Law. Furthermore, the acceptance of these interpretations by living accordingly is the visible sign of the select community, and the basis upon which God metes out blessing. Thus, a disrespectful attitude to the community interpretations of the Law degrades the distinction from others that enables the reception of such blessings.

The expulsion is an attempt to cement the proper relationship to God. The greater part is an oration praising God for the blessings enjoyed in the past, with the hope that they may continue. This reiteration of community faithfulness, now that the disrespectful member is being justly ejected, serves to remind God of the special relationship that they enjoy. The complete rejection of the expelled member, solidified by annual cursing, preserves the distinction between insiders and outsiders and prevents further erosion. A similar change in status occurs in Matt 18:18, although no rite specifically marks the change. The difficult member of the Matthean community will no longer belong in the fellowship.

The rites in Matthew concern marriage, divorce and burial, with a brief mention of sacrifice. The betrothal of Mary and Joseph in 1:18-19 reveals that betrothal was a binding contract with divorce, including the issuing of a certificate, required for a

separation. It is as binding as formal marriage. Plausible accusations of adultery are grounds for divorce, and the wronged husband is entitled to pursue this. Matthew provides an anecdotal exploration of Joseph's rights and praises him for his decision to proceed with divorce discreetly. Thus, the manner in which one claims his rights is subject to personal consideration.

Jesus' teachings on divorce in 5:31-32 explore the divorce process and reasons for divorce. He affirms the basic right of a husband to divorce his wife, as long as he gives her a certificate of divorce, but adds the condition that adultery is the only acceptable justification. For Matthew, adultery (by the wife) is a legitimate reason for divorce, and divorce itself may be an indication to the community of the divorced woman's immorality. Matthew's audience is to refrain from any course of action that would cause another to sin, with any man who divorces an innocent wife forcing her into a *de facto* state of adultery in any subsequent marriage. The ideal is the continuation of a successful marriage. This is borne out by the discussion with the Pharisees in 19:3-12, in which Jesus presses all to accept his more stringent teachings. Again, there is a distinction between obedience to the points of the Law and the choice to exercise rights afforded by the Law. The certificate is still a central requirement where divorce occurs.

Matthew's treatment of death rites reflects a worldview in which obligations to the dead are of considerably less importance than those to the living. Jesus' instruction to a potential disciple to abandon plans to bury his father in 8:21-22 states this directly. The immediate harshness of this instruction is somewhat mitigated by understanding the secondary burial context. The statement encourages a violation of the mourning period. The ejection of hired mourners in 9:23 is a subtler example, in which the trappings of death are rejected – indeed, with Jesus' raising of the corpse in question, they are an irrelevance. The only reference to a funereal anointing of Jesus' body happens before his death, in 26:12. He interprets the anointing as an anointing for burial as he instructs his disciples to appreciate him while he is alive. Accordingly, if death rites are a rite of passage in Matthew, it is a passage from life to a state of irrelevance for his community.

The content of the *Damascus Document* and Matthew does not overlap in the area of rites of passage. What the rites of passage in these texts have in common is the attempt to navigate major life changes without departing from the Law. Implicit is the

recognition of the precariousness of the relationship to God whenever fundamental changes in status or situation occur. Safe negotiation of these transitory periods preserves the relationship to God that can ensure continued favour and blessing.

## 5. RITES OF AFFLICTION

### I. Introduction

Rites of affliction attempt to mitigate the negative effects of afflictions with a supernatural or metaphysical cause. These may be ‘morally neutral’, or they may be attributed to personal sin. The morally neutral rites address issues of purity in domestic circumstances, an on-going task. In addition, physical impurity such as the pollution of childbearing, discussed in the *Damascus Document*, and skin disease fall under this category. Exorcism, a theme in Matthew, demonstrates the supernatural afflictions countered. Afflictions need not be personal or domestic, but may be afflictions suffered by the whole society, such as drought or pestilence. The rites attempt to address the imbalance or impurity and restore order. They achieve this through rites of purification and cleansing, or, in the case of time-limited impurity, through a period of separation or seclusion to contain the impurity.

In the *Damascus Document*, every rite of affliction relates to ritual purity. Ritual impurity is incurred through the presence of skin disease, for the duration of menstruation or another discharge and after childbirth for a period of time. It can be eliminated through a sequence of diagnosis, separation, and cleansing, after which reincorporation becomes possible. Questions of authority are discussed, as well as the particulars of the rules which determine whether someone is pure or impure. In the case of skin disease, this has much to do with the extent of the physical changes. Removal from the community for a limited period of time is a key feature. In the case of childbirth and menstruation, the transmission of impurity is the central issue. Here, there are apparent deviations from the Levitical Law that must be addressed.

The rites of affliction in Matthew cover a different range of issues. The value of oaths is challenged by Jesus, and their merit is explored throughout the gospel narrative. The principles behind the regulations governing oaths can be examined through his teaching and the question of which objects it is or is not appropriate to swear by. The debate leads into the controversial oath at the climax of Jesus’ trial by Pilate, when the people swear, “His blood be on us and our children.” The requirements and actions of the exorcist will be considered along with the nature of authority and the locus of the power by which demons may be cast out. A profound challenge to purity regulations is

found in his debate with the Pharisees over hand washing, which calls into question the separation of morality and morally neutral ritual impurity. Above all, they provide an opportunity to explore the attitude of Jesus to the Law, and his assertion that he does not advocate its abolition but fulfilment.

## II. Rites of Affliction in the Damascus Document

### 1. Rites of Affliction

The *Damascus Document* contains instructions for the mitigation of ritual impurity in the case of skin disease, menstruation or discharge and after childbirth. These instructions address the process of diagnosis and discernment of the required ritual ordinances. For skin diseases, discerning impurity is the central concern, and avoidance of the transmission of menstrual or *zab* impurity dominate elsewhere. Following this stage, separation is mandated for a fixed period, and the regulations regarding further periods of separation are outlined. Issues of authority are important in these passages. CD XVI 13-14 prohibits the offering of any property acquired through injustice, an act that would risk the purity of the altar. 4Q271 II 8-13 prohibits the bringing of metals formerly used in the making of idols. It also warns against the use of materials used in work, or polluted by corpse impurity, without purification. CD XI 18-21 demonstrates concerns about the defilement of the altar when sacrifice is offered by the ritually impure. Distinctive features of the *Damascus Document* attitude towards impurity are discussed, in relation to the Levitical Law and analogous interpretive sources.

### 2. Rites of affliction by topic

#### a. Skin diseases

##### i. CD XIII 5-7

One central question regarding rites of affliction addressed in the *Damascus Document* is the question of judgement. In CD XIII 5-7, corroborated in 4Q267 9 IV 1-3, the *Damascus Document* asserts that, in the event that a judgment is required on the status of a skin disease, the authority belongs to the priest who has jurisdiction over the camp, instructed by the Overseer. The instructions come directly from the instructions found in the Pentateuch on skin diseases, laid out in Lev 13 and 14, however the role of

the Overseer is a notable addition. The Overseer has the highest authority, even over the priests, which is an addition to the Levitical procedure.<sup>504</sup>

Leviticus 13 contains a series of circumstances in which a judgement may be required of the priest, and casts the priest alone in this role of examination and adjudication. Should the hair have turned white and the sore become more than skin deep, the person is pronounced ritually impure; as in Lev 13:3, 10, 21, and 25-37, these are the two criteria for impurity.

Leviticus 13:9-11 detail further variations on symptoms that denote an impure skin condition, where the hair has turned white and there is raw swelling. Verses 13:12-17 clarifies that it is not the skin disease itself which renders the person impure, but the mixing of affected and unaffected skin. A lengthy process in vv29-37 involves a priestly examination at several points, with various other actions implicitly performed by others, helping to clarify that the role of the priest is discernment, above all. Verses 29-44 repeat this process in the case of white spots and baldness. Chapter 14 continues to give instructions for those with skin diseases, looking forward to the eventual purification. The priest again examines the affected person and has the authority to declare them clean (vv1-7). Each of these cases reiterates that it is the priest who is to perform the examination and has the authority to declare a person pure or impure in accordance with the instructions given.

The fact that the diseases described cover a range of skin conditions makes it inappropriate to approach the transference of impurity on a basis of equating the concept with the communicability of disease. The danger appears to be based on the transmission of ritual impurity. This leaves more intriguing the designation of the skin diseases as “infectious”. However, the question of diagnosis is beyond the scope of a consideration of ritual purity. It will become clear that any question of infection or transmission illuminated by a precise identification of a single represented disease would be secondary to the impact of its presence on the affected individual within the community, discussed here exclusively in terms of their ritual standing. Therefore it is reasonable to approach the concerns of the *Damascus Document* as concerns of purity alone, without confusing impurity with literal, medical infection.

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<sup>504</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 108

The central point of CD XIII 5-7 is that the priest is the one charged with the task of examination, which has ample precedent in Lev 13. The content of CD XIII 5-7 does not alter this general approach to the determination of ritual purity, but adds the role of Overseer as instructor to the task. In this text, the Overseer takes on a role in which he oversees the rite, explaining the interpretations of the Law, in the case that the priest is ignorant (cf. 4Q267 9 iv 2).<sup>505</sup> This is in accordance with the tone of the *Damascus Document*, which safeguards its interpretation of the Law and orthodoxy in praxis. It goes beyond the content of Lev 13-14, in which the priest is not explicitly accountable to any third party directly, but is given authority for discernment only within the scope of the instructions given there, which are numerous and specific. *M. Neg.* 3:1 (dating from the interwar period) states that the same priest must make all the judgements throughout the inspections. Rather than the priest alone, anyone may inspect the skin, as long as the final decision is pronounced by the priest. However, *m. Neg.* 4:7-9, 7:1 and 8:6 (also interwar) imply that the final inspection of another person – a sage – may be more important than the perspective of the priest.<sup>506</sup>

The *Damascus Document* retains the sense of accountability to the Law and the role of the priest, but the independent authority of the priest is diminished by the addition of the Overseer, who has a higher authority and is even charged with explaining to him the correct interpretations of the Law.

## ii. 4Q266 6 I 1-13

The process for identifying someone as ritually impure due to a skin disease is explained in 4Q266 6 I 1-13 (duplicated in 4Q269 7 1-13; 4Q272 1 I 1-20; 4Q273 4 II). In this case, the instructions from Lev 13 and 14 provide a direct template for the instructions in 4Q266 6 I 1-13. 4Q266 6 I 8-9 quotes Lev 13:33 directly, demonstrating the explicit exegetical purpose of the passage.<sup>507</sup> The mention of “living flesh” (4Q266 6 I 2) is a further semantic link to Lev 13:14.

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<sup>505</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 108.

<sup>506</sup> Neusner, *Judaism*. 101-102.

<sup>507</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 54.

An impure skin condition is considered by the priest, where the depth and type of plaques (areas of “dead skin”) are examined and ritual purity may be judged. If there is any change in colour or in growth of hair (Lev 13:3), the person is impure; the same criteria appear in 4Q266 6 I 1.<sup>508</sup> Should there be any plaques appearing on the scalp, the head is shaved of hair, except the plaques. While this is diagnostic, rather than a purifying act, the rite remains a feature of a larger ritual scheme allowing purity to be regained.

In texts from Khirbet Qumran, Neusner reads impurity as a metaphor for sin, or evil, and purity as virtuous. He contrasts this with the Mishnah, in which purity is equivalent to holiness, a category distinct from virtue in its ontological, rather than moral, nature.<sup>509</sup> The susceptibility of a person to become impure indicates their innate capacity for holiness. According to the Mishnah (*m. Soṭah* 9:15, outside Neusner’s stratigraphy), purity *leads* to the shunning of sin, thus there is a relationship between purity and morality, while impurity is not in itself sinful.

As above, the priest carries some measure of authority to judge between pure and impure skin conditions, and the Law must be observed in the sacrifices and reintegration on purification. The relation of impurity to the depth of the affected skin parallels Lev 13:3-4, in which the skin-deep sores are not considered impure, but any further depth renders the sufferer impure. Baumgarten suggests that 4Q266 6 i 3 may indicate the extension of this rite to each of the types of symptoms described in Lev 13:2, thus the inspection may have been expanded to encompass swelling and other skin complaints.<sup>510</sup> 4Q266 6 i 6 describes the contraction of a skin disease as a spirit entering and taking hold of the afflicted person. The suggestion of a spiritual aetiology of disease reflected in this description of symptoms reflects the blurring of the boundaries of ritual and medical understanding.<sup>511</sup> No magical cures or procedures are suggested and this seems like an expression describing physical affliction rather than an attribution of symptoms to a purely spiritual malady.

The priest is to re-examine the sufferer after seven days of isolation but, while 4Q266 instructs no further period of isolation, Lev 13:4-6 clearly demands a further

<sup>508</sup> Ibid. 53.

<sup>509</sup> Neusner, *Judaic Law from Jesus to the Mishnah*. Atlanta: Scholars’ Press, 1993. 207

<sup>510</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 53.

<sup>511</sup> See the discussion of exorcism in Matthew later in this chapter.

period of isolation even if there is no change. After this period, the sufferer must wash his clothes before returning to the community (v6). According to Sanders, the period of isolation is an indication that contact with a skin disease (Lev 13:46, Num 5:2) had a defiling effect.<sup>512</sup> The Mishnah (*m. Neg.* 13:6-12) deals with the transference of impurity and confirms that this was a concern. The exegesis of *m. Neg.* 13:10 in the Tosefta (7:9) indicates that susceptibility to impurity also affords a greater measure of protection from impurity; this is the interpretation of R. Judah as amplified in the Tosefta.<sup>513</sup> The *Damascus Document* gives no decisive indication of a belief in increased protection, but it is noteworthy that the truncated period of isolation is considered sufficient, even as fences are added to the rites of affliction in the form of the Overseer and the more stringent rules about the transference of menstrual impurity through physical contact.

Like 4Q266, Lev 13:33 instructs the shaving of the head, except for the affected areas, should a skin disease appear on the scalp. In Lev 13:3, 10, 21, and 25-37, the change in hair colour is also a decisive factor.

The multiple correspondences between these instructions and the instructions of Lev 13 suggest that there is little addition to the Law in this case. The deviation from a two-week period of isolation is noteworthy, but it is difficult to draw any significant conclusions from it, especially as the reference appears as a fragmented text. The examination must be undertaken by the priest, who has primary responsibility for safeguarding the purity of the community.

### b. 4Q266 6 II 1 – 13 – Menstrual, postnatal and *zab* impurity

4Q266 6 II 1 – 13 (with the menstrual impurity stipulations paralleled in 4Q272 1 II 7-18) contains a series of rules for women during menstruation and after childbirth.

The first set of instructions deal with menstrual impurity. Menstrual impurity lasts seven days (4Q266 6 II 1-4) and any issue of blood outwith this defined period is impure. Ritual impurity after childbirth lasts seven days, if it is a male child, ending on

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<sup>512</sup> Sanders, *Jewish Law*. 138.

<sup>513</sup> Neusner, *Judaic Law*. 213-4.

the eighth day when the boy is to be circumcised, with a further period of blood purification lasting thirty-three days (lines 5-7). Postnatal impurity last fourteen days after the birth of a girl, and the period of blood purification lasts sixty-six days (lines 7-10). There is an incomplete reference to a capital offence in line 10 and of a wetnurse for purity reasons in line 11. The fragmented text of line 12-13 suggests that there is an offering of affliction that may be made at the end of the period of impurity, a dove or pigeon if the woman cannot afford a lamb.

The fact that menstrual and postnatal impurity are placed side by side in 4Q266 6 II contrasts with their separation in Lev 12 and 15. Menstrual impurity was of serious concern to groups that Sanders describes as “pietist”, although variation occurred in practice, which may at first seem to lend greater importance by association to postnatal and *zab* impurity.<sup>514</sup> However, as Wassen notes, these issues may be dealt with together as similar purifying measures must be taken in each case.<sup>515</sup> The nature of the separation required to avoid defilement is also very similar. The link is therefore not particularly significant as there is no alteration to either ritual instruction that may be attributed to their placement.

Menstrual impurity is the focus of 4Q266 6 II 1-4. A direct antecedent to the rule may be found in Lev 15. In Lev 15:19-33, a menstruating woman is impure for seven days. This seven day period of *niddah* impurity is affirmed in 4Q266 6 II 3. Any contact with her or defiled objects renders a person impure until evening, or for seven days in the case of sexual contact, in Lev 15:19-24 and 18:19. 4Q266 6 II 3-4 prohibit contact with sanctified food and presence in the sanctuary.

Any abnormal discharge by a man or woman is subject to the same rules concerning purity (Lev 15:25-27, 32-33) and both male *zab* impurity (v11) and female menstrual impurity (v19) can be transferred by touch. In 4Q272 1 II 7-10 the *Damascus Document* most likely declares all physical contact with men or women with a normal or abnormal discharge impure (line 10).<sup>516</sup> This extends beyond the instructions of Lev

<sup>514</sup> Sanders, *Jewish Law*. 41

<sup>515</sup> Wassen, Cecilia. *Women in the Damascus Document*. (Atlanta: SBL, 2005). 46-47

<sup>516</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 190. The abnormal discharge in 4Q266 6 II 2-3 could be any menstrual bleeding continuing after the seven day period of menstrual impurity and the rite of purification. However, the references to anomalous discharges are more often attributed to a miscarriage in women or to various sources of spermatorrhoea in men. (Sanders, *Law*. 136-138). As *m. Nid.* 2:6-7 refers to varying colours of blood that are unclean in a woman, this in fact allows for several potential causes. Indeed, *m. Nid.* 3:1-3:7 provides detailed instructions for purity regulations in the event of a miscarriage, as the status of the

15 in both the restriction of all physical contact and in the apparent extension of this rule to women with *zab* impurity.<sup>517</sup> In Lev 15:24-27 it appears that women with *zab* impurity contaminate others via those things on which they have been sitting while impure, but it is not clear that those who come into physical contact with them become impure. As Lev 15:33 implies that the chapter provides instructions for all three situations, this is a logical extension of these rules to clarify an instruction that may be regarded as implicit in the Levitical text, not a completely original instruction. This is very much in keeping with the development of instructions related to *zab* and *niddah* impurity, ‘wholly predictable on the basis of what has gone before’, where the rules represent an extension of principles already present in their antecedents.<sup>518</sup>

The similarities between the *Damascus Document* and other Qumran texts, when discussing issues of menstrual/postnatal and *zab* impurity, are noted by Harrington.<sup>519</sup> Thus, reading with 11QT<sup>a</sup> XLVIII 14-16, Baumgarten notes that separation from holy places and things within the city was a moot point, as the separation confines the woman outside her city.<sup>520</sup> Harrington cites 11QT<sup>a</sup> XLVIII 15-16 but asserts that impure women are to be accommodated within ordinary cities and are only excluded from the temple city.<sup>521</sup> In either interpretation, the woman would be separated from the temple proper, and Harrington’s more nuanced reading would present a physical distinction between the two stages of impurity in the postnatal paradigm as the women undergoing purification would, therefore, have access to the city. In 4Q266 6 II 1-13, the stage of blood purification after childbirth also requires separation from the child, the pure food and the sanctuary, lending further support to the necessity of this stipulation.

Where *niddah* impurity is concerned, the instructions of the *Damascus Document* stick closely to the Levitical instructions, a common trait of development from Leviticus 12.<sup>522</sup> The only departure from the instructions in Lev 12 is the link between menstrual impurity and sin. Baumgarten completes the word following the

foetus determines the type of impurity and its duration, which may incorporate aspects of postnatal impurity.

<sup>517</sup> cf. Wassen, *Women*. 49-51.

<sup>518</sup> Neusner, *Judaic Law*. 32.

<sup>519</sup> Harrington, H. K. *The Purity Texts*. (New York: T&T Clark, 2004). 48-50.

<sup>520</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 56.

<sup>521</sup> Harrington, *Purity Texts*. 98-99.

<sup>522</sup> ‘the facts of Scripture everywhere predominate.’ Neusner, *Judaic Law*. 154.

lacuna in line 2 as יְאֵן, commenting that this association of sin and impurity is ‘characteristic of the Qumran outlook’.<sup>523</sup> Sanders notes the ambiguity in areas of unavoidable impurity, such as childbirth, where it is unclear whether the instructions on how secondary impurity is contracted indicate that the impurity should be avoided (an impractical proposition in many cases) or whether instructions for purification were provided because such a transfer of impurity were to be expected.<sup>524</sup> This tension is also highlighted by Neusner, who does not support the idea of household impurity resulting from menstrual impurity but believes it more likely that women would be kept entirely separate to avoid any transference of impurity.<sup>525</sup> Despite these features of the instruction, the ambiguity of the outlook does not appear to alter the text’s reading of any of the stipulations from Lev 15.

The instructions on childbirth in 4Q266 6 II 5-13, though fragmented, appear to follow closely the salient points of Lev 12. The seven days of impurity after the birth of a boy are found in vv1-2, while two weeks of impurity result from the birth of a girl in v5, a stipulation not found in the fragment of 4Q266 6 II 7-8 due to its fragmentary nature, but a plausible reading of the text nevertheless.<sup>526</sup> Leviticus 12:3 orders the circumcision of the boy on the eighth day, explaining the shorter period of impurity which ends for the mother at this point. 4Q266 6 II 3-4 differs from Lev 12 in its instruction to keep away from the temple only until sunset on the eighth day. Leviticus 12:4 prohibits her presence in the sanctuary or contact with sacred objects for thirty-three days, or sixty-six days after the birth of a girl (12:5).

Milgrom suggests that the variation, based on sex, in the duration of impurity does not reflect differing risks of contamination but merely the necessity to perform circumcision in purity on the eighth day. Thus he proposes that originally the duration of impurity should be identical for a boy and a girl, but had to be shortened due to conflicting obligations.<sup>527</sup> Harrington disagrees on the basis that other nations such as the Hittites also observed different periods of impurity for boys and girls, three and four weeks respectively, and that the more likely explanation is that girls were thought to carry greater risk of impurity. This may be due to the inevitability of girls becoming

<sup>523</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 56.

<sup>524</sup> Sanders, *Jewish Law*. 144.

<sup>525</sup> Neusner, *Judaism*. 66-67.

<sup>526</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 56.

<sup>527</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus: A book of ritual and ethics*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004). 742.

impure regularly during their lifetime.<sup>528</sup> What is clear from 4Q266 6 II 5-9 is that the *Damascus Document* follows closely the instructions of Lev 12.

The fragmentary text of 4Q266 6 II 10-11 declares it a capital offence to defile the sanctuary. Numbers 19:20 provides the basis for this purity concern; as the woman would be in a state of ritual impurity that could be transferred, in some circumstances, by touch, she would be unable to have contact with sanctified objects and, by extension, the sanctuary. This is a logical extension of the principle of separation to avoid the transfer of impurity. In addition, 4Q266 6 II 11 suggests that during the mother's period of impurity, her impurity could be transferred to her child and that this is to be averted by the use of a nurse to nurse the child in purity. This stipulation is unique to the *Damascus Document* and the transference of impurity is not a concern in later rabbinic literature, but functions here as an illustration of the great concern with transference in the document.<sup>529</sup>

The damaged text of 4Q266 6 II 12-13 implies a sacrifice, which would correspond to the sacrifice demanded in Lev 12:6-8 after a period of postnatal impurity.<sup>530</sup> The sacrifice detailed in 12:6-8 includes a young pigeon or a dove as a sin offering, along with a year-old lamb. Neither are mentioned in the surviving text of the *Damascus Document*, though Baumgarten suggests that the text be read as very close to Lev 12:6-8.<sup>531</sup> The priest is responsible for offering the animals on her behalf, after which she is pure.

While it cannot be determined whether or not the sacrifice combining the lamb and the single pigeon or dove is mentioned anywhere in the original text, the implication that a sacrifice follows is in accordance with 12:6-8. In that case, the reason given for the substitution is the relative wealth of the woman in question – if she cannot afford a lamb, two doves or pigeons will suffice. This sacrifice marks the end of the period of impurity and the woman's passage back into a state of ritual purity.

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<sup>528</sup> Harrington, *Purity Texts*. 100

<sup>529</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 56

<sup>530</sup> Very similar requirements apply to the cessation of *zab* impurity. In Lev 15:14-15, after the discharge ceases, a woman or a man with an abnormal discharge is impure for seven days and until he, or she, takes two doves or pigeons to the priest who will sacrifice one as a sin offering and one as a burnt offering (vv28-30). This type of impurity is clearly distinguished from menstrual impurity as *zab* impurity. The seven day duration of impurity comes from this instruction. The story of David and Bathsheba, in 2 Sam 11, refers to Bathsheba's purification in relation to their sexual contact (v4).

<sup>531</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave 4*. 56. The text of column 6 is incomplete, so it is not possible to infer whether or not this is a feature of the purity regulations in the *Damascus Document*. cf. Wassen, *Women*. 46

Maintenance of ritual purity is the focus of this column, which adds little to the instructions of Leviticus 12 and 15 but expands the restriction to all physical contact with a person suffering an unusual discharge. This is consistent with the additional Sabbath rules and the tendency to find examples of “fences” throughout the *Damascus Document*. The discrepancies between the rules for impurity after the birth of a girl and the text of 4Q266 may simply be attributed to a damaged text here without a clear picture of how it fits into the overall legal structure of the *Damascus Document*, as there is no parallel with CD and Baumgarten’s proposed reading demonstrates that the missing Levitical instruction is the probable reading of the missing text. In each case, the physical separation effects a distancing of the woman, representing the threat of impurity, from the community and the temple. Separation limits the opportunity for the transference of impurity.

### **c. CD XVI 13-14, 4Q269 8 i-ii, 4Q271 2 6-13 – purity of the altar and sacrifices**

Three detailed discussions of altar and sacrificial purity can be found in the *Damascus Document*, in CD XVI 13-14, 4Q269 8 i-ii, and 4Q271 2 6-13. Together, they provide a significant insight into the very specific preoccupations of the *Damascus Document*, particularly where the transfer of impurity is concerned. The altar in the temple is the locus of ritual. Its purity must be maintained for sacrifices performed there to be valid, therefore there must be some measure of control over the purity of the people and implements granted access.

Sacrificial purity is the main concern of CD XVI 13-14, which contains a stipulation that nothing should be offered that was “obtained by unjust means” – a law preserving the purity of the altar and asserting that ethical considerations are relevant to the allocation of “pure” and “impure” status. Sanders proposes that vows underlie the charge of theft arguing that stolen property was ‘vowed to the altar, with the result that it could not be recovered’ and characterising the accusation in CD as an accusation that the priest had accepted ownership of this property rather than having stolen it himself

(cf. Mark 7.11).<sup>532</sup> The passage presents guidance on sources of impurity which would defile a sacrifice: Gentile idols, items used in Gentile ritual and items defiled by corpse impurity. It presents steps that may be taken to ensure purity: avoid unclean items, deal with impurity through purity rites, and avoid the need for purification by using new metals straight from the furnace.<sup>533</sup> During the performance of animal sacrifice (such as the guilt offering) no implements should be used that are recycled or contain metal recycled from Gentile sources, nor should any stolen or unjustly acquired items.

Leather implements are purified in Num 31:20, along with other organic materials. 4Q269 8 ii contains a reference to bringing only that which is new from the furnace – echoing Ezek 22:18-22 where the same materials are refined in a furnace. 4Q269 8 i-ii contains a prohibition on unknown items (presumably detailed in the lacuna) that have been defiled by the blood of sacrifices. As Baumgarten notes, this may be a reference to pagan sacrifice due to the stated fear of pollution resulting from questionable origins.<sup>534</sup> Similar themes appear in Acts 15:20. In the latter Sanders attributes the potential imposition of Jewish prohibitions on Gentile converts to the fear of pollution.<sup>535</sup>

Hides, garments and tools for “defiling the soul of man” are prohibited unless they have been purified. This appears to indicate that they are defiled by corpse impurity, and this is the translation selected by Hempel among others.<sup>536</sup> With their sacrifices, in 4Q271 2 8-13, no metals are to be involved (as implements used in sacrifice) – specifically, gold, silver, copper, tin, and lead – from which Gentile images have been made, only new materials (line 8-10). The text also warns not to bring leather, clothes or objects that have been used for work or defiled by corpse impurity unless they have been appropriately purified by sprinkling (9-13). Baumgarten notes that the metals named agree with the list in Num 31:22 and he suggests that they are derived from this verse.<sup>537</sup> Numbers 31:22 deals with metals taken from the Midianites and their eventual purification. The difference noted by Baumgarten in this case is that the metals come from pagan statues. There is, however, no instruction to perform a

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<sup>532</sup> Sanders, *Judaism*, 184.

<sup>533</sup> Hempel, *Laws*. 61.

<sup>534</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave* 4.131

<sup>535</sup> Sanders, *Judaism*, 194.

<sup>536</sup> Hempel, *Laws*. 59.

<sup>537</sup> Baumgarten, *Cave* 4.174

ritual purification specific to this circumstance, with the mention of sprinkling consistent with the general rites for object purification. In *m. 'Abod. Zar.* 4:4-5, metal utensils used by pagans may be ‘nullified’ through a process of purification.<sup>538</sup> The list of metals in line 2 excludes those used in pagan images, which Baumgarten notes is in contrast to *m. 'Abod. Zar.* 32b where rabbinic Halakhah allows the employment of pagan implements and fragments of images as long as they have been “nullified”.<sup>539</sup> The person who sprinkles water on the objects for purification must be pure and of age.<sup>540</sup> 4Q271 2 6 requires the sprinkler to have attained the ‘age of majority’. Baumgarten suggests that this is twenty, based on the restrictions found in other texts at Khirbet Qumran.<sup>541</sup> The person sprinkling must also be of age and be ritually pure according to the *Tevul Yom* principle that dictates that purification by mikveh did not fully take effect until sunset.<sup>542</sup>

The rite is described as effective during the “period of wickedness”. Baumgarten characterises this as typical of the style of CD where the Law and its interpretations (including the laws of a community) apply to this era which is believed to be leading up to the eschaton (Cf. CD VI 14, XII 22-23, and XV 6-7). Communion with the divine can only be effected through proper observance of the purity regulations, while the sacrificial rites of exchange include a moral imperative to exclude any defiling elements which would be offensive.

Sanders describes votive offerings made of silver, gold and bronze but could have taken the form of plaques or vessels. *Apion* 2.48 claims that Ptolemy III Euergetes donated plaques in the third century B.C.E. while Josephus describes wall mounted dedications (loot from military campaigns) which were donated by Herod and the Hasmoneans (*Ant.* 15.402). According to *War* 5.526 Augustus contributed drinking vessels.<sup>543</sup> It is easy to imagine that Gentile material could find its way to the temple and it would become necessary to develop instructions for dealing with this. Though

<sup>538</sup> Ibid. 174

<sup>539</sup> Ibid. 131

<sup>540</sup> Ibid. 174

<sup>541</sup> Ibid. 131-132. Ian C. Werrett notes the interesting, but ultimately unverifiable, suggestion made elsewhere by Baumgarten that the age requirement was a reaction to a Pharisaic suggestion that young boys made good candidates due to their distancing from corpse impurity. I. C. Werrett, *Ritual Purity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. (Leiden: Brill, 2007). 45. Cf. J. Baumgarten, ‘The Red Cow Purification Rites in Qumran Texts’. *JJS* 46 (1995): 118.

<sup>542</sup> Werrett, *Ritual Purity*. 44.

<sup>543</sup> Sanders. *Judaism*. 85.

CD is not a document of those who controlled temple sacrifice, knowledge of ideal procedure in temple worship was clearly important. Temple sacrifice likely included twice daily lamb offerings, entirely burnt, slaughtered and butchered by the priests (*Spec. Laws* 1.169).<sup>544</sup>

The rite for which these implements are required appears to be the offering described in Numbers 19:2-10, 17-20; the rite of the Red Heifer. The rite involves an unblemished red heifer slaughtered outside the camp by a priest (vv2-3) who then sprinkles its blood seven times in the direction of the tent of meeting (v4). The heifer is then to be burned with cedar hyssop and red wool (v6) with the ashes gathered and used in water for purification (v9) which will subsequently be sprinkled in purification ritual for corpse impurity ( vv12-13, 17-19). Werrett notes that the *Damascus Document* is silent on the matter of human susceptibility to corpse impurity but instead focuses on contamination of implements.<sup>545</sup> It is not unreasonable to imagine that the *Damascus Document* is here extending the efficacy of the red heifer rite for the purification of objects. The “waters of sprinkling” provides a procedural link between Numbers 19 and 4Q271 2 12.<sup>546</sup>

Numbers 19:14-15 explains the contraction of corpse impurity, which applies to those in the tent, and open containers within the tent; there is a precedent for inanimate objects contracting corpse impurity. Given the requirement of this rite to deal with corpse impurity it stands to reason that those who followed the *Damascus Document* would have practiced this rite as needed whether or not the temple authorities were involved.<sup>547</sup>

Should these requirements not be met, the efficacy of the rite will be compromised, thus the on-going relationship with God will no longer be harmonious and continuous. This has implications for all sacrifices that may be performed on the altar using questionable implements so it is fundamental to the fulfilment of these obligations.

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<sup>544</sup> Ibid. 104.

<sup>545</sup> Werrett, *Ritual Purity*. 41-42.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid. 41.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid. 46.

### III: Matthew

#### 1. Rites of affliction in Matthew

The rites of affliction contained in Matthew do not cover the same ground as the *Damascus Document*. Jesus preaches about the making of oaths, a theme which recurs in the narrative. Exorcisms, by Jesus and by others, appear and provide an exploration of spirit-possession and authority. Jesus challenges the purity concerns of the Pharisees as he differs from them on the importance and value of hand washing. Each topic presents a portrait of Matthew's Jesus in relation to his societal context.

#### 2. Oaths and curses (5:33-36, 14:6-10, 23:16-22, 26:72, 26:74, 26:59-62, 26:65, 27:25)

##### a. 5:33-36 – a warning against oaths

Jesus warns against the making of oaths. He cites the instruction to keep oaths made to the Lord, then goes on to warn against swearing by heaven, as it is God's throne, by earth, as it is God's footstool, by Jerusalem, the city of the Great King, or by one's own head, as no one has power over it to make one hair white or black. This is M material and introduces oath-making as a major theme in Matthew's gospel. Oaths could be made in a variety of circumstances, with witnesses or without, and debates over their binding nature are reflected in Matthew's treatment of the topic.

The Law carries warnings about false oaths made in the name of the Lord, with Lev 19:12 stating that to break such an oath would profane the divine name. Exodus 20:11 warns that the Lord will not hold one who misuses his name guiltless (cf. Exod 20:7; Deut 5:20, 23:21; Num 30:3-15). Davies notes that the teaching is consistent with Deut 23:21 which states that it is not wrong to decline to make oaths.<sup>548</sup> However, it is clear that the taking of oaths was permitted, and oaths in the name of the Lord explicitly

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<sup>548</sup> Davies, *Matthew*, 54.

mandated in some circumstances.<sup>549</sup> Furthermore, there is nothing to suggest that the oaths referred to in Matt 5:33-36 are false oaths, or oaths made deceitfully.<sup>550</sup> Ex 22:11 requires an oath in the name of the Lord to be made when judging property disputes in the case of animal theft. By extension then, if Jesus prohibits all oaths, it would render some parts of the Law unobservable in his paradigm. This certainly seems problematic based on his statement in 5:17-20 that the Law was not to be abolished, as well as the way in which he upholds the Sabbath law.<sup>551</sup> This draws our attention to the fact that, in Matt 5:33-36, Jesus repeats the instruction to keep oaths made “to the Lord” but explains why swearing by specific things is inappropriate. The earth as his footstool and heaven as his throne is an image that comes directly from Isa 66:1.

There is ample scriptural precedent for oath-making, without a negative judgement. In 2 Chronicles 36:11-14, which tells the story of Zedekiah, it is broken oaths alone that are cited as his defining disastrous actions. There are also numerous oaths by the Lord that are incidental to their narrative. In 2 Kgs 5:20 Elisha’s servant Gehazi swears by the Lord that he will obtain payment from Naaman. In Gen 24:3 Abraham demands that his servant swear by the Lord of heaven and earth that he will not select a wife for Isaac from the Canaanites. Rahab, in Josh 2:12-14, requests an oath to the Lord from Joshua that she and her family will be spared, an oath honoured in Josh 6:22. Joshua 9:3-20 tells of the Israelites’ oath to the Hivites that they will not attack them, which, while the Israelites grumbled about leaving their cities unchallenged, was honoured out of fear of the wrath that breaking an oath to the Lord would invite.

It is possible to interpret the prohibition on oaths as a prohibition on swearing by objects, not oaths by nature, with the key point being the difference between swearing in the name of God (as in each of the scriptural examples) and swearing by earthly things, which provide no measure of truthfulness. The inefficacy of such oaths is a reflection of how things should be; man should not need an oath to be truthful, as the imperative is to be truthful at all times and to honour commitments. Divorce is also permitted under the Law, but Jesus notes that this is a concession for human sinfulness

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<sup>549</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 204.

<sup>550</sup> B. Chilton, *The Temple of Jesus: His Sacrificial Program Within a Cultural History of Sacrifice*. (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992). 135-136

<sup>551</sup> See the discussion on Calendrical Ritual.

and not a reflection of creational principles. Oaths acknowledge the dichotomy between the imperative to be truthful and the reality of human duplicity.

These give the impression of an acceptable convention, widely employed, as suggested in Jesus' response to this convention. Prior to Jesus' command, oaths are not seen as morally problematic – making and honouring an oath is a sign of integrity and breaking an oath is, without exception, a sign of wider moral failing. Indeed, God swears by himself in Gen 22:16, by his holiness in Ps 89:35, and by his anger in Ps 95:11. On this subject the nation seems to be clear. Thus Jesus' revision of the oath convention is unlikely to originate in the fundamental inefficacy of oaths as a guarantee of truth, in principle, but in the duplicity that gives rise to questions over truthfulness.

### b. 14:6-10 – Herod's oath

Matthew 14:6-10 subverts the convention in the use of an oath in narrative. In most cases, it would be anticipated that if the king made an oath and kept it, good would come out of it, but if he broke it, it would be bad news for the nation and an indication of his poor character. Here, however, Herod's oath has disastrous consequences for a righteous man. After she dances for his birthday guests, Herod makes an oath to his stepdaughter, the daughter of Herodias, that she may have whatever she desires.

Matthew 14:1-11 is an abbreviation of Mark 6:14-29; Matthew omits Mark's 'up to half my kingdom' in Mark 6:23.<sup>552</sup> Her mother encourages her to ask for the head of John the Baptist on a platter, and although Herod is unhappy, he acquiesces to uphold his oath. John is beheaded accordingly.

Herod makes his oath before his dinner guests, and it is partly to their presence that his unhappy fulfilment of the oath may be attributed. When oaths are made before witnesses the potential for shame, having sworn then recanted, would be considerable.<sup>553</sup> Carter argues that Herod's sense of peer pressure in vv9-10 shows that he values his honour ahead of doing what is right in God's eyes.<sup>554</sup> Herod speaks before

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<sup>552</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 555-558.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid. 559.

<sup>554</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 304.

his guests, who function as witnesses, and to break his oath undermines any sense of his integrity and righteousness. Motivation becomes important. It is not enough to uphold an oath; some measure of personal integrity as motivation is significant, if not essential to its function. As in 2 Chron 36, where Zedekiah makes an oath crucial to the survival of Jeremiah, Herod's oath is decisive for John. However, while both kings uphold their oath, the outcome is seen to be good in the case of Zedekiah and evil in the case of Herod. 2 Chronicles 36 celebrates the honouring of oaths, but Matt 14:6-10 illustrates the perils of making oaths that, it later transpires, have dire consequences. This is not to say that the Hebrew Bible uniformly equates the keeping of oaths with positive outcomes while Matthew's subversion is an innovation. The story of Jephthah, who made an oath that bound him to sacrifice his daughter, illustrates the same subversion well (Judg 11:30-40).

As the first incidence of oath-making since Jesus spoke out against oaths in the Sermon on the Mount in 5:33-36, it is worth noting that this episode illustrates the perils of making oaths. While the story clearly has a larger significance, with the death of John the Baptist the central feature, the fact that this event happens because of an oath seems particularly appropriate given Jesus' expressed views as established in ch 5.

### **c. 23:16-22 – Oaths towards the Temple**

Matthew 23:16-22 is among the “seven woes” of Jesus to the religious leaders. This parallels the woes found in Luke 11 which points to a common Q source. He calls them “blind guides” and critiques their teaching on suitable subjects for oath-making. Their teaching denies the value of oaths made by the temple or the altar, instead instructing people to swear by the gold in the temple or the gift on the altar. This demonstrates a reluctance to swear by God and a preference for swearing by objects that are inferior, but still have ritual significance. He takes this as evidence of their blindness and questions them as to how the gold and gift could possibly be greater than the temple or altar that sanctifies them. He says that one who swears by the altar or the temple by extension swears by everything on or in it, and in the case of the temple, by the one who

dwells in it. Jesus confirms his position on oaths made by heaven, again stating that one who swears by heaven swears by God's throne.

Jesus notes a quirk of contemporary attitudes towards the temple and altar implied by the convention of oath-making: to hold the gold or the gift in greater regard, even solely for the purposes of oath-making, carries a (perhaps unintentional) value-judgement about the temple and altar. Carter characterises the swearing of oaths by heaven or objects as an attempt to manipulate God by compelling him to act on human instruction.<sup>555</sup> Presenting it in this manner overshadows any other reasons they may have had for this instruction and confronts the implications. Effectively, further allowances are being made for human iniquity even than those made in the Law concerning oaths discussed in 5:33-36, though a euphemistic attitude to oath-making does not indicate a diminished respect for the divine or an inappropriately lofty view of the altar.<sup>556</sup>

The acknowledgement that there is a debate about whether or not oaths are binding demonstrates that those making oaths are likely to seek a loophole so they do not need to carry out their obligations.<sup>557</sup> Davies proposes that the poor would swear an oath by something lesser than God when securing a loan to avoid divine condemnation if they were unable to repay the loan.<sup>558</sup> While this cannot be confirmed it casts those seeking a loophole in a more sympathetic light and raises the possibility that it is not simply a case of wilful disobedience. Osborne suggests that Matthew's community may have heard 23:16 as an indictment of the debates reflected in *m. Ned.* 1.3 (outside Neusner's stratigraphy) about whether or not an oath was binding and this teaching could portray the frustration with a debate based on whether or not people should be held to their oaths, as opposed to the appeal to integrity in 5:37.<sup>559</sup> Carter suggests that this challenge is deliberately unanswerable to parody the convention of oath making in a way that cannot be rationally defended.<sup>560</sup> Every oath is made before God so every oath is binding.<sup>561</sup> In *m. Ned.* 1.3, which deals with vows made by various parts of the temple,

<sup>555</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 149.

<sup>556</sup> Bock, Darrell L. *Jesus According to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002. 334-335

<sup>557</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 458.

<sup>558</sup> Davies, *Matthew*, 160.

<sup>559</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 849.

<sup>560</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 457.

<sup>561</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 850.

including the sacrificial lamb, burnt offerings, wood for kindling the altar, and the altar itself, any vows made by these objects or areas is a binding vow. There is no scriptural precedent for an oath made by the gold or altar gifts of the temple, but this appears to be consistent with the fences, or hedges, used as a precaution against a serious breach. Matthew makes it clear that to break an oath for any reason is still a violation of integrity without significance relative to the object of the oath.

The manner of Jesus here is far more confrontational than in 5:33-36. This seems to be in keeping with his acknowledgement in ch 5 that accurate teaching was given which he now overturns or modifies. Here, however, he not only opposes the principle of swearing by heaven, he tries to draw attention to potential inconsistencies in the application of oath-making conventions to undermine this practice. He does not acknowledge these teachings as accurate and denies their efficacy in the fulfilment of the intended function of oaths.

#### **d. 26:59-65 – Jesus charged under oath**

Matthew 26:59-65 forms part of the trial narrative, and contains a reference to a possible oath contained in the trial, added by Matthew to his material.<sup>562</sup> Matthew 26:59-60 claims that the chief priests and Sanhedrin sought false evidence against Jesus that would allow them to put him to death, but were unable to find any despite a number of false witnesses approaching them. They were finally satisfied in vv60-61 by two witnesses who told them that Jesus had claimed that he would be able to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. During the trial, in v62-3, the high priest stands and asks Jesus if he is not going to answer, and asks for a response to the testimony of the two witnesses, but Jesus remains silent. The high priest then charges Jesus, under oath by the living God, to answer whether or not he is “the Christ the Son of God” (v62). Jesus acknowledges this in 26:64 and tells those assembled that in future they will see the Son of Man at the right hand of the Lord and coming on clouds of heaven. The high priest rends his garments and says that Jesus is unquestionably guilty of blasphemy.

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<sup>562</sup> For a discussion of the trial setting, see Political Rites, p110.

Osborne argues that to charge someone in the name of God demands a response.<sup>563</sup> One could not simply refuse to answer. It may well be the case that Matthew's modification of Mark's "I am," to, "It is as you say," or, "It is you who say it," represents an evasion on the part of Jesus when a more direct answer would place him under oath.<sup>564</sup> However, it is interesting that this phrasing implies that Jesus responds when pressed under oath, which may require a more subtle interpretation of 5:33-36. Bock notes that this response has been used already in 26:25 and the combined effect is to imply a clearly positive response, albeit one which requires some qualification.<sup>565</sup> The oath holds the accused visibly accountable before witnesses based on their own declaration to God. This makes it necessary to seriously question if Jesus' prohibition of oaths made by heaven or earth would extend to oaths made by the living God. This is especially highlighted by the discussion of the woes – Jesus' argument is in response to a teaching, but this could be analogous with making an oath by God's throne rather than by God who sanctifies it. There is some irony at work, partly as further evidence of the ritual incompetence of the high priest in contrast to Jesus and in light of his teaching.

#### e. 26:69-75 – Peter's oath of denial

In Matt 26:69-75, Peter is sitting in a courtyard while Jesus is before the Sanhedrin. A servant girl approaches him and remarks that he was one of those with Jesus. Peter denies it before everyone in the courtyard and tries to leave, but another girl tells those assembled again that he was with Jesus. Again he denies it, though he is subsequently challenged by the crowd as his accent causes them to suspect him of lying. He responds with more fervent oaths and curses, swearing that he does not know Jesus, when the cock crows and he remembers Jesus' prediction of his denial. He goes outside and weeps. Matthew appropriates Mark's trial narrative but the account of the oath differs

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<sup>563</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 996.

<sup>564</sup> Sloyan, *Trial*. 59-60.

<sup>565</sup> Bock, *Jesus*. 373-374

between the synoptics.<sup>566</sup> Mark and Mathew are in agreement about the details of those provoking Peter to his denial.<sup>567</sup>

Peter's oath is a subtle reinforcement of his denial; he does not only deny Jesus with his words, he disobeys his teaching against oaths in 5:33-36. In keeping with Jesus' teaching against oaths, this may reinforce that nothing good comes of oaths. Osborne notes that Peter's oath, is an attempt to construct a façade of innocence, serves as part of his decline in honour in Matthew's narrative.<sup>568</sup> It is an illustration that he too has abandoned principles taught by Jesus in 5:33-37. However, this is equally in accordance with the treatment of oaths in the Hebrew Bible, as a morally diagnostic tool. It may function as a cautionary tale, but not in the same manner as the oath made by Herod, who kept his oath. It serves far more to reinforce the implication that oaths bear witness to the inherent dishonesty of humanity.

#### **f. 27:25 – The blood curse**

At the climax of the trial narrative, Pilate allows the crowd to choose between Jesus and Barabbas. The crowd choose to save Barabbas, and when Pilate protests that Jesus was innocent, the crowd answers, "Let his blood be on us and on our children". Davies believes that the narrative explicitly encourages the audience to blame the Jews for Jesus' execution.<sup>569</sup> This curse is incidental to the narrative in some ways, but defines the treatment of this rite. While the interpretation of this statement is often explicitly theological, and the rite demands this to some extent, the swearing of an oath is often accompanied by the invocation of curses as a prevention against breaking the oath.<sup>570</sup> The analogies that may be drawn from the whole incident are to calendrical ritual, but it is the oath that is the only explicit ritual utterance. The cleansing of Pilate's hands will be dealt with separately as a purification rite, also a rite of affliction.

The story echoes aspects of the Day of Atonement ritual, found in Lev 16:2-34 (cf. also Num 29:7-11). Jesus and Barabbas are reminiscent of the goats, with the choice

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<sup>566</sup> Cf. Mark 14:66-72, Luke 22:56-62. Osborne, *Matthew*, 991-992.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid.

<sup>568</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 1001.

<sup>569</sup> Davies, *Matthew*, 196.

<sup>570</sup> See the discussion of political oaths and curses on p95f.

given to the people. One is released, and one is sacrificed. The one who is released is described here as guilty, which is in accord with the goat sent into the wilderness to carry the guilt of the people, while Jesus is described as innocent, similar to the unblemished goat in the rite. The assumption of guilt by the whole nation in this oath is an inversion of the Day of Atonement. Rather than acknowledging and being absolved of their guilt, the response of the assembly denotes an assumption of guilt – should any injustice be committed. Its use suggests that the crowd were, instead, asserting their guiltlessness in response to Pilate's handwashing.<sup>571</sup>

The theme of atonement need not be disregarded, especially when Matthew's theme of atonement through substitution is considered; additionally this is original Matthean material. The blood of the covenant referred to in Exod 24:8 marks the reinforcement of an induction into the covenant made at Sinai. In the Eucharist, Matthew ties the significance of the covenant confirmation to the covenant described at the Last Supper.<sup>572</sup> The (historically rather controversial) curse could simultaneously be understood as an ironic statement of responsibility which in fact leads to an unintentional claim on the benefits of the “rite”; it in itself is a purification. As Osborne notes however this possibility is partly undermined by the fact that the crowd is actively seeking the death of Jesus in this verse.<sup>573</sup> The splashing of blood as found in the confirmation of the covenant already appears in the Passion Narrative as a vivid part of the scriptural resonance in the Eucharist. Matthew's theme of a new covenant is restated through the ritual references both subtle and direct.

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<sup>571</sup> T. B. Cargal, ‘His Blood Be upon Us and Upon Our Children: A Matthean Double Entendre?’ *NTS* 37 (1991): 101-112. Carter, *Margins*, 529.

<sup>572</sup> Cf. the discussion under Calendrical Ritual.

<sup>573</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 1021.

### 3. Exorcism (7:22, 8:28-34, 9:32-34, 10:1, 10:8, 12:22-28)

Several accounts or mentions of exorcism may be found in Matthew. These offer a vivid portrait of how those in first century Israel may have understood their place within the spiritual realm during a time of upheaval. Before examining the features of each instance, it is worthwhile to consider the phenomenon of spirit-possession and its illustrative function in understanding Jesus' relationship to the spiritual realm and the significance of the actions involved in exorcism.

Stevan Davies illustrates the common misconceptions that possession was caused by the incursion of the Romans and that exorcism was a political act to which he hopes to provide a corrective.<sup>574</sup> These are described as 'preposterous' by Davies, who nevertheless acknowledges them as endemic in biblical scholarship.<sup>575</sup> Indeed, such claims are implicit or explicit in works by John Dominic Crossan and Richard Horsley.<sup>576</sup> Sanders and Neusner concur on Davies' view that the Pharisees' alleged "conservatism" – meaning excessive stringency – is a construction of a Christian polemic that seeks to pit Jesus against the Pharisees in a majority of areas of thought.<sup>577</sup> Sanders points out that during Jesus' plausible lifetime there were no Roman troops stationed in Herod Antipas' territory. It is also plausible to suggest, as he does, that the peasantry would have found their current tax levels fairly favourable.<sup>578</sup> An indicator of later resentment, the Jewish Revolt did not occur until more than thirty-five years after Jesus' ministry. Furthermore, Davies notes that non-biblical scholarship on spirit possession experiences calls into question the efficacy of possession as a response to

<sup>574</sup> Hollenbach's argument tends to equate orthodoxy with extremism, describing the Pharisees as 'conservatives' as if their adherence to their own principles constituted a particularly strict outlook. Hollenbach's dissenting view is reliant on an image of 'Galilean society' in which the Pharisees enjoy a 'privileged place' in Roman-regulated society. This view is dismissed as 'polemical antipharisaic imagination' by Davies who justly tackles the assumption that Jesus' exorcisms would automatically be interpreted as a threat, or interpreted thus for socio-political reasons. S. Davies, *Jesus the Healer: Possession, Trance and the Origins of Christianity*. (London: SCM Press, 1995). 78-79. P. Hollenbach, "Help for Interpreting Jesus' Exorcisms," *SBL Seminar Papers* (Scholars Press, Atlanta, 1993), 124-125.

<sup>575</sup> Davies, *Healer*. 79

<sup>576</sup> J.D.Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. New York: HarperCollins, 1993. 317, P Hollenbach, "Jesus, Demoniacs and Public Authorities: A Socio-Historical Study," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 99, 1981: 573

<sup>577</sup> Cf. J. Neusner, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (New York: KTAV, 1979); Sanders., *Jesus and Judaism*. 23-28, Davies, *Healer* 79.

<sup>578</sup> E. P. Sanders, 'Jesus in Historical Context,' *Theology Today*, Vol. 50, 1993: 439; cf. Davies, *Healer* 80-81

excessive taxation.<sup>579</sup> Thus possession should not be regarded as a conscious act motivated by politics. Possession appears to arise only from interpersonal, particularly intra-familial, stresses, and in situations where the possessed does not have recourse to other sources of support or mediation.<sup>580</sup> In some cases the phenomenon proves useful in controlling the precipitating circumstances.<sup>581</sup> A helpful generalisation would be to say that those exorcised probably came from a position of social subordination within the family or community.<sup>582</sup>

Davies notes that possession is such a universal experience across cultures that the phenomenon must be approached in terms of understanding its features rather than establishing its existence.<sup>583</sup> This does not necessitate any judgement as to the veracity of various spiritual truth claims. Thus, this study is limited to the internal coherence of the experiences described rather than attempting to establish an underlying spiritual or psychological aetiology. The focus is on how exorcism is achieved: through which actions and by whose authority demons can be compelled to vacate their hosts.

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<sup>579</sup> ‘to put it mildly, demon-possession is not at all widely attested as a likely, understandable, or useful mode of response to taxation and indebtedness.’ Davies, *Healer* 81

<sup>580</sup> S. Freed, and R. Freed, ‘Spirit Possession as Illness in a North Indian Village,’ in J. Middleton (ed.) *Magic, Witchcraft, and Curing*. Garden City: The Natural History Press, 1967. 320; Davies, *Healer* 83

<sup>581</sup> Freed, and Freed, ‘Spirit Possession,’ 317; Davies, S. *Healer* 83

<sup>582</sup> Davies, *Healer*, 81-82, 86. Possession is most often observed in members of a family who find themselves in the more socially subordinate roles, i.e. wives and children, and proves to be an effective mechanism for coping with very difficult family circumstances. Those in such positions are far more likely, in addition, to exert other “mystical” forces or to exhibit further, apparently supernatural, phenomena. Chandra Shekar’s research suggests that possession provides relief from severe anxiety brought about by social position. C. Shekar, ‘Possession Syndrome in India,’ in Colleen Ward, *Altered States of Consciousness and Mental Health* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1989), 87. Joanna Dewey notes that the majority of possessed individuals in Luke were women. The notion that possession affects those in subordinate roles does not restrict possession to women, even if more women would find themselves in such roles. J. Dewey, “Jesus’ Healings of Women: Conformity and Non-Conformity to Dominant Cultural Values as Clues for Historical Reconstruction,” *SBL Seminar Papers* 1993, (Scholars’ Press: Atlanta 1993), 181-182. Women do not account for the majority of possession experiences in Matthew, but the outcast Gadarene men and the supernaturally afflicted child in Matt 17:14-20 fit into the category of outcasts.

<sup>583</sup> Ibid. 24-25

### a. Actions and words

Two ancient exorcism accounts, from Josephus and Lucian of Samosata, are often compared to those of Jesus; in each, a spirit is ordered to leave the possessed.<sup>584</sup> Lucian parodied exorcism in *Philopseudes* 16 describing a “Syrian from Palestine” who is an expert exorcist. The exorcist questions the demon about its origin and the demon answers, at which point the exorcist utters magic words and threatens the demon to drive it out. Morton Smith notes that the reference to a Syrian from Palestine reflects the widespread image of exorcism as a common Jewish practice.<sup>585</sup> The definitive command to the demon appears in Matthew’s exorcism accounts, but accompanying ritual objects and actions are notably absent.<sup>586</sup> As well as Eleazar’s bowl of water (depicted in *Ant.8.49*), incense (*Tob. 8:3*) or various medicines (*Jub. 10:10-12*) were used by exorcists to draw out or chase away demons. The lack of these features (with the possible exception of the pigs in Matt 8:5-13) in Jesus’ exorcisms is striking.<sup>587</sup> The common feature of exorcisms involving these various objects is in their appeal to a secondary authority.<sup>588</sup> Jesus does not invoke any external authority.

One consistent feature of the rites of exorcism is the issuing of a verbal command by Jesus. Twelftree notes that the variety of authoritative utterances has tended to lead scholars to the conclusion that there are no formulaic phrases and the words used do not really matter. Osborne considers the brevity of Jesus’ instruction to be a symbol of his authority in contrast to lesser exorcists who would ‘prattle on and on’.<sup>589</sup> However Twelftree argues that the brevity of the few accounts do not allow such a conclusion when the nature of the commands leaves open the possibility that any or all

<sup>584</sup> *Ant. 8.47*, Harmon, A. M. *Lucian*. (New York: Macmillan, 1921).

<sup>585</sup> Smith, *Jesus the Magician*. 57.

<sup>586</sup> In contrast, 1QapGen XX retells Gen 12-15, with Abraham compelled to heal the demonically afflicted Pharaoh through prayer and laying on of hands. Morton Smith notes the importance of Jesus’ hand in casting out demons with physical means making the exorcism more powerful. Smith, *Jesus the Magician*. 128. Hands are also crucial in Gen 32:11 Exod 19:13 Deut 28:12, 31:29 Judges 2:14 Psalm 90:17 Jer 27:6.

<sup>587</sup> Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*. 157.

<sup>588</sup> Ibid. 159.

<sup>589</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 321. Margaret Davies also notes the brevity of this command. Davies, *Matthew*, 75-76.

of them could have functioned as magical formulae in the context of exorcism.<sup>590</sup> Jesus' charge that the demon be silent, for example, could be a binding formula.<sup>591</sup> The instantaneous reaction to Jesus' simple command demonstrates his authority and God's sovereignty.<sup>592</sup> Furthermore, Matthew removed material from Mark 5:1-20 that sounds magical.<sup>593</sup> In general, Margaret Davies notes that Matthew dwells less on the technical details of the exorcism than Mark.<sup>594</sup> The absence of mechanical details in several of Matthews' exorcism accounts may partly be explained by the accusations of sorcery and demon possession (12:14) Davies also suggests that this explains the distinction between the reference to the finger in Luke and the spirit of God in Matthew (Luke 11:14-23).<sup>595</sup>

Matthew 8:29-34 tells of two demon-possessed men in the region of the Gadarenes who come forth to meet Jesus, referring to him as "Son of God", and ask whether he is there to torture them. They ask that if he drives them out he send them into the nearby herd of pigs (impure animals according to Lev 11:7 and Deut 14:8). Jesus drives them out by ordering them, "Go!" and they possess the pigs, which charge into the lake and die.

In Matthew this is the first descriptive narrative of a confrontation with demons, which differs from Mark 5:1-20 where his lengthier account follows several such incidents.<sup>596</sup> Matthew shortens Mark 5:1-20 considerably, although he has two demon possessed people. His focus on Jesus' identity is a more central theme. The only violence is noted as a side effect of possession. Jesus' exorcism and dialogue are simpler and the epilogue about the exorcised wanting to become a disciple is absent.<sup>597</sup>

Several aspects and details are unique to this account – notably the possession of pigs and stampede into water. This does not appear anywhere else in the gospel accounts of Jesus' exorcisms and Davies suggests that this contradicts the common Near-Eastern belief that spirits feared water.<sup>598</sup> However, if seemingly invincible demons are vanquished – ordered, not coaxed – then it seems fitting to have them

<sup>590</sup> Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*. 153.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid. 154.

<sup>592</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 213.

<sup>593</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 317.

<sup>594</sup> Davies, *Matthew*, 79.

<sup>595</sup> Davies, *Matthew*, 96.

<sup>596</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 363.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid. 317.

<sup>598</sup> Davies, *Healer* 80. Davies does not provide specific sources.

defeated by means of a substance which, in contemporary lore, was detestable to them. The transfer of the demons into the pigs is consistent with an exorcism transference motif, in which demons cannot simply be cast out of the afflicted but must be transferred in to another object which may then be destroyed (*Ant.* 8.49).<sup>599</sup>

Jesus commands the demons to withdraw, but there is little evidence in Matthew of formulaic words or actions. Rather, the exorcism is achieved through the formidable force of his personal authority.

### b. Identity and authority

There were widespread beliefs that knowledge of a demon's name afforded a measure of control over the possessing entity.<sup>600</sup> Name and identity provided a means to gain power over an individual, in general, and this adds an extra layer of significance to the demons' naming of Jesus.<sup>601</sup> It is significant that he does not cast the demons out by utterance of his own name. In 8:29, when the demons declare Jesus identity they may be trying to bind him, harnessing the power granted by knowing someone's name.<sup>602</sup> In Matthew 8:29 he omits the demon's challenge from Mark 5:7, in which it invokes the name of God. Twelftree argues that Matthew objects to an attempt to bind Jesus by supernatural power coming from divine authority.<sup>603</sup> Matthew wishes to make it unambiguous that Jesus has authority over these spiritual beings.<sup>604</sup>

Further evidence for the high regard in which personal authority was held comes from Josephus (*Ant.* 8.46-49), who writes of Eleazar the exorcist casting out a demon with the authority of Solomon, whose special relationship with God and superior knowledge endows him with charisma sufficient to force out demons. Likewise in *Ant.* 6.166-9, David is praised as an exorcist in his rewriting of 1 Samuel 16.<sup>605</sup> The

<sup>599</sup> Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*. 155.

<sup>600</sup> Ibid. 92

<sup>601</sup> Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*. 84.

<sup>602</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 319-320.

<sup>603</sup> Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*. 82.

<sup>604</sup> Smith, *Jesus the Magician*. 101.

<sup>605</sup> Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*. 36.

earliest evidence for personal authority as an effective vehicle for exorcism is arguably 1 Samuel 16.

In Matt 10:1 and 8, Jesus gives his disciples authority to drive out evil spirits (taken directly from Mark 6:7). Matthew 7:22 would suggest that “authority” was not needed, as even the false prophets were able to cast out demons in the name of Jesus. Yet in 10:1 Jesus gave authority to the disciples. His own ability to exorcise suggests a middle option. When Jesus gives authority to his disciples it is not through education or training but through Jesus’ personal power.<sup>606</sup> It is likely that, should the disciples need any kind of conveyed authority to exorcise, it would be authority to exorcise as Jesus had done, with personal authority granted by God.

In the *Prayer of Nabonidus*, 4Q242, the narrator recounts his experience of exorcism.<sup>607</sup> He claims to have been afflicted with an ulcer or inflammation, and cured by an exorcist forgiving his sin. This has an interesting connection in vocabulary to Matthew, where forgiveness of sin and the curing of demonically-afflicted illness are linked. The exorcisms are not merely expected to function as medical cures but as expressions of spiritual transformation.

The question of Jesus’ identity is raised in the gospels when Jesus exorcises. Davies notes that the audience may have interpreted this as a matter of personal identity rather than categorisation, which suggests that the exorcisms of Jesus hinge as much on the unique nature of his identity as it does on the ritual context.<sup>608</sup> Jesus claims to cast out demons by the “spirit of God” (Matt 12:28).<sup>609</sup> Even if one does not assume that Jesus is synonymous with the character of God in Matthew, he can still be said to be possessed— hence, empowered – by the spirit of God, which is quite consistent with the accounts in which he need utter no special invocations of Solomon or other figures.<sup>610</sup> The personae of the demoniacs in Matt 8:28-34 are those of the demons by which they are possessed, and the persona of Jesus is the empowering or possessing spirit of God.

<sup>606</sup> Smith, *Jesus the Magician*. 114, 127. Osborne, *Matthew*, 371.

<sup>607</sup> Cf. J. Collins, “4Q242” in VanderKam, (ed.) *Qumran Cave 4.XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3* DJD 22; (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.) 83-93

<sup>608</sup> Davies, *Healer*. 94

<sup>609</sup> Furthermore, the involvement of God is attested throughout the gospel exorcism accounts – Luke says “finger of God” (cf. the plague account in Ex 8:19) Davies, *Healer*. 92-93; Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist*, 108-110. Cf. Van Cangh, J. “Par L’Esprit de Dieu – Par Le Doigt De Dieu,” 337-342, in Delobel, J (ed.) *Logia: Les Paroles de Jesus – The Sayings of Jesus*. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1982).

<sup>610</sup> Davies, *Healer*. 98-99.

Confrontation takes place on this level between these supernatural personae.<sup>611</sup>

Evidence of the affliction being removed is sufficient to demonstrate the effectiveness of the exorcism.<sup>612</sup> Matthew seems far more comfortable depicting exorcism as a demonstration of Jesus' authority than a rite with set words or actions.

### **c. Matt 9:32-34, 12:24-28 – the Beelzebul controversy**

Matthew 9:32-34 tells of a demon-possessed mute who is brought to Jesus for exorcism. The Pharisees, however, suspect that Jesus must be driving out demons by means of demonic power. The reaction of the Pharisees suggests that exorcism was not a clearly defined rite within Second Temple Judaism, or at least not a widely recognised symbol of divine purpose. The method employed by Jesus is not explained, and no special words or movements are reported. The miracle in 9:32-33 is only briefly described but the statement that the demon was cast out implies a forceful expulsion.<sup>613</sup> This uniquely Matthean episode invites reflection on the difference between exorcism by Jesus and that of others. Authority is a recurring theme for others, and only for Jesus in the context of Pharisaic questioning that recognises the authority if not its source.

The Pharisees argue, in 12:24-28, that only through Beelzebul could Jesus cast out demons. Matthew uses the Q material to expand Mark's material in 12:24-28. Verses 24-28 come from Mark 3:22-24, while vv27-28 is Q material also in Luke 11:19-20.<sup>614</sup> Jesus counters by telling them that Satan cannot cast out Satan without being divided against himself, which would be his downfall. He asks them how "their people" drive out demons, and says that if he drives out demons by the Spirit of God then the kingdom of heaven has come upon them. That the Pharisees may question whether Jesus' exorcism is a measure of his goodness or evil strongly indicates that there was no established teaching on exorcism as the exclusive domain of the good. Despite this, v27 suggests that the Pharisees were familiar with the concept of exorcism and drove out demons themselves. Jesus' assertion is, as Satan cannot contradict himself in this way, exorcism can only be performed in the Spirit of God. Thus, while false prophets may

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<sup>611</sup> Ibid. 99.

<sup>612</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 271.

<sup>613</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 359.

<sup>614</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 479.

drive out demons, demonic forces cannot. While the ability to perform exorcisms is not an indicator of righteousness, the nature of exorcism itself is not in question for Matthew; it is a task achieved through goodness, or, more accurately, by the power of God.

The goodness of the source of the power does not indicate personal goodness. In 7:15-23, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns against false prophets whose exorcisms make them appear ‘honorable and desirable’.<sup>615</sup> However, Jesus denies that a “bad tree” can bear “good fruit” and vice versa. He foretells that many will claim that they qualify as they prophesied, exorcised and performed miracles in his name, but he denies that this is the case. Matthew 7:22 contains their claim that they have a special status having prophesied in the name of Jesus, cast out demons and performed many miracles.

It is noteworthy that prophecy, exorcism and miracles are not seen as dependent on a right attitudinal relationship to God. Jesus does not deny that the false prophets may be able to cast out demons, rather that the ability demonstrates nothing about the character of the exorcist. It is the name of God that seems to carry the power for them to do these things. True prophecy, but not false, is dependent on being a “good tree”, while exorcism and miracles are possible in the name of Jesus even for false prophets. Consequently, exorcism embodies the tension between the active and passive attributes of exorcism in the name of Jesus. Exorcism in general should be seen as a rite in which the apparently active performer has little to do with its functionality beyond invoking the authority of Jesus, which is, nevertheless, the element on which the rite hinges.

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<sup>615</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 191.

## 4. Purification

### a. 8:1-4 – purification of a leper

When Jesus comes down from the mountain after the Sermon on the Mount (8:1-4), he is followed by crowds. A man with a skin condition comes and kneels before him, claiming that, should Jesus be willing, he can cleanse him. Jesus reaches out, touches the man, replies that he is willing and commands him to be clean. He is cured. Jesus then tells him to tell no one but the priest and to offer a gift as a testimony. Matthew's modification of Mark 1:40 adds κυριός (Matt 8:2), which clarifies that the leper recognises Jesus' status. Matthew truncates the account, removing Jesus' motivation in Mark 1:41 and the disobedient proclamation of the leper in Mark 1:45.

The offering of a gift at the altar, after inspection by a priest to certify purity, functions as a tangible witness to the leper's new state of purity. Osborne suggests that there may be some element of bearing witness to the efficacy of Jesus' cure, but the prohibition on telling anyone in 8:4 suggests that the presentation to the priest is nothing to do with demonstrating Jesus' success specifically.<sup>616</sup> Rather, it occurs in line with the sacrificial requirements in Lev 14:1-32.

Skin diseases can be sent as punishment, as in the punishment of Miriam in Num 12:1-10, of Gehazi in 2 Kgs 5:27, and Azariah in 2 Chr 26:20. Otherwise, the presence of a skin disease is a morally neutral affliction, and is dealt with as ritual impurity without a moral dimension.<sup>617</sup> The instructions relating to skin diseases are found in Lev 13 and 14. The diagnostic rites determine whether the sufferer is ritually pure or impure and fit to participate in the calendrical rites and daily activities of their community. Ritual impurity excludes the sufferer from residency with the pure and presence in the sanctuary. This illustrates that despite the lack of moral condemnation accompanying a skin disease, there are still undesirable consequences. It remains a state from which those who wish to participate fully in ritual activity must find an escape, in Lev 13 and 14 provided by the possibility of reintegration after a period of isolation and quarantine.

The ritual actions involved in the purification are the kneeling of the leper and Jesus' combination of touch and command. Davies argues that the respect displayed in

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<sup>616</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 284-285.

<sup>617</sup> Maccoby, *Ritual and Morality*. 167.

kneeling before Jesus as an expression of trust is an instrumental part of the purification.<sup>618</sup> With David (1 Sam 25:23-24) and Elijah (1 Kgs 18:7) also shown respect and reverence through the act of kneeling, the leper greatly honours Jesus by his gesture. The effective part of the purification is Jesus' command that the man should be purified.<sup>619</sup> The man's claim that Jesus need only be willing to heal the man is confirmed by Jesus' response that he is willing. It also suggests that he would have to be willing for the cleansing, and that this is somehow distinct from the power to exorcise in the name of Jesus. Jesus reaches out and touches the man, as he does on several occasions when healing, but this is classed as a rite of affliction as it has a direct and immediate effect on this man's ritual standing. It facilitates the ritual return to society required of those who are declared clean after a period of skin disease. This is why Jesus describes the offering of a gift at the altar as a testimony; it is not a testimony of his miraculous healing, as Jesus has told him to be silent on that matter, but as a testimony of his return to a ritually pure state.

### b. 15:1-2, 11, 20 – food purity and handwashing

Matthew 15 recounts a clash between the leaders and Jesus over food purity. Together, this explores the issues of handwashing and the clean or unclean state of food consumed. In 15:1-2 the leaders come from Jerusalem to see Jesus at Gennesaret and take him to task for his food purity practices. They accuse the disciples of breaking with tradition by not ritually washing their hands before eating. The only first century evidence for the handwashing tradition apart from this reference is made by Josephus (*Ant.* 13.297-209) where he claims that only the Pharisees follow this custom.<sup>620</sup> In 15:1-2 Matthew clarifies Mark's characterisation of the hand washing practice, attributing it to the Pharisees rather than all Jews.<sup>621</sup> Jesus directly opposes the view of the Pharisees and teachers of the law that handwashing maintains ritual purity. In this

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<sup>618</sup> Davies, *Matthew*, 69-70.

<sup>619</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 200.

<sup>620</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 315.

<sup>621</sup> Davies, *Matthew*, 111.

case it is interesting that he does not only overturn the convention but denies its efficacy.

In v 11, Jesus claims that nothing going into a man's mouth renders him impure, but what comes out of his mouth may make him impure. This seems to be a break from the scriptural instructions on food purity in which impurity can be transferred from impure food to the one who eats it. Matthew 15:1-2 comes directly from Mark 7:1-2. In 15:11 Matthew adopts the saying from Mark 7:19 but omits Mark's interpretation that Jesus was declaring all foods to be clean.<sup>622</sup> This omission is significant because it removes the decisive movement away from distinctly Jewish food purity rules. Jesus' denial of handwashing does not make most sense as a contradiction of the Law. The explicit countering of the principle of purity through handwashing is linked to the immorality of what may come out of a man to defile him. These practices are criticised because they are distracting people from obeying the commandments.<sup>623</sup> As long as this continues, handwashing is an irrelevance. The assertion that what comes out of the mouth can induce impurity is, therefore, an example of Matthew's tendency to have Jesus intensify the Law, or the principles behind the Law.

### **c. 23:25-26 – purity of dishware**

As part of the woes of Matthew 23, 23:25-26 sees Jesus denouncing the teachers of the Law and Pharisees as hypocrites for their purity regulations and practices. While they may fulfil their own strict ritual requirements, he claims that their characters suffer. Taking the purity of dishware as a metaphor for their moral state, he accuses them of cleaning the outside of the cup and dish while leaving the inside full of greed and indulgence; their observance is merely 'window-dressing'.<sup>624</sup> Referring to them as "blind", he exhorts them to clean the inside first, and by this means the outside will be clean. This denunciation carries the same judgement as his teaching on handwashing, but the dishware provides a terminological link to Zechariah 14:20-21 in which the

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<sup>622</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 585-588.

<sup>623</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 320.

<sup>624</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 460.

prophet's climactic vision declares that every vessel will be purified and made fit for sacrifice, bringing about forgiveness of iniquity. The tradition of cleansing cups and dishes to deal with ritual impurity comes from Lev 11:31-32. This link between the ritual purity of a vessel and the removal of sin is paralleled in Matt 23:25-26, and to add to the thematic links between Matthew and Zechariah 14, the *Targum of Zechariah* adds a reference to the "kingdom" ruled by God at v9.<sup>625</sup> Ian Werrett notes the particular susceptibility of vessels and implements to impurity found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, over human susceptibility; this paradigm could underlie the particular concern for vessel purity.<sup>626</sup> The seven woes of Matthew 23 roughly parallels Luke's six woes in Luke 11:37-54 but while the content is too similar to suggest two completely original compositions the versions are too divergent to suggest a single recoverable Q source.<sup>627</sup> The woes certainly reinforce Matthew's theme of ritual as important but insufficient to please God.

#### d. 27:24 – Pilate's handwashing

In Matt 27:24, at the climax of the trial before Pilate, there is an example of handwashing that, while falling outside regular ritual schemes, evokes many of the properties of such practices to demonstrate a key point in the narrative.<sup>628</sup> Pilate sees that the crowd is in danger of overwhelming him and relents in the matter of Jesus' execution. Yet, to try to demonstrate that the culpability will be theirs and not his, he washes his hands in full view of the crowd and claims that he is innocent of Jesus' blood which is their responsibility. Only Matthew includes this incident.

This custom originates in Deut 21:1-9 where it allowed a community to reject the blood guilt resulting from an unsolved murder.<sup>629</sup> The regulations provided in Lev 14 and 15 instruct bathing for purification from physical impurities, establishing that water has a cleansing function in ritual. However, for the most part the rites eliminate ritual impurity without a moral component. The only explicit references to water itself

<sup>625</sup> Chilton, *Temple*. 136

<sup>626</sup> Werrett, *Ritual Purity*. 41-42.

<sup>627</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 846.

<sup>628</sup> For a discussion of the judicial setting, see Political Rites, p112.

<sup>629</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 1020.

as an element that is capable of absolution are found in Ps 51:2 (see also v7) and Ezek 36:25, which refer to the washing away of iniquity in water. Dealing with national sin, the same principle seems to be at work in Isa 1:16, although it is not entirely clear whether the washing is literal or linked to the cleansing from sin demanded in the same verse. More relevant to Pilate's situation is Psalm 26:6, which describes the washing of hands as a sign of innocence. René Girard notes that, to Pilate, Jesus is an insignificant character and Pilate may not feel any particular guilt about his condemnation.<sup>630</sup>

The handwashing example of Ps 26:6 is intended to demonstrate the fitness of the one who washes to be in proximity to the altar. While there is certainly an element to this act that seeks the symbolic demonstration of innocence, it does not seem likely that Pilate's handwashing would be to facilitate presence at the altar under any circumstances. There is no reason to think that Pilate would be intentionally invoking meaning from Jewish ritual, so any meaning imparted is purely due to internal interpretation within Matthew's ritual world. In ch 15 it was established that handwashing may be a sign of ritual purity, but is meaningless as a symbol of innocence should the one performing the cleansing be guilty.<sup>631</sup> Thus, Pilate's handwashing is intended to demonstrate his innocence, but it is an ironic episode in the Passion Narrative as Jesus' earlier teaching shows that he cannot absolve iniquity this way.

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<sup>630</sup> Girard, R. *The Scapegoat*. (trans. Yvonne Freccero) (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). 106-107.

<sup>631</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 527.

#### IV. Conclusions

The rites of affliction in the *Damascus Document* and Matthew are consistent with the function of such rites inasmuch as they provide mitigation where undesirable circumstances must be overcome. In the area of rites of affliction, several examples also provide some level of insight into the preoccupations of those who followed the text, and the way in which the Law was interpreted. Rites of affliction are especially helpful in this regard, as the type encompasses a range of purity issues, fundamental to daily life and the fulfilment of ritual obligations explicitly linked to community and national wellbeing. The actions involved take measures to protect the temple through separation and eradication of impurity.

For the most part, the *Damascus Document* and Matthew share a common context, in which purity is a topic of the utmost significance, but do not share topical concerns within the area of rites of affliction.

The *Damascus Document* retains the essential structures of purity in the area of skin disease-related ritual. Skin diseases of certain types are judged to pose the threat of ritual impurity to others in their community, as in Lev 13 and 14. The *Damascus Document* follows these instructions closely in its own regulations. The central part of skin-disease related ritual is the examination by the priest. The priest is the one given the authority to judge, although the *Damascus Document* adds the role of "Overseer" to assist in this task. The priest has authority, but also has a duty to uphold the standards detailed in the instructions given. The apparent deviation from the Levitical instructions in 4Q266 9 I 1-12 suggests that some streamlining may have been in effect, but firm conclusions are hampered by the incomplete text available.

A fragmented text is also a problem in determining the extent to which the *Damascus Document* deviates from the Levitical Law on the matter of impurity incurred after childbirth and during menstruation. The acceptance of a dove sacrifice other than as a last resort is a change that may reflect an assessment of economic feasibility or common practice but most likely does not seek to advocate a breach of the Laws of Lev 12. The feature that is most definitely noteworthy is the stringency of the instructions on contact with a menstruating woman. Leviticus 15:19-33 lists the circumstances in which a man or woman with a discharge may contaminate another,

limited to contact with ritual objects, contact between a ritually pure person and something on which an impure person has sat or slept, and sexual contact. However, 4Q272 1 II 7-10 clearly broadens the potential for contamination to any physical contact whatsoever with a person who is ritually impure due to a discharge of any kind. This attitude is consistent with the tendency to impose “fences” as a precaution against breaking the Law, a feature of the *Damascus Document* established in the proliferation of Sabbath regulations.

Based on the apparent simplification of the skin disease-related period of exile, the addition of an Overseer to the task of judgement and the simpler rules for avoiding the contraction of impurity suggest a preoccupation with the practicalities of ritual observance. A mention of purification in water clarifies a perceived ambiguity in the text of cleansing rites to specify the depth of water required.

Further discussion of sacrifice demonstrates a further concern for sacrificial purity. The altar is vulnerable to impurity, thus objects brought to the altar must not defile it. Materials from which Gentile idols have been constructed must not be brought, nor should objects used for work or defiled by corpse impurity be brought to the altar. The fear of pollution is greater and relates to a wider number of materials than found in the source texts of the Hebrew Bible. The fear of Gentile pollution is intense. In addition items of questionable provenance and ownership are unsuitable for sacrifice. The intensification of these rules provides a vivid demonstration of the *Damascus Document* as a document for a group concerned about mainstream Judaism and its orthodoxy in the period leading up to the eschaton.

In Matthew, Jesus teaches on rites of affliction in different circumstances, as well as several rites being included in the narrative of the gospel. Jesus teaches in Matt 5:33-36 that oaths should not be made by heaven or earth, often interpreted as a ban on all oaths, but his response under oath in the trial narrative, though not conclusive, calls this assumption into question. The cautionary-tale aspect of Herod’s honoured oath in 14:6-10 and Peter’s denial of Jesus in 26:69-75 reinforce the idea that oaths are not guarantees of positive outcomes but bear witness to human iniquity. Jesus criticises a convention of the Pharisees, in 23:16-22, to swear by the gifts of the altar, consistent with his teachings in 5:33-36 not to swear by lesser objects. The debate exposes a lack of integrity and a failure to understand God’s requirement that all oaths be kept. This

paradigm aids the trial narrative when the people condemn Jesus in favour of Barabbas, as the inverted Day of Atonement turns the oath of innocence made by the people into an irony.

Exorcism is cast as a rite only done for good and always by the power of God, but not necessarily by the righteous. The process itself is conspicuous by its absence, as Matthew takes pains not to portray Jesus as a magician using magical words or actions. Nevertheless, Jesus commands the demons to depart and his instruction is the effective part of the rite. In 7:22 Jesus teaches that the ability to perform exorcisms indicates nothing about the character of the exorcist, as the demons are driven out by the name or spirit of God, not personal authority. The disciples are given authority in this context, but this authority is better thought of as analogous to the innate authority of Jesus as the one who embodies the divine authority by which demons are cast out, perhaps being “possessed” by the spirit of God. This is demonstrated in 8:28-34 when Jesus exorcises two men whose demons recognise Jesus as Son of God in his exorcist role, although he does not cast out the demons by the utterance of his name. This strengthens the case for ritual as an expression of principles and structures of authority that underlie creation; as vehicles for this authority rather than generative acts.

The rites relating to purity in Matthew are more wide-ranging. Jesus’ healing of the leper in 8:1-4 is both a demonstration of his power to heal (distinct from exorcism) and his support of traditional purity rites with the cleansing and sacrifice to be made by the priest. Jesus’ challenge to the Pharisees over ritual handwashing before eating in chapter 15 is, it transpires, no stronger than the prophets in his apparent contradiction of the Law, and in fact challenges the efficacy of purity rites where moral purity is not present. His denunciation of their moral character strengthens this view as his analogy comes from a purity context, comparing them to dishware cleansed only on the outside. Accordingly, Pilate’s handwashing is intended as an expression of his innocence, but within the ritual paradigm of Matthew the audience knows that he cannot absolve his guilt by washing in water. Ritual purity without good morals is worthless.

The teaching and narrative uses of rites of affliction in Matthew betray the sense of disappointment with the human iniquity lying beneath correct ritual action. Jesus denounces rites correctly performed by those with the wrong attitude and denies the efficacy of ritual undertaken in moral turpitude, even if all requirements of ritual purity

are met. There is a moral and ethical imperative in addition to ritual praxis. In this, Jesus (as claimed in 5:17-20) does not undermine the Law but holds all to higher standards of morality reflecting the principles behind the Law.

## 6. FEASTING, FASTING AND FESTIVALS

### I: Introduction

Catherine Bell's definition of feasting and fasting defines their function as 'the public display of religiocultural sentiments'. In this respect they could be considered social drama as in Glenn's typology.<sup>632</sup> Matthew's feasts tend not to conform strictly to this definition, as while they contain features that point to implicit religious awareness their interpretation resists a direct exposition of self-conscious social or theological commentary. Where religious components are present, they are peripheral to the concerns of the discussion, as in the Pharisaic concern for social status in 23:6.

The boundaries of a social group or community can be defined by shared feasting.<sup>633</sup> Table fellowship is of fundamental interest in Matthew's feasts, with controversy emanating from the inclusion of questionable persons and new communities formed or bolstered by table fellowship.

Bell's treatment of Christian fasting deals with later coordinated fasts which she proposes emulates the trial of Jesus in the wilderness.<sup>634</sup> This brief mention in Matthew 4:1-2, a source of these later fasts, is one subject of the investigation into fasting in Matthew. However, the debates between Jesus and the Pharisees and his teaching on the distinctive attitude of his followers concerning fasting provide far more information on the place of fasting in Matthean use.

While feasting and fasting are mentioned in the *Damascus Document*, each instance conforms to the calendrical type of ritual and provides information relevant to that discussion rather than resonating with the material in Matthew. There is a reference to the Day of Fasting in CD VI,19, while a communal meal with "pure food" is implicit in CD IX, 21 and 23, CD XIV, 20, and 4Q2707 I 6. Each mention of the pure food warns of exclusion from this meal as a punishment, so it was clearly a privilege expressing inclusion and affirming personal orthodoxy. However, while a key component of a communal meal would be the affirmation of the insider group in contrast to outsiders, the ability to distinguish between approved and disgraced

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<sup>632</sup> Bell, *Ritual*. 120.

<sup>633</sup> Ibid. 123.

<sup>634</sup> Ibid. 123-124.

members of this insider group was not, presumably, the main point of the meal. The mentions of food and the Day of Fasting are incidental, so they do not provide substantial evidence for a community perspective on feasting and fasting; the details of the rites are not available in the *Damascus Document*.

## II. Feasting

### 1. 8:11 –An eschatological feast

In Matt 8:11 Jesus refers to an eschatological feast. He states that many will come from east and west to join the feast in the kingdom of heaven, along with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The reclining as described here refers to the custom of lying on couches, leaning on the left elbow, to eat. This Hellenistic practice was the custom among Jews at their feasts. This manner of eating, along with the honour of an invitation, constituted a profound gesture of fellowship.<sup>635</sup> Table fellowship with the patriarchs would be ‘the highest honor imaginable.’<sup>636</sup> This is a contrast to the threat of exclusion in 8:12. Luke’s account in Luke 13:28-29 has these two contrasting statements in reverse with the exclusion of the Jews coming first. Matthew places the surprising inclusion of the Gentiles first with this highest honour and follows it with the equally surprising exclusion of the Israelites in verse 12.<sup>637</sup>

References to east and west provide a link to the gathering of Jews from the Diaspora, as in Ps 107, Isa 25-27 and Ezek 37-39. The contrast in this context could be between Jews who do, and do not, accept Jesus.<sup>638</sup> However the inclusion of Jews from the Diaspora does not discount the inclusion of Gentiles. Gentiles and Jews outside Israel could be included in the gathering of people from all nations in prophetic texts (the coming of many nations to Zion is found in Isa 2, 49:22-23, Mic 4:1-5 and Zech 8:20-23), and this is consistent with the immediate context of Matthew 8:8-10 in which Jesus encounters a Gentile.<sup>639</sup> The Gentiles reclining at table with the patriarchs envelops the faithful centurion and the Gentile mission. That the subjects of the kingdom may be excluded from the banquet hall is the continuation of the theme from the Sermon in the Mount that faith is important.<sup>640</sup>

Verses 11-12 are a Matthean insertion which transforms the praise of the Gentiles into an ominous warning to Jews.<sup>641</sup> Carter notes that the one interpretation

<sup>635</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 145. Osborne, *Matthew*. 293.

<sup>636</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 293.

<sup>637</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 144-145.

<sup>638</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 292. Carter, *Margins*, 203.

<sup>639</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 203.

<sup>640</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 8-20. 11

<sup>641</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. 91.

absolutely unsustainable is a suggestion that all Jews are to be excluded given the presence of Jewish patriarch at the feast.<sup>642</sup> The warning is that God's inauguration of this empire is imminent and repentance and full reliance on God, as displayed by the centurion, are necessary to be included.<sup>643</sup> In John 4:46-54 Jesus warns an official that many will not believe unless they see wonders, and it is the faith without proof that causes a miracle. Here, the audience may not have another chance. The feast described may well be the messianic banquet as described in Joel 2:24-28 and Isa 25:6-8 (see also *1 Enoch* 62:12-14).<sup>644</sup> These predictions refer to both Israel and the Gentiles, and the gathering of Israel is also mentioned in Isa 65:13-14 and Bar 4:37.<sup>645</sup> The "many" in 8:11 could include Gentiles. The faith described in 8:10 is the vehicle for the gathering of the nations which, with the ominous warning of verse 12, goes beyond the boundaries of Israel.<sup>646</sup> With John the Baptist having declared in 3:9 that God can create new children of Abraham, Jesus' declaration in 8:11 emphasises his authority.<sup>647</sup>

Israel's identity had always incorporated some non-Jews, shown through the acknowledgement of resident aliens throughout the Law (Exod 22:21, 23:9; Deut 10:18, 24:19; Num 15:13-16).<sup>648</sup> There is little evidence from the gospel of the presence of a significant number of Gentiles in Matthew's community, therefore Matthew may not be introducing radical ideas, merely exploring a more recently pressing issue, with increasing Roman presence.<sup>649</sup> The prophecy encourages caution lest exclusion be experienced, while celebrating the forthcoming fellowship.

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<sup>642</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 203-204.

<sup>643</sup> Ibid. 203.

<sup>644</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 293.

<sup>645</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 232-233.

<sup>646</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 292.

<sup>647</sup> Overman, *Crisis*. 117.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid. 118.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid. 118-119.

## 2. 9:10 – A meal

Matthew 9:10 contains a brief report of a meal with his disciples that Jesus was eating at a house, at which he was joined by tax collectors and those whom Matthew described only as “sinners”. In v11 the Pharisees question the disciples as to why Jesus is willing to eat with these people. For the Pharisees to witness, or hear reports of, this meal and for all the guests described to hear of and seek out the meal, it must have been sufficiently noteworthy. Hosea 6:6 is the source of Jesus’ quotation, paralleling 12:7.

Matthew here introduces the character of Matthew (subsequently called Levi, while in Mark 2:14-15 the same character is simply called Levi). Most commentators assume that the meal takes place at Levi’s house, with those in attendance friends or colleagues of Levi. Matthew 9:10 does not specify that the banquet took place at Levi’s house. It merely says “at the house”, which means it could have been the house of Jesus or someone else. Gundry suggests that the exclusion of the specification that it was Levi’s house (this is specified in Mark 2:15) is pointed and that after establishing that Jesus has a home in Capernaum in 4:13, Matthew intended his audience to understand that the house belonged to Jesus. Jesus as host would enhance his portrayal as the one who offers mercy.<sup>650</sup> The parallel in Luke 5:29, however, places the banquet at Levi’s house, and while Matthew fails to adopt Mark’s specification he does not offer any clear alternative setting. It is more likely, then, that Matthew assumes that the setting is obvious and does not need to be restated. This would be consistent with the description of Levi as a tax collector, as he could be sufficiently well off to have a house large enough to host a banquet

Across the Jewish and Gentile ancient world meals served to represent and consolidate hierarchy and social connections.<sup>651</sup> The status of those attending would be profoundly affected by those with whom they shared table fellowship. It also defines their social circle.<sup>652</sup> Again, the reclining demonstrates the adoption of this as a convention at religious feasts and banquets.<sup>653</sup> A further example of Jesus joining with others in table fellowship at a banquet appears in the wedding account in John 2:1-12.

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<sup>650</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 167.

<sup>651</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 219.

<sup>652</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 335.

<sup>653</sup> Ibid.

The Pharisees are scandalised by the presence of people whose company they deem unsuitable for a teacher. Matthew's characterisation of Pharisaic disapproval is unlikely to be related to his early church audience. It is possible that the Pharisees see Jesus' position as a teacher as analogous to their own when it comes to maintaining the purity of table fellowship. The address of Jesus as teacher is not a usual address of those who follow him and may demonstrate, for Matthew, the fundamental lack of understanding that accompanies their questioning of Jesus' actions.<sup>654</sup>

Overman suggests that the Pharisees may have taken offence because Jesus was not dining with them and seems to have chosen these people over the respected Pharisees who took the Law seriously. This would certainly explain Jesus' response in 9:12-13.<sup>655</sup> While this does not seem the most likely option – the Pharisees clearly have a profound objection to Jesus' choice of eating companions beyond personal offence – it is preferable to the idea that the Pharisees wanted to completely reject all contact with these questionable people. Had the Pharisees wished to shun everyone with different modes of ritual observance to their own, they would have quickly found themselves in the position of sectarians. The issue here is most likely table fellowship, as the Pharisees definitely object to Jesus and the disciples eating with these people.<sup>656</sup> Neusner characterises the Pharisees as portrayed in the Gospels as a 'table-fellowship sect within Judaism' who kept temple purity laws in all situations and could eat together in purity.<sup>657</sup>

The fact that Matthew invited tax collectors like himself and those described as sinners probably does not indicate that he snubbed members of the local elite but that he was shunned by them due to his profession. Hare suggests that the tax collectors were shunned because of suspected embezzlement, and that the sinners may have been a group such as bankers, as their activity violated the Law through usury (Exod 22:25, Ezek 18:13).<sup>658</sup> The designation "sinners" denotes disapproval and anticipates judgement.<sup>659</sup> The tax collectors and sinners seem to be a formulaic pairing suggesting that the tax collectors were counted as sinners and equally disdained. This attitude is not

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<sup>654</sup> Van Tilborg, *Leaders*. 113-114.

<sup>655</sup> Overman, *Crisis*. 131.

<sup>656</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 252.

<sup>657</sup> Neusner, *From Politics to Piety*, 67.

<sup>658</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. 101.

<sup>659</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 219.

restricted to ancient Jewish literature, with Dio Chrysostom (*Orat.* 14.14), in the first century, likening collecting taxes to keeping a brothel or other “base and unseemly” ventures. The Mishnah is even less flattering, lumping them in with criminals and murderers (e.g. *m. Ned.* 3.4, outside Neusner’s stratigraphy).<sup>660</sup> They may have been people with lax observance to purity laws.<sup>661</sup> Matthew’s attitude towards those considered deviant is conciliatory, possibly in a conscious distinction from mainstream society, with “undesirables” welcomed into intimate fellowship through this very public inclusion.<sup>662</sup>

To eat with these persons of disrepute did not merely indicate a social acquaintance with them. It indicated to the Pharisees that Jesus was identifying himself with this social group in a scandalous manner. The Pharisees did not necessarily wish to shun these people; they would have spoken to, or taught them, while certainly not sharing the closeness of table fellowship.<sup>663</sup> Jesus’ challenge to the Pharisees demonstrates a profound rejection of the idea that close association is necessarily polluting and that God would judge unfavourably those who extended fellowship to those considered disreputable.<sup>664</sup> Jesus’ claim that he has come to invite sinners over the righteous provides a semantic link to the parable of the wedding banquet in 22:9-14 and Hare considers this to denote an invitation to the eschatological messianic banquet.<sup>665</sup> This is not only shocking to the Pharisees but implies the exclusion of those presumed to be righteous.

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<sup>660</sup> Overman, *Crisis*. 126.

<sup>661</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. 101.

<sup>662</sup> Saldarini, ‘Conflict’ 51

<sup>663</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 336.

<sup>664</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 219-220.

<sup>665</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. 101-102.

### 3. 14:6 – Birthday feast

Matthew 14:6-10 describes a feast given by Herod for his birthday. In v9 Herod is compelled, by the presence of his dinner guests, to uphold his oath made in haste. The purpose of this pericope is to recount the death of John the Baptist, introduced by Matthew with a report that John the Baptist had already been dead for some time. The story is recounted “in flashback” as it were, and the circumstances of Herod’s feast are of little interest to Matthew. There is little information on the feast in question. However two details provide some insight into Matthew’s understanding of the significance of such a feast. Verse 6 provides a temporal setting: it is Herod’s birthday. This implies that – at least for kings – a birthday was marked and provided sufficient occasion for a feast.

Verse 9 notes that Herod experiences peer pressure, with a considerable fear of shame on account of the presence of his dinner guests. While the brevity of Matthew’s comments regarding the event, and his apparent disinterest in details of historicity, should caution against the enthusiastic extrapolation of too many specifics, it is interesting to note that Herod is concerned about retaining the good opinion of his guests. Herod Antipas sought to secure prestige in the sight of his guests and his willingness to uphold his oath originates in his fear of losing face as the host.<sup>666</sup> Whether this is a matter of personal concern for his reputation, in Matthew’s characterisation, or an implied comment on the status of his guests, is unclear. Certainly from vv 6-7 the attendance of his family is implied. The reference to the birthday brings to mind the birth and installation of Jesus as a king (cf 1:18).

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<sup>666</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 364.

#### 4. Miraculous feasts (14:13-21, 15:32-38)

Matthew 14:15-21 is Matthew's account of the feeding of the five thousand.<sup>667</sup> In v15 the disciples suggest that Jesus dismiss the crowds as they believe that they need to eat and must leave to prepare food. Jesus responds that the disciples can feed them and they do not need to leave (v16) but the disciples respond that they only have five loaves and two fish (v17). Jesus asks them to bring the food to him (v18) and tells the crowd to gather and sit (v19). In v19 he takes the food, gives thanks, breaks the bread and passes them to the disciples for distribution. Verse 20 states that everyone ate sufficiently, with the disciples gathering twelve baskets of leftovers.<sup>668</sup> Verse 15 implies that the Galilean crowd would have an expectation of eating in the evening. This may reflect first century Palestinian rural norms or it may reflect the situation of Matthew's audience community. The hour becoming late could also refer to the late-dining conventions of a festival or banquet as in the Sabbath or Passover meal. The miraculous extension of the food demonstrates Jesus' commitment to meeting basic physical needs. The audience may recall the petition of 6:11 – it is appropriate to pray for daily divine provision for basic needs.

In Matthew 15:32-38 there is a further account of a miraculous feeding, this time of four thousand men plus women and children. This time (v33) there is no handy village in which the crowd could buy food. In v34 the disciples have seven loaves and a few small fish. In v36 Jesus gives thanks, breaks the food and gives them to the disciples to distribute. This time the disciples collect seven baskets of left overs (v37). In structure and semantics this pericope is almost identical to 14:13-21. As in 14:14 Jesus feels "compassion" for the crowd. Once more the provision of bread provides a conceptual and semantic link to the Lord's Prayer (6:11). The breaking of bread also calls to mind the Last Supper (26:26). The breaking of bread in 15:36 as in 14:19 may have evoked for Matthew's audience the Eucharist. That this is shared among a large

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<sup>667</sup> For a discussion of the prayers involved, see Rites of Exchange and Communion, p82f.

<sup>668</sup> The word for basket is different in 14:20 (*κοφίνους*) and 15:37 (*σπυρίδας*). Osborne notes that *κοφίνους* can be used to refer to a basket carrying kosher food when travelling and that the distinction in vocabulary may provide a tenuous analogy between the two distinct stories and the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Osborne, *Matthew*, 567, 608. This does suggest an explanation for the two miraculous feeding stories, but the evidence is scant enough to make further assumptions questionable. Notably, however, the ritual details are very similar between the two accounts, so if Gentiles are included in the narrative their ritual obligations, in Matthew's thinking, seem to be the same as the Jewish participants.

crowd resonates with the regular gatherings of the early church communities and the extension of the bread and the size of the crowd evoke thoughts of the common fellowship between far flung early church communities. In 15:32, Jesus' feeding of the crowd is motivated by his compassion. The references to the Lord's Supper found in 14:19 are repeated.<sup>669</sup> Overman describes the actions surrounding the feeding as liturgical noting that Matthew's community would have met for meals and worship.<sup>670</sup> While the story is the report of a miraculous event, Matthew's audience would quite probably have found here a resonance with their own communal meals and the Lord's Supper.<sup>671</sup> This feast symbolises the giving of life in contrast to Herod's deadly feast. While his involved the social elite, the miraculous feeding involves the poor and marginalised.<sup>672</sup> Bread and fish were the staples of poor Galileans, yet Jesus transforms the simple food associated with poverty into a messianic banquet. The fellowship enjoyed indicates friendship and community with Jesus even establishing a new community for this miraculous feast.<sup>673</sup>

Patristic commentaries first proposed that the second feeding event denotes feeding of the Gentiles, particularly as Mark's account not only places the story in Gentile territory (Mark 7:31) but it follows two incidents in which table fellowship conventions are altered and Gentiles are included (Mark 7:1-30). Moreover the language used to refer to 'guests' is similar to the references to Gentiles in Eph 2:13-17.<sup>674</sup> This however makes it more striking that Matthew removes the language of Mark 8:3 in Matt 15:32. The previous pericope has Jesus reiterating his opinion borne out by his instruction in 10:5 that he was sent only to Israel and not Gentiles (15-24). In Matthew the interaction with the Gentiles in chapter 15 is clearly portrayed as exceptional, as Jesus does not instruct his disciples to reach out to the Gentiles until his instruction at the very end of the gospel in 28:19.<sup>675</sup>

Miraculous feedings also appear in Exod 16:11-36, Num 11 and 2 Kgs 4:42-44. Matthew's accounts describe the level of need experienced by the crowd and Jesus' compassion about their 'primal' needs, with resonance to Exod 16 and wilderness

<sup>669</sup> Luz, *Matthew 8-20*. 345

<sup>670</sup> Overman, *Crisis*. 218.

<sup>671</sup> Luz, *Matthew 8-20*. 314-315

<sup>672</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 305.

<sup>673</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 393. Osborne, *Matthew*. 569.

<sup>674</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. 181.

<sup>675</sup> Ibid. 181-182.

feeding.<sup>676</sup> In addition to the calling, the miraculous feedings of manna while Moses was leading the Israelites in the desert, this feeding offers an anticipation of the messianic banquet (see also 1QSa II 11-21, where the Messiah joins with the community).<sup>677</sup> The singular mountain in verse 29 symbolises an eschatological age in the oracles of Isa 2:2-3 and Mic 4:1-2. This significance is shared with the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus was the conduit for God's revelation through his words and he is, in ch 14 and 15, the conduit of God's power through his deeds.<sup>678</sup>

The order to recline on the grass calls to mind the reclining at feasts and foreshadows the scale of the feast about to take place. The feast of plenty is in accordance with the satisfaction of all hunger in Matthew 5:6.<sup>679</sup> Banquets expressing unity through religious identity and symbolising divine provision appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS VI 4-5, 1QSa II 11-22).<sup>680</sup> However, the simplicity of the meal precludes a literal representation of the Messianic banquet.<sup>681</sup> Carter suggests that the disciples' failing in 14:15 is in looking to commerce to supply needs rather than Jesus, and that the second feeding emphasises God's continued provision for his people.<sup>682</sup> The feeding looks forward to God's future kingdom in which all good things are provided in abundance.<sup>683</sup>

## 5. 22:1-14 – Parable of the wedding feast

Matthew 22:1-14 is a parable about a wedding banquet. This banquet is representative of the kingdom of heaven (v2). In vv 2-3 a king prepares a wedding banquet for his son and sends servants to summon the guests who have already been invited. They refused to come. He sends further servants with enticing descriptions of the food on offer asking them to come to enjoy the food that has been prepared (v4). Some of the invited guests ignore the invitation instead continuing with their work,

<sup>676</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 8-20. 311. Carter, *Margins*, 307.

<sup>677</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 369-370.

<sup>678</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. 180.

<sup>679</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 566.

<sup>680</sup> Overman, *Crisis*. 218.

<sup>681</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. 166.

<sup>682</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 393. Carter, *Margins*, 306-307.

<sup>683</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 307-308, 326.

while the rest kill the servants (vv5-6). The king sends his army to exact vengeance (v7). The king instructs his servants to invite anyone from the streets, whether good or bad, to fill the wedding hall instead of the guests who are described as underserving (vv8-10). One guest is not wearing wedding clothes, and when he cannot respond to the king's question why, the king instructs his servants to bind him and throw him outside in to the darkness (vv11-14). The parable is usually attributed to Q and is paralleled in Luke 14:15-24. Luke 14:16-24 provides a parallel to 22:2-10 but the differences are so significant as to rule out a common written source. Verses 2-10 continue the theme of substitution with the invited losing their chance to attend and being replaced.<sup>684</sup> Verses 11-14 are uniquely Lukan.<sup>685</sup>

Matthew 22:1-14, being a parable, cannot be expected to provide a historical account of a feast. However the features that are not clearly theologically driven offer some helpful, potentially informative, details. Jones demonstrates with reference to the social setting of the parables which incorporate contemporary power structures and social position that while the parables cannot be divorced from their cultural setting<sup>686</sup> Therefore the parables can – with caution – be considered to be representative of attitudes and practices described within them, if only in the broadest sense. The most basic of these is that a wedding would provide an appropriate occasion for the throwing of a banquet. The Jewish custom was to have wedding celebrations over several days. The wedding feast is implicitly continued over several days according to the Jewish custom of the time.<sup>687</sup> The combination of animals slaughtered is similar to 2 Sam 6:13 and 1 Kgs 1:9.<sup>688</sup> Tobit 4:12-13 has the father of the groom in charge of organising the wedding and the king in the parable organises the marriage feast in his paternal capacity.<sup>689</sup>

Eschatologically, the marriage feast may be an innovation, but Jewish tradition presents the concept of a future, eschatological banquet in the age to come.<sup>690</sup> Marriage

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<sup>684</sup> Nalpathilchira, J. "Everything is Ready: Come to the Marriage Banquet": *The Parable of the Invitation to the Royal Marriage Banquet (Matt. 22,1-14) in the Context of Matthew's Gospel*. Rome: Gregorian Biblical Press, 2012. 23.

<sup>685</sup> Luz, *Matthew 21-28*. 47

<sup>686</sup> Jones, I. H. *The Matthean Parable: A Literary and Historical Commentary*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.140-141.

<sup>687</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 170. Nalpathilchira, "Everything is Ready" 139.

<sup>688</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 435.

<sup>689</sup> Nalpathilchira, "Everything is Ready" 129-130.

<sup>690</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 798. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*. 52

is a common prophetic metaphor for the covenant between God and Israel (Hos 1-3, Jer 3:1-10, Ezek 16:8-63).<sup>691</sup> Revelation 19:9 describes followers of Jesus as wedding guests. Feasting throughout the Hebrew Bible symbolises participation in God's plan (Exod 12, 16, Ps 78:23-25, Prov 9:1-2, Isa 55:1-3). Participation in eating indicates participation in a relationship, dedication to God, exploration of God's ways, and divine provision. Eating in Matthew is consistently a divine gift showing goodness and justice, with the pointed inclusion of the marginalised (6:25-34, 7:7-11, 10:9-10, 14:13-21, 15:32-39, 16:8-10).<sup>692</sup>

The banquet is also planned in advance and guests are invited (v2, 4 and 8). Chan-Hie Kim claims that the issuing of oral invitations was conventional.<sup>693</sup> The double invitation reflects customs attested across the Middle East over many centuries, though there is no first century evidence.<sup>694</sup> The invitation was issued initially in advance of the event to gauge attendance and a further invitation follows when the meal is planned.<sup>695</sup> The two separate groups of slaves sent to issue invitations is a common ancient convention, as preparations were sufficiently detailed and time-consuming as to make it impossible to issue invitations with specific dates at this initial stage.<sup>696</sup> Slaves appear in several parables in Matthew in roles of considerable responsibility, reflecting their position as valued and trusted members of the household.<sup>697</sup> Verse 7 may serve as a bizarre disruption to the parable's chronology but unless a literal antecedent is presupposed, the anomaly has little impact on the message of the parable.<sup>698</sup>

The first meal is most likely an early meal in the day, such as lunch, marking the beginning of the feasting before the wedding was celebrated in the evening. This meal would signal the beginning of several days of feasting. Nalpathilchira argues that the earliness of the meal would allow guests with conflicting obligations to be present for part of the festival, before returning to their business. Therefore had the invited guests in verse 5 had conflicting obligations (something which is not at all made explicit in the

<sup>691</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 434.

<sup>692</sup> Ibid.

<sup>693</sup> Chan-Hie Kim, "The Papyrus Invitation," *JBL* 94 [1975] 391

<sup>694</sup> Later Rabbinic commentary on Lamentations (*Midrash Rabbah Lam.* 4.2) claims that the convention of double invitations was so ingrained that no citizen of Jerusalem would dream of attending a banquet without a second invitation. Cf. K. E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant; and Through Peasant Eyes: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables of Luke*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 94-95.

<sup>695</sup> Nalpathilchira, "Everything is Ready" 135-137.

<sup>696</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 798-799.

<sup>697</sup> Nalpathilchira, "Everything is Ready" 133.

<sup>698</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 21-28. 54

parable) the nature of the feasts would allow them to join the celebration and honour their commitments. The impolite refusal of the first invitation makes the second a gesture of magnanimity in the face of humiliation.<sup>699</sup> The king takes care to promote the most appealing aspects of the feast with his final magnanimous invitation.<sup>700</sup> That refusal to appear at a banquet to which one has been invited is an affront finds support in the writings of Pliny (*Ep.* 1.15). There he expresses anger at a guest's failure to keep an accepted invitation.<sup>701</sup> Assuming a patron-client relationship, nonattendance does not seem to be an option. The guests are not only the political elite, but they would be clients; refusing the invitation is to snub the allegiance owed to the patron.<sup>702</sup> This is especially the case if the guests were directly subordinate to the king (in 2 Sam 10:4 the refusal of the king's invitation equals rebellion). The shaming of the king as a result of these refusals explains why the destruction of v7 should not seem like too much of an overreaction.<sup>703</sup>

Matthew's version turns the banquet into a marriage feast and adds all the violence as a provocation for destruction.<sup>704</sup> The king does not resort to violence until his expected guests harm his slaves.<sup>705</sup> Matthew's Jesus has invited the religious establishment but, having been rejected, accepts the embrace of the common people.<sup>706</sup> The lack of religious resonance to the invited guests' refusal makes it difficult to press for a literal interpretation of 22:1-14 as an analogy for any one faction. There is a case to be made that the first invited guests represent Israel while the guests from the street are the Gentiles, though again there is nothing specifically "Israelite" about their refusal.<sup>707</sup> Luz proposes the more convincing thesis that the two groups of guests represent the rich and the poor. This is supported by the activities of the invited guests in v 5 where the guests are property owners and business people while the new guests in v 9 are rounded up from the streets.<sup>708</sup>

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<sup>699</sup> Nalpathilchira, "Everything is Ready" 137.

<sup>700</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 799.

<sup>701</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 21-28. 52

<sup>702</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 434.

<sup>703</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 799.

<sup>704</sup> Overman, *Crisis*. 300.

<sup>705</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 435.

<sup>706</sup> Jeremias, *Parables*, 180, Luz, *Matthew* 21-28. 50-51. Cf. Mounce, *Matthew*. 205-207.

<sup>707</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 21-28. 51

<sup>708</sup> Ibid.

A comparison with Luke's version of the parable shows that both receive a common replacement motif from their common source. Matthew's redaction however brings this into sharper focus.<sup>709</sup> Luke 14:15-24 parallels the first half of Matthew's parable with some small but significant differences. In Luke 14:21, the slave returns and recounts the guests' refusal to attend, which makes the king angry. However, with no parallel to Matt 22:7, it is only Matthew's king that turns to violence. Luke 14:21 notes the king's anger but he moves on immediately to the replacement guests. Matthew's version emphasises the complete and permanent rejection of the ungrateful invited guests, with these people eradicated before they are replaced. This demonstrates that in Matthew the consequences of rejecting the invitation are far worse than missing out on a party; acceptance is the only way to avoid destruction.

Luke's interpretation in Luke 14:21 specifies the poor and disabled among the replacement guests. Matthew frequently contains a motif of replacement in which a group of those called, but unfaithful, are replaced by an unexpected, but ultimately responsive, group (in parables in 21:28-32, 21:33-44, 24:45-51, also 3:9-10, 8:10-13, 15:12-14, 19:30).<sup>710</sup> The parables in which the God figure deals harshly with those who are disobedient introduces insecurity for those who do not keep God's Law but it also establishes God's provision and justice as a constant.<sup>711</sup>

The gathered guests in 22:10 provide a conceptual, as well as semantic, link to the synagogue or Christian fellowship.<sup>712</sup> The rule of heaven is evoked in practical terms through feasting and fellowship. Those who have already been invited to the feast have rejected the invitation. Unexpected and unconventional guests are therefore invited in their place.<sup>713</sup> The extension of the invitation includes those of lower social status. Sirach 40:28-30 describes the street crossings as a location for begging.<sup>714</sup> The sharing of table fellowship becomes a means of extending an invitation to discipleship; described by Nalpathilchira as 'a practical parable'.<sup>715</sup> Accepting this invitation to table fellowship expresses acceptance of the invitation not only to lunch but to

<sup>709</sup> Jones, *Parable*, 404-405.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid. 114.

<sup>711</sup> Ibid. 139.

<sup>712</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 438.

<sup>713</sup> Nalpathilchira, "Everything is Ready" 349.

<sup>714</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 436.

<sup>715</sup> Nalpathilchira, "Everything is Ready" 340.

transformation.<sup>716</sup> Objections to the manner of eating or company signify resistance to Gods' order (cf. 9:10-13, 11:18-19, 12:1-8, 15:1-20).<sup>717</sup>

The text of 22:1-14 contains two separate anecdotes but the latter, though distinctly Matthean, is relevant to the earlier section of the parable and contains reinforcement of the replacement motif.<sup>718</sup> Verses 11-12 imply that at such an occasion a guest would be expected to wear special clothes. Verse 11's reference to a wedding garment is unusual as its meaning is obscure. Jeremias interprets that as a clean garment as would be typical (cf. Rev 19:8 and Isaiah 61:10).<sup>719</sup> It is possible that the clean garments could represent the results of living out the teachings of Jesus with clean clothing representing the removal of debt (cf. Zech 3:3-5; Rev 3:4-5; Ecc 9:8).<sup>720</sup> 1 Enoch 62:14-16 connects a special garment with a heavenly banquet. Charette believes the garment to be a metaphor for righteousness.<sup>721</sup>

The unrealistic circumstance in which a guest pulled off the street is criticised for not properly preparing for the banquet is confusing but of little consequence for the meaning of Matthew's parable.<sup>722</sup> White or at least clean clothing was expected at such a feast. A ruler may even have provided such garments (there is some weak evidence that kings provided wedding clothing)<sup>723</sup> and the failure of one guest to wear wedding clothes indicates an insult by refusing to wear clothes provided, which would seem more plausible, even in the less likely circumstance, for a literal reading of this confrontation after an invitation issued at short notice. In any case the failure to make the effort is taken as a great insult.<sup>724</sup>

The implication of 22:12 is that it is surprising to find someone improperly attired at the feast. It indicates that it must have been somewhat conventional for attendants to vet the incoming guests.<sup>725</sup> A king would have appointed people to ensure that the guests were conducting themselves according to the rules of etiquette and would

<sup>716</sup> Ibid. 341.

<sup>717</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 434.

<sup>718</sup> Jones, *Parable*, 409.

<sup>719</sup> Jeremias, *Parables*, 187, Luz, *Matthew 21-28*. 55-56.

<sup>720</sup> Mounce, *Matthew*. 206. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*. 56

<sup>721</sup> Charette, *Recompense*. 149.

<sup>722</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 439.

<sup>723</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 524.

<sup>724</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 802.

<sup>725</sup> Ibid. 803.

have punished those who failed to live up to those standards.<sup>726</sup> Indeed, the host of a banquet may have left the guests to eat alone and rarely made an appearance. This would explain how the king suddenly noticed that one of his guests was not properly attired.<sup>727</sup>

The wedding garment is integral to the replacement motif and not an ‘optional extra’: the garment introduces a specifically moral component to the issue of inclusion and exclusion.<sup>728</sup> The incident of the man without the wedding garments may reflect a concern for the preservation of goodness while the gospel incorporates those described as sinners and demonstrates a concern to incorporate an understanding of the personal moral imperative.<sup>729</sup> The broadening of the invitation and the inclusion of both bad and good does not indicate that judgement is annulled. Inclusion does not constitute approval or invite abdication of obligations any more than correct ritual performance eliminates the need for moral adherence to the principles of God.<sup>730</sup> The wedding feast reiterates the Matthean replacement motif in the context of a feast at which guests were honoured to be included, thus making the rejection of the invitation more surprising and insulting. As a metaphor it encapsulates the failure of those given priority to respond appropriately and the unlikely choice of replacements from all quarters, as well as the wedding garment incident indicating the continued standards required for maintenance of this privilege.

## 6. 23:6 – the place of honour at feasts

Matthew 23:1-7 is one of the seven woes directed towards the Pharisees and teachers of the law.<sup>731</sup> Jesus describes the many ways in which he considers the Pharisees to be self-seeking and hypocritical, motivated not by their integrity and devotion to God but by the adulation of others and to shore up their reputation. Mark 12:38-40 is the source text, and in v39 the same criticism appears. Mark 12 contains a

<sup>726</sup> Schottroff, *Parables*. 40-41.

<sup>727</sup> Jeramias, *Parables*.187. Gundry, *Matthew*. 439.

<sup>728</sup> Jones, *Parable*, 409.

<sup>729</sup> Ibid. 74.

<sup>730</sup> Ibid. 154-161.

<sup>731</sup> For a discussion of the synagogue accusation, see p84.

series of confrontations with and statements about the scribes, Sadducees and Pharisees (many of which are directly paralleled in Matt 22): vv1-12 tell the parable of the Wicked Tenants, and the authorities know that Jesus is speaking against them (v12); vv13-17 contain the confrontation over Roman taxation (found in Matt 22:15-22); vv18-27 contain the Sadducean question about marriage at the resurrection (Matt 22:23-33); vv 28-34 describe an exchange between Jesus and a scribe about commandments (Matt 22:34-40, where the scribe is portrayed considerably less favourably); and in vv35-37 Jesus critiques scribal teaching (Matt 22:41-46). However, there is nothing similar in volume to Matthew 23's sustained diatribe against the authorities. The transposed but otherwise identical text of Matt 23:6 places the content of Mark 12:39 within this lengthy critique.

Neusner attributes the vilification of the Pharisees in the Gospels to their status as the origins of their 'rabbinical heirs' at Yavneh; they are portrayed as the primary Jewish opponents of Jesus because they are the primary Jewish competition to the early church.<sup>732</sup> Verse 6 proposes that one of their acts of self-glorification is their enthusiasm for accepting the place of honour at feasts. This claim suggests that the host throwing a banquet could honour certain guests by seating them in a privileged position. This claim also implies that the Pharisees were of sufficient social standing that those of relative importance in the rural Galilean society would not only invite them to banquets but would consider them to be honoured guests. The place of honour at a banquet would be beside the host and sitting here would confer the greatest honour.<sup>733</sup> Such meals would provide a visible badge of social status as everything about the experience of the feast would be superior: the table ware would be finer and they would receive the most and best food and drink.<sup>734</sup> Places of prominence in public would also lead to prestige.<sup>735</sup> Luz notes that banquets would come with strict conventions about seating based on seniority and social position. The highest seat being reserved for priests may be found in 1QS VI 8-9.<sup>736</sup> Luke 14:7-11 contains a warning not to seek the place of honour at a banquet, partly due to the potential for embarrassment if someone senior were also

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<sup>732</sup> Neusner, *From Politics to Piety*, 68.

<sup>733</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*, 457. Carter, *Margins*, 453.

<sup>734</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 453.

<sup>735</sup> Turner, *Matthew*, 547.

<sup>736</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 21-28, 104.

invited, but also with an exhortation to take the lowest place out of humility. Matthew 23:6 condemns the Pharisees for seeking this honour.

## 7. 26:17-29 – the Last Supper

Matthew 26:17-29 contains the preparations for, and an account of, the Last Supper.<sup>737</sup> Verse 17 places the meal on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Matthew may be using the Feast of Unleavened Bread as a loose designation for the festival beginning with Passover. This resolves the apparent inconsistency with the chronology of the feast itself and is consistent with other ancient Jewish sources (cf. Josephus *Ant.* 2.317).<sup>738</sup> The fact that Jesus chooses a feast to represent his forthcoming passion is in accord with the number of references to table fellowship found in Matthew's gospel. The preparation described in 26:19 would have involved taking a lamb to be slaughtered, preparing elements for the feast, i.e. bread, wine and the bitter herbs, and preparing the room.<sup>739</sup> Jesus intends to celebrate Passover by eating with his disciples. This affirms Jesus' orthopraxy in the celebration of this feast. The disciples ask Jesus where he wishes to celebrate Passover. Verses 18-19 concern the finding of a suitable location, instructed by Jesus. The Last Supper was eaten in Jerusalem like a Passover meal. Verse 20's setting in the evening is fitting given the instruction of Exod 12.8 which instructs the eating of the Passover meal after dark.<sup>740</sup> The time of the feast is after sunset and most ordinary large meals were eaten in late afternoon.<sup>741</sup> Verse 20 suggests that reclining at the table is the appropriate manner of eating in this situation. Reclining would take place on *triclinia*.<sup>742</sup>

Matthew modifies the institution of the Lord's Supper in Mark 14:22-25 by adding imperatives "eat" and "drink" which may reflect Matthew's audiences liturgy.<sup>743</sup>

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<sup>737</sup> For the setting and calendrical aspects of this rite, see the discussions on pp50-51.

<sup>738</sup> Ibid. 353.

<sup>739</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 964.

<sup>740</sup> Ibid. 359.

<sup>741</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 963. For a fuller discussion of the rite as a Passover celebration and the ambiguity of its temporal setting see the discussion on the Lord's Supper as Calendrical Ritual.

<sup>742</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 624. Osborne, *Matthew*. 964.

<sup>743</sup> Luz, *Matthew* 21-28. 364-365

It may also reflect Matthew's wishes as to how the text was to be understood: the community was to emulate this performance and Matthew makes clear to his listeners that this story provides a direct model for their own practice. Matthew shortens the parallel found in Mark 14:12-16, leaving only Jesus' instructions and their carrying out.<sup>744</sup> As Matthew adapts Mark's account for the most part, and changes details, these changes (the imperatives to eat and drink, the mention of the forgiveness of sins in v 28 and Jesus addition of 'with you' in verse 29) may reflect his community's liturgical practice and understanding of the significance of this practice in their understanding.<sup>745</sup>

The significance of the bread in the Lord's Supper comes not from the properties of bread itself but from the significance of the act of breaking and distribution.<sup>746</sup> This recalls the miraculous feedings of chapters 14 and 15 and provides a semantic link to 14:19 and 15:36. The single cup is clearly important in Matthew's account. The unity of the participants symbolises the unification of the disciples through Jesus' death and by extension the unification of the early Christ-following communities achieved most profoundly by common celebration of the Lord's Supper.<sup>747</sup> That it is the breaking of bread rather than the bread, and the cup rather than the wine it contains, that are the active features of the rite demonstrates that it is in the performance of the action i.e. eating and drinking that creates unity and allow the participants to share in Jesus' death rather than the elements themselves.<sup>748</sup>

With 22:1-14 having established the concept of an eschatological feast Matthew emphasises the fellowship with Jesus enjoyed in the Lord's Supper and that those who participate in the Lord's Supper may have an expectation of somehow sharing in the "Christ event" and enjoying the benefits of forgiveness afforded by Jesus' sacrifice.<sup>749</sup> Matthew's account of the Passover setting is truncated, even more than Mark's, and it is striking that with Matthew's sophisticated understanding of, and detailed attention to, the specifics of Jewish ritual that this meal is not instituted as a Passover meal. There is certainly no indication that they celebrated it only annually.<sup>750</sup>

<sup>744</sup> Ibid. 351-352

<sup>745</sup> Sim, *Gospel*, 142.

<sup>746</sup> Luz, *Matthew 21-28*. 377-379

<sup>747</sup> Ibid. 379-381

<sup>748</sup> Ibid. 381

<sup>749</sup> Luz, *Matthew 21-28*. 382-383

<sup>750</sup> Ibid. 383

Verse 23 implies that Jesus and the disciples were eating from common bowls and indicates the measure of intimacy afforded by the sharing of this common meal.<sup>751</sup> The dipping into the bowl is an allusion to the communal bowl of *haroseth* sauce or relish paste for the dipping of green vegetables as a customary component of the Passover meal.<sup>752</sup> The common bowl emphasises the shared fellowship and therefore the sense of betrayal.<sup>753</sup> Gundry suggests that Jesus' reference to the disciple dipping his hand in the common bowl does not signify the ambiguity over the betrayer's identity, as is obviously assumed by the disciples, but may imply a temporal event – Judas dips his hand in concurrently with Jesus which could imply a failure of etiquette in neglecting to follow protocol or waiting for their leader to dip first (cf. 1QSa 2.11-22).<sup>754</sup> In v 25 there is a juxtaposition of insider and outsider status for Judas. The reaching in to the bowl in 26:24, along with presence at the meal denote full inclusion in the community of disciples. However the use of the title Rabbi rather than Lord places Judas as an outsider; the title is the title used by Pharisees and non-disciples to refer to Jesus (9:11, 12:38, 17:24, 19:16, 22:16, 22:36).<sup>755</sup> It is therefore all the more interesting that Matthew follows Mark in failing to clarify whether Judas remained for the Lord's Supper, while Luke reverses the Lord's Supper and Jesus' revelation of his forthcoming betrayal, making it unambiguous that the betrayer is present for the Eucharist but that his status is unknown during its performance.<sup>756</sup> Verse 29 looks to the table fellowship to be enjoyed at the Messianic banquet while the forgiveness of sins is introduced as something partly conveyed to those experiencing the fellowship of the Last Supper.<sup>757</sup>

The Last Supper provides a climactic realisation of the teaching on feasting throughout Matthew. Matthew's Jesus describes those called coming together in eschatological table fellowship, and in 26:17-29 this particular feast embodies the sharing in his passion. It confirms Jesus' participation in festival rites; Matthew does not portray a Jesus at odds with his ritual context. The Passover context forms the basis of this new rite in the life of Matthew's community, with the instructive nature of Jesus'

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<sup>751</sup> Mounce, *Matthew*. 240.

<sup>752</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 625. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*. 359-360

<sup>753</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 527.

<sup>754</sup> Ibid.

<sup>755</sup> Luz, *Matthew 21-28*. 360-361

<sup>756</sup> Ibid.

<sup>757</sup> Sim, *Gospel*, 142.

dialogue linking this narrative to ritual praxis in the life of the audience. Just as the disciples become part of Jesus' narrative, so the Matthean community can become part of the table fellowship at the Last Supper through the same ritual actions.

### III. Fasting

#### 1. 4:1-2 – Fasting of Jesus prior to temptation

In Matt 4:1-2 Jesus fasts in the desert. According to v1 the spirit led Jesus in to the desert in order that he would be tempted after a long period of fasting. The temptation of v3 is in his ability to turn stones into bread, with further temptation taking place on a mountain. Verse 2 establishes that after a long period of fasting he was hungry.

Luke 4:2 describes Jesus' fast as abstention from food – he *ate* nothing. This may suggest that fasting could entail non-consumption of food, but not water, which may be the case here. It is also possible that fasting may only be a daytime activity.<sup>758</sup> In 4:1-2 the purpose of fasting seems to be the very practical inducement of hunger. The resulting hunger ensures that the experience of temptation in v 3 is genuine.<sup>759</sup>

It recalls the forty years of Israel's desert wanderings.<sup>760</sup> The forty days and forty nights is found in Exod 34:28 but the number forty in itself is evocative of themes relevant to fasting and to Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. The flood (Gen 7:4) is an event of new creation according to Carter. The forty years in the wilderness in Exod 16:35 denotes the presence of God and faithfulness in a time of trial (Deut 2:7, 8:2-3, and 29:4-5). Ezekiel and Jonah predict or prefigure judgement and destruction over periods of forty days (Ezek 4:6, Jonah 3:4).<sup>761</sup> The length of the fast is the same as that of Moses (Exod 34:28, Deut 9:9) and Elijah (1 Kgs 19:8). Osborne considers the reference to the history of Israel as a means of providing contrast between Jesus and Israel.<sup>762</sup> Several trial periods or punishments involve periods of time defined by the number forty. (Gen 7:4, Ezek 4:6, Jonah 3:4)<sup>763</sup> Moses fasted for the same period before receiving the Law on Mount Sinai and this fast also takes place on a mountain. The testing takes place after the fast when Jesus becomes hungry rather than during it.<sup>764</sup>

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<sup>758</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 126-127.

<sup>759</sup> Davies, M. *Matthew*. (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993). 44.

<sup>760</sup> Ibid.

<sup>761</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 108.

<sup>762</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 132.

<sup>763</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 127.

<sup>764</sup> Ibid.

Jesus; wilderness experience recalls Israel's desert experience but he does not complain against God as the Israelites did in Exod 16:3-8.<sup>765</sup> In his fast in the wilderness Jesus experiences what Israel experienced. Meyer suggests that Jesus himself is becoming Israel in assuming the role of son in the place of Israel.<sup>766</sup> The fact that Jesus fasts affirms the practice of fasting in Matthew. It helps to contextualise the later criticisms of those who fast for attention, clarifying that fasting is not in itself a flawed practice. Jesus provides an exemplar for those who might undertake fasting, withstanding the trials of hunger despite devilish provocation. The fasting is not only a rite encouraging communion with God, but in 4:1 the fast is prompted by the spirit.

## 2. Teaching on fasting

### a. 6:16-18 – instructions on fasting

In 6:16, in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew describes the practices of the hypocrites who advertise their deprivation during periods of fasting. Jesus describes the recognition as their only reward. Instead in vv17-18 he instructs his followers not to make it obvious when they were fasting as God will reward their secret fasts, not done with an expectation of human recognition. Verse 17 offers instructions for fasting indicating that fasting in itself is not condemned but only fasting for the sake of image. This is all M material, and that Matthew decided to include this instruction suggests that fasting was an issue of ongoing relevance to his audience.

Presupposed in 6:16-18 is that fasting was an accepted part of ritual practice (cf. Tacitus, *Ann.5.4*, and Suetonius ,*Augustus 76.2*)<sup>767</sup> who describe fasting as typically Jewish). Elsewhere in the New Testament it is associated with prayer (Matt 4:2, Luke 2:37, Acts 10:30, 1 Cor 7:5).<sup>768</sup> Mourning and prayer are also found in 1 Sam 31:13, 1 Chron 10:12 and 2 Macc 13:12. Individual prayer and fasting appear in 2 Chron 20:1-12 and Tob 12:8.<sup>769</sup> Fasting is consistently associated with atonement, healing and exorcism. The prophets condemned fasting when it is not accompanied by justice (Isa

<sup>765</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 108.

<sup>766</sup> Meier, *Matthew*, 29.

<sup>767</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 170.

<sup>768</sup> Arguably also Mark 9:29 in some versions. Betz, *Sermon*. 417

<sup>769</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*. 110.

58:3-14, Jer 14:12).<sup>770</sup> Fasting in Matthew is a concretised signal of reliance on God. As the fasting in question is fasting undertaken privately then the maintenance of personal appearance precludes the fasting becoming an exhibition of piety.<sup>771</sup>

The fasting that Jesus addresses is personal fasting for the reasons of prayer. Jesus provides an antithetical comparison to the Pharisees in which the disciples' faithfulness can be measured according to their efforts to be unlike the Pharisees.<sup>772</sup> Betz suggests that Jesus' problem is with the traditional fasting, possibly denying its efficacy. Indeed Jesus response to criticism in 9:15 lends credence to this. Luz however sees the criticism as primarily concerned with motive rather than practice.<sup>773</sup> The potential motives for fasting are varied therefore the purpose is somewhat nebulous. Prophetic criticisms of motives for fasting testify to its problematic nature due to its loosely defined ritual purpose (Isa 58:1-14, Jer 14:12, Joel 2:15, Zech 8:16-19).

Fasting was required on the Day of Atonement and at the celebration of a new year. The present tense of fasting in 6:16 implies ongoing activity. In addition the "hypocrites" fasted every Monday and Thursday, according to *Did. 8:1*.<sup>774</sup> Traditionally fasting was accompanied by the rending of garments or the wearing of sackcloth and ashes. The disfiguring could refer to the rejection of basic hygiene practices or covering the face with cloth or ashes (cf. Jer 14:4, 1 Macc 3:47).<sup>775</sup> The implication in 6:16 is that they make a special effort to be seen as miserable and the word play of verse 16 implies that they make themselves unrecognisable in order that their extra effort is recognised.<sup>776</sup> Fasting in itself is not conspicuous and Jesus urges everyone who fasts to fast in this spirit.<sup>777</sup>

Heeding 6:17 requires an effort to look normal while fasting, not seeking recognition from others. It suggests that this is a personal activity.<sup>778</sup> The external signs accompanying fasting are found in Dan 9:3 and Jon 3:5 while prophets criticised the practice of fasting without adjusting one's unrighteous behaviour (Isa 58: 3-7, Jer

<sup>770</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 170.

<sup>771</sup> Meier, *Matthew*, 63.

<sup>772</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*, 110.

<sup>773</sup> Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 362. Betz, *Sermon*, 418

<sup>774</sup> Gundry, *Matthew*, 111.

<sup>775</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 170-171.

<sup>776</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 237. Gundry, *Matthew*, 111.

<sup>777</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 171.

<sup>778</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*, 237.

14:11-12, Zech 7:4-14). Fasting could be a voluntarily undertaken practice for reasons of communion with the divine, as in the fasts of Moses (Exod 34:28) and Elijah (1 Kgs 19:8), who both enjoyed revelatory experiences.<sup>779</sup> Fasting should be worshipful but this behaviour transforms it to mere theatricality.<sup>780</sup> Fasting is not condemned, but attention-seeking forms should be rejected so as not to undermine the practice. Fasting itself is acceptable; it is an act of personal and private devotion sometimes related to prayer. However, it is not to be undertaken for attention or to invite the admiration of others. Visible signs of fasting-induced misery are not the point, and are condemned for being obstructive and undermining the function of fasting.

### b. 9:14-15 – Why the disciples do not fast

Chapter 9:14-17 recounts a question about fasting posed by the disciples of John the Baptist. In v14 they ask Jesus why they fast and the Pharisees fast but Jesus' disciples do not fast. Jesus' response in v15 is that the guests of a bridegroom cannot mourn while the bridegroom is there. The reference to mourning implies that fasting was seen as a sign of mourning, a significant association also found throughout the Hebrew Bible. An interesting detail from the Talmudic tractate *Semahot* (11.6) is that if a funeral procession and a wedding procession should cross paths, the funeral procession should give way to the wedding, giving priority to the living.<sup>781</sup> Jesus in life is cause for celebration.

Fasting provides a tangible distinction between Jesus' disciples and both the followers of John the Baptist and the Pharisees. While Jesus' disciples may be somewhat related to these groups they are clearly different and this debate articulates one of their boundaries.<sup>782</sup> Leviticus 16:34 and Num 29:7-11 command fasting as part of the celebration of the Day of Atonement and it is unlikely that they did not observe this fasting. Luke 18:12 alludes to a biweekly fast that was voluntary, but commonly

<sup>779</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 190.

<sup>780</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 171.

<sup>781</sup> McCane, *Roll Back the Stone*, 32.

<sup>782</sup> Overman, *Crisis*. 131-132.

observed.<sup>783</sup> The question asked by the disciples of John acknowledges that Jesus was able to generate his own scheme of ritual practice.<sup>784</sup> Their distinct practices emphasise the discontinuity, however subtle, between the disciples and other groups.

Fasting functions as a way of demonstrating repentance for sin to avert divine retribution, exemplified by the Day of Atonement.<sup>785</sup> Jesus probably observed the Day of Atonement fast, as the fact that Jesus had taught on fasting in 6:16-18 suggests that he did not condemn fasting in all situations.<sup>786</sup> Still, knowledge of the non-fasting disciples could have posed a theoretical problem for those later followers who wished to practise fasting. The shift of emphasis in Matthew's redaction of Mark 2:19-20, from the non-fasting to the future potential fasting, allows for this tension to be explained and diffused for his audience.<sup>787</sup> The alteration is minor: Matt 9:15 adopts only the first half of Mark 2:19 and all of Mark 2:20. However, as Mark 2:19 reiterates the inappropriateness of fasting while the bridegroom is present, this halves the length of the reference to the present in Matt 9:15. Instead of dwelling on the "present" presence of Jesus, Matthew's version is more balanced and moves on swiftly to claim that fasting will once again become acceptable.

God is described as the bridegroom of Israel in Isaiah 54:5-6, 62:5, Jeremiah 3:14 and Hosea 2:16-20.<sup>788</sup> The bridegroom's regular obligation to recite the *Shema* is suspended during wedding celebrations in *m. Ber.* 2.5.<sup>789</sup> From this one might suppose that other aspects of "normal service" could be disrupted during the bridegroom's period of celebration, such as an impulse to fast. Tobit 11:19 describes a weeklong celebration. Fasting symbolised mourning and repentance (fasting upon bereavement: 1 Sam 31:13, 2 Sam 1:12, 1 Chron 10:12; to assuage guilt (of oneself or to intercede on behalf of others): 2 Sam 3:35, Deut 9:18).<sup>790</sup> Fasting is inappropriate because chapters 8 and 9 are celebratory rather than solemn and also because the forgiveness, healing and exorcism that normally constitute the object of fasting are being provided directly by

<sup>783</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 254.

<sup>784</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 222.

<sup>785</sup> Hare, *Matthew*. 103.

<sup>786</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 341.

<sup>787</sup> Van Tilborg, *Leaders*. 116-117

<sup>788</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 342.

<sup>789</sup> Ibid.

<sup>790</sup> Ibid.

Jesus.<sup>791</sup> Matthew 9:15b further suggests that fasting will once again be appropriate when the bridegroom is no longer present. Matthew's inclusion of this instruction without comment clearly suggests that his audience would be familiar with fasting as an accepted part of their ritual life. The reference to Jesus as a bridegroom foreshadows the parable of the wedding feast in 22:1-14. In that parable the presence of the bridegroom should be taken as an invitation to feasting and those who decline the invitation are punished. In connection with the previous story, in which Jesus was criticised for sharing table fellowship with sinners in an apparent feast of celebration, in 9:14-15 the joy of Jesus' presence precludes fasting.<sup>792</sup> Fasting is retained as ritual only in the context in which Jesus' significance is truly understood and after the conclusion of his earthly ministry.<sup>793</sup>

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<sup>791</sup> Carter, *Margins*, 222.

<sup>792</sup> Osborne, *Matthew*. 341.

<sup>793</sup> Turner, *Matthew*. 256.

#### IV: Conclusions

Due to the absence of any non-calendrical feasts in the *Damascus Document*, it is impossible to draw any conclusions about the community's attitude to feasting and fasting without these being compromised by their calendrical nature. Matthew, however, provides several examples of feasts that demonstrate the tendency of feasting to define the in-group by clearly delineating those who are included and those who are not. In particular, the eschatological feast in 8:11 redefines the boundaries to include not only Jews from the Diaspora but Gentiles at the table enjoying table fellowship with the patriarchs. Additionally, 9:10 is a startling subversion of expectations with the Pharisees shocked by Jesus' inclusion of unsavoury characters at his table. It also illustrates attitudes to tax collectors as questionable dining companions. To share table fellowship was an invitation to intimacy that would normally bolster the status of those honoured by an invitation to dine with someone considered to be their superior. Accordingly, Jesus' reputation is called into question when he accepts those held in disdain by the local leaders. Conversely, Herod's company at his feast consists of the elite and highly regarded, but is corrupted to result in the death of John the Baptist, while the Pharisees are criticised for caring about the appearance of status and respect.

Jesus shares his largest feasts with thousands of the poor and marginalised, in an embodiment of Matthew's community prayer for divinely provided sustenance. This inclusion on a grand scale is extended to Matthew's community with the implicit sharing in the Last Supper facilitated by the liturgical echoes in the text. The poor are also the prime beneficiaries of the wedding feast described in Jesus' vivid parable. When the invited guests shun the invitation, despite the feast being ready for them, they lose their place at the table as strangers are invited to come in from the street instead. When those who are called reject the seat to which they are entitled, the unexpected but responsive take their place. The overall theme of Matthew's material on feasting is that God is concerned with more than respectability, and those who have already been invited should be aware that, if they do not comply with God's plan, their privileges may be withdrawn in favour of the most unexpected members of society.

Jesus' fasting brings him into explicit identification with Israel and not only establishes him as the embodiment of the true Israel but provides a narrative

introduction to the giving of the “new law” in the Sermon on the Mount, just as Israel spent time in the desert prior to the giving of the Mosaic law. In Matthew, apart from the fact that Jesus fasts, his teachings on fasting make clear that the practice is acceptable, though fasting to attract attention is dismissed as hypocritical and ineffective. The disciples, however, do not fast, and Jesus explains that his presence is a cause for celebration rather than mourning. Matthew’s inclusion of this material about fasting implies that it was an accepted practice in his audience community, and it was important to have the correct approach.

## CONCLUSION

Once ritual content is identified in these texts, Catherine Bell's typology facilitates the examination of ritual action and, more often the preoccupation of the texts, key ideas of belief and identity through their embodiment in ritual praxis. All ritual activity contained in the *Damascus Document* and Matthew falls into one of the six categories of Bell's typology: calendrical ritual, rites of exchange and communion, political ritual, rites of passage, rites of affliction and rites of feasting and fasting. I have attempted to identify all explicit or clearly implicit instances of scriptural exegesis, particularly relating to the Law, or other textual sources within the descriptions of ritual praxis.

Calendrical ritual regulates society and sets the tone for all other ritual carried out throughout the year. The *Damascus Document* lays out detailed prescriptions about how calendrical ritual is to be observed. Rather than prescribed activity, Sabbath prohibitions mark the Sabbath as a special day dedicated to God through ritual inaction. Sabbath prohibitions are detailed and intensified, in accordance with the tradition of "fences" protecting the commandment from inadvertent transgression. A point of conflict with the mainstream arises through the differing calendars. Matthew does not undertake the work of extending or clarifying specific rules about work but reflects contemporary Sabbath observance. The conflicts about Sabbath observance in Matthew focus on the attitudinal intentions of those who observe ritual, with Sabbath observance a measure of righteousness only where there is no ritual or interpersonal conflict. In Matthew's account of the Eucharist, however, Jesus takes the covenant confirmation rite and, through the employment of its key features and the establishment of a new rite, he infuses his actions with the significance of a covenant, taking its form from the biblical covenant in Exod 24:8. The extensive treatment of Sabbath in both the *Damascus Document* and Matthew demonstrates the fundamental importance of this issue in Jewish society. The fences in the *Damascus Document* are definitely not presented as Scripture but carry authoritative interpretations to be regarded as definitive. Matthew's attitude to the fences is favourable only where it does not result in muddled priorities. The fences are decidedly not authoritative to the same extent as in the *Damascus*

*Document*; this is not the deciding factor in judging an individual's Sabbath observance. In their proper place they can facilitate Sabbath observance.

Both Matthew and the *Damascus Document* demonstrate the way in which biblical literacy contributes to meeting future needs. In this manner, where a situation appropriate for ritual arises, similar occasions in the Hebrew Bible become generative of new forms, lending traditional significance to innovation.

The temple remains a valid locus of ritual for Matthew, even though the temple has been destroyed and its validity refers only to pre-70 participation in the temple cult. In the *Damascus Document* the temple remains relevant in principle, although there is clearly some suspicion about the orthodoxy and, therefore the efficacy, of the temple cult. While both groups in these texts have cause to question the establishment, neither goes so far as to dismiss the legitimacy of the temple. Considerable space in the *Damascus Document* is devoted to concerns that maintain the purity of the temple as a key ritual space. The community does not define itself through opposition to the temple cult or a rejection of its legitimacy requiring replacement or condemnation. Many of the purity instructions in the Damascus document seem to be a direct response to perceived needs in the temple cult such as the caution against Gentile metal implements and the regulations about sacrifice. Guilt or sin offerings, designed to repair the relationship to the divine, and the dedication of firstfruits are intended to maintain a good relationship to God, facilitating rites that keep the lines of communication open.

In Matthew the maintenance of a good relationship through sacrifice is not dismissed but it is noteworthy that the focus of Matthew 5:23-24 is not the actions of sacrificial but human interpersonal relations. This is entirely in keeping with the spirit of restitution commanded in the Law but in stressing the primacy of human relationships Matthew takes a quite different approach. Matthew consistently takes care to demonstrate that the material he received from Mark shows Jesus to be knowledgeable about, and consistent with, the Law. While the *Damascus Document* discusses the practical details of ritual performance, Matthew's concern is the maintenance of healthy relationships between people as well as the maintenance of a right relationship to God.

Matthew is at once strongly affirming of traditional sacrifice and prayer and fairly harsh towards those who fulfil these obligations to attract attention and

admiration. Nor should ritual performed correctly be performed in an attempt to manipulate God through magic. God should be the audience and the object of prayer and sacrifice; doing them for public acclaim undermines the efficacy of these rights and God will not respond. Expecting a reward for properly performed rites of exchange and communion is perfectly acceptable in Matthew. If the rite is performed for public recognition Matthew clarifies that this will be the entirety of the positive outcome; God will not respond further, even though standing and speaking aloud are the conventional actions associated with prayer. The establishment of the Lord's Prayer as a model for collective prayer establishes not only a formula for approaching God but also an ethical statement for the Matthean community. The Lord's Prayer emphasises dependence on divine providence and mutual responsibilities between community members. This example of collective prayer demonstrates humility while Jesus' own prayers reflect his insistence on discretion and humility. Jesus' blessing of and thanksgiving before food is a selective account of this story which calls to mind the distinctive ritual practices of the Matthean community, particularly the action of breaking bread, and includes them implicitly in the generous provision of Jesus. This is perhaps the most vivid demonstration of the way in which narrative ritual content, "performed" through its delivery in an oral context, can transform prose into an expression of community identity.

The political ritual in the *Damascus Document* reflects and bolsters the authority structures of the community. It also demonstrates the distinctive character of the community through its legal framework, which differs from and adds to the national authority structures represented in the priesthood and monarchy. Community gatherings provide a representation of unity and separation from those excluded. The authority of priests is affirmed but they are only invited to exercise their authority to a limited extent, in clearly defined situations, while educated laity assume the greatest part of the teaching authority. This would be consistent with Boccaccini's theory that dissenting priests led the movement, and the role of priests from other factions was constrained. The role of the Overseer is not found in the Hebrew Bible but is of central importance as a guide and secretary. The process of admission to the community involves the swearing of oaths which bring the new member into the covenant and subject them to the resulting process should they break their oath. Becoming part of the covenant

requires an affirmation of the community as the vehicle of correct interpretation and an endorsement of the authority structures under threat of expulsion. This is a move towards the exclusivity that would later characterise the sectarian groups that grew from the parent movement.

Additional oaths, only to be made where leaders are witnesses, further emphasise the submission of the members to a system in which they are subordinate to leaders who administer divine justice. All relationships are regulated by oaths and the judgement of the leaders, whose endorsement is required to legitimise any oath where disputes may arise. Their presence is commanded to the extent that it becomes an offence to compel another member to swear an oath in any context where the judges and Overseer cannot witness it. Safeguards ensure the protection of members from corrupt or vexatious accusation; only fully initiated members are considered competent to accuse, while any witnesses must also be in a state of ritual purity. Turning a member over to Gentile prosecution is strictly prohibited. The integrity of the community and its self-sufficiency in judgement are of the utmost importance in the *Damascus Document*.

Situations of judgement, albeit with the locus of authority external to the audience community, also dominate Matthew's political ritual. The urgency of reconciliation, such a central theme in Matthew's gospel, is also advocated as a pragmatically advantageous measure where external authorities could be invoked to the cost of all parties. Debt, and punitive measures of recouping debt, is a theme that recurs through Jesus' teaching and parables. Along with this comes the consistent assertion that an attitude of grace towards one's debtors is pleasing to God. There is also an invocation of self-interest with the caution that external authorities may not be as agreeable to community or individual interests, so resolution should be sought within the more sympathetic community where "kingdom" values are shared. Grave warnings about hostile authorities clarify that they are not incorruptible instruments of divine justice; in speaking before them the community can expect floggings and persecution. This does not only refer to Gentile authorities who may be enforcers of imperial rule; the Pharisees are condemned just as harshly for their hypocritical self-righteousness when Jesus claims that they would have been as keen as their ancestors to execute the prophets. Jewish authorities bear the brunt of the criticism, despite the greater power of Rome, which may reflect a reluctance to criticise the empire too harshly, given the

vulnerability of Matthew's community. It also reflects a conciliatory view towards Gentiles, with an eschatological expectation of their eventual inclusion if not in the present community, and embodies the uneasy relationship to the Jewish authorities during a period of separation. If the Matthean community did not already consider themselves distinct from mainstream Judaism, despite some shared observances, this indicates a growing gulf between the groups.

Jesus' experience before the Sanhedrin and Pontius Pilate models the kind of reception that Matthew predicts for his audience. With clear perversions of correct procedure, such as the two witness requirement (itself upheld in Jesus' teaching in Matthew), Matthew emphasises that righteousness is not a product of proper ritual procedure alone, but the attitudinal observance of the spirit of ritual. This A distrust of authority sets Matthew apart from the *Damascus Document*, as Matthew's audience anticipate a more antagonistic relationship to those in power while the *Damascus Document* displays a suspicion of external authority but does not contain explicit warnings about ongoing persecution. Other collected material concerns the giving of money as alms. The voluntary nature of the contributions is the focus – one should not draw unnecessary attention to the virtuous action of giving, giving for the sake of others without having a ritual obligation.

The one rite of passage detailed thoroughly in the *Damascus Document* is the rite of expulsion from the community. As this circumstance represents a profound disconnect between community values and the member judged to be worthy of expulsion, it follows that ritual management of the situation focuses on negotiating the decisive separation between the community and the errant member, clearly disassociating the community from the person who poses a risk of impurity. Notably, the strongest indication that a member may need to be expelled is consistent disdain for the authority of the community. This failure to respect the leaders in their legal teaching is portrayed as a measure of unrighteousness in all areas of life. Without unanimous endorsement of their leaders, the integrity of the community is challenged and boundaries are eroded, so this situation represents a serious community crisis. Resolution is achieved through a symbolic and total rejection of the expelled member by the gathered congregation and subsequent cursing when the congregation gathers. This rejection consolidates the collective identity so profoundly challenged through

dissent. Matthew 18:15-17 also contains an expulsion, and though there is no rite of expulsion the effect is similar. Both accounts emphasise the need to maintain a community identity and the risk posed by divergence from the norms.

Matthew, in contrast, depicts a more egalitarian approach to inter-group conflict. Discretion is advised and the entire community (not just the leaders) are only involved in disagreements when they are irreconcilable. Resolution on a personal level is the highest ideal, and expulsion as far as it exists in his community places them on the same level as denigrated groups. The reference to Gentiles as such a group indicates that Matthew's community – though not dismissive of Gentiles as part of the future kingdom – does not consider the "Mission to the Gentiles" to be a priority. Gentiles may have been welcome in the community, but it is clear that community identity markers come from observance of the Law in its entirety, in the light of Jesus' ethical teachings appealing to God's creative intent, and any Gentiles participating in Matthew's community would be expected to observe the Law with equal sincerity.

Divorce and marriage also feature heavily in Matthew, throughout the narrative and teaching. The husband holds the power in divorce, and the legality of divorce is not in question, but Jesus strongly discourages it in all cases except adultery, due to the consequences for the woman, who would be assumed to be guilty of adultery. This is, in itself, merely one justification for rejecting divorce; the appeal in the Sermon on the Mount and in dealings with the Pharisees is to God's creative intention and the near-mutilation involved in separating those joined by God. Even so, the requirement for a written contract of divorce remains; this is the effective part of the rite and it is in the handing over of this document that marriage is dissolved legally. A man may choose to exercise his right to divorce under the Law, but Matthew's material on marriage and divorce clarifies that this is not in line with God's wishes for humanity. In the Matthean community their distinct approach to this principle highlights their distinct identity among those who uphold the Law. References to death throughout Matthew clearly place obligations to the living above the dead, even in a shocking departure from customs demanding care for the dead. The irrelevance of death and the urgency of Jesus' call are repeated in the minimalist versions of death rites and the rejection of the trappings of death. Matthew's gospel implies a community dealing with the necessary considerations of life under the Law with a view to focusing on the living and on God's

reconciliatory purposes. This is necessary because of the eschatological urgency underpinning community activities.

The rites of affliction contained in the *Damascus Document* reflect the primary concern of crisis-related ritual: how to identify impurity and the measures to be taken to deal with it effectively. The instructions for rites of affliction demonstrate the perceived threat posed by impurity, to community and even national security. The need to delineate areas of responsibility is a preoccupation in skin disease mitigating rites. It is vital to know who is charged with judging and who is competent to diagnose impurity. The priest is the chief judge of skin disease, but one innovation is the addition of the Overseer as advisor. This involvement of educated laity demonstrates a development in the understanding of the role of the priest. The Overseer has a higher authority in the requirement to check that the priest is upholding the Law, even explaining the correct interpretations if necessary. The procedure for diagnosing impure skin requires both the priest and the Overseer as an advisor. It clarifies the procedure of separation and return contained in Lev 13 with the addition of the Overseer role. Regular and irregular discharges required similar periods of separation to preserve community purity, but the ability of an afflicted person to transfer impurity is expanded so that they are seen as a risk through touch. Incomplete instructions about postnatal impurity do not allow comprehensive conclusions to arise from the apparent discrepancy between the two-week period of impurity after the birth of a girl and the month-long separation required in Lev 12. The preoccupation with separation demonstrates the adherence to traditional models of purity and impurity and the need to keep pure members of the community away from those who pose a risk of impurity.

Matthew provides a more diverse collection of rites of affliction. There are several references to affliction-related oaths and curses which illustrate the Matthean suspicion towards the tradition of making oaths. Jesus instructs his followers not to swear by objects, whether divine or not, and to simply speak truth, later ridiculing the tendency of the Pharisees to swear by the gift on the altar. Herod's disastrous oath to his stepdaughter, resulting in the death of John the Baptist, serves as a cautionary tale illustrating this line of thought. The criticism of hasty or ill-considered oaths comes to a head in the Passion Narrative, when Jesus is charged under oath and Peter denies Jesus under oath, compounding his betrayal, while the crowd demanding Jesus' crucifixion

invokes a blood curse. Exorcism demonstrates the power of Jesus, extended to his followers and even those who invoke his name as false prophets. Words may provide a formulaic command of expulsion, though the range of actions involved makes it difficult to argue that there is a fixed rite of exorcism. Rather, meaningful actions and speech in combination, with authority behind the actions, are effective. Exorcism does not serve as a measure of righteousness, but of the power of Jesus. Also demonstrating his personal power is the ability to heal a man with a skin disease, rendering him ritually pure and able to participate in ritual. In his approach to food purity and hand-washing, Matthew's Jesus challenges the Pharisees for, in his opinion, upholding purity rules while living in attitudinal impurity. Matthew's rites of affliction present a challenge to orthodox attitudes to ritual purity; upholding the Law is insufficient to be truly pure. The Law is vital and observance is not optional, but additional attention to the spirit in which the Law is observed is to be the marker of the follower of Jesus in the Matthean community.

Feasting and fasting appear as independent practices only in Matthew, but nevertheless reveal useful details about the practices of Matthew's audience. The references to fasting encourage fasting in the proper spirit, while rejecting the efficacy of fasting to project a personal image of righteousness. The feasts described in Matthew present a challenge to those who believe they are among the righteous and therefore have an inalienable position of privilege in God's fellowship. Somewhat unexpectedly, those who are given priority should take care, as if they take their position for granted and fail to meet the required standards of attitude their place may be taken by the poor, marginalised and disdained, including Gentiles who will one day be included over unfaithful Jews.

The *Damascus Document* displays a high regard for the Law. This may be expected, but the stipulations make clear that a minimalist attitude to keeping the Law is insufficient. One should not transgress the Sabbath commandment, but in order to avoid doing so every member of the community must also observe the additional "fences" designed to keep any misdemeanour further removed from the commandment. The fences are constructed in accordance with the character of the community and their sense of identity as a privileged group; fences are not unique to the *Damascus Document*, but these reflect the shared values of the community and their collective

ritual priorities. The practical differences between communities should be approached not as a variation in stringency or sincerity, but as variations in the placement of the fences. The *Damascus Document* and the sectarian texts from Qumran share many of these fences in common. The community represented in the *Damascus Document* also considered themselves to be privileged arbiters of correct legal interpretation, but unlike the sectarians they did not consider the temple to be irredeemably corrupt in a manner which precluded participation in the temple cult. Later texts show that the leaders of the sectarian community shared the distinctive views and specific fences, but progressed in their view of cultic corruption to define themselves in opposition to the temple authorities and mainstream Judaism. These facts contribute to a portrait of the *Damascus Document* community as a stage between mainstream participation and sectarianism, as movement in its own right that either transformed into or gave birth to a sectarian group.

Matthew's favourable view of the Law is probably a good indication that his community upheld at least a large portion of the Law. This is shown through his concern for issues of legal relevance when he modifies his Markan sources. The actions, instructions, and preaching of Jesus provide an exemplar for the Matthean community and this Jesus is comprehensively respectful to the Law, with changes or additions portrayed as corrected interpretations or the revelation of God's underlying purpose in prescribing these laws. Jesus is understood to carry divine authority to make revelation, a fact which indicates that the identity of Jesus was significant in validating his teaching. Gentiles are not rejected, and are even preferable community members to Jews who do not respect Jesus or accept his interpretation of the Law or his ethical principles. However, this does not mean that adherence to the Law is optional. To be part of Matthew's community is to accept both Jesus and the Law. In a period of rapid change following the destruction of the temple, Matthew's community see themselves as part of the temple tradition and their identity is unquestionably Jewish. The identity markers of the community are Jewish, and while it deviates from mainstream Judaism its points of distinction are part of its distinct identity; the specifics of deviation established new norms for the members of the community.

Jesus as Christ possesses in himself the authority to reveal divine will and intentions, and the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount are statements that appeal to

divine creative purpose rather than exegesis and discussion of the Law. His presence denotes the advent of a time of renewal and regeneration, with the ethical imperatives part of a process of restoration. The imminence of the kingdom is affirmed repeatedly, and declarations such as “let the dead bury the dead” illustrate this sense of urgency. With Jesus providing the “correct” interpretation of the Law this transforms the Matthean community into the arbiters of orthodoxy. The group is not sectarian and continued their participation in the temple cult as long as there was a temple. The text reflects a difficult period for the community when it is both critical of mainstream Judaism and, without a temple, of ambiguous status throughout Judaism. The uneasy relationship to mainstream Judaism indicates the beginning of a pulling away from the remaining Jewish authorities, while looking towards an eventual, eschatological inclusion of Gentiles, though their presence depends on their adherence to the Law. Despite these tensions, to truly follow Jesus is to become part of the true Israel, with all the associated demands.

Preserving national identity is central to both texts. There is no assumption in either text that the distinct beliefs of their community exclude them from the wider concept of Jewish fellowship. Each asserts their divinely-conferred privileged knowledge on matters of orthodoxy, and the authors are even harshly critical of “mainstream” Judaism. However, collective Jewish observances are still of sufficient relevance that the temple remains at the centre; in Matthew, the idea of the temple continues to dominate despite its recent destruction! There is no disdain in either text towards proper practice of ritual action in the temple. In both cases, the communities self-identify as the group with better information than their peers. It is this tension that explains the tendency of groups with this sense of orthodoxy to withdraw and become sectarian in character, but neither community has reached this crisis point or been forced to withdraw.

Focusing on the references to ritual in the *Damascus Document* and Matthew provides a unique insight into the life of these communities. It reveals their character not only through abstract ideas but through a fully embodied worldview. The approach of each community to their regular worship and crisis amelioration is illuminating because it exposes the pervasive preoccupations of two groups grappling with national identity while expressing reservations about mainstream religion. The ritual content

highlights the central question underlying community ethics: how to retain a national identity as part of a dissenting subgroup united by the distinct qualities of their dissent.

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