

EXAMINING THE JEWISH ORIGINS EMPLOYED IN THE MATTHEAN
BEATITUDES THROUGH LITERARY ANALYSIS AND SPEECH ACT
THEORY

by

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"The opinions expressed in this dissertation do not necessarily reflect the views of the South
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DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any academic institution for degree purposes.

Timothy Dale Howell
January 2011

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Summary

Many models have been offered in explaining the meaning of the Beatitudes. Generally, the focus is on the eschatological, ethical, sapiential, or epitome. The model proposed in this study does not replace but rather complements the other models. The proposed model is sensitive to the Jewish metanarrative that guided the Matthean composition. The primary question of this study is how the Beatitudes demonstrate that Matthew intended to utilize Jewish concepts as a paradigmatic utterance for the Matthean community. Matthew's paradigm was the needed transition for understanding the role of the new community post 70 AD.

The Beatitudes have theological and literary significance for the Christian community. The theology of blessing dominates the pericope. Other themes, such as kingdom and righteousness, have significant roles through the blessing motif. The Gospel of Matthew was the most Jewish of the Synoptic Gospels. The importance and role of Jewish concepts can be demonstrated in the developing paradigm constructed by Matthew.

Since the Beatitudes were a literary composition, this study employed both exegetical and literary analysis to the pericope. The historical and social reconstruction of the Matthean community is examined to evaluate its role in the Matthean composition. In using comparative analysis to Second Temple literature, the Matthean composition demonstrates a proclivity toward Jewish concepts. The literary analysis reveals a poetic arrangement encased in a mixed genre of apocalyptic and wisdom tradition. Furthermore, with literary analysis, the Beatitude pericope will be shown to have had a mnemonic purpose in performing the Beatitudes in both the Matthean community and future Christian communities.

The literary nature of the Beatitudes demonstrates a composition that developed orally. Speech act theory is utilized in understanding the oral features of the text as well as demonstrating what Jesus did in his utterances. The significance of the Beatitudes lies in the authoritative utterances of Jesus.

By employing speech act theory on the Beatitudes, the sayings of Jesus are investigated to demonstrate the force of the utterances upon the Matthean community. It is understood that Matthew intended to compose a pericope in serving as a paradigmatic utterance to guide the Matthean community in its existence and mission in the world. In addition, the paradigm is to be adopted by all Christian communities in their mission to the world.

This study found six principles guiding speech act theory on the Beatitudes. A speech act model is presented and applied to the Beatitudes pericope (Matt 5:3-16). The formula is **SP+(EE)CH=ACT**: analyze the **Situated Performativity** of a text, add it to the multiplying nature of **Existential Engagement** by the interpreter with the illocutionary force found through the **Critical Horizon** of guiding worldviews, and the result is an **Acquired Communal Translation** for the social body.

Performative utterances provide a situation for the speaker and audience to engage in their roles of communication within the world of reality to which the language speaks. It is through the imagination and compliance of the hearer whereby the illocutionary force has successful results. Through ritual or performance, the significance of the Beatitudes occurs in the experience of utterance. The experience of the social body has a multiplying effect as it bridges the situated performative text ("**SP**") to the present "**SP+(EE)**". The existential role advocated in this model is more pragmatic than philosophical. The strength of engagement is relative to how a social body measures or values the illocutionary force.

From this model, it is concluded that Matthew intended for the Jewish concepts interwoven through the literary and theological construct of the Beatitudes, to be adopted by the new community, serving as a paradigmatic utterance for understanding its existence and purpose in representing Jesus as the presence of God in the world.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

For centuries, the beauty of the Beatitudes has amazed readers with both its literary and rhythmic quality, as well as its theological significance. It is probably one of the most familiar pericopes, besides the Lord's Prayer, in the New Testament (Matt 5:3-12). The sayings attributed to Jesus by Matthew, formed a purpose for the new community as it struggled in its infancy. This new community Matthew addressed consisted primarily of Jewish Christians at its inception, but incorporated Gentile believers over time (Beare 1981:10-11; Davies and Allison 1988:33,133-138; Harrington 1991:1-3,19; Hagner 1993:lxiv-lxxi; Stanton 1993:124-145; Betz 1995:1-4; Barnett 1999:362; Luomanen 2002:107-130; Skarsaune 2002:222-223; Ferguson 2003:613-615; Carter 2004 81-89; France 2007:17-18; Lutz 2007:45-55,84-87; Turner 2008:14).

Some have identified the community with a divergent Jewish sect who came to believe in Jesus (Overman 1990:157-161; Saldarini 1994:84-90, 120-121). The new community was none other than the Christ community with obvious Jewish roots (Harrington 1991; Luomanen 2002; France 2007). Identity clarification was critical at this juncture of the church's beginning. Clarifying its existence would also serve in promoting its purpose in the domain of Hellenistic and Jewish religion.

1.1.1 Selected Theological Approaches to the Beatitudes

Many ideas have been presented over the rich and varied meaning of the Beatitudes. For the purposes of this study, only four will be given to represent the range of interpretative thought. Then, the model offered in this study will be explored. Those approaches to the Beatitudes that have engaged scholars over the last century are the eschatological, ethical, sapiential, and epitome.

For the *eschatological dimension*, the Beatitudes are gracious pronouncements of God upon those who need a spiritual reversal, bridging the hope of the present with the reality of the future (Allison 2005:178). In addition, the apocalyptic themes so prevalent at the time of Jesus and seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls would be another aspect within the eschatological dimension (Flusser 2007). Schweitzer has been credited with bringing attention to this aspect of Jesus' preaching (1968). Included in the argument is the view of Luz that Jesus' Beatitudes afford a present experience based on the hope of reversed conditions on earth (2007:189).

Opposite to the eschatological blessings of the Beatitudes is the idea of moral instruction or "entrance requirements" described as the *ethical approach* (Guelich 1976:29-33; Przybylski 1980; Windisch 1951; Mann 2000). Some see these teachings as a moral demand almost equivalent to a religion of works (Windisch 1951:26,168). A slight variation within the ethical dimension is the idea that the Beatitudes are descriptive of qualities characteristic of discipleship (Green 1975:76; Talbert 2006; Neyrey 1995). They are seen as describing those who have responded to the call of Jesus while the rest of the Sermon reveals the cost and challenge of doing so.

A third approach is the *sapiential element*. The sapiential movement understood the necessity of wisdom in life. Lady Wisdom, as seen in Proverbs and Second Temple writings, was presented as an invitation to heed her call. Crossan points to Jesus' message as wisdom offered to the peasant society, which clashed with the values of honor and shame in Mediterranean culture (1994:70). Tuttle has concluded that the Sermon on the Mount demonstrates features characteristic of Israel's wisdom movement, and the Sermon should be interpreted as a wisdom speech (1997:213-230). Witherington has concluded that the entire Gospel of Matthew was sapiential (2006:16-21). The

focus was on the “hearing and doing” (Matt 7:24-27), reminiscent of the Proverbs in the Old Testament (Tuttle 1997:214-218).

Finally, a fourth idea focuses on the Beatitudes as *epitome*. Scholars see epitome from various angles. Betz has insisted that the Beatitudes, along with the Sermon on the Mount, are an epitome of Jesus’ thoughts and theology, based on the Hellenistic philosophers, most notably, Epicurus in his *Kyriai Doxai* (1979b:285-297; 1995:93-99). The Beatitudes were, Betz conjectured, a ritualistic way of reminding the Christian community of their baptismal experience into new life (1995:59-60).

Similar to Betz is the view of Turner, who has suggested that the Beatitudes should be seen as an epitome of Jesus’ life (1992:41-42; cf. Bailey 2008:86). Thus, Jesus revealed to his disciples what kingdom living would look like by relating both to God (first set of 4 Beatitudes) and humanity (second set of 4), ultimately exposing “the error of superficial, self-centered living” (Turner 2008:147). Turner, in describing them as the embodiment of Jesus’ life, has emphasized, along with Betz, the ritualistic pattern found within the Beatitudes.

There are strengths to these four approaches. For the eschatological, the second member of each Beatitude points to its apocalyptic nature (Davies and Allison 1988:439). With the ethical approach, the continual emphasis on the law in the Sermon and the need for its appropriation through good works demonstrates the concept of discipleship (Albright 1971:lv; Harrington 1991:76; Stanton 1993:299-300; Talbert 2006). Third, the sapiential idea was founded upon Jewish roots that provided principles and attitudes for the challenges the church faced (Harrington 1991:84). Finally, with the fourth approach of epitome, the Beatitudes are understood to function as an exordium (Betz 1995:75), introducing the Sermon as a “kind of teacher’s guide” (Albright 1971:clxv; Scaer 2002:16-25) for the community. This approach recognizes the communal nature of the Beatitudes.

In contrast, there are various weaknesses in exclusively emphasizing any one approach over another. The eschatological has to deal with the evident ethical tensions found within the Sermon itself (Betz 1995:60) and the invitation to consider one’s choices under Jesus’ authority (Matt 7:11-27). Even within the Beatitudes, one notices both pronouncements of blessings

and virtues (Lioy 2004:121). On the other hand, Davies and Allison have pointed to the lack of imperatives in the Beatitudes. For them, this is proof against an exclusive ethical claim upon the pericope (1988:439-440).

As for the sapiential approach, Luz has concluded that the literary structure of the Sermon distinguished it from Jewish wisdom sayings (2007:174). Viewing it solely from a wisdom tradition excludes the tensions and importance of Jesus as Messiah. Finally, Stanton challenged the approach of epitome offered by Betz, both in its form and function, in corresponding to Hellenistic parallels (1993:308-318; cf. Carlston 1988:51). Stanton argued that a pre-Matthean tradition would need to have been in place differing from the vocabulary and style of Matthew's gospel, which, clearly is not the case (1993:314).

Central to the debate is the phrase "kingdom of God." The impressive work of Perrin on the kingdom of God established a consensus that viewed it as a symbol rather than concept (cf. Perrin 1963). This symbol encased the Jewish consciousness for centuries with thoughts of being the people of God (Farmer 1987:120). As a symbol, the kingdom of God would transcend the time element to which many tend to view the kingdom. However, Moore has rightly challenged the symbol idea of Perrin with a metaphorical understanding found in the Old Testament (cf. Moore 2009). She contends that the kingdom is the thought of "God as king" in the sense of a "cosmic and universal suzerain" (2009:283). The kingdom of God understanding is a rhetorical metaphor demonstrating the superiority of God, evidenced in literary motifs as situations demand it (Moore 2009:284-285). The "common stock" of the metaphor was the relationship of God to his people, supremely exemplified in Jesus' message (Moore 2009:4, 285).

The model presented in this study does not serve to replace any particular approach as a sole alternative. Instead, it serves to complement the overall purpose of the Beatitudes as an introduction to Jesus' promise of the kingdom and life through that kingdom. The Beatitudes served to describe the "composition" of the new community (Guelich 1982:29). What is lacking in the given approaches is an underlying framework that resolves the seeming contradictions of a pericope that must be about either the present or future; of

grace offered or good works displayed. This study recognizes the kingdom of God as a rich metaphor, employed literarily in rhetorical situations.

As a complementary model, focus will be on the ideological, theological, and pragmatic (rhetorical) purposes Matthew had in arranging the Beatitudes with Jewish temple and covenant concepts to serve the new community throughout time (Wright 1996:288-289; Hays 2005; Gurtner 2008:152-153). Matthew addressed those in the new community with language familiar to their past, a “rigorous Jewish-Christianity” (Guelich 1982:26; cf. Horrell 2002:332). Their past consisted of scriptures and rituals rooted within Judaism (Evans 2007; Bailey 2008:16-21).

Gerhardsson has illustrated Matthew’s propensity to use Hebrew ideas and mannerisms in his Gospel arrangement (1998:196; cf. Hays 2005:165-172). The struggle within the community was how much of their Jewish past would be involved in the expression of Christ-centered worship. The Gospels were composed with diversity, reflecting the struggle various Christ communities were facing (cf. Horrell 2002:328). With roots to their past, Matthew addressed how the Matthean community reflected those concepts as reflective of God’s presence through Jesus, as metaphorically represented in “salt” and “light” (Matt 5:14-16).

Hence, for the new community, a communal self-definition was implicit, and Matthew offered his model as the ultimate paradigm (Haber 2008:157). The literary paradigm demonstrated that as the ministry of Jesus brought communal change, so the ritualistic expression would follow as well (cf. Assmann 2006:70-72). Important for Matthew was the ritualistic expression he composed. As a literary piece, it would be the descriptive nomenclature for the Matthean community to adopt. This compared to a catechism used in the instruction for new members (Jeremias 1963:24; Kodjak 1986:16; Stanton 1993:43; Scaer 2002), as well as a catalyst for the new community in displaying the life of Christ (Talbert 2006:29). Pragmatically, the new community would have “repeated, remembered, recovered, and referred” to the Matthean composition, resulting in a “cultural text” for its members (cf. Assmann 2006:75-76).

Even more, the nature of utterance within the Beatitudes fosters a unique ability to “hear” the words of Jesus. New Testament scholars have

recognized that oral compositions and performances were complementary to the written text (cf. Hearon 2008:102-107; Horsley 2008:117). The Matthean paradigm served in guiding the new community through the written text, vital to the oral performance itself (cf. Talbert 2010:72). The process of word composition was a communal and social activity governed by oral performance (cf. Downing 1996:30-34).

The theological development within the new community did not occur in a vacuum. Matthew introduced his Gospel with a triadic formula “*from...to*” (Matt. 1:17) that demonstrated the connection of the historical significance of Abraham, David, and Exiles to the salvation brought by Christ (Eloff 2008:88-94). Using Jewish concepts from both the temple and covenants, Matthew composed a paradigm that emerged with the expansion of the new community in representing Jesus’ message after the resurrection of Jesus. Matthew has interwoven Old Testament theology found in Jewish thought, particularly the promised blessing to Abraham, a promised kingdom for David, and a promised restoration to the exiles, as theological threads that led to the fulfillment found in Jesus (Eloff 2008:107).

This paradigm was literary as much as theological in its composition. Through literary analysis, the pericope of the Beatitudes demonstrates its affinity toward Jewish themes and Semitic compositional expressions of both its past and of the first century. It was through both the literary composition and oral context that Matthew demonstrated a paradigm that the new community had adopted in its realization of purpose and intention in the world (cf. Person 1998:601).

For Matthew, the literary structure was a poetic display of the community’s identity and purpose through the life and ministry of Jesus. The literary device was a composition embedded in a familiar Semitic framework, but one that offered a new paradigm of understanding in the person of Jesus. Puech has explored the literary parallels of the Matthean Beatitudes with Sirach 14:20-27 by Ben Sira and 4Q525 from the Dead Sea Scrolls (1993:358). Combining the study of both the Semitic parallelism and word count in these documents, insight is offered into how rules were followed composing the beatitude genre (Puech 1993:362; cf. Daube 1956:196-200).

The literary pericope demonstrates an oral composition and a culture based “in the art of recitation” (Hearon 2006:9; cf. von Dobschutz 1983:26). The Gospels were written as “stories scripted about Jesus” (White 2010:3). These stories were told in the way of “commemoration” as a communal act (White 2010:102). The study of the Gospels is a study of “history theologically interpreted” (Bailey 2008:20). The analysis of Scott and Dean of the aural formula displayed in the pericope, has led to the assumption of ritualistic observances with the Sermon on the Mount by the community on various occasions (1996:311-320).

Therefore, it is imperative to examine the oral nature of the pericope and its reflection both through the theology and literary development of the new community. The way a culture communicated held epistemological implications for learning and thinking (cf. Botha 1990:37). The medium of exchange must be examined to assess the meaning of what was heard by the audience. The implications of orality can be assessed by examining the form and structure of the Beatitudes (cf. Hearon 2006:8-20).

1.1.2 Speech Act Theory as an Exegetical Tool

The Beatitudes demonstrate the oral process by which the Matthean theology progressed. Details from the pericope exhibit qualities that can be best explained through an oral medium that resulted in a crafted text. The texts functioned, through repetition of words and sounds, in aiding scribes for oral performances (Horsley 2008:71-82). Eventually, these stories were written down as they had been told. Through oral performance, the new community displayed a theological awareness of its role in the world. What would it mean if the Beatitudes were a composition illustrative of how the new community saw itself and how their constitution would exist in the world?

Speech act theory is the study of how language is used and the effects of language use upon hearers. The emphasis is not only what is spoken but also the consideration of the performative utterance in what it does and its resulting effects (Austin 1975:6-7). When a couple exchanges vows and say “I do” during a marriage ceremony, it establishes a formal institution between

them. When a ship is christened, the formal announcement of its name is delivered and that name becomes official.

These examples point to the effect of an utterance, that is, what is done or accomplished by speech itself in a given context (cf. Nida 1999:20). Speech act theory addresses how we use speech (locutionary act), the performance of an act in saying something (illocutionary act), and the consequential effect or intended result of saying something (perlocutionary act) (Austin 1975:98-103).

J. L. Austin is considered the founding proponent of speech act theory with his 1955 William James Lecture *How to Do Things with Words* delivered at Harvard University. In 1962, the lectures were compiled in the book bearing the same title of the lectures (Austin 1975). For Austin, an utterance “indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action—it is not normally thought of as just saying something” (1975:6-7).

Speech act theory was developed further through the work of John R. Searle (1969). Searle’s contribution was his emphasis that utterances were rule-governed (1969:24-25). Subsequent developments were made by Grice who identified the Cooperative Principle as that which is always operating in communication, which he defined through four maxims of economy, sincerity, relevancy, and clarity (1975:41-58). Mary Louise Pratt was another key influence upon speech act theory when she noted that it involves literature as a context itself (1977:99).

Within the field of biblical hermeneutics, there have been many contributions by those engaging in the discipline of speech act theory upon the text. Donald Evans, a student of Austin, was one of the first to take and place speech act concepts upon the biblical text. Other scholars that have successfully engaged with speech act theory have been Daniel Patte who understood the theory as a way to distinguish one’s religious experience (1988:98), Briggs who developed the stance that interpretation is an “act of self-involvement” with the text (2001b:7), and Wolterstorff, who used the theory as a way of understanding God in divine discourse (1995).

Through speech act theory, attention is upon the utterance within its context for discovering illocutionary force (Mitchell 1987:174). Illocutionary force is the actual performance of an act in saying something (Austin 1975:99-

100). The importance, then, is not only that something has been said, but in the nature of the actual utterance itself.

The “blessing” utterance, as found in the Beatitudes, would carry the effect of a declaration in any given speech act (cf. Guelich 1976:416-417). Since oral recitation and repetition were first century practices (Dunn 2007:185), speech act theory can facilitate greater awareness of how the community practiced its core beliefs through an oral exchange. Since interpretation is dependent upon presuppositions, contexts, and semantics, so speech act theory is a methodology that coincides with theology in aiding it by explaining the language events and their importance. What did the “blessing utterance” mean to the first century hearers? What does it communicate to a present reader?

The significance of speech act theory in exegesis is that any “adequate study of speech acts is a study of language...” (Holdcroft 1978:35). By using speech act theory, the biblical text can demonstrate the particular culture and language relationships that existed in that context. Especially helpful, is the probability for another performative utterance experience between the “hearer” and “speaker” of the text. To experience the repeat performance is to engage in an existential encounter with the text (Evans 1980:262).

Speech act theory has been applied to various Gospel texts with positive results, such as Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4 (Botha 1991) and the ending to Mark’s Gospel by Upton (2006). Brant (1996:3-20) has addressed oaths in the Sermon on the Mount through speech act theory. The research has shown no formal study existing of examining the Beatitudes from a position of speech act theory.

1.2 Research Problem and Questions

The primary question of this study is how the Beatitudes demonstrate that Matthew intended for the utilization of Jewish concepts be adopted as a paradigmatic utterance by the new community in understanding its existence and purpose in representing Jesus as the presence of God in the world? The objective of this study was to investigate those verbal and literary clues that

imply Jewish temple and covenant notions and what the theological implications of God's presence would mean for the community. The goal was to ascertain whether Matthew was describing a ritualistic observance or intending to create one within the new community, thereby capitalizing on Jewish temple and covenant concepts already in place. Luz has emphasized the importance of Matthew's language "rooted in worship" (2007:43). By using speech act theory, the influence of the spoken words can be assessed and a model for current Christian communities can be demonstrated.

Subsidiary questions will also be addressed. In what way was the metanarrative of the Jewish past being replaced with new meanings within the ideology of Jesus' sayings? The study will focus on Judaism during the Second Temple period and how religious functions changed after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Focus on the tensions found between Jewish and Jewish Christian groups demonstrates a Roman and Hellenistic culture (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999; Saldarini 2001; Skarsaune 2002; Ferguson 2003).

How does the literary nature of the Beatitudes reflect a composition that derived from oral presentations? Focus will be upon the oral dimension within first century Mediterranean culture (Kelber 1983; Horsley 2008; Hearon 2009). Since Jesus spoke on many occasions, the issue of multiple performances can best describe various literary editions or understandings by the early community (Dunn 2003a; Kelber 2006; Redman 2010).

Third, how does the social context influence the Matthean pericope? An analysis of society reveals the eclectic nature of Jewish cultures within the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Particular social matters, such as honor/shame (Neyrey 1995; Hanson 1994b, Lawrence 2002; Crook 2009), kinship (deSilva 2000a; Malina 2001), and assembly (Ascough 2001; Ferguson 2003) will be explored on its relationship to the new community. An assessment of how the new community developed in that environment allows greater understanding of the new community (Jeffers 1999; deSilva 2000; Wilson 2005).

Finally, what were the practical and theological intentions Matthew had in framing the Beatitudes with Jewish concepts and metaphor? Here attention will be upon the oral nature of the Beatitudes within a society that was familiar

to the mnemonic structuring of literary compositions. Could the Beatitudes have been used as background for a hymn, confession of faith, Eucharistic worship, or teaching tool (cf. Brooke 1986:35-41; Betz 1995:59; Scaer 2002:16-25; Luz 2007:44)? What clues are available to explore these and other possibilities?

The possibilities are examined against the backdrop of some key documents, namely Sirach and IQS6.6-8; IQS3.15-25; 4Q521; 4Q525 of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The theological framework from which Matthew employed his temple and covenant imagery had strong relevance to the new community.

1.3 Purpose, Significance, and Rationale of Study

The purpose for this study is the focus on how the Beatitudes demonstrate that Matthew used a literary and theological construct centered on Jewish concepts, which were to be adopted as a paradigmatic utterance by the new community in understanding its existence and purpose in representing Jesus as the presence of God in the world. There has not been a specific analysis devoted to the temple and covenant concepts through speech act theory in the immediate context of the Beatitudes within Matthean studies. The value of this undertaking will be to utilize a paradigmatic model by which to interpret both the meaning and social context of the Beatitudes as utterance.

Through this study, various analyses will be conducted evaluating the text data to determine to what extent Matthew used the Jewish concepts and for what purpose in its adoption by the Matthean community. The findings demonstrate a modified temple/covenant *langue* that was Matthew's intention for the new community to adopt in describing their existence and purpose in representing Jesus as the presence of God in the world. The findings derived from speech act theory will demonstrate that the Matthean paradigm has existential value today as it did in the past through a focus on the utterances of the Beatitudes.

The significance of this study is that an analysis of the Beatitudes, in both its literary and social context, will demonstrate a new paradigmatic utterance Matthew employed. It was implemented with Jewish concepts from

the temple and covenants of promise that produced a ritualistic expression for the new community. Three central ideas shaped the foundation for this new paradigm.

1.3.1 Oral Nature of the Beatitude Composition

The literary nature of the Beatitudes reflected a composition developed orally and one that served mnemonic purposes. The poetic structure exhibits through its alliteration, assonance, and parallelism verbal aides demonstrating how the motif would have been orally presented (Green 2001:40-41; DeConick 2008:135-179; Shiner 2009:51-54).

Within the Mediterranean world, true communication was oral communication and the written text was “waiting” to be recreated in sound (Shiner 2009:49). Performance criticism has brought attention to the first century culture and its fondness for storytelling, which served for entertainment, education, and celebration (Person 1998; Rhoads 2006; Kelber 2008; Hearon 2009:25-34; Shiner 2009:51). Historical studies have demonstrated that literacy was not significant among the masses, so professional scribes were hired to produce legal documents (Botha 1992:195-215; Ferguson 2003:132). Within the Hellenistic culture, physical presence in communication was considered superior to that of a written text (Shiner 2009:50). Why was there a need for a text?

Within the context of the first century, the oral history of Jesus was transferred to manuscript form as needs arose within the Christian communities for a written “witness”. In addition, the eyewitnesses were convinced that the ministry of Jesus was extraordinary and should be shared with others across generations (Nolland 2005:13). This was due, in part, to the need of a society to protect a particular tradition from alterations that would diminish the credibility of that tradition (Bauckham 2006:271). “But if the Gospels tell us anything they surely tell us that the first Christians felt the need to explain themselves by telling stories about Jesus....” and point to the foundation for the early Christian movement (Dunn 2003b:176).

1.3.2 The Jewish Metanarrative

There were verbal clues that denoted Jewish connotations the new community would have associated with Old Testament themes and Second Temple period practices (Klawans 2006). The very earliest days of the church were spent in the Jerusalem temple teaching and praying (Acts 3:1). Eventually, homes would replace the temple whereby the members met for prayer, teaching and worship (Acts 5:42). Christians studied the Jewish Scriptures. The *kerygma* that dominated the missionary activity of the early Church always appealed to the Jewish Scriptures for evidential value (cf. Gamble 1995:24).

Without doubt, the Gospel of Matthew was the most Jewish of the Gospels (Jefford 2005:47; Luz 2007:45-48). By the time Matthew composed his Gospel, many Jewish Christians in the new community had been forced out of the synagogues due to messianic claims concerning Jesus (Barnett 1999:362; Heyler 2002:497-500). This caused both social and emotional upheaval. Matthew addressed this situation by using notions reminiscent of their Jewish past, but framing it in a new Christian ideology, namely, temple concepts and covenant promise (Skarsaune 2002:162,177,274; Hays 2005; France 2008:109). Similar comparison can be demonstrated within the Qumran literature as the community struggled for legitimacy within Second Temple Judaism (cf. Wilson 2005:55-56).

1.3.3 The Social Context of the Matthean Community

The social context surrounding the new community demonstrated an origin that was formed in an eclectic nature of Hellenistic, Roman, Mediterranean, and Jewish cultures. For the Matthean community, the Jewish religious culture dominated its social understanding. The extent of adaptation to both the Hellenistic and Jewish culture became a struggle within the early formative years of the early church (Jeffers 1999:71-88; Ferguson 2003). For the new community, Matthew's paradigm, with its links to Jewish roots, was the needed transition for understanding its purpose and existence, especially after 70 AD (Ascough 2001:97). Who were the constituents of the Matthean

community? Was it singular or could it be described as a network of communities with a relationship to the Matthean composition?

Within Matthew's community, the Beatitudes would serve both a theological and practical purpose. Theologically, they would reveal the importance of the church in its existence as reflective of God's presence to the world, as seen in Jesus' metaphorical use of salt and light. The paradigm Matthew presented would transfer this understanding of reflecting God's presence in the world as Jesus' sayings were inculcated. The post-resurrection community saw the Old Testament eschatological expectation, as God's reign through the resurrected Jesus (Steinhauser 1982:125). The Beatitudes, then, "contain the heart of Jesus' preaching concerning God's reign" (p. 122).

Practically, the community was constantly reminded of its mission in the ritualistic composition by Matthew and through its adoption evident in the oral performances. Mnemonic exercises were prevalent within Hellenistic and Judaistic culture as ways to teach and learn (Gerhardsson 1998:148-155). Niditch has emphasized the role of repetition in assimilating material within an oral culture (1996:10-11).

The rationale for this study is the need to explore the purpose and significance of Matthew's use of Jewish concepts as a model to be incorporated within the new community. As the new community, the presence of God, as understood through the temple functions and terminology of the past, would be transferred and experienced through the model centered on Jesus' utterances, remaining valid for the present (Gurtner 2008:130-134).

1.4 Assumptions and Delimitations

1.4.1 Assumptions

The following assumptions must be considered as the contextual framework for this study.

- The Gospel of Matthew was addressed to the Matthean community and its social network, in order to understand and define their role in a

world full of religious and political changes (Stanton 1993:157-168; Wilson 2005:51; Hagner 1996:47; Luz 2005:3-17).

- The Matthean community consisted primarily of Jewish Christians (Guelich 1982:26; Hagner 1996:45; Turner 2008:15).
- The Gospel of Mark was composed first and Matthew's composition relied on it as one of its sources (Stanton 1993:28-31; Hagner 1993:xlvi; Witherington 2006:3-5; Luz 2007:41-43).
- It is difficult to be assured of the compositional date of the Gospel of Matthew. Scholars generally place it between 68 AD and 80 AD. Arguments for the temple standing or the temple destroyed are both compelling (Blomberg 1992:41-42; Hagner 1993:lxiv-lxxv; Nolland 2005:14-17; Luz 2007:58-59). What can be assured is that the climate was ready for the Jewish War, or the community was living in its aftermath (Davies and Allison 1988:297; Wilson 2005:47). For the purposes of this study, it is assumed the Gospel of Matthew was written post 70 AD.
- The author of the Gospel of Matthew is not for certain, but the hand of Matthew the apostle was at least the source for the Jesus' sayings and narrative material (Hagner 1993:lxvii; Witherington 2006:5). Throughout this study, when Matthew is addressed as the author, the understanding is that the composition has his influence on it directly or indirectly (through his disciples in the community). Most likely, the author was a Jewish Christian scribe who employed literary techniques en vogue in the first century (cf. Matt 13:52; von Dobschutz 1983:19-29; Duling 1995a:378; Orton 1989; Witherington 2006:6-11; Loader 2007:105-108).
- Diaspora Judaism accounted for both the Jewish nature of the Gospel and the Greek language employed (Wilson 2005:20-25; Helyer 2002:42-74).
- The testimony of Papias, concerning Matthew compiling the *logia*, is referring to one of two options. First, it could have been a reference to the sayings of Jesus, which he had spoken in Aramaic that were collected and then translated for composition (Hagner 1993:xlvi).

Second, and a better option for this study, it referred to the Semitic rhetorical style that was used in interpreting the ministry of Jesus, thus explaining the Jewish style of the Gospel's composition (Turner 2008:15-16).

- Syrian Antioch has been named as the most probable provenance for the Gospel of Matthew (Davies and Allison 1988:143-147; Senior 2001:8). Gale has given good arguments for Sepphoris instead of Antioch (2005:46-63). This paper simply assumes an urban environment with a Jewish population (Kingsbury 1978:66; Stanton 1993:50; Gale 2005:41-46).
- The genre of the Gospel of Matthew was primarily gospel (*kerygma*), which referenced the oral proclamation of Jesus' death and resurrection (Stanton 1993:13) and, consequently, story narrative for the faith community to be strengthened in their hope (Carter 2004:42; Luz 2007:18). It has the marks of Greco-Roman *bios* (Burridge 1992).

1.4.2 Delimitations

The Beatitudes have been explored in numerous ways and through various methodologies. This study has delimited itself in the following.

- The choice of using Matthew 5:3-16 as the pericope is due to the strength of the Beatitudes juxtaposition to the salt/light metaphors setting the context for the Sermon on the Mount. This pericope is best seen as a unit that describes those for whom the Sermon is addressed in its natural setting.
- An interesting and obvious question would be why the Matthean Beatitudes differ from the Lukan account (cf. Lk 6:20-26). The question is not pursued in detail because the focus of this inquiry is to explore the implications of the Matthean pericope for the community to which it was addressed. The Lukan account needs a greater scrutiny and is beyond the scope of this paper (Stanton 1993:285-289).
- Many methodologies could be used on the Beatitudes, but this study has limited its scope through the lens of literary analysis and speech

act theory (Vanhoozer 1998). The literary analysis primarily covers the poetic aspect of the text and not an investigation into the rhetorical structure, which would demand more than can be addressed in this study. The speech act theory deals with the pericope as an utterance that demands not only what has been said (exegesis) but what has been done (empirical) (Senior 2001:17).

1.5 Research Design and Methodology

The research design was conducted in the area of literary studies using text analysis. The text analysis was evaluated through various disciplines with emphasis on grammar, verbal threads, use of speech act in oral performance, and theological implications for both the historic Matthean community and the Christ community of today. The research centered primarily on exploratory, descriptive and causal questions. These, in turn, linked the key components of the Beatitudes to the overall structure, shedding light on the meaning of the text, specifically, how Matthew introduced Jewish concepts in the pericope (Pennington 2009; Gurtner 2008).

1.5.1 *Exegetical analysis*

This consisted of an analysis of the Beatitudes and the surrounding context. The Beatitudes served as an introduction to the Sermon on the Mount. The theological theme of righteousness, introduced in the Beatitudes pericope, can be traced throughout the Sermon (cf. Matt 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33). By linking the Beatitudes to its Semitic context and seeing the challenges of the social culture within the church, the foundation for Matthew's usage of temple imagery was established (Luz 2007:48; Gurtner 2008:153; Welch 2009; Lioy 2010).

The various words and semantic ranges were assessed. Key changes in syntactical constructions were examined with implications for the Matthean community (TDNT 1985; DNTT 1986; Hagner 1993; Davies and Allison 1988;

Gundry 1994; Danker 2000). Of special interest were the rich and varied meanings of key terms and phrases used by Matthew in the Beatitudes. Comparisons were made to the Old Testament and Dead Sea Scrolls for greater understanding in the range of meaning Matthew may have had in the pericope.

1.5.1.1 *Historical and Social Reconstruction*

Ideas for why Matthew composed the Beatitudes are given as the historical and social reconstruction of the new community emerged. The relations between Jewish and Christian sects were examined. In addition, a literary comparison of the Lukan version was explored and evaluated to the Matthean account (Betz 1995; Barnett 1999; Helyer 2002; Skarsaune 2002; Luz 2007). The influence of the Hellenistic and Roman culture was discussed since both Judaism and Christianity was seen struggling with group identification within their religious sectors. The values of honor and shame, along with kinship ideas, were examined as indirect influences upon the Beatitudes (Neyrey 1995; Jeffers 1999; deSilva 2000a; Malina 2001; Lawrence 2002; Crook 2009).

1.5.1.2 *OT/Semitic Allusion*

An analysis of the Old Testament allusions, as used by Matthew within the pericope, was conducted. The study found verbal clues that reflected Jewish and temple notions. These were examined as they related to the context of the Beatitudes (Stendahl 1968; Lachs 1977; Flusser 1978; Stanton 1984). A primary source for Matthew was the Isaianic literature. His free and frequent use of Isaiah was reflected throughout his Gospel (Beaton 2002).

Wisdom tradition dominated the writings at Qumran and Second Temple Judaism literature (Crawford 1998; Kampen 2000). The DSS recognized blessing as the result of wisdom applied in life (cf. 4Q185; 4Q525). Semitic literature was written from a wisdom tradition, forming various “schools” of thought, as can be compared between the DSS, Sirach, and Wisdom of Solomon. One scholar has approached Matthew entirely from a wisdom perspective (cf. Witherington 2006).

1.5.2 *Literary and Poetic Analysis*

This consisted of a poetic analysis of the Beatitudes and the possible ramifications of why Matthew composed them in his particular manner. As a result, reflections on the theology of Matthew in the pericope were addressed. The nature of literary studies and inferences for hermeneutics was discussed. The role of the author, text, and reader was given sufficient examination in relation to the Beatitudes (cf. Jauss 1974:11-41; Ricoeur 1970; 1976; Iser 1978; Eco 1979; Sternberg 1985; Gracia 1996; Pucci 1998; Vanhoozer 2006).

This study has found that Matthew used the Sermon on the Mount, not only for teaching purposes for the new community, but as a literary tool for his overall narrative plot (Syreeni 2005:98). His narrative composition was built upon the oral traditions and memories of the early Christian community. Through the Matthean literary piece, the new community would understand its role in representing Jesus in the world.

1.5.2.1 *Structural Analysis*

The structure and development Matthew used in composing the Beatitudes demonstrates both parallelism and chiasm. This was a germane procedure for writers in expressing key ideas at the time of Matthew (cf. Fenton 1959:174-179; Kingsbury 1975; duToit 1977; Man 1984:146-157; Derickson 2006:423-437; Bailey 2008:13-21; VanderWeele 2008:669-673). The structure provides clues to how Matthew communicated through the Gospel composition.

A prevalent theme in the Gospel is “God with us” (cf. Kupp 1996). The inclusio of Matthew 1:23 and 28:20 forms the grand narrative of the divine presence in the new community. Many structures framing the Matthean Gospel have been offered, but no particular suggestion has advanced with exclusive priority. This study observes the structure of Matthew through major imperatives forming thematic mediums for the story of Jesus to be told. The gradual development of these themes exposes the unfolding nature of being a follower of Jesus and his kingdom. A chiastic formation of the kingdom is demonstrated in Matthew’s Gospel, which developed out of the imperatival themes.

1.5.2.2 *Poetic Literary Analysis*

Parallel and poetic structure was important to Matthew in his literary composition (cf. DiLella 1989; Talstra 1999; Green 2001). Implications of the Semitic concepts as offered through conventional poetical devices were explored (cf. Alter 1985; Berlin 1985; Songer 1992; Puech 1993; Green 2001; Grant 2008). Focus was upon the alliteration, assonance, repetition, and redundancy of key words and ideas in the text as composed by Matthew (cf. Combrink 1983; Green 2001; Luz 2004).

The understanding of genre development provides the framework for the Matthean composition. By combining the wisdom tradition of the prophets to the apocalyptic worldview prevalent during Second Temple Judaism, a mixed genre emerged to define Jesus' message to the Matthean community. Jewish influence can be detected in the use of apocalyptic material in writings appearing during the first century (cf. Gamble 1995:38). For early Christianity, Jesus had proclaimed the reality of divine intervention in the inaugurated kingdom message. After the resurrection of Christ, Christians continued to proclaim the importance of Jesus' message as the "eschatological community" (Fiorenza 1989:303).

For early Christianity, the apocalyptic genre was a mixed composition of Jewish wisdom and prophetic tradition, demonstrated in its literary form and structure (Fiorenza 1989:304). The primary distinction between Christian apocalyptic and Jewish apocalyptic was its theological worldview: the acknowledgement of "Jesus as Lord of history" (Daley 2009:109; cf. Horsley 2010:3). Furthermore, Fiorenza has suggested the characteristic of paranesis as defining the early Christian use of the apocalyptic genre (1989:302).

1.5.2.3 *Theological Analysis*

The major theological themes presented by Matthew were explored and its particular influence upon the beatitudes, evidenced in its arrangement (Caird 1994; Wright 1996; Dunn 2003b; Carter 2004). Matthew carefully combined his theological purpose into his literary composition (cf. Burnett 1985:91-109; Luz 1995:1-21; Schroter 2006:104-122). Within the Beatitudes, theological themes concerning the kingdom and righteousness dominate. Central to the

pericope composition was Matthew's assertion of Jesus' role in speaking to and being represented by the Matthean community. By addressing the Christ community as "salt and light", Matthew demonstrated the practicality of a theological and sociological paradigm. The presence of Jesus within the community was central to the Matthean theology guiding his Gospel (cf. Kupp 1996; Matt 28:18-20).

1.5.3 *Speech Act Theory*

There was an analysis of the pericope using speech act theory. At this point, attention was given to what was actually being done in the utterances of Jesus. A model is presented to help clarify the analysis of the text through speech act theory.

1.5.3.1 *Brief History of Speech Act Theory*

A basic understanding of the history and beginnings of speech act theory was explored beginning with the works of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) during its infancy, and ending with Wolterstorff (1995), Briggs (2001b) within the field of biblical interpretation. Contributions by other key figures, such as White (1979), Pratt (1977), Patte (1988), Thiselton (1997), and Vanhoozer (1998), are brought into the discussion of key speech act concepts. The key concepts of locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary were discussed and defined. Other key ideas that have developed from speech act theory have been evaluated in its development as a literary discipline.

1.5.3.2 *Purpose of Speech Act Theory on the Beatitudes*

Discussion was upon the validity of speech act theory as an exegetical tool upon the biblical text. The implication of speech act theory upon divine discourse as discussed by Wolterstorff was examined (1995). The main purpose of the discipline of speech act theory was evaluated and assessed as it relates to biblical interpretation generally, and on the Beatitudes specifically (Thiselton 1974; Briggs 2001b; Botha 2007). Six primary principles from speech act theory were presented with the implications for studying the

Beatitudes. The principles serve to position and direct the speech act model with the Beatitudes.

- (a) Intentionality must be considered when examining speech acts within text creation.
- (b) The understanding of any speech act originates with contextual considerations.
- (c) Speech acts are worldview snapshots.
- (d) Speech acts are socially constructed and complementary.
- (e) The role of the hearer in the speech act cannot be diminished.
- (f) Perlocutions are open-ended.

1.5.3.3 Proposed Model for Speech Act Theory on the Beatitudes

A practical model was developed by the researcher to use in understanding the Beatitudes from the vantage point of speech act theory. The model has four dimensions that can correspond to an acronym and formula of **SP+(EE)CH=ACT: Situated Performativity + Existential Engagement x Critical Horizon = Acquired Communal Translation**. Each dimension is discussed in its contribution to speech act theory on the Beatitudes. Various figures were presented to give a visual representation of the pragmatic nature of the speech act model.

1.5.3.4 Speech Act and an Existential Response

The final stage consisted of examining the development of this discourse and its Jewish concepts as a means to experience the presence of God. An existential model was used as a paradigm in viewing the findings. Jesus' sayings, which developed into a modified temple *langue* for the new community, were found to be a guiding principle in the Beatitudes (Klawans 2006; France 2008; Gurtner 2008; Wardlaw 2008).

An existential look at the Beatitudes and surrounding verses demonstrate a current application for believers in their present context. With a working model, the performative utterance of Jesus' words will demonstrate that the hearing of and responding to those words is still a viable option for humanity today. The Bering model served to demonstrate an existential benefit in approaching the Beatitudes (cf. 2003:101-120). The three-tiered

model concepts are “Event-Experience-Existence” that can be applied to the text in finding existential meaning.

1.6 Definitions of Key Words

The following key words or phrases that are being used throughout this research need to be understood as follows:

- The “**new community**” is the totality of those who express belief in Jesus Christ as the central motivation for their group’s existence. The phrase “**Matthean community**” is that local network forming the new community to which the Gospel of Matthew was addressed (Stanton 1993:50-53; Ascough 2001:125; Carter 2004:81-89).
- The term “*langue*” stands for the linguistic system shared by a community or “the totality of language shared by the collective consciousness” (Cuddon 1999:449).
- The term “**pericope**” is “the rhetorical unit to be studied” which has a “beginning, a middle, and an end” (Kennedy 1984:33).
- The term “**existential**” is a broad philosophical concept, but will be used here in the interpretative sense to refer to “one’s engagement with the text’s truth claims” which “has ultimate personal significance” (Schneiders 1999:175).
- The term “**paradigmatic**” is “that each word has a linear relationship with the words that may go before it”, i.e. it considers the fact that each word or words has a “relationship with other words that are not used but are capable of being used--and by being capable are thus associated” (Cuddon 1999:891).
- The *Sitz im Leben* is literally “setting in life” and is used to refer to the social customs prevailing in a particular culture at a particular time, and which have importance in the role of the speaker and hearers, or the writer and readers, directing the linguistic formations they use (cf. Koch 1969:28; Hagner 1996:27-29).

1.7 Hypothesis

Matthew intended for the Jewish concepts interwoven through the literary and theological construct of the Beatitudes, to be adopted by the new community, serving as a paradigmatic utterance for understanding its existence and purpose in representing Jesus as the presence of God in the world.

1.8 Chapter Overview

Chapter two brings attention to the variety of views concerning the Jewish-Christian identification of the early Christianity, especially as it related to the Matthean community. The importance for this study is found in Matthew's intention to address those issues as experienced by the emerging church. Knowing the nature and composition of the Matthean community contextualizes the Beatitudes within the Gospel of Matthew.

Chapter three frames the study of the Beatitudes in its historical and social context. There is reflection on the Judaism of the Second Temple Period, while also exploring the influences of Judaism and Hellenism upon Christianity. By focusing on the historical context, the research shows that the context for the Matthean community had tensions to overcome as conveyed in the Gospel. Religiously, the tensions with emergent Judaism are explored and various views are considered. The significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls is examined which points more to the cultural context during Matthew's composition. Changes were inevitable after the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. By focusing on the social context, Mediterranean values of honor and shame are discussed with its relationship to family and economic interests.

The circumstances surrounding the Beatitudes are the focus of chapter four. The place of the Sermon on the Mount within the structure of Matthew is explained. In addition, a discussion on the unique position of the Beatitudes as introduction to the Sermon exhibits its importance. The semantic issues of the Beatitudes are examined by observing Jesus as the Christ, the role of repentance, and the call to follow Jesus. These contextual observations situate the Beatitude pericope as addressed to those in the new community.

The exegetical study of the Beatitudes is the primary concern of chapter five. The Beatitudes are carefully examined within the context of Jesus' pronouncement. Alongside the Beatitudes, the development and placement of the salt/light pericope is scrutinized as a case study for the Matthean community. Emphasis is placed upon the Old Testament allusions as demonstrated in the Beatitudes and the surrounding context. By examining the allusions, the verbal clues provide evidence of a consistent Jewish and temple concept.

In chapter six, the Beatitudes are seen as a literary unit through the lens of poetic analysis. The use of parallelism and its influence upon Matthew is explored. Focus is also upon the Beatitudes as a mixed genre of wisdom tradition and the apocalyptic worldview. The importance of understanding mnemonic purpose within an oral culture is emphasized in light of the poetic structure. The theology of the composition of Matthew is evaluated and shown to have a further ritualistic purpose.

The methodology of speech act theory is the concern of chapter seven. A brief history of speech act theory and its development through Austin and Searle is discussed. Two scholars, Wolterstorff and Briggs, and their impact within biblical hermeneutics in using speech act theory are explored. A paradigmatic model is used to demonstrate how the speech act theory can be useful with Scripture. The model is then placed upon the Beatitudes demonstrating the nature of a verbal performance and a continued ritualistic observance. Certain key metaphors in the Beatitudes are examined in light of the theory. The paradigm emerging from the discourse of the Beatitudes served in demonstrating the "speech acts" of Jesus to be such that a "hearing" continues to be possible in a present context.

The conclusion of the study is found in chapter eight and focuses on the significant results of the exegetical analysis, literary analysis, and speech act theory of the Beatitudes. Further, it will be demonstrated that a composition was to be adopted by the new community as it recognized itself through a paradigmatic utterance and with the role of announcing God's presence through Jesus to the world.

Chapter 2

Various Views of Jewish-Christian Identification and Its Implications for the Matthean Community

The Beatitudes, as framed in the Gospel, were addressed to a “community network” with a germane understanding of the Matthean intention. An examination of the Matthean network is essential in understanding the Jewish origins employed by Matthew in his Gospel and, more particularly, the Beatitudes. It is best to keep in mind the distinction of the first century followers of Jesus. There were three historical groups defined as first century followers of Jesus: those who followed Jesus during his lifetime (the disciples), those who followed Jesus after his resurrection in Jerusalem (the churches of Judea), and those messianic groups after 70 AD found throughout Palestine and Asia Minor (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:187).

Historically, Jewish Christianity refers to Jews who have turned to Jesus as the promised Messiah of the Old Testament and affirm their faith in following the teachings of Jesus who is the fulfillment of the righteousness of the Torah (Hagner 2003:196). On the other hand, there have been attempts to discredit the very designation “Jewish Christianity” altogether pointing to it “as a marker of the too Jewish side of the Goldilocks fairytale that is ‘ordinary’ Christianity...” (Boyarin 2009:7). Boyarin further contends that Christianity needed Judaism as a religious force for which to do battle and legitimate itself as an equal (2009:20).

Yet, ultimately, the central position that mattered most to those labeled Jewish Christians was the person and work of Jesus as a redemptive activity (Longenecker 1970:25). Matthew writes not only to address the situation the

community faced but also to give them an ideological framework in relating to both unbelieving Jews and to Gentile Christians (Hagner 1996:47).

Scholars have identified the Jewish Christian movement in various ways, which have implications for interpretative decisions within the Gospel of Matthew. A perusal of the views will suffice to demonstrate the importance of first giving an identity to the community and its network Matthew addressed. After a review of the positions, an evaluation and summary will be given of the views with an explanation of the Matthean community.

2.1 Rival Movement within Judaism

There are scholars who see early Christianity as a sect of Judaism (Overman 1990; Segal 1991; Saldarini 1994; Sim 1998) and, specifically, the Gospel of Matthew as a presentation of a competing version of Judaism (Turner 2008:3). This tends to view early Christianity in a family conflict, like a rebellious daughter (Viljoen 2007:702) or sibling rivalry (Luz 2005:255).

2.1.1 Overman and “*Matthean Jesus is Best Option*”

The correct understanding of Matthew’s Gospel begins with considering that the community was in competition and conflict with Judaism post 70 AD (Overman 1990:5). Within Judaism, there were several movements that emerged and struggled for control, including Christian groups revealing a rich diversity of thought (Overman 2008:259). Jewish groups were looking for a coherent religious understanding after the temple was destroyed and what they found was a Pharisaic system that became formative over time (1990:36). These groups were also known as sects and had three characteristics (1990:16-30).

- (a) Dualistic mindset of insiders and outsiders.
- (b) Hostility toward Jewish leadership
- (c) Committed to centrality of the law.

Overman has pointed out that for a time both the Matthean community and formative Judaism grew together but finally diverged during the

composition of the Gospel (1990:5). For Overman, the Matthean community was responding to the developments within formative Judaism and sought to differentiate themselves as the true form of Judaism (1996:10). In fact, Matthew was answering the charges and condemnation brought by formative Judaism against the community in his Gospel composition (1990:157).

Overman has brought attention to key aspects of formative Judaism (1990). Formative Judaism must be kept separate from rabbinic Judaism (which came years later). Formative Judaism was one of several movements struggling post 70 AD to have influence over the Jewish community. It must be remembered that formative Judaism does not speak for all of Judaism, since many sects also existed alongside it (1990:3). For Overman, the Matthean community shared the same matrix as formative Judaism (p. 3).

Matthew argues that his community is in utter continuity with the history and eschatological drama of Israel, that what has happened to the great heroes of Israel, and the faithful people of Israel, is happening and will happen to Matthew's church (Overman 1990:23).

Matthew, according to Overman, was taking the teachings of Jesus as authoritative interpretations of the law for the community to follow and compete with the Judaism that was forming post 70 AD (2008:262). The new community eventually understood they were different from what was emerging among formative Judaism (1990:4).

2.1.2 Segal and “Matthew’s Jewish Voice”

Matthew’s voice was a positive one for the Torah and Jewish law observance (Segal 1991:4). According to Segal, Matthew was voicing his opposition to Pharisaic interpretations and its authority as influences on the Matthean community (p. 31). Yet, this voice was one well acquainted with rabbinic exegesis of the law and its interpretations (1991:5; cf. Matt 5:22-48; 12:9-14). The negative tone expressed in the Gospel toward the Pharisees must be seen in this social and religious context to appreciate common Jewish practice of debate and disagreement in exegesis (p. 23).

Peter was used by Matthew as a positive portrayal of the law throughout the Gospel (14:28-31; 16:16-19; 17:24-27), as well as reflecting the importance of the community in its response to the law (Segal 1991:8-9). Compared to Paul's stance toward the law, Matthew had a "more compromising position within the Jewish community" (p. 15).

2.1.3 Saldarini and "Perfected Judaism"

Saldarini has pointed out that Jews who believed in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God were in a fragile minority **within** the Jewish community (1994:1). The religious authorities labeled them deviant because they were resisting the Jewish community from the inside hoping to prevail with their "perfected Judaism" (Saldarini 1994:7). Therefore, according to Saldarini, Matthew, who considered himself a Jew, was fighting for what he saw as the correct interpretation of Jewish religion (1994:7). Essentially, Matthew was defending an alternative way of being Jewish (Saldarini 1995:244). "In fact, Matthew still had a fading hope that he would prevail and make his program normative for the whole Jewish community" (Saldarini 1991:41).

This was not strange for Second Temple Jewish thought as demonstrated in divergent interpretations found within the *Jubilees*, the Temple Scroll and the Damascus Document (Saldarini 1994:197; Helyer 2002:119-126, 197-206). Saldarini points to questions posed by Matthew's Gospel over Sabbath worship (12:2), association with sinners (9:11), hand washing (15:2), divorce (19:3) and Jesus' authority (12:38; 16:1) by comparing how this was legitimate discussion for first century Judaism (2001:168-169).

For Saldarini, Matthew was not attacking Judaism but, instead, over the leadership authority within the Jewish community (1995:251-253; 2001:170). Matthew was interpreting the law "like everyone else" but was doing so through the person of Jesus (Saldarini 1995:251). What Matthew sought to do was "delegitimate his opponents' interpretation of Judaism" (Saldarini 1992:659-680). In turn, the Matthean community would be seen as legitimate and authoritative leaders of Judaism (Saldarini 1992:671). Saldarini has concluded that the Matthean community was addressed as an *ekklesia*

(private, voluntary association) by Matthew since the group was viewed as a deviant sect by the Jewish community (Saldarini 1995:254-256).

2.1.4 Sim and “Christian Judaism”

David Sim has noted that not only were there Jewish Christian groups, but many alternative groups such as those who followed James and Paul (2008:31). Sim contends that it is wrong to think of the early Christian movement as complete and with a strong sense of direction (2001:10). There were too many disagreements and divisions to conclude that Christianity was a single, unified community. The Gospels are proof that the evangelists edited their works for specific contexts suited to local traditions, providing a distinct portrait of Jesus for that tradition (2001:23).

In considering the Matthean community as one example, Sim asks a series of questions for scholars to consider: Did this community suffer persecution from the Gentiles? Were the Gentiles expected to follow the law in the Matthean community? When and how did the community break with formative Judaism? How should this community be seen in light of the Roman imperial context (2008:28-30)?

Sim has suggested that in the Great Commission (Matt 28:19) the assumption was that Gentile converts were to be circumcised as well as baptized (1998:247-254). The Matthean community was to obey the Torah as taught by Jesus (1996:186-1870). These questions have also led Sim to suggest that the date and context of Matthew’s Gospel should be much later than supposed, probably late first century or early second century (2008:19).

Sim sees the development of the Matthean community as an attempt to establish itself as the group that is “righteous” as opposed to those who are “wicked” through the use of sectarian language (1998:109-110). The language used by Matthew was also used by other Jewish sects, such as the Essenes, in hostile denunciation of the Jewish leadership (1998:111). As has been demonstrated by Sim (1998:117), Matthew also used the sectarian language to deliver his polemic against the Jewish leadership in his Gospel: righteous/lawless (13:41-43), wise/foolish (7:24-27; 25:1-13), faithful/wicked (5:45; 7:17-18; 12:34-35; 22:10; 25:14-30).

Even though Matthew used language that was polemical, it is clearly a sociological principle that between two disputing groups, the closer the dissent, the greater the conflict (1998:121). Sim has suggested this is evidence that the Matthean community was a sect **within** Judaism and that it “was still fundamentally Jewish in practice and belief and perceived itself to represent the true version of Judaism” (1998:142). The key difference was the need to follow Jesus in obeying the Torah (cf. Sim 1996:188-195).

2.2 Rebellious Movement away from Judaism

As opposed to a sect within, other scholars see early Christian groups as diverging or evolving away from Judaism over a period of time (Stendahl 1968; Dunn 1991; Wright 1992; Stanton 1993). Common among these viewpoints is the separation of the Christian movement from Judaism and the implications of that divergence.

2.2.1 Stendahl and “Matthew’s Handbook”

Krister Stendahl broke new ground when he proposed that the Gospel of Matthew reflected a school with rabbinic and catechistical training (1968:12). The Gospel material Matthew composed was drawn from a handbook already in use among the community (1968:24). Stendahl has suggested the school was primarily for teachers and church leaders with a handbook comparable to an instruction manual (1968:29-35). Scaer, too, has concluded that the Gospel composition was a “catechism in narrative form” (2002:16).

For Stendahl, the quotations from the Old Testament in Matthew’s Gospel compared to the Midrash pesher of the Qumran sect (1968:35). The free use of Old Testament quotations served as evidence that Matthew’s school was reflecting and interpreting the Old Testament as depictions of Jesus as Messiah, much like an apologetic for Christianity (pp. 190-195). The prominence of preaching is central to understanding the literary development in the Gospels (Stendahl 1968:13-14).

As time progressed, Matthew's community stood in greater contrast with the Jewish community. Still, there was a struggle for control of Judaism.

The separation of the church from the synagogue is a painful factor in Matthew's situation and the conflict for the loyalties of Jewish people is a live one. This means that the situation in which Matthew wrote was probably not a time when the separation of Christianity from Judaism was complete and final (Cope 1976:51).

Yet, Matthew brought the Gospel to the traditional Jewish setting in such a way as to avoid suspicion as others had encountered. Matthew's Gospel demonstrated a smoother transition between Judaism and Christianity (Stendahl 1968:xiii).

2.2.2 Dunn and "The Parting of the Ways"

Matthew still saw himself as an insider within Judaism (*intra muros*-“within the walls”) as he began to write his Gospel (Dunn 1991:156). Matthew wrote as an insider to portray Jesus in the best light to other insiders, which eventually led to confrontation. Dunn points to two key characteristics provided in Matthew's Gospel that revealed the growing confrontation after 70 AD for defining what Christianity means inside of Judaism (pp. 151-152).

- (a) The stress of loyalty to the law by Matthew (5:17-19, 23).
- (b) The use of “their synagogues” (4:23; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54) as a means of conveying ownership (i.e. looking outside in).

By looking at the Gospels of Matthew and John, as well as the books of Hebrews and Revelation, it is evident that Jewish Christianity was strong for many decades (Dunn 1991:238).

There were four pillars of Second Temple Judaism that could be described as “common” among all the different Jewish sects: the temple, monotheism, election of Israel as God's people, and the Torah (Dunn 2003b:286-292). Dunn has stressed that it is important to see that early Christianity embraced these pillars combined with the Jesus tradition that was

traced to the first disciples (2003b:882). Matthew's Christology was exhibited by portraying Jesus as Wisdom (Matt 11:19) and divine presence (Matt 1:23; 18:20; 28:20) among the community (Dunn 1991:213-215).

Dunn prefers to speak of the "enduring Jewish character of Christianity" (1991:258). It is far better, he notes, to see the continuity between Christianity and its Jewish heritage (pp. 257-258). For Dunn, the inevitable parting of the ways was primarily between Christianity and Jewish Christianity, rather than Christianity as a whole and rabbinic Judaism (p. 239). This parting was decisive in the first thirty years of the second century (pp. 238-243). Therefore, a complementary development occurred for Jewish Christians with its previous focus on the priestly heritage within Second Temple Judaism combined with the emerging oral heritage within the new community (pp. 257-258).

2.2.3 Wright and "Exile and Renewal"

Wright has argued that Jesus did not come to establish a church because there was already one, the people of Israel (1996:275). Jesus' intention was to reform Israel into the community that was expected because of the offering of the kingdom and the new covenant through his presence (Wright 1992:445; 1996:277-279).

Many Jews of the Second Temple period regarded themselves still in exile, especially after 70 AD (Wright 1992:386). Matthew begins his Gospel with a triadic genealogy leading from Abraham to David, David to the exile, and the exile to Jesus (Matt 1). Wright suggests the genealogy sets the story for the community to realize that Jesus, who is God among us, will bring them out of exile to a state of renewal through the kingdom promises (p. 388).

There is a way by which Israel can be rescued from her exile, can receive the promised forgiveness of sins rather than the ultimate curse. It is the way of following Jesus (Wright 1992:388).

Two key components the early church celebrated, baptism and the Lord's Table, pointed to both the symbol and significance of the story of Jesus

in the Gospels. Baptism pointed to the recognition and identification of the community with Jesus' message, while the Lord's Table pointed to the acknowledged fulfillment of Jesus' promises. Wright combines these to identify a worldview of exile and return prevalent in the mindset of Jewish identity (1996:553-562). These celebratory actions by early Christians served as the most striking features of its worship of Jesus (1992:448). Jesus, then, was bringing the restoration to his people as exhibited by the church.

2.2.4 Stanton and a "New People"

"The evangelist's primary aim is to set out the story of Jesus" so Stanton describes the thrust of Matthew's Gospel (1993:45). The law and the prophets were still important to Matthew and authoritative for the Christian community. The one exception was the love-commandment developed fully in the teaching of Jesus (p. 49). For Stanton, the Gospel of Matthew was addressing those in the parent group (Judaism) who felt like a persecuted minority (pp. 93-95).

The sectarian idea is central for Stanton, and he has demonstrated a comparison of Matthew's Gospel with the Damascus Document of the Qumran community to give greater understanding to the social setting of these groups (1993:88-98). The Damascus Document, as pointed out by Stanton, was an appeal to the "true way" and was essentially a protest movement within Essenism (1993:93). The Qumran community felt as if they were the faithful ones before God and suffered as the minority due to their righteous living (Wilson 2005:229). Stanton has observed that both writings have a polemic directed at the leaders in the dominant group to distance themselves as a minority group (1993:96).

Stanton has pointed to 6 areas within the Gospel of Matthew demonstrating the new community Matthew addressed was still close to the Jewish group, yet on parting ways (1992:382-386).

- (a) Conflict of Jesus and his followers with the religious leaders (Matt 23 as climax)—Matthew used the term hypocrite on thirteen

occasions to describe the religious leaders (compared to Gospel of Mark-once; Gospel of Luke-none).

- (b) The contrast between synagogue and the church (6:2, 5; 23:6)—Jesus' disciples are not to follow the example of the scribes and Pharisees.
- (c) Community centered in church and not temple (16:18; 18:20; 28:20)—the mercy of Jesus is greater than the temple! The idea of God's presence through Jesus with the community was a strong motif for Matthew to his community.
- (d) The kingdom is offered to the Gentiles (8:5-13; 15:13; 28:20)—Matthew made clear that the offer of the kingdom would be extended universally.
- (e) The distinction between the Jews and Christians was alluded to as the Gospel concluded (28:15). Stanton has pointed to Matthew's emphasis that those Jews who did not accept the claims of Christianity were seen as distinct from the new people (1992:385).
- (f) Opposition and Persecution (5:10-12; 10:17-23; 23:34-37)--This demonstrated the trauma of separation and threat of hostility.

Apostates who reject totally the world-view and values of the community can be ignored, but 'heretics' who still share some of the values of the community, as well as erring or unfaithful members, are often roundly condemned (Stanton 1992:386-387).

As Stanton has concluded, the Gospel of Matthew is much like an apology defending the existence of a group or sect that has parted from its parent. This parting was due to Jesus as the agent of God whereby the "new people" enjoyed the divine presence (1992:389). The essence of Matthew's Gospel was providing the new community with a new story that had its roots within the Old Testament and Jewish heritage.

2.3 Remnant Movement beside Judaism

Many scholars point to the fact that early Christianity was definitely Jewish, but also distinct in its Jewish expression (Bauckham 1993; Ascough 2001; Skarsaune 2002, 2007). The difference posed by the remnant movement concept is the distinct identity of Jewish Christianity from Judaism.

2.3.1 Bauckham and “Christianity the New Temple”

Bauckham has questioned the model that perceives Christianity developing out of Judaism and becoming a new religion (1993:135). One vital point he has made is that within the history of Judaism, there were many diverse ideas but all shared a common Judaism (pp. 139-141). Common Judaism shared in the temple, the Torah, divine election as God’s people, and monotheism (p. 139). Eventually, rabbinic Judaism and Christianity stood side by side as separate groups, yet still sharing a common foundation. Bauckham has made the deduction that “we have to say that by the end of the first century not just rabbinic Jews but most non-Christian Jews placed Jewish Christians outside the community of Israel” (p. 137).

By comparing the Qumran community to early Christianity, it can be demonstrated that there was a point of withdrawal from temple worship with the community serving as its substitution (Bauckham 1993:141). By considering how early Christianity viewed the temple, there is a clearer perception of how it understood its own role. Bauckham has underscored the importance of the temple to early Christianity (1993:143).

- (a) Christians continued to worship in the temple as witnessed in Acts (2:46; 3:1; 5:42).
- (b) The Gospels preserve Jesus’ prophecy of the temple destruction and the early church must have expected it to happen (Matt 23:38; 24:2; Mark 13:2; 14:58; 15:29; Luke 13:35; 19:44; 21:6; John 2:19).
- (c) The early Jerusalem church (Christians) saw its community as the eschatological temple of God. Why did they believe such a radical thought?

This must have expressed the conviction that in the Christian community, through the mediation of the exalted Christ, God's promised eschatological presence in the midst of his people was taking place. The place of God's eschatological presence—the new temple—was the church (Bauckham 1993:144).

The importance of this model is it demonstrates how Christianity was linked to common Judaism, yet, also, existed as a distinct group relative to Judaism. Eventually, Christianity would reinterpret other beliefs found in common Judaism from a Christological understanding of Jesus, further defining what Christianity meant as an institution (Bauckham 1993:148).

2.3.2 Ascough and “Community Formation”

The formation of the *ekklesia* as used by Matthew is a sure way of evaluating Matthew's community and early Christianity according to Ascough (2001:96-97). The need for an authoritative text drove Matthew to write his Gospel (p. 101). Ascough accounts for the community growth through the model of Bruce Malina with his three stages of community formation, community cohesion, and community regulation and adds a fourth, community performing (p. 99-114).

- (a) Community formation was needed because the Matthean community could not continue to organize around Jesus as Messiah in the synagogue. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact time and nature of the break of Matthew's community from the synagogue, it seems evident that a conflict was occurring close to his group. Matthew proceeds to demonstrate that Jesus was “the divine patron of the *ekklesia*” in Matthew 16:17-19 (Ascough 2001:105).
- (b) Community cohesion was the process of the Matthean community becoming unified through defined leadership and goals (Ascough 2001:107-109). Matthew referred to threats of persecution from without and dissension from within (10:17-25; 18:21-35).

- (c) Community regulation was evidenced by interpersonal relationships and conflict resolution (18:15-20). “Clearly, the Matthean Christians wanted to ‘differentiate’ themselves from Jewish groups” (Ascough 2001:113). Matthew wanted the *ekklesia* to be noticeable as a group similar to, but different, from the synagogue.
- (d) Community performing was identified by Matthew as the Great Commission for the church (28:19-20). Here was the central vision, centered on Jesus, inspiring those within the new *ekklesia* for years to come (Ascough 2001:124-125).

2.3.3 Skarsaune and “Jewish Influences”

For Skarsaune, the criterion of Jewish ethnicity should guide historical studies, rather than the ideological (2007a:4). One major piece of evidence in Skarsaune’s favor is that no ancient source ever speaks of Jewish Christians from an ideological sense, as opposed to identifying them quite often from an ethnic sense (p. 4). “A ‘Jewish Christian’ is a Jewish believer in Jesus who, as a believer, still maintains a Jewish way of life” (p. 5). Skarsaune emphasizes that it is an historical fact that the Jewish leadership viewed Gentiles differently as Christians from Jews who were Christians (p. 7).

Recent studies also demonstrate that when Jesus was debating with Jewish leaders, he was speaking from within Pharisaic circles, which were altogether complex (Skarsaune 2002:106). In fact, one should speak of “several Judaisms” and schools of thought when categorizing the first-century Jewish religion (Skarsaune 2002:107). Skarsaune has pointed to the fact that both Judaism and Christianity of the first centuries were pluriform phenomena (2007b:779).

Two influences seem to have affected the early Jewish Christian movement to a greater degree: the temple and the Diaspora synagogue (Skarsaune 2002:106-107; 2007b:763-770). First, the temple served as the core of Jewish thought and life (Skarsaune 2002:106). It was from Jerusalem that the disciples’ first spoke of Jesus as Messiah, since the voice of authority for Jews was there in the temple (2002:149). Second, for the Jews of the Diaspora, the synagogue served as a real substitute for the temple service,

especially post 70 AD (2002:125). Within the Diaspora community, there was no physical separation of Jewish Christians from Gentile Christians. Because of the close proximity between Jewish and Gentile believers, unity was sought in their communal practices (Skarsaune 2007b:767).

The attitude of the early Christian community toward the temple and Torah is evident in the New Testament. First, early Christians went to the temple to teach and pray, not to offer sacrifices (Acts 2:46). Matthew reminded his readers of Jesus' words that the temple should be a place of prayer (Matt 21:13). Once the temple was destroyed, the Church continued to meet in synagogues, seemingly not disturbed by the political ramifications of the temple loss (Skarsaune 2002:155).

The second aspect of Judaism, the Torah, was an issue the early Christians struggled over internally. There were indications that various Jewish believers wrestled with the degree of keeping or not keeping halakah and maintaining their identity (Skarsaune 2002:179). Matthew drew attention to the fact that the law was significant in the ministry of Jesus (Matt 5:17-19).

2.4 Evaluation of Models and Implications for the Matthean Community

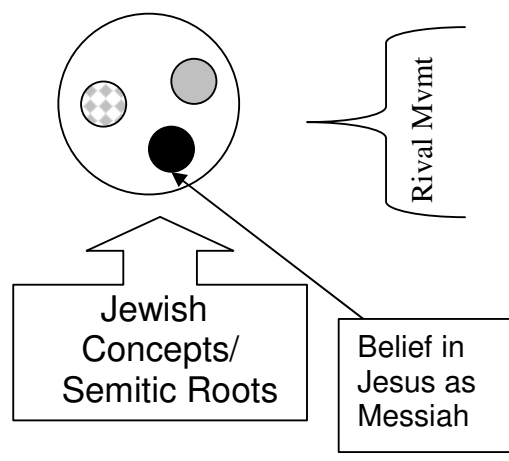
The research shows the various attempts to identify the early Christian movement and its relationship to Judaism. By arranging the views in the terms of rival, rebellious, and remnant movements, one can better contrast the differences demonstrated. Yet, for all the differences, the one key similarity is the Jewish influence on Christianity. Which model best accounts for explaining both the Jewish nature of the Matthean community and its differences from Judaism, as well as from other early Christian communities?

To focus on one model alone is too one-dimensional. Instead, the strength of each model should be observed in its particular feature, leading to a dynamic model that demonstrates the various dimensions that were functioning. Weren has sought to remedy this predicament with his three-stage model reconstruction of the Jewish Christian community (2005:51-62).

Where his reconstruction focuses on the temporal aspects (pre-70 AD, 70-80 AD, 80-90 AD), the models here are seen as interrelated without time barriers.

2.4.1 Rival Movement: An Ethnic Model

The rival movement conveys the idea that the early Christians were just a sect in Judaism (Overman 1990), a competitive group with Judaism (Saldarini 1991; cf. Deutsch 1996:4-6), or a radical group of Jewish believers in Jesus (Sim 1998). What must be understood is that early Jewish Christians continued to see themselves as the Jewish community (Weren 2005:53). Within that community, what distinguished them was belief in Jesus. This eventually led to competition within that ethnic group. Thus, for the rival movement, Matthew was competing for a leadership position among Jewish Christians making his group a legitimate one among others (Riches 2000:316-324). Even the narrative thread of Matthew's Gospel demonstrates an increasing conflict with Israel (Luz 2005:244). Yet, for Saldarini, "Matthew lost the battle for Judaism...and became a separate, competing group" (1991:60-61).



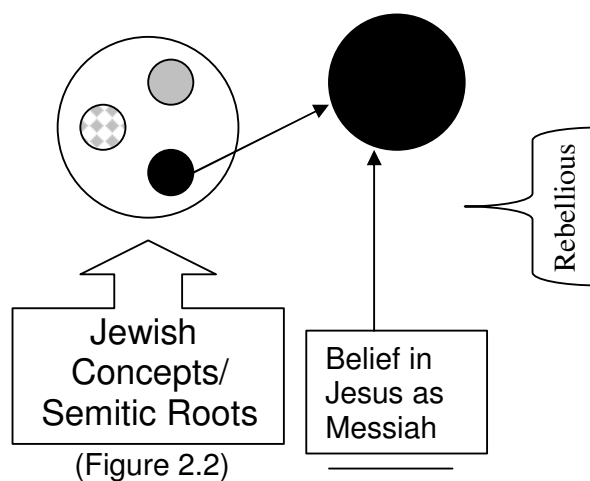
(Figure 2.1)

In Figure 2.1, the enlarged circle stands for Judaism; the smaller light grey circles stand for various Jewish sects; and the dark circle represents the Jewish-Christian communities distinguished by belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

2.4.2 *Rebellious Movement: A Sociological Model*

The rebellious movement goes further to reveal the separation between Judaism and early Christianity. Stendahl has argued for a handbook used by the new community to distinguish itself from its parent group (1968). With Dunn, the parting of the ways means the new community has matured into a new direction that is not compatible with Judaism (1991). For Wright, the Church was the aftermath of Israel's own exile due to the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah (1992), while Stanton continues that idea with the "new people" breaking away because of their faith in Jesus and the conflict that emerges (1993).

Thus, for the rebellious movement, Matthew was addressing the Jewish mind with Jewish concepts. An apologetic was developed that would demonstrate why the new community could no longer exist co-dependently with Judaism, thereby alienating itself from a Jewish social framework (Weren 2005:58-59). Repschinski contends that the controversy stories in Matthew were composed to reflect the tension between the Jewish leadership of the synagogues and those leaders within the Matthean community (2000:329). The "Jewish leaders are condemned for not allying with Jesus" and become opponents of the Christian community (Viljoen 2007:707).

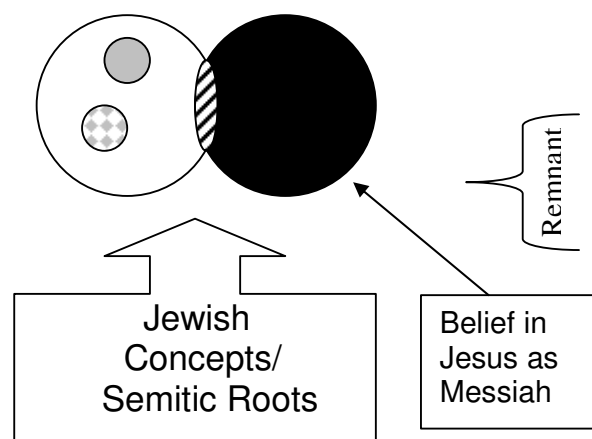


In Figure 2.2, the early Church is seen as moving away from Judaism toward a distinct position of its own. This would be similar to a mother-daughter loss of association (Luz 2007:53).

2.4.3 *Remnant Movement: A Theological Model*

With the remnant movement, a clear distinction is drawn between Judaism and Jewish Christianity. The distinction, though, was found in the theological dimension. Bauckham has stressed that the theology of the Christian community was centered on the common themes and concepts of Judaism, but differed from Judaism with its Christological interpretation of those concepts (1993). Ascough (2001) has brought the importance of community formation for the early church in defining itself, demonstrating the unique character of the *ekklesia* in the first century. Viljoen has drawn attention to the new community as the “restored people of God” (2007:705).

Finally, Skarsaune has reminded us of the Jewish influence upon the new community as it developed into its own legitimate group outside of the oversight of Judaism (2002). Thus, for the remnant movement, Matthew was writing a Gospel that was authoritative as witnessed in the life and ministry of Jesus, and, through his fulfillment of all the Jewish expectations as found in the temple and covenants.



(Figure 2.3)

In Figure 2.3, the overlap conveys agreement and complementary positions found among Jewish Christians, while still distinct through belief in Jesus.

2.4.4 Implications for the Matthean community

The Matthean community was Jewish. It was also Christian. There were links to other Jewish Christian communities (networks) who also encountered situations similar to the Matthean community (Stanton 1993:50-53; Bauckham 1999:877-882). It is naïve to think in terms of an isolated Matthean community; it had missionary fervor from the start (Bird 2002:227). Bauckham has given several arguments for a networking community that would be an appropriate place for the Gospel to be addressed (1999:876-882).

- (a) There was a high mobility and communication within the Roman world.
- (b) The early Church thought of itself as a worldwide movement.
- (c) Historically, Christian leaders were traveling from place to place.
- (d) Letters sent between churches were a common practice to the 2nd century
- (e) Papias and Ignatius both refer to close contacts between churches.
- (f) The evidence of conflict and diversity suggest a network of churches.

In the study that follows, the following assumptions of the Matthean community guided the research process. These are made in light of the threefold warning by Neusner concerning false assumptions when it comes to Jewish-Christian relations (1998:234). First, one should not speak of Judaism and Christianity as coherent entities. Second, one should not speak of “the Jews” or “the Christians” as coherent social entities. Third, one cannot draw from literary facts evidence beyond that of the social world of the author.

For Hengel, none of the Gospels was written to a particular community, and he has adamantly asserted that one “cannot even say with certainty whether they ever came into being in one community...” (2000:107). Bauckham, like Hengel, has argued that the Gospels were not written for a specific community, but, instead, for wide circulation (1999:865-867). Yet, ultimately, the Jesus tradition was not a hodgepodge of material drifting in

social circles. Most scholars have recognized the tension Matthew posits between the circle of Jesus followers and the Jewish leadership (Keener 1999:45; Repschinski 2000:329).

Blomberg has argued for both viewpoints, in that the evangelists had specific communities in mind as they wrote, but the compositions were quickly and widely circulated as contested in Acts (1992:34-37; cf. Riches 2000:6). It consisted of a selection that was based on the needs of the early communities (Schnackenburg 1996:265). Each community did not exhaust the Jesus tradition, but within the network of communities, a larger picture of Jesus would develop (p. 266).

2.4.4.1 An Inevitable Separate Community

There was a Matthean community and similar communities linked to the author of the Gospel, consisting of Jewish Christians who saw themselves as a separate and distinct community from Judaism as a social entity (Stanton 1984:269). Yet, one should not assume this accounted for all Jewish-Christian communities, as demonstrated in the rival model above.

The implications for the Matthean community were both theologically and sociologically apparent within Matthew's Gospel. Either the Christological reflections by Matthew (Son of David, Son of Man, authority above that of the temple) indicated a break that transpired or one that was about to happen between the Jewish Christians in the Matthean community and the local Jewish leadership over the person of Jesus (Senior 1999:5; White 2010:314-315).

The principal disagreement between Jewish Christians and other Jews was their conception of the Messiah (Wilson 2005:159). This would also entail social ramifications. As Tomson has demonstrated, there was a sociological polarization due to the Jewish war and its aftermath (2003:4-7). Added to the sociological tension was the "survival of the fittest" concept, demonstrated in the sudden and rapid development of Christianity next to Judaism after the events of 70 AD (Sanders 1993:244-257). By the early 2nd century, both the Didache and Epistle to Barnabas reflected contrasting views, pointing to a social conflict within rabbinic Judaism, Gentile Christianity, and Jewish-Christianity. The Roman wars would produce tensions and prejudice among

the Jewish and Gentile populace alike, without any theological immunization due to the sociological changes (Tomson 2003:25-26).

2.4.4.2 Jewish Leadership Viewed Negatively

Matthew does present the Jewish leadership in a negative light based on their present attitude toward Jesus and his followers. By using the term *hypokritōn* (“hypocrite”) thirteen times in his Gospel (6:2,5,16; 7:5; 15:7; 22:18; 23:13,15,23,25,27,29; 24:51) as compared to one time in the Gospel of Mark and none in Gospel of Luke), the conflict was emphasized to those who had reasons for such debate (Stanton 1992:383). Pretense was known and valued as a characteristic of those acting on the stage within the Greek culture (Hagner 1993:139).

Jesus was raised near a theatre in Sepphoris (Batey 1984), so to use this term as descriptive of the Jewish leadership was clearly insulting. Draper has pointed out that most of the passages dealing with hypocrisy were in contexts condemning a public display of righteousness, as opposed to the followers of Jesus doing their righteousness in “secret” (2005:230-235). In turn, the “hypocrites” had the power to punish and report followers of Jesus (Matt 10:17-23). By practicing their faith in secret, they would avoid public confrontation and conflict where possible (Draper 2005:235). This demonstrates that Jewish Christians still held to their Jewish identity. Yet, Matthew drew upon these remarks to demonstrate what tensions should be expected as the new community followed the leadership of Jesus.

2.4.4.3 Ekklesia as Eschatological Presence of Jesus

By using the term *ekklesia* twice in contrast to the synagogue (“their”) and temple, Matthew stressed the divine presence of Jesus among the new community (Matt 16:18; 18:17). This also exemplifies the sociological struggle experienced in the early Matthean community. The use of the term *ekklesia* pointed to the distinction of the new community alongside the synagogue (Ascough 2001:114). Within this new community, Jesus’ authority would be experienced through the teaching (“binding and loosing”) of its leadership (Matt 16:18). Matthew associated the scribes and Pharisees with the

synagogue (Stanton 1992:383). Within the Beatitudes, the new community understood Jesus' pronouncement as speaking of them: blessed, persecuted, salt, and light within the world (Matt 5:3-16).

2.4.4.4 New Worldview outside the Jewish Temple

The real challenge in the Gospel of Matthew is to see the writing from a Jewish worldview (Allison 1993:133) while, also, noticing the direct challenge to that worldview in the demonstration that Jesus has authority above cherished Jewish symbols (Matt 5:17-20; 9:6; 12:6; 20:28; 26:28; 28:18), thereby, deserving of divine attention (Hare 2000:273-277; Welch 2009:190). For the new community, it was the *ekklesia* as the presence of Jesus, and not the synagogue, that was worthy of attention (Weren 2005:58-60).

The concept of the *ekklesia* was the transition for which Matthew sought to convey (Weren 2005:59). "A new kingdom-praxis was articulated that was both novel and subversive of the value-system that the accepted symbols enjoined in the name of God's authoritative rule over Israel" (Freyne 1988:267). For the Matthean community, the role of the Jewish symbols culminated in the person of Jesus (Sim 1996:171; Riches 2000:181-182).

2.4.4.5 Jesus as New Interpreter

Matthew did not expect his readers to be more "conservative in the interpretation and more rigorous in observance" of the Torah than the Pharisees or Qumran community (Hare 2000:270). Instead, the Torah was understood through a "prophetic" reading revealing a new *interpretation* through the love and mercy of Jesus (Snodgrass 1992:369). Matthew used the word νόμος (law) eight times (5:17,18; 7:12; 11:13; 12:5; 22:36,40; 23:23) but never to refer to Jesus' teaching (Burridge 2007:209-211). Matthew drew the balance between Jesus' approach to the law as fulfillment (Matt 5:17-19) and the contrast that his teachings were not rigorous (Matt 11:28-30). Jesus was portrayed as the one who brings understanding through his teachings, making disciples of those who follow (Luz 2005:123). Ultimately, Jesus' interpretation was seen as the true understanding of God, leading the way toward perfection (Matt 5:48) and Torah fulfillment (Schroter 2008:246).

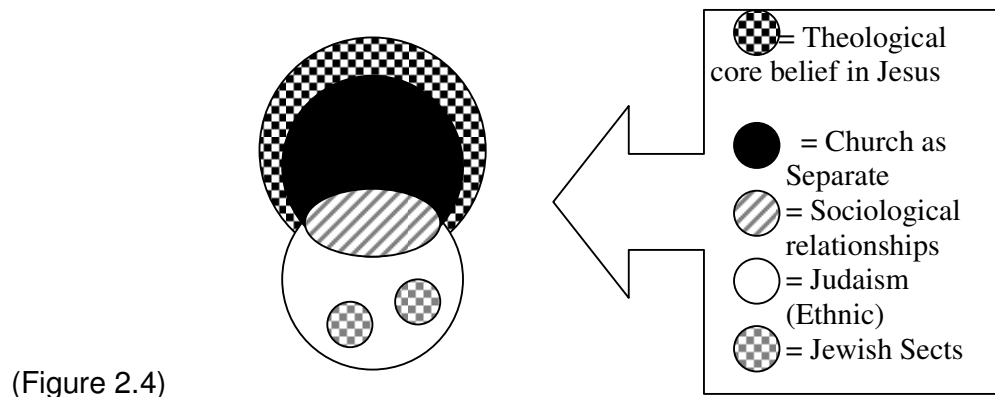
2.5 Conclusions of Jewish-Christian Matthean Community

Matthean scholarship is still divided over both the Jewish-Christian identification and the composition of the Matthean community. For Overman, Sega, Saldarini, and Sim, the early communities existed within Judaism and were composites of Judaism (**ethnic**). Other scholars, such as Stendahl, Dunn, Wright, and Stanton understand the historical and social proximity of the early church to Judaism, but emphasize the separation and departure of the two groups from one another (**sociological**). For these scholars, the Matthean community sought for the legitimation of itself and the delegitimation the parent body of Judaism (Repschinski 2000:54). Finally, there is Bauckham, Ascough, and Skarsaune who have demonstrated that the early church was greatly influenced by Judaism, but developed ecclesiastically outside of Judaism, meaning there was no need to break away from a parent group **theologically**.

What this study has found is that all the models, when used conjointly, can demonstrate the interrelations and interactions of the early Jewish-Christian movement. No one model can explain the new community entirely. A more accurate depiction of the Matthean community involves viewing the ethnic, sociological, and theological dimensions together in enhancing a broader understanding of the Gospel. The Matthean community was involved in both the Jewish and Christian world, resulting in the inevitable construction of their own (cf. Hagner 1996:49-50).

In the following model, the dynamic dimensions of all three models are represented. As illustrated, the Christian community always had the theological core belief that Jesus was the Messiah, differentiating the group from Judaism. Yet, this model also demonstrates that within the ethnic body of Judaism, a Christian community could be found, ultimately being identified as the Church (cf. Figure 2.4).

Dynamic Model



It is understood in this paper, when referring to the Matthean community, that there was probably a network of communities in a wide geographical area associated with the Matthean tradition (Stanton 1993:378; Bauckham 1999:865-866; Weren 2005:51; Sim 2008:14-15). Viljoen has suggested the term “Matthean audience” to convey both the target of the composition as well as the wider scope of the Gospel (2006b:243). Matthew addressed this community directly but it should also be remembered that the Gospel was written with an ability to communicate widely outside of the specific community itself (Bauckham 1999:872-873; cf. Schroter 2008:234).

The Gospel of Matthew was written from a particular Jewish paradigm readily understood by its readers. Those readers would understand the paradigm shift Matthew implied with Jesus as the protagonist. Matthew’s community, although Jewish, demonstrated a new perspective that could not be traced to a past or present Judaism (Hagner 2003:197). Matthew wrote with the understanding that he belonged to a different group from Judaism (Luomanen 1998a:478). The tension for Matthew was between the “old and the new” (cf. Matt 13:52; Duling 1995a:378). Weren has pointed to four areas demonstrating the position of the Matthean community as separate from Judaism (2005:58-61).

- (a) The terms used to describe its communal involvement, *ekklesia* as contrasted to the synagogue, expressed a separate way of thinking.

- (b) The missionary strategy of the community developed as the Matthean community became closer to other Christian communities.
- (c) The worship patterns differed in that the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-13) and the Lord's Supper (Matt 26:26-29) was given priority.
- (d) Matthew warns repeatedly of false prophets threatening the core of the community (Matt 7:15-23; 24:11, 24).

In the end, Matthew wanted to convey to the new community that Christianity continued all that was promised in the Old Testament. In practical terms, the community was "the true Judaism" (Morris 1992:2; cf. Neusner 1990:249).

Chapter 3

Major Issues Bearing upon a Contextual Analysis of the Beatitudes

The Gospel of Matthew was composed within the religious and political context after 70 AD (Stanton 1993:124; Hagner 1996:44-45). Religiously, it is the most Jewish of the Gospels (Davies and Allison 1988:80-85; Segal 1991:3-6; Stanton 1993:2-3; Hagner 1996:45; Horrell 2000:145; Wilson 2005:55; Luz 2007:45-46; France 2008:108; Turner 2008:3). “The gospel of Matthew was clearly the most widely respected and utilized gospel text of the Mediterranean church” (Jefford 2005:47).

All early Christianity was Jewish Christianity (Wright 1992:453) and “at the time of its origins, all of what we now call Christianity was Jewish Christianity” (Horrell 2000:136). Yet, after 70 AD, relations between Jewish Christianity and Judaism became fragile and strained (Stanton 1993:124-144; Bauckham 1993:139-148; Hagner 1996:47; Ascough 2001:107-109; Horrell 2002:326; Gurtner 2008:128-130). Christianity was not the only group struggling within a Jewish context. A comparison with the Qumran community has demonstrated that much of the material found in the Gospel of Matthew was in accordance with normal interactions of hostility between sects within the same parent group (Stanton 1993:98-102; Wilson 2005:55-56; Overman 2008:261-263).

Politically, the Matthean community was in a Hellenized culture ruled by the Roman Empire while facing the aftermath of Jerusalem’s destruction (Helyer 2002:101-108; Wilson 2005:25-35, 46-56). Early Christianity was eventually seen by Rome as a new entity without a history and outside of traditional religious groups (Wilken 1980:104-106; Jeffers 1999:72-76;

Skarsaune 2002:59-64; Ferguson 2003:601-607). What did the political climate mean for the new community? How did the Romans view associations outside of their control (Ascough 2001:96-106)?

Defining the community is important in understanding the context by which Matthew addressed his Gospel. When viewing first century social groups, the concepts of kinship/family, honor/shame, and patronage/client must be examined (Hanson 1994b; deSilva 2000a; Malina 2001). Within the Mediterranean culture, these concepts dominated both individual and group relations. Through an understanding of the cultural milieu, the Beatitudes can be interpreted more clearly within its contextual framework.

The key issues facing the Matthean community can be demonstrated in the structure and scope of the Gospel: the covenant promise reflected in the messianic genealogy (Nineham 1976; Hays 2005:169-172), the temple themes and Torah allusions as found specifically in the Sermon on the Mount and the Gospel as a whole (Swartley 1994:27; Gurtner 2008:128-136; Welch 2009), and the new *ekklesia* with its role as the Christ-confessing community (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:251-253, 262-264). How did Matthew see the community he was addressing? What was guiding his compositional structure in both thematic and stylistic terms? What does the study of Matthew yield in terms of the social and historical context?

3.1 The Jewish Metanarrative Used by Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew was structured and arranged by Jewish themes which have been noted by scholars: the Gospel material “goes back to Semitic sources” (Lochs 1978:98), the emphasis on fulfillment of the Old Testament sayings (Morris 1986:118), the “Jewish tradition supply precedent for Matthew’s execution of a Moses typology” (Allison 1993:95), the notion by Matthew “of Jewish faith and practice” which was reinterpreted with a Christian perspective (Senior 1999:21), “wrote with a Jewish framework for a Jewish audience” (Beaton 2002:9), “this heavily accented Jewish gospel” (Scaer 2002:17), written for readers who were “rooted in the traditions of Israel” (Viljoen 2006b:259), how Matthew characterized “defining components

of Judaism” within his Gospel (Gurtner 2008:128), and how “the Jewish context for this Gospel” is important (Sim 2008:14).

Although there is continuity with Judaism within the Gospel of Matthew, it is important to note that for Matthew, “Jewish Christianity is the perfection and fulfillment of Judaism...that a thoroughly Jewish Christianity is still Christianity and not Judaism” (Hagner 2004:281). Throughout the Gospel, Matthew used key Jewish concepts to convey how early Christianity fulfilled the Jewish expectations of the past (cf. Hagner 1996:47; Riches 2000:234). As far as Matthew was concerned, the story of Jesus could not be told apart from the retelling of the history of Israel (Kennedy 2008:218).

It was the paradigmatic retelling of Israel’s history, through the life of Jesus, which demonstrated the teleological narrative Matthew composed (Kennedy 2008:216). Some see the Mosaic imagery as contributing to Matthew’s Christological purpose (Allison 1993; Baxter 1999; Hays 2005). These concepts were formed from the Jewish metanarrative that guided both religious and social thought during the Second Temple period (516 BC-70 AD). This period covered the time the Jewish people were under foreign control and struggling over their national identity (Vanderkam 2001:1).

Those entities that formed the metanarrative of the Jewish people consisted of the covenants, the temple, and the Torah. These three entities guided the Jewish thought and understanding of God (Jones 1996:60-61; Deines 2008:71-83; France 2008:108-110). The metanarrative focus in Matthew’s Gospel will demonstrate that a new paradigm of thought was echoed to the Christian community, what Hays refers to as “the task of reorganizing Israel’s religious language” (2005:166). Using the symbols of covenant (land), temple, and Torah, Matthew employed the known “codes” and modified them in order to portray a new understanding for the community (cf. Riches 2000:22-24).

Together they generated a new vision that not merely supported a separate identity for his group within a shared Jewish inheritance with other groups, but was soon to give rise to an alternative system that would break the mould of that inheritance as this was generally understood in the first century (Freyne 1988:261).

The Jewish entities were reflected in concepts such as land, blessing, righteousness, kingdom, and forgiveness. Therefore, Matthew addressed the Jewish Christian community from a coherent theological paradigm by which they were familiar (Bauman 1985:5). Evans has demonstrated that the very literary structure of the Gospel reflected a Jewish worldview through a Christian motif (2007:244-245).

- Lineage (*genesis*) of Jesus
- Three periods of fourteen generations (Abraham, David, exile)
- Moses' typology in infancy narrative and the five discourses
- The five prophecies appealed to in infancy narrative as fulfilled
- The five antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount and the law
- The mountain motifs in the Gospel
- The familiarity with Jewish customs and traditions in Gospel
- The emphasis on fulfilling the Torah for righteousness

Matthew combined the Jewish metanarrative with the new paradigm as an attempt in answering two disturbing questions in his Gospel: what about our Jewish heritage? In addition, what kind of community are we? These two questions must be explored in order to understand the overall intention of Matthew in his Gospel.

3.1.1 The Covenants: Hope in the Divine Promise Seen through Sonship

With the introduction to the Gospel via a genealogy, Matthew addressed the question of Jewish heritage within the new community. Viljoen has compared the infancy narrative to the *exordium* used in classical rhetorical speeches (2006b:250). Through his focus on Abraham, David, and the exile, images of their past heritage were brought to the forefront drawing applications for the present community and their need for existence as God's presence (cf. Combrink 1983:77).

Matthew was interested in connecting the salvation theme of the Old Testament to the history of Jesus (Eloff 2008:87). In the past, most scholars

have focused on the differences between the Matthean and Lukan genealogies. The move in New Testament scholarship has been to view the genealogies theologically rather than biographically (Bauer 1996:129), although Barr believes the literary plot should govern the Matthean drama (1976:351). By focusing on the narrative world of Matthew, assumptions found within the text can be examined in order to understand the *Sitz im Leben* of the community (Bauer 1996:131-132).

Matthew began his Gospel with the genealogy (*genesis*) of Jesus with the pattern of three sets of fourteen generations (Matt 1:2-17). From the specific text, it appears as the common formula for introducing a genealogy (Hagner 1993:9; Bauer 1996:140; Luz 2007:69). One scholar has suggested the translation “Book of Genesis” to demonstrate how Matthew linked his Gospel to Genesis (Davies 1966:67-72; cf. Davies and Allison 1988:149-154). The phrase “*Biblos geneseos*” was used in Genesis 2:4 and 5:1 in the LXX.

In the ancient world, genealogies were rarely constructed for biological information. The main purpose was to establish the social rank or importance of a person. For Matthew, the purpose would have been to affirm the status of Jesus’ birth as equivalent to God’s presence (cf. Luz 2005:84-85). The genealogy served as a “reverse-legitimizing” formulation that demonstrated the ultimate kingdom message and ministry of Jesus (Kennedy 2008:218).

Through literary analysis some see the genealogy as pointing to the origins of Jesus’ relationship to past Israel as well as the new community (Kingsbury 2001:156-157; Turner 2008:56). A better option has been suggested viewing the *genesis* as an allusion to the new creation offered in the Christ-event by which Matthew intended his Gospel to demonstrate (Allison 2005:162; Hays 2005:170; Luz 2005:31).

The generations were from Abraham to David, David to the exile, and the exile to Jesus. “The history of Israel passes before their eyes in concentrated form” (Luz 2007:82). The genealogy Matthew presented alludes to the covenants made with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), David (II Sam 7:10-16), and Jeremiah for the exiles (Jer 31:31-36). These covenants provided continued assurance to Israel of a land from which the kingdom of God would originate, hence, the holy land (cf. Burge 2010:3-11).

First, concerning the Abrahamic covenant, the promise made was that a land would be given (Gen 12:1), a great nation conceived (Gen 12:2), and a meditative blessing to the world (Gen 12:2-3). Matthew, with his allusion to Abraham, was pointing to the origin (*genesis*) of Israel (Matt 1:1) and Jesus (Matt 1:18). Israel's identity was always connected to the Land (cf. Riches 2000:31-37; Burge 2010:11). The land promise guided the Old Testament narrative. Jesus was portrayed as the "eschatological culmination" of the promise given to Abraham (Kingsbury 2001:163).

Second, the Davidic Covenant promised Israel a land of peace (II Sam 7:10-11), a royal line, a house (temple) for David (II Sam 7:12), and a kingdom (II Sam 7:13-16). Matthew linked the kingdom concept of Israel's past with the birth of Jesus. Establishing the Davidic line was of extreme importance to the birth and significance of Jesus in the Matthean story.

Third, the covenant given to those going into exile was a promise to Jeremiah that God would change hearts (Jer 31:33), bring the knowledge of God (Jer 31:34), and forgive sins (Jer 31:34b). Wright has drawn attention to the concept of exile and restoration as fundamental to the thinking of Matthew (Wright 1992:385-388). Jesus, then, was ending Israel's exile through the salvation (Matt 1:21) offered through him. The genealogy would function as an introduction of hope as found in the story of Jesus (Hays 2005:171).

Matthew pointed to the failure of the nation as a son of Abraham and the failure of the monarchy as the son of David (Bauer 1996:146). The Old Testament prophets declared that the loss of the land, due to Israel's disobedience, would be restored in the future because of God's promise (Burge 2010:8). By linking this covenant to Abraham and David, Matthew demonstrated the continuing validity of God's promises to Israel in the possibility of restoration through the birth of Jesus (Matt 1:21) as evidenced in his name (Bauer 1996:146; Eloff 2008:91).

Matthew refers to the Father's relationship to Jesus as Son in the birth narrative (2:15—"out of Egypt I called my Son", RSV throughout unless noted differently), at his baptism (3:17—"my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased"), and the transfiguration story (17:5—"Listen to him"). Matthew was cleverly alluding to both Exodus 4:22-23 ("Israel is my firstborn son") and

Hosea 11:1 (“out of Egypt I called my son”) so “that the story of Jesus acquires the resonances of the story of Israel’s deliverance” (Hays 2005:174).

By linking all three covenants together in the genealogy, Matthew pointed to Christological conclusions that Jesus was the promised Messiah (Matt 1:17), the Son of David (Matt 1:20), and the Son of God (Matt 1:23).

Matthew is stating that the problem of the exile and the consequent nonfulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs, to David, and thus to Israel, are only finally resolved with the coming of Jesus (Eloff 2008:91).

The covenant theme signified that the Jewish metanarrative was conceived with the ideas of land, seed (national identity), blessing, kingdom, righteousness, and forgiveness of sins. Through the demonstration that the *genesis* of Jesus rested on the foundational promises made to Israel in the past, Matthew pointed to a new worldview for the community as being the restoration needed and desired for the future (cf. Pagola 2009:113-114). For Matthew, Jesus was the restorative hope of an exiled people since he was the essence of what God had promised (Matt 1:21).

3.1.2 *The Temple: Faith in the Divine Presence Through Emmanuel*

Within Jewish thought and heritage, two symbolic representations were utilized in expressing the presence of God among his people. The one viewed the temple as a representation of the cosmos, while the other understood the temple as symbolic of God’s heavenly dwelling (Klawans 2006:128). Despite the difference in views, in “both cases the temple has cosmic significance, and its ritual has symbolic value” (Klawans 2006:144). Bauckham has stressed that the Jewish identity was bound to the temple itself because the temple assured God’s people of his presence through priestly access (1993:142).

For Matthew, it was vital to stress to the new community that the birth of Jesus meant “God with us” as conveyed in the name Emmanuel (Matt 1:23). Some scholars see the “divine presence” as the key to interpreting the

Gospel of Matthew (van Aarde 1994; Kupp 1996). For Kupp, the two names at the beginning of the Gospel, *Jesus* and *Emmanuel*, demonstrate that God's presence was in the mission and person of the Messiah, guiding the flow of thought throughout the book (1996:235). In the Sermon on the Mount, Welch has identified at least 53 words used with allusions to the temple (2009:43). Why, then, did Matthew employ the temple motif in his Gospel?

Within the Jewish metanarrative, God's presence was confirmed through the temple. The temple had a presence in Jerusalem that was both intimidating and inviting. It controlled every area of life for the Jewish person. The Holy of Holies was significant, as the place of God's sanctified presence, expressed by the importance people placed on the temple and its authority (Skarsaune 2002:93). The temple was more than a building. It served as their national identity with the ideological concept that Israel was God's chosen people and Jerusalem the holy city of God (France 2008:123).

The prophet Isaiah told of a time when God would reign over the entire world from the temple in Jerusalem (Is 24:23; 61:11). Peace and righteousness would be characteristic of that kingdom. Israel, as the people of God, attached their identity to the land and the temple (cf. Riches 2000:38-65). Within this metanarrative Matthew composed his Gospel to acclimate the new community to Jesus as the foundation for their identity. Matthew adopts temple language with its conceptual images because the temple would be the one source "of unity, coherence, and meaning" found in his composition, especially the Sermon on the Mount (Welch 2009:11).

Whereas Judaism hoped for the fullness of life in the Land, Christianity replaces those hopes for the restoration of the Land, the Temple and the gathering of dispersion, which were expressed in the Mount Zion traditions, with hopes for the gathering of the nations around the Messiah Jesus (Riches 2000:255).

Through the temple service, it can be observed how God interacted with Israel. First, the nation had faith that approaching God consisted of mediated sacrifice. This consisted of the Day of Atonement as well as daily

sacrifices. “Atonement was regarded as the very *raison d’être* for the temple service” (Skarsaune 2002:95).

Second, ritual purity was of paramount importance as it conveyed holiness in concrete ways (Skarsaune 2002:95; Klawans 2006:5-11). Klawans has proposed that sacrifice and purity should not be separated conceptually, since the dynamic purpose of atoning ritual was in “attracting and maintaining the presence of God within the community” (2006:48).

With the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, Judaism felt an immeasurable loss. The old way of living with the prominence of the temple, priests, and Jewish leaders ended (VanderKam 2001:45). Yet, within the Christian movement, it was not problematic because “the temple was not an essential, irreplaceable institution” (Skarsaune 2002:155). Evidence from Acts demonstrates that early Christians went to the temple for prayers and teaching but not for sacrificing (Acts 2:46; 3:1).

Matthew alluded to this practice as he recalled Jesus’ words that the temple should be a “house of prayer” (Matt 21:13). Skarsaune has surmised that the Christian community in Jerusalem treated the temple as the supreme synagogue, a place for teaching and praying (2002:160). This paradigm became normative for the early Christian community as it gathered for worship (Acts 2:42).

The early Christian community still maintained sacrificial language, howbeit, through metaphorical ritual (Perdew 2007). The community meals and prayers of the early Church demonstrated the metaphor of sacrifice through the values of worship, self-giving, and fellowship. Christians adopted the language of sacrifice, i.e. blood and body, without an altar or temple because the celebration of Eucharist conveyed the true meaning of sacrificial worship through Jesus (Perdew 2007). Therefore, the idea of sacrificial worship was maintained despite the destruction of the temple in 70 AD.

Matthew used the temple motif to develop not only a new paradigm of thought for the early Christian movement, but also to address the issue of authority (Gurtner 2008:133; Welch 2009:190). By using the “greater than” formula, Matthew demonstrated the authority of Jesus in comparison to the temple, Jonah, and Solomon (Mat 12:6, 41, 42). Matthew portrayed Jesus as desiring mercy more than sacrifice (Matt 9:13; 12:7), which brought needed

assurance to the new community with respect to the loss of the temple. Jesus was both superior to and sovereign over the temple with his divine authority and display of mercy (Matt 12:8).

As Crossan has concluded, Jesus' attitude "symbolically" destroyed the temple and "negated the basic value of the Temple as cultic mediator between God and Israel" (1988:126). For Matthew, both the sayings and story of Jesus pointed to God's presence in Jesus' life (Luz 2005:28). Jesus was the presence of God among his people without the physicality for which they were accustomed with the temple. For the new community, a restored temple was no option. Jesus was the new temple of Zion (France 2008:127). God's presence on earth was in the new community, as it exhibited the person of Jesus in message and ministry (Charette 2000:103).

3.1.3 *The Torah: Conformity to the Divine Principles as Fulfillment*

The Torah was considered God's greatest gift to the Jewish people (Ferguson 2003:541). However, just as it was a gift, so it was a duty. Rabbinical emphasis was on the keeping of the commands that governed every aspect of life (Skarsaune 2002:37). Over time, the rabbis found 613 commands in the law. Complementary to the Torah was the oral law. The oral law developed through the numerous interpretations and applications within Judaism. The central aspect of the oral law was to put a fence around the law so no one could break the law without first breaking the fence (Ferguson 2003:542).

Among the Pharisees, there were constant reminders of the Torah. They wore tassels at the end of their garments (*zizith*), attached small containers on their doorposts with written passages of Scripture (*mezuzah*), and prayer straps around their arm (*tefillin*) with selected Scriptures (Ferguson 2003:543). Jesus ministered within this Jewish heritage and tradition.

The real issue between Judaism and early Christianity was not over the authority of the Torah, but how it was to be interpreted (Ferguson 2003:544). Scholars are generally in one of two groups with respect to how Matthew approached the law in his Gospel: those that understand Matthew as supporting the Jewish interpretation of Torah and those that understand

Matthew as providing a new understanding of the role of Torah through the ministry of Jesus (cf. Guelich 1982:136-174; Deines 2008:58).

For those supporting obedience to the Torah, one scholar contends that Matthew's community "rearranged and reweighted" the law to demonstrate a better response to God (Saldarini 1991:50). Furthermore, concerning Judaism, Luz has suggested that one must first decide whether Matthew declared the whole or only a portion of the Torah to be valid (2005:187). The main issue for Matthew and his community was the extent of obedience to the law of Moses in view of Jesus' ministry (Schweizer 1970:214). White has concluded the Sermon on the Mount as the "call to discipleship under the guidelines of Torah" (2010:309).

The crucial passage concerning Matthew's understanding of the law is Matthew 5:17-20. Two key words demand attention (Matt 5:17) as they stand in contrast to the other: *katalusai* and *plērosai*. The infinitive is used in both cases expressing purpose (Rogers and Rogers 1998:10). The term *katalusai* stems from *kataluō* meaning, "to abolish, annul or destroy" (Davies and Allison 1988:483; Hagner 1993:105; Luz 2007:214). It was used for destruction or dismantling of the temple building and the temple institution in Matthew 24:2; 26:61; 27:40 (France 2007:182). It was also used in this sense with other Jewish-Christian groups as evidenced in the Gospel of the Ebionites, the Gospel of the Egyptians, and the Marcionites (Betz 1995:175-176). These sources have similar sayings to Matthew 5:17 that Betz has translated respectively as (1995:175-176):

- "I have come to abolish the sacrifices...." (Gospel of the Ebionites)
- "I have come to abolish the works of femaleness." (Gospel of the Egyptians)
- "I have not come to fulfill the law but to abolish (it)." (Marcionites)

Thiessen has brought attention to the various uses of *kataluō* in 2 Maccabees (2:22; 4:10-11; 8:16-17), 4 Maccabees (4:15-16, 19-20, 24; 5:33; 7:9; 17:9), and Josephus (*Antiquities* 12:364; 15:40-41; *Jewish War* 2:391-393; 4:154, 223, 258, 348, 381-382). He contends that the usage of *kataluō* was ingrained within the minds of the Jewish audience as the idea of "law abolishment" referenced during the Antiochan Persecution (2nd Century BC)

and the Jewish War of 66-70 AD (2009). For Matthew, then, his argument was that the new community was not involved in law abolishing activities.

The word causing the interpretative quandary is *plērosai* (from *pleroō* “to fulfill”). The word could convey the idea of “to finish”, “to perform”, or “to bring to completion” (Delling 1985:869). In the temporal sense, it referred to “coming to an end” and “expiration” (Schippers 1986:1:734). Literally, it means “to fill to the full” (Hagner 1993:105) or “fill something completely” (Yieh 2004:76). Liroy has given the range of meanings *pleroō* could have: “to fulfill as in doing”, “to bring to full expression or meaning”, and “complete” (2004:137). Both Liroy and Yieh contend that all three ideas were present in the declaration by Jesus.

Matthew used *pleroō* sixteen times in his gospel. It was used in Matthew 3:15 in regards to the baptism of Jesus. For Jesus, obedience to Torah, as interpreted, modified, or redefined by him, was the way to righteousness (Foster 2004:258). It was to this proper idea of righteousness (Matt 5:20 “righteousness exceeds the Pharisees”) that Jesus pointed. Jesus developed the theology of proper righteousness throughout the Sermon on the Mount as heart transformation.

Contrasted with *katalusai*, Matthew was emphasizing Jesus’ commitment to Torah through radical obedience (Hays 2005:177). The Torah played a central role in the Matthean composition, but only as it demonstrated the identity of Jesus (Hagner 2004:268). For Matthew, the unique authority of Jesus was evident where there was a question over the meaning of the law (Hagner 2004:267; cf. Viljoen 2006a:146). In the end, “Jesus is not the servant of the Torah; he is its Lord” (Luz 2007:221; cf. Moo 1984:24-37). It was, then, through the authoritative teaching of Jesus, his obedience in death to God’s will, and living a righteous life that the law was made complete as only Christ could do (Liroy 2004:137-139; Yieh 2004:76-77).

The question is did Jesus “fulfill” with his teaching or with his activity? If through teaching, Jesus brought the law “to its intended meaning in conjunction with the messianic fulfillment”, which fit Jewish expectation (Hagner 1993:106; 1997:47). The true meaning of the Torah was explained by Jesus in comparison to erroneous interpretations (Davies and Allison

1988:486; Gundry 1994:81; Gale 2005:30; Viljoen 2006a:141). Matthew was pointing to Jesus as having taught with more confidence “than any 1st-century rabbi....” (Brown 1997:179). This view would correspond to the antitheses that follow in Matthew 5:21-48. Seeing the fulfillment in terms of the authoritative, interpretative teachings of Jesus would be like the later rabbis who maintained their rulings were implied within the Torah (Turner 2008:158). Thus, Jesus was preserving the Torah by explaining its true intent.

This is the explanation of the radical-sounding teaching of Jesus that cuts through the casuistry and mystification of the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus’ commitment to the whole law is no less serious than theirs, but he alone is in a position to penetrate to the intended meaning of the Torah (Hagner 1993:110).

If through his activity, the fulfillment was found in either the “doing” or obeying of the Torah commands, as exemplified in the divine mission of Jesus (Schweizer 1975:107; Luz 2005:200-202), or in his death and resurrection (Guelich 1982:142), or in the prophetic view of the Old Testament pointing to Jesus (Carson 1999:39-41; France 2007:183-184). What unites these concepts is that through Jesus’ a fulfillment of the law and prophets was realized (Schweizer 1975:107). This view would maintain that the “good works” and “righteousness” alluded to in Matthew 5:12, 16 continue to demonstrate the fulfillment of Jesus’ mission through the new community.

Deines suggests that for Matthew it was both the teaching and messianic mission of Jesus by whom the law and prophets were fulfilled (2008:75). The combination of both the law and prophets was a Matthean idiom referring to the entire law (Schweizer 1975:106-108). Along with the Matthean fulfillment motif in the Gospel, the entire law is shown as consummated by Jesus’ messianic work (Westerholm 2006:78). The “formula-quotations” occur ten times in Matthew (1:22-23; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:4-5; 27:9). There are also other quotations without the same introductory formula, but clearly convey fulfillment (2:5-6; 3:3; 11:10; 13:14-15; 15:7-9; 21:42).

This has led France to argue that the central theme of Matthew's Gospel is fulfillment (France 2007:10-12). For Carter, the "fulfillment citations" function to recall God's previous saving work, thereby interpreting Jesus' mission in relation to God's purposes (Carter 2004:120). The Old Testament must be interpreted from a Christological paradigm for an understanding of the changes Jesus generated in his ministry (cf. Blomberg 1992:104). Matthew, then, was rhetorically validating the claims of Jesus' identity by establishing them in the Old Testament texts of Israel (Hays 2005:167).

The implications of Matthew 5:17 cannot be divorced from what precedes (5:13-16) and what follows in Matthew 5:18-20. One central dimension of this passage is the "rootedness" of the New Testament in the Old (Hare 1993:50). Still, for Matthew, it was only through a Christological understanding that the Torah could be viewed as fulfilled (Luz 2007:217). Why did Matthew reference the Law after the introduction (5:3-16)?

The salt/light metaphors provide the bridge from the Beatitudes to the discussion of the law (cf. Dumbrell 1981:1-21). As will be shown in this study, the salt referred to the nature of the new community, while the light spoke of their mission. Light was employed as a symbol for the Torah within Judaism (Dumbrell 1981:17). By referring to the new community as "the light" of the world, it was necessary for Matthew to explain the implications of a statement that conflicted with Jewish thought.

For the new community, Jesus was the only teacher and to follow him was to follow that teaching (Byrskog 1994). Those who heard Jesus were "confronted with the absolute will of God" (Strecker 2000:261). The following conclusions demonstrate that Matthew assumed the Torah was fulfilled by Jesus' mission and had ramifications for the new community.

3.1.3.1 Longevity of Jesus' Teaching (Matthew 5:18)

There was an assurance that Jesus was the eschatological fulfillment within the scope of heilsgeschichtliche. Heaven and earth served either as an idiom for "never" (France 2007:185; Deines 2008:77) or as symbolic language for the temple, since the Jewish worldview saw the temple as a "cosmos in miniature" (Fletcher-Louis 1997:157). With this symbolism, it would serve as

a reminder to the Matthean community that the temple was gone (70 AD) but Jesus' words remained.

Even though the temple was gone, Jewish Christians still had the teachings of Jesus and should have felt no loss (Fletcher-Louis 1997:163). Hagner contends that Jesus was pointing to the eternal character of his teaching that continues despite the passing of heaven and earth, that is, the "end of time" (1993:107-108).

3.1.3.2 Importance of Jesus' Teaching (Matthew 5:19)

Matthew expressed that Jesus was the only teacher for the new community (Byrskog 1994). Its new worldview originated and developed through Jesus' teachings and interpretations. The point by Matthew was that the law retained validity as interpreted by Jesus (Hagner 1998:366). Strange, indeed, would it have been for Matthew if Jesus abrogated the Torah itself, since "it was unthinkable that any true believer should question the eternal validity of God's holy law and prophets" (Brown 1967:41). Instead, it was the "completion" of the Torah in Jesus that Matthew emphasized (Brown 1967:42).

No longer were the commands of the Torah to be viewed outside the reality of the kingdom Jesus announced (Deines 2008:79). Throughout the six antitheses, Jesus used the emphatic "but I say to you", pointing to the "independent, authoritative teaching of Jesus" (Viljoen 2006a:146). For Matthew, the Law could not be understood apart from Jesus' teaching and ministry.

3.1.3.3 Core of Jesus' Teaching (Matthew 5:20)

The central fulfillment by Jesus was the greater righteousness offered through him. By comparison, Jesus was referring to a different concept of righteousness than the Pharisees (France 2007:189), a new idea of righteousness (Hagner 1993:109). For Betz, the righteousness stood for the teachings of Jesus constituting the foundation of the Jewish-Christian community (1995:197). Hauerwas argues that Christianity has always been challenged to what extent the law should be observed (2006:66-67). For Hare, it was qualitative obedience (1993:49). For duToit, it was "obedient realization of God's will" (2000:551). In the magisterial work of Przybylski, he understood

Matthean righteousness as the Jewish concept of conduct (1980:119-123). A better option views the righteousness that Matthew referred to as a Jesus-righteousness experienced by the new community through his messianic mission.

In the end, the question is where the foundation for the righteousness that is valid in the kingdom of God lies: in the Torah or in the work and word of the Messiah...the intention of this phrase is to point out that this righteousness is not possible without Jesus (Deines 2008:81).

The righteousness so many desired by keeping the Torah (heritage) was finally settled in Jesus' own estimation: mercy (Matt 9:13; 12:7) and love (Matt 22-34-40). Matthew demonstrated the proper way to understand the law and prophets was through the mercy and love (cf. Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18) exhibited through the new community (Matt 7:12-15) in its representation of Jesus' words and deeds. All of Torah was "suspended from these two pillars" (Hays 2005:179). The new righteousness came from a new understanding of Torah given by Jesus (Hagner 1993:109; Duetsch 1996:97-98).

3.1.4 Gospel of the Kingdom: Acceptance of Divine Pronouncement through Hearing and Doing

Matthew has provided the link between the Jewish metanarrative and new community paradigm within three ideas: (1) the Jewish concept of kingdom used in (2) the proclamation by Jesus for (3) the purpose of understanding and inculcation by his followers.

The expression "gospel of the kingdom" (*euangelion tas Basileias*) was peculiar for Matthew (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; cf. also 26:13). Matthew used "kingdom" fifty-five times in his Gospel. This was the conceptual bridge between Judaism and the new community. Because of this, some have argued that the Matthean community was just another sect within Judaism (Overman 1990; Saldarini 1994; Sim 1998). Yet, although there was continuity with Judaism, Matthew was clear with "the degree of newness and

discontinuity with Israel that is found repeatedly in Matthew” (Hagner 2008:173).

The emphasis of Jesus proclaiming the “gospel of the kingdom” was central to the paradigm Matthew desired for the new community to adopt in its acceptance and proclamation of Jesus’ words (Kingsbury 1975:130). Matthew intended to lead his community in understanding their identity (duToit 2000:547). Their identity was found in the kingdom proclamation of Jesus.

Jesus was portrayed as “teaching and preaching” throughout the Matthean Gospel. “It is theologically decisive for Matthew that all church proclamation (*euangelion*) is oriented toward the earthly Jesus and has no content other than his words and deeds” (Luz 2007:169). The gospel was the “good news” announced by Jesus of the Kingdom (Kingsbury 1975:133). The core of Jesus’ message was the nearness of God as portrayed in Jesus (cf. Byrskog 1994:269; Pagola 2009:92-100).

The “gospel” concept had both Roman and Jewish roots (Lioy 2004:89). For the Romans, it was used of key events that were announced about the emperor’s life, with ramifications for the peoples. Within Jewish thought, the gospel concept would bring to mind the book of Isaiah (Beaton 2002). Matthew’s ultimate emphasis was on the kingdom and its positive (gospel) content (Nolland 2005:183). It is interesting to note that in Matthew 4:23 and 9:35 Jesus proclaimed the “gospel of the kingdom” in the synagogue setting. This signifies that for Matthew, the new paradigm of thought was at home with the Jewish metanarrative.

Matthew also emphasized the “hearing and doing” with the proclamations of Jesus. Throughout the Gospel, Matthew referred to the responsibility of those who “heard” Jesus (Matt 5:19; 7:24, 26; 11:4; 12:19; 13:9, 13, 14-15, 16, 19, 23, 43; 15:10). Matthew used several Isaianic passages in these pericopes to compare with the prophet’s warning to Israel about the need to hear so they would understand (Is 6:1-13; 11:2-19; 29:13; 42:1-4). As Matthew compared the prophetic warning to the teaching of Jesus, he demonstrated the various responses to Jesus’ ministry (Brown 2008b:268).

Talbert has even taken the ending to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 7:13-27) as “a catalyst for the shaping of intentions” and discipleship

(2006:143). There was also emphasis on “doing” by Matthew (Matt 7:12, 21, 24-27; 16:27; 19:16-22; 24:26; 25:40, 45). The word for “disciple” (*mathētēs*) was used more frequently in Matthew than any of the other Gospels (73 times). For Matthew, doing what Jesus said was the essence of following him (Hagner 2008:177). Matthew never separated the Gospel proclamation of the kingdom from the teaching of Jesus, but fused them both together to form a new paradigm (Luz 2007:169).

The pericope that begins the Matthean discourses set the foundation for Jesus’ proclamation to, and estimation of, the new community with its privileges and responsibilities (Matt 5:3-16). It introduced the first of five discourses found in the Gospel marked by “when Jesus finished all these sayings” (Matt 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). Many scholars see a direct allusion of the five Matthean discourses to the five books of Moses (Bacon 1918; Allison 1993). Within the Beatitudes (Matt 5:3-12) Jesus’ pronounced blessing on those of the kingdom. What was the milieu of those pronouncements?

3.2 Influences of a Religious and Socio-Historical Milieu

The growth and development of the early Christian community is a socio-historical study of group formation (Malina 1981; Stegemann and Stegemann 1999; deSilva 2000a; Ascough 2001; Carter 2004; Sim 2008). The social, political, and economic conditions of the Mediterranean Sea area were structurally similar in the cities and rural areas, existing as advanced agrarian societies (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:2-3). The political power was the Roman government. Social forces of the Mediterranean were embedded within a Hellenistic culture where the values had implications for religious practices (Sim 2008:38-39). Recent scholars have demonstrated the importance of the Greco-Roman environment upon the early Christian movement (deSilva 2000a:18-19; Carter 2004:84-89; Sim 2008:28-29).

3.2.1 Religious Milieu: Examples from the Dead Sea Scrolls

Interest in the Qumran community for New Testament studies comes primarily from assumptions that these people were associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls (hereafter DSS), which also corresponded to the early days of Christianity (Kugler 2000:883). Usually identified as Essenes, these people lived during the period of 150 BC to 68 AD along the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea (Helyer 2002:181). The identity of the community where the DSS were found is still debatable among scholars today.

This study assumes the existence of the Essene community in the Dead Sea area, although not specifically at Qumran. Suggestions have been that Qumran was a place for wealthy families, a fortress, or a Sadducean sect. There is merit in these opposing viewpoints as the debate continues (Boccaccini 1998; Wise, Abegg and Cook 2005:21-35; Cargill 2009). Although no single scroll has been found at Qumran, theories abound whether the DSS were a product of the Qumran community's direct hand, treasures brought in by the Qumran community, or just coincidentally placed in caves near the Qumran community (Wise, Abegg and Cook 2005:16-35; Cargill 2009).¹

The study of the scrolls yields the idea of diversity at the time of Jesus and the early church (cf. Ellis 1983:62). For the Jews, the DSS encourages them to see a "family" much larger than expected through a variety of Judaisms (Timmer 2008:396), while for the Christians it demonstrates a more Jewish realization of its beginnings and composition (WAC 2005:35).

There are five particular texts from the DSS that demonstrate religious thought during the turn of the first century, corresponding to similar Matthean thought, as found in the composition of the Beatitudes.

3.2.1.1 The Temple Scroll (11Q19-21)

This is the longest of the scrolls (28 feet) and gives details concerning the construction of the new, eschatological temple. The scroll gives "Jewish utopian thought" (Collins 2000:59) as well as a "blueprint for an ideal society" (p.60). Throughout the Temple Scroll, references are made to purification rites

¹ Wise, Abegg and Cook 2005 are hereafter referred to as WAC 2005.

for entrance into the future temple and God's presence. The utopian dream of the sect was a purified temple in a New Jerusalem. This dream originated out of disdain for the impure state of existence in both the temple and Jerusalem (Beavis 2006:56). In the Temple Scroll, one reads concerning the temple and glory concepts, which Matthew also employed.

11Q19 29:7-10: *And find favor they shall; they shall be My people, and I will be theirs, forever. I shall dwell with them for all eternity. I shall sanctify My [te]mple with My glory, for I will cause My glory to dwell upon it until the Day of Creation, when I Myself will create My temple; I will establish it for Myself for everlasting in fulfillment of the covenant that I made with Jacob at Bethel* (translation WAC 2005:606).

For Matthew, the Temple Scroll would be significant in that it pointed to an eschatological time in which laws that had been pertinent for Israel outside their homeland (exile) would no longer be relevant. Therefore, the "jot and tittle" would have passed (Matt 5:18), but Jesus' words remained (Fletcher-Louis 1997:151).

3.2.1.2 Community Rule (1QS)

These texts describe the nature and constitution of the community, or better yet, the Jewish sectarian association scattered throughout Palestine (WAC 2005:113). The texts focused on the eschatological purpose for the community's existence as belonging to the mercy of God, resulting in an obedient spirit among the sect members (Smith 2006:82-83). This sectarian group was separate from the real Temple due to the determination that it was ruled by wicked priests. The ideal community, then, anticipated "the day when a new, purified temple, city, and land would be established" (Beavis 2006:57). Repentance was stressed as the condition for entrance into the community's blessings (Beavis 2006:87). God's blessings were extended through righteousness and mercy as contrasted with the sins of Israel (Chazon 1999:253).

1QS 2:1-4a: *Yet He has also requited us with the loving deeds of His mercy, long ago and forevermore. Then the priests are to bless all those foreordained to God, who walk faultless in all of His ways, saying, “May He bless you with every good thing and preserve you from every evil. May He enlighten your mind with wisdom for living, be gracious to you with the knowledge of eternal things, and lift up His gracious countenance upon you for everlasting peace”* (trans WAC 2005:118).

1QS 11:2b-3a, 13b-15a: *As for me, my justification lies with God. In His hand are the perfection of my walk and the virtue of my heart. By His righteousness is my transgression blotted out...Through His love He has brought me near; by His loving-kindness shall He provide my justification. By His righteous truth has He justified me; and through His exceeding goodness shall He atone for all my sins. By His righteousness shall He cleanse me of human defilement and the sin of humankind—to the end that I praise God for His righteousness, the Most High for His glory* (trans WAC 2005:134-135).

Throughout the Community Rule, the Yahad (“unity”) was the most common self-designation used by the group (WAC 2005:113). The sect saw their purpose through the lens of divine election. They believed the eschatological mercy of God was extended to their group as the obedient minority within Israel (Smith 2006:90). Purity laws abound in the DSS and point to “the drawing of boundaries between outside and inside” groups in the social body (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:142).

1QS 2:22-25: *Thus shall each Israelite know his proper standing in the Yahad of God, an eternal society. None shall be demoted from his appointed place, none promoted beyond his foreordained rank. So shall all together comprise a Yahad whose essence is truth, genuine humility, love of charity, and righteous intent, caring for one another after this fashion within a holy society, comrades in an eternal fellowship* (trans WAC 2005:119).

The Community Rule demonstrated that Matthew lived within a context where the concept of minority benefits was socially and religiously acceptable. The benefits were from God and served to unify the community around the theology of election.

3.2.1.3 *Rule of Blessings (1QSb)*

This section was an appendix to the Community Rule (1QS), stressing that once God had removed evil from the world, the eschatological blessings would be provided (Chazon 1999:263; Swanson 2000:171; Smith 2006:91). The blessings are to “those who fear God”, Sons of Zadok, the messianic high priest, the Prince of the Congregation and an unidentifiable part (1QSb 1:1; 2:22; 3:22; 4:22-24; 5:20). The unique feature of the Rule of Blessings was the blessing upon different ranks of people within the community (Swanson 2000:173).

Each blessing was introduced with the phrase “*Words of blessing belonging to the Instructor...*” (trans WAC 2005:141-143). Along with the blessing was the explicit theology of divine election: “*whom He chose for an eternal covenant th[at should en]dure forever*” (1QSb 1:2b-3a, trans WAC 2005:141). The idea of a spoken blessing toward the chosen community on behalf of God was a common procedure among the sect and played a vital role in its metanarrative (Swanson 2000:172). The entire blessing liturgy was covenantal, which was due to the sect’s understanding they were the chosen community of God for covenant renewal (Timmer 2008:396).

3.2.1.4 *Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521)*

The community believed that a messiah would come in the end times bringing a new era for them. This expectation has language similar to Isaiah 61.

Fragment 4 2:4-13: *Will you not find the Lord in all this, all those who hope in their heart? For the Lord attends to the pious and calls the righteous by name. Over the humble His spirit hovers, and He renews the faithful in His strength. For He will honor the pious upon the th[ro]ne of His eternal kingdom, setting prisoners free, opening the eyes of the blind, raising up those who are bo[w]ed down*

(Ps. 146:7-8)] And for[ev]er I shall hold fast [to] those [who h]ope and in His faithfulness sh[all...] and the frui[t of] good [dee]ds shall not be delayed for anyone and the Lord shall do glorious things which have not been done, just as He said. For He shall heal the critically wounded, He shall revive the dead, He shall send good news to the afflicted (Isa.61:1), He shall sati[sfy the poo]r, He shall guide the uprooted, He shall make the hungry rich (trans WAC 2005:531).

It is obvious that this fragment from 4Q521 has resemblance to Matthew's Gospel as well. Concepts of God hovering over his people and giving them strength (Matt 11:28-30), calling the righteous (Matt 5:11-12), satisfying the poor and hungry (Matt 5:6; 25:34ff), and offering the kingdom (Matt 5:3) were used throughout Matthew's Gospel, and, specifically, in the Beatitudes.

3.2.1.5 Beatitudes Text (4Q525)

The similarity between this text and Matthew 5:3-10 is remarkable. In his prolific study of 4Q525, Puech has pointed to its origin in sapiential works similar to Proverbs and Ben Sira 14:20-27 (1993:353). Through extensive comparison of texts, Puech has concluded that the authors in Palestine during 200 BC—100 AD knew the literary rules for a composition of a beatitudes genre (1993:362). Charlesworth is persuaded that the author of 4Q525 and the Matthean Beatitudes used a similar genre (2000:29).

Fragment 2-3 2:1-7: *[Blessed is he who speaks truth...] with a pure heart and who does not slander with his tongue. Blessed are those who cling to her statutes and who do not cling to the ways of perversity. Blessed are those who rejoice inn Her and who do not spread themselves in the ways of folly. Blessed is he who seeks Her with pure hands and who does not go after Her with a deceitful heart. Blessed the man who has attained Wisdom and who walks in the Law of the Most High and applies his heart to her ways, who cherishes her lessons and ev[e]r rejoices in her corrections, but who does not repel Her in the pain of [his] misfortune[s](?) and in bad times does not abandon Her, who does not forget Her [in days of] terror and in the humility of his soul does not*

reproach [Her]. Thus, on Her he meditates always and in his misfortune he ponders on [the Law(?) during all] his existence on Her [he reflects(?) and puts Her(?)] before his eyes (trans Puech 1993:354-355).

The “blessings” (macarisms) within Semitic thought have been classified as either sapiential or apocalyptic (Brook 1989:38). The macarisms of 4Q525 were clearly sapiential with its emphasis on clinging to wisdom (Torah) through obedience (Crawford 1998:365; de Roo 2000:152). How does this compare to Matthew 5:3-12 with its eschatological worldview (Brook 1989:38)? Viviano has argued the beatitudes of the Old Testament were not yet understood eschatologically (1992:54). Yet, Charlesworth contends that Isaiah 56 pointed to an understanding that some divine blessings were for the future or, at the very least, second century Judaism interpreted it that way (2000:23). Recent scholarship has demonstrated that certain DSS texts (4QInstruction) have shown a relationship between wisdom and apocalypticism during the Second Temple period where a wisdom text incorporated an apocalyptic worldview (cf. Goff 2005:666). There should be caution in concluding that in the Old Testament the beatitudes were characterized as non-eschatological sayings.

For this study, the conclusion is that 4Q525 does not have a direct link to Matthew. What the DSS demonstrate is that within Second Temple Judaism there existed a “beatitudes genre” that both Matthew and Luke employed (Charlesworth 2000:33). Furthermore, Matthew possibly used language, similar to initiation rituals for new members to a community, with the concepts of reward and “seeing God” (Brooke 1989:40). It was within this context that Matthew employed the genre with a direct application to Jesus’ eschatological message for the new community.

3.2.1.6 Themes of the DSS Texts in the Matthean Beatitudes

The milieu in which Matthew wrote was rich with religious concepts that he incorporated into his Gospel. The religious concepts, as seen in the DSS texts, would continue to foster both an understanding by and of the new community concerning itself.

- The desire for a better society or utopia through the concept of “kingdom”
- The formation of the community as the temple of God
- Divine blessing upon a chosen community
- Community defined by its separateness (repentance) from the mainstream (temple) and purpose (righteous obedience and purity)
- Themes of righteousness, mercy, satisfaction, purity, and eschatological hope surrounding the core of the community

Combining such a rich culture of religious thought with the person of Jesus provided a paradigm in which the new community could easily adopt and adapt to their needs. Matthew used Jesus’ blessings to announce a kingdom. The blessings would define the community and their purpose around Jesus (“on account of me,” Matt 5:11). With the pronounced blessings, Jesus offered righteousness (Matt 5:6, 10), mercy (Matt 5:7), satisfaction (Matt 5:6), purity (Matt 5:9), and eschatological hope (Matt 5:10-12).

3.2.2 Hellenistic Milieu: Rhetoric and Orality Situated in the Text

It is without question that communication in the first century occurred in an oral environment (Kennedy 1984; Gerhardsson 1998; Hearon 2009). Only between 10-15% of the population were literate (Knowles 2004:56). Hearon has noted that only 5% of non-urban males were literate and 15% of urban males were literate (2006:18). It would be a mistake to understand an oral culture as characterized by verbal discourse alone. An oral culture was one encased with “the experience of words (and speech) in the habitat of sound” (Botha 1990:40). Even solitary reading was done aloud (cf. Achtemeier 1990:17). Such a culture would rely heavily upon repetition and collective memory (Botha 1990:40-41).

One must also assume that the earliest transmission of the material on Jesus’ life and sayings was oral (Dunn 2003a:148). Caution should be taken to assume that there was a sudden change from an oral culture to a written

one (Niditch 1996:134). Oral tradition and teaching developed before the written texts (cf. Cox 1998:83-84). Gerhardsson has demonstrated that the art of writing took much time to develop, more time to transmit and adopted among the masses, and, finally, time to break from an oral culture (1998:123). There was a continual interaction between oral and written communication. The idea that oral literary forms ended with writing is erroneous (cf. Horsley 2008:132-133).

The best way to approach the sayings of Jesus is to understand the appropriate context of the discourse and how it was spoken, transmitted, and, eventually, put into literary form by early Christianity (Robbins 1985:35). For Gerhardsson, it was through the memorization and repetition of the oral material that evolved into a respect of its authoritative nature (1979:77-80). Other scholars contend it was the Christian community and its interpretive adaptation of the Jesus tradition into their social contexts that led to literary compositions (Stanton 1993:378-382; Dunn 2003b:237-238; Le Donne 2007:167-170; Allison 2010:29-30; Redman 2010:196-197). Niditch has pointed to three characteristics of the oral culture in ancient times: the presence of repetition, the use of formulas, and the use of conventional patterns of content (1996:10-11).

3.2.2.1 Oral Tradition and Written Text

The world of the Gospels was a world of spoken word that was also combined in written form (Achteimeier 1990:4-5; Hearon 2009:22). Eyewitnesses to the death and resurrection of Jesus passed information and Jesus' sayings orally throughout Palestine (Luke 1:1-4). In contrast, Barnett has proposed that the early Church had fixed texts before the Gospels were written and being read aloud (1999:382-383).

It must be remembered that the scribal culture was familiar with writing, but only as it served the oral context since what was written was read aloud (cf. Botha 1990:42; cf. Achteimeier 1990:15). Bultmann seemed to ignore this fact by stressing that there was "no definable boundary between the oral and written tradition" so the editing process had already begun ahead of the Gospel compositions (1963:321). A better assessment has come from Gerhardsson who has stressed the early Jesus movement was "mainly an

oral tradition in practice” although it was a brief one as the documents were taking shape (1998:46, TT).² Bird has even encouraged a greater concentration on the early Christian communities, not merely the Gospel writers, as responsible for oral tradition (2005:179).

Accuracy in oral transmission is guaranteed not by verbatim memorization but by habitual repetition in a community context where the community owns and secures the integrity of its traditions (Bird 2005:179).

The question is what was the relationship between oral transmission and the written text?

The eventual written Gospel compositions served the social memory and enhanced oral performances as the early Church expanded in its traditions (Rhoads 2006:123). Features such as alliteration, proverbial sayings, chiasmic patterns, analogy, and mnemonic hooks were all present in the Gospel composition (Rhoads 2006:124). Person has noted that even scribal practices found in the DSS pointed to their “oral mentality” allowing for variation in text copying (1998:608). Thus, variants were not mistakes in copying as much as the influence of an oral mentality producing a faithful rendition (Person 1998:609).

Verbatim agreement between the Gospels demonstrates that the words and events of Jesus’ life were reproduced in oral fashion as a “text.” Even the agreement between Matthew and the Didache should be attributed to oral sources (Jefford 2005:40). Yet, the dissimilarities also demonstrate that certain oral texts were not held in isolation, but reworked through the social and collective memory which served the present moment and situation (Byrskog 2007:25; Allison 2010:1-6).

Byrskog has noted, “in orality the social context is everything” (2007:24). The oral tradition was dependent on specific social conditions for its survival (Downing 1995:133-134). It is best to remember that an oral culture can be explored, but only through the precedence of a present time

² The 1998 edition of Gerhardsson is a combination of his 1961 *Memory & Manuscript* and his 1964 *Tradition & Transmission in Early Christianity*. In this paper, when the 1998 edition is referenced, the distinction between the two books will be given as MM for the 1961 edition and TT for the 1964 edition.

which is governed by a written mentality (Andersen 1991:23). What does the Jesus tradition demonstrate? Was it simply story upon story, and person to person? Why did the oral tradition result in a written text?

(a) *Oral Tradition as Oral "Text"*: The importance of eyewitnesses brings credibility to both the oral and written tradition concerning Jesus and early Christianity (Bauckham 2006:93). Historically, evidence of written documents abound in the Roman world of antiquity, such as personal letters, documents in the temples, senate records, and even newspapers in Rome (Achte-meier 1990:11). Evidence of writing on clay tablets, wax tablets, wood tablets, papyri, books, and parchment have been discovered (Ferguson 2003:124-134).

The Gospels were created out of an oral tradition that began with eyewitness testimony (Bauckham 2006:472-490; Baum 2008:1-23). Eyewitness testimony was surely convincing. However, what role does memory selection have in this testimony? However, what other factors contributed to the transmission of the Jesus tradition?

Bauckham prefers to distinguish oral tradition from oral history (2006:30-38). For Bauckham, oral history is oral communication that is contemporary to the communication process itself. Oral tradition is the continual dissemination of the past in narrative form (story), at least a generation or more removed from the event (p. 31). The Gospels, then, were written during a period of oral history originating with eyewitnesses to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (pp. 479-486). Bauckham contends that "In the immediate testimony of the witness, that which lives on in deep memory, the witness 'sees' what is disclosed in what happens...fact and meaning coinhering" (pp. 507-508).

However, is this distinction helpful in the understanding of oral tradition (Byrskog 2008:159)? Eyewitnesses do not guarantee historical accuracy (Redman 2010:190). Recalled memories were shared in a "localized" setting of a community (Le Donne 2007:168-169; Runesson 2008:95-96). Distortion, even minimally, would naturally result within the semantic framework of transmission (Le Donne 2007:168; Allison 2010:3-6). Even Bauckham has

admitted in earlier writings the problem of faulty memory as a factor to be considered in eyewitness accounts (1985:385).

Other scholars have brought attention to the transmission of oral tradition, for without transmission there would be no tradition (Andersen 1991:27; Gerhardsson 1998:45-47, TT). The transmission would dictate such things as the genre, form, content, and frequency of the oral tradition (Andersen 1991:32-37). Andersen concludes, then, that oral transmission, within an oral culture, was the communication of a “text” (1991:26). The oral “text” began with eyewitnesses and then spread to and through newly created Christian communities in dynamic ways (cf. Schroter 2006:116).

Dunn has pointed to both features at work in early Christianity.

I see no difficulty, then, in merging the insights of oral tradition as community tradition and recognition of the importance of individual eyewitnesses in providing, contributing and in at least some measure helping to control the interpretation given to that tradition (2004:484).

Yet, caution should be given to the historical “play by play” of eyewitnesses themselves. An historical event cannot be isolated from the impact of creating stories told through the trajectory of time (Le Donne 2009:61). Even with eyewitness testimony, interpretation was involved with the impact of Jesus’ sayings and actions (Le Donne 2007:168-170). This would help to explain the differences and emphases between the Gospels.

(b) *Memory and Interpretation*: Scholarship from the last century focused on the form and redaction of the Gospel texts (Bultmann 1963). These theories had a written text focus and provided minimal relevance in viewing an oral culture. To demonstrate how an oral culture transmitted its tradition, Bailey has offered the idea of “informal, controlled tradition” in contrast to Bultmann’s “informal, uncontrolled tradition” and Gerhardsson’s “formal, controlled tradition” (1995b:4-8). What he sought to demonstrate was that through the constant retelling (“informal”) of the Jesus stories and sayings (“tradition”) in various social contexts, the Jesus tradition had a core that was fixed (“controlled”) despite the flexibility in hearing it. “To remember the words

and deeds of Jesus of Nazareth was to affirm their own unique identity. The stories had to be told and controlled or “everything that made them who they were was lost” (Bailey 1995b:10).

Le Donne has made the case that history is primarily defined through memory limitation (2009:11). Memory would have played a vital role for the community to continue with dissemination of the Jesus material (Dunn 2003b:239-245; Bauckham 2006:280-286; Horsley 2008:109-125). Memory can be classified as either cold (the recalling of the past) or hot (the integration of the past to the present) in differentiating its two functions (Thatcher 2008:11). However, memories can be faulty or distorted. The “past can never be preserved in a pure, complete, and authentic form” but is reconstructed based on the worldviews and semantic frames of the present (Le Donne 2009:52).

What was the assurance the early Church had in basing their understanding on recollective memories? The interpretative meaning was central to them. With repeated patterns in the text, it becomes evident that memory served to demonstrate “Jesus did things like this, and he said things like that” (Allison 2009:61-66). What we get with the Gospels is “memories of the first disciples—not Jesus himself, but the remembered Jesus” (Dunn 2003b:130-131). Various scholars have noted the importance of interpretative meaning (Guelich 1982:24-25; Kupp 1996:15-16).

Depending on the use to which the memory is being put, people who recollect may be more or less concerned with accurate representation of what happened, but to some degree all recollection entails reference to the real past. Interpretation is therefore the search for meaning adequate to the event as well as conforming to the values and expectations of the person remembering and the audience...The continuing process of interpretation, which may go on, in the eyewitness's thinking and telling, long after the event was first recollected, is, in part, a search for an interpretation adequate to the event as remembered. Information and interpretation interrelate for as long as the latter changes (Bauckham 2006:351-352).

The Jesus tradition as presented in the Gospels derived from the shared memories of those who were impacted with his message and ministry, not simply the recalling of aphoristic sayings (Dunn 2003b:241; Horsley 2008:121). Dunn has also noted the danger of just desiring “facts” alone since that kind of endeavor would dispense with interpretation (Dunn 2004:476). For Kelber, the multiple stories about Jesus were varied as it adapted itself to any given social situation (2008:255). Social memory was the force behind the organization and preservation of the Jesus material from which the Gospels were composed (cf. Horsley 2008:126-145).

DeConick has pointed out that the gospels are preserved and reconstructed memories based on interpretation (2008:179). Wright has concluded that all the images of Jesus in the Gospels were complementary of the church and their situations in life (1996:112). What the Gospels demonstrate was the weaving of stories about Jesus, both oral and written, into a master story for particular audiences in their contexts (White 2010:11).

The early Church was made of those individuals who had experienced the impact of Jesus on their lives and sought to identify with others, forming a shared memory. The Gospels were oral traditions unifying the early Church and written to be shared with others (Dunn 2004:481). This would constitute the purpose of the text. Written texts would have advantages over oral tradition by having longer existence, no dependency on memory, and no dependency on social exchange (Hearon 2008:103-105). Good or bad, “if orality is primary, literacy has the final word” (Andersen 1991:54). The text is what the church has been left, but embedded in it are the oral clues to its creation.

(c) *The Beatitudes and Oral Tradition*: What oral tradition demonstrates is that the sayings of Jesus in the text have several layers that must be uncovered. The layers consist of early oral history, stories of Jesus’ life, the collection of Jesus’ sayings representative of the resurrected Jesus, and the compositional formation by the evangelist (Schnackenburg 1996:264). The Beatitudes of Matthew can be compared and contrasted with those of Luke (Lk 6:20-26). Between the two versions, four beatitudes have similar comparisons, but the contrasts are more evident.

Matthew composed eight beatitudes; Luke composed four beatitudes. Matthew has Jesus speaking the Beatitudes on a mountain; Luke has him on a plain. Matthew emphasized the “kingdom of heaven,” while Luke emphasized the “kingdom of God.” Matthew used the third person in the blessings; Luke used the second person in addressing the crowd.

What this pericope demonstrates, along with other stories in the Gospels, is that Matthew wrote for the needs of the community and provides the same means for the interpreter today. The method Matthew employed was a “new explanation and application to penetrate into the life of the community in order to feed and shape it” (Schnackenburg 1996:265).

3.2.2.2 Rhetoric and first century Christianity

The environment of the New Testament documents originated in an oral setting that emphasized both a “word” from God and the “hearing” of it. It must be remembered that both the writing and reading of the Gospel material involved the oral dimension (Achteimeier 1990:25; Downing 1996:29-48). Within the text itself are clues to its oral foundation and rhetorical development (cf. Gamble 1995:34-35; Scott and Dean 1996:311-378).

Even though the Gospels were written from the context that Jesus was the Son of God, the writers also stressed Jesus as a teacher (Byrskog 1994; Gerhardsson 1998:326). Both Jesus and the early Church lived in a Hellenistic culture that appreciated and valued the art of rhetoric in discourse and education (Kennedy 1984:3; Bloomquist, Bonneau and Coyle 1992:231). Rhetoric is the use of discourse by a speaker or writer “to accomplish a purpose” (Kennedy 1984:3).

The writers of the books of the New Testament had a message to convey and sought to persuade an audience to believe it or to believe it more profoundly. As such, they are rhetorical, and their methods can be studied by the discipline of rhetoric (Kennedy 1984:3).

(a) *Origins of Rhetoric:* Classical rhetoric began in Athens during the fifth century BC by Aristotle and was promoted through the Sophists (Stamps 2000:953; Ferguson 2003:119). Sophists contended that wisdom in speech

was a persuasive tool (Stamps 2000:954). Civic life was the usual arena for rhetorical dialogue (Kennedy 1984:6). Kennedy has deduced that rhetorical methods were in use in Palestine at the time of Christ, since Hellenization had disseminated throughout culture for over 300 years (1984:8-11). Yet, he also contends that the rhetoric should be labeled “radical Christian rhetoric” since it appeals more to authority than to rational proof (Kennedy 1984:7).

Rhetorical studies in relation to the Gospels are less influential since so much of the writing is narrative. Perhaps the best conclusion is that rhetoric as a literary and communication discipline in its Hellenistic context played a role of some degree in the composition of the New Testament (Stamps 2000:958).

(b) *Five Parts of Rhetoric*: The five parts of rhetoric taught in speech preparation were invention of ideas, arrangement, style (including composition/diction), memorization, and delivery (Kennedy 1984:13; Ferguson 2003:119). Rhetoric developed in a Hellenistic system located in the city-state arena: the courtroom, political assemblies, and civic ceremonies (Robbins 2008:82). Classical studies have pointed to ancient communication as the involvement of the speaker (ethos), speech (logos), and audience (pathos). These are timeless principles for all cultures in speech communication (Kennedy 1984:15).

The ethos was the credibility inherent within the speaker. Logos was the actual word or content that was spoken. With ethos, the response of the hearer was emphasized. Matthew made a similar observation by pointing to Jesus’ emphasis on “hearing and doing” at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 7:24-27).

(c) *Three Types of Rhetoric*: Rhetoric was used in various contexts and for varying reasons. The three types of rhetoric used were judicial (in legal settings), deliberative (citizen assemblies, political), and epideictic (ceremonial occasions) (Ferguson 2003:119-120). Oratory was used for defense, persuasion, or confirmation. The importance of rhetoric was the use of speech for a purposeful accomplishment.

(d) *Rhetography or Sacred Rhetoric*: Robbins has made an insightful contribution to rhetorical studies with his categories of rhetography (pictorial narration) and rhetology (of argumentative narration) in a given discourse (2008:82). For Robbins, classical rhetoric of argumentation and Christian rhetoric of authority merged to form radical rhetorical dimensions (pp.87-98). The six rhetorical forms used in the New Testament were apocalyptic, prophetic, miracle, wisdom, pre-creation and priestly.

This means that an early Christian rhetorlect is a network of significations and meanings associated with social-cultural-ideological places and spaces familiar to people in a certain geophysical region...rhetography is the means by which people envision a speaker and audience as a context that gives meaning to its rhetoric (Robbins 2008:99).

To study the Gospels (and religion) is to study the process of rhetoric as seen in acts of persuasion through its narratives and discourses (Wudel 2000:275). The ultimate purpose of rhetorical criticism is to understand the effectual purpose of a text (Kennedy 1984:33; Bloomquist et al. 1992:231). The text is rhetorical in the sense that it was written, "to achieve a particular effect" upon the audience (Patrick 1999:6).

(e) *The Beatitudes and Rhetoric*: For Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount was penned as a speech to be read aloud. Ancient reciters and audiences were concerned with the sounds of a text because it served as clues in directing them in the organization and meaning of the text (Scott and Dean 1996:314). Reading aloud served to strengthen and encourage the social gathering of constituents with similar beliefs and values (cf. Gamble 1995:39-40).

By focusing on the rhetorical structure of the Beatitudes, the literary elements become the clues for discerning its aural value as speech. The rhetoric *of* a discourse must be differentiated from the rhetoric *in* a discourse (cf. Combrink 1992:7). For the interpreter, decisions must be made whether the compositional author used rhetorical means to communicate directly to the reader, as employing character(s) in the narrative, with rhetorical force. The

Old Testament was the familiar paradigm for the rhetorical compositions told about Jesus within an oral culture (Kloppenborg 2001:172; Scott and Dean 1996:316-317).

As a pericope, the Beatitudes were situated within the Sermon on the Mount as the beginning of the rhetorical unit, providing clues to the understanding of the Sermon as a whole. Through exegetical and literary analysis, the Beatitudes demonstrate the power of the spoken word. Black has demonstrated how linguistic principles of redundancy, mental representation, and markedness work together in the narrative of Matthew's Gospel (2008:25-33). These can also be used in the speeches of Jesus.

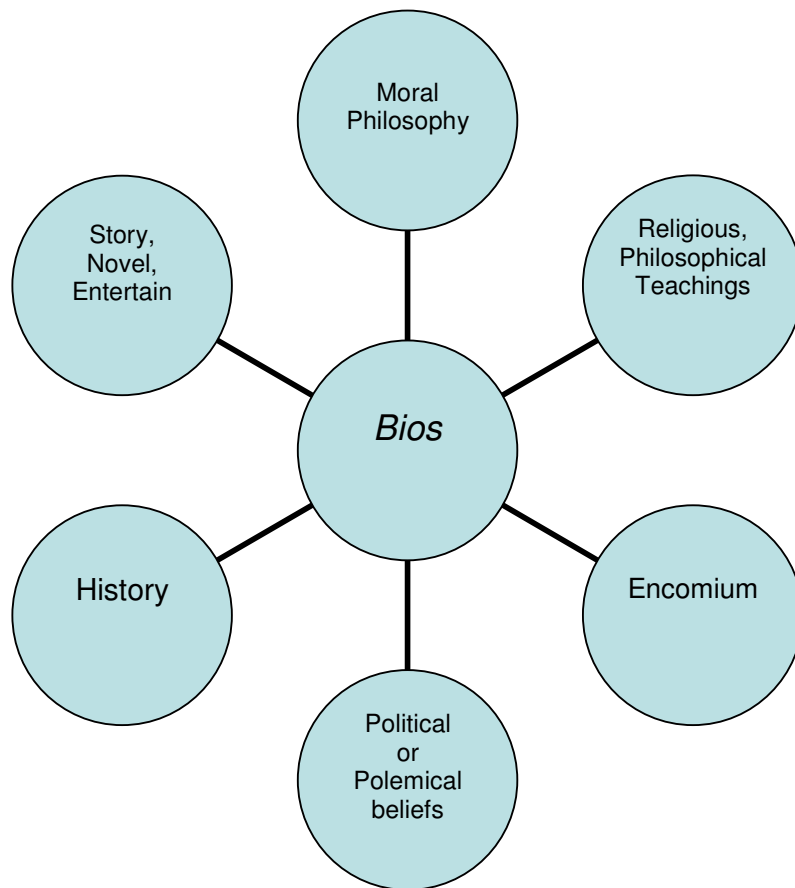
The principle of redundancy can be illustrated with Matthew's use of blessed, kingdom of heaven, and righteousness. Mental representations are seen in hunger, thirst, spirit, salt, and light. When Matthew switched the address from third person to second person, he demonstrated markedness in the text. These principles give weight to Matthew's intention of guiding the new community into a paradigm useful for experiencing the words of Jesus repeatedly.

3.2.2.3 *The Gospels as Biography*

Matthew's gospel was a theological story developed through the speeches and narrative of Jesus' life (Stanton 1987:187; Downing 1995:138-143; Strecker 2000:378). Why compose a story of Jesus? Bultmann claimed that there was no biographical interest of Jesus in the Gospels, and, therefore, no biographical genre to investigate (1963:372). Yet, Dunn contends by arguing Bultmann was using a modern idea of biography in his assessment (2003b:185). Stanton has pointed out that although Matthew did not write in a Greco-Roman biographical style, his later readers took it that way (1989:19)! It is best to take the Gospels as a "subtype of Graeco-Roman biography", if not completely as one (Allison 2005:142-143; cf. Luomanen 1998b:56-57).

(a) *Bios*: BurrIDGE has argued that within the Greco-Roman world biography (*bios*) were writings that displayed interest and information of those considered prominent (1992:73). It was prose narrative devoted to the whole person of eminence (Aune 1987:29; Carter 2004:41). Carter has explained

ancient biography from a didactic function (2004:40). The genre would focus on various topics of origin, significance, anecdotes and speeches from the life of the notable person (2004:40-41). From the in-depth study of Burrige on the genre of biography, he has concluded that the specific aspects of biography were never made clear by the ancients (1992:62-65). Instead, biography was flexible and adaptive to many areas (Burrige 1992:66). Burrige has illustrated the multi-faceted workings of *bios* in Greco-Roman literature (cf. Figure 3.1).



(Figure 3.1)

(b) *Function of Bios*: The function of Greco-Roman *bios* involved the “historical legitimation (or discrediting) of a social belief/value system personified in the subject of biography” (Aune 1987:35). Within the Gospels, the legitimation of Jesus was seen in the miracle stories, his sayings, and the Old Testament fulfillment motifs (Strecker 1967:221-222; Scott 1985:68-82).

Osborne has challenged that any inquiry into the historical Jesus, without taking seriously the Gospels as historical evidence, is doomed from the beginning (2003:6).

Wright has gone further by claiming that the Gospels are historical, since it appeals to history throughout its writings (1996:8-11). Strecker has pointed to Matthew's historical Jesus as a portrait, in word and deed, of the way of righteousness (1967:228). This conforms to the standard *bios* where narrative was formed to demonstrate the deeds and sayings of the one presented (cf. Figure 3.1; Burridge 2000:168). Matthew's Gospel was written to demonstrate the significance of Jesus' life, providing a platform for "shaping the identity and lifestyle of a particular community of faith" (Carter 2004:42).

(c) *Theological Portrait in Gospel Bios*: The beauty of the Gospel compositions is seen in both its portrayal of Jesus as historical figure and Jesus as uniquely significant. Burridge has defined biography as a type of writing that ancient groups used, formally, in which they sought to, follow a "certain charismatic teacher or leader...." (1992:80). Ferguson points to the dual nature of the Gospels, in that they cover the history of Jesus (biography) within a rabbinical, stylistic framework (2003:122). Ultimately, then, the Gospels were kerygmatic in purpose (contra Flusser 2007:2-3) and this serves as the real dividing line between a strictly Greco-Roman biography and the presentation by the evangelists (Dunn 2003b:185; Turner 2008:5).

The story of Jesus begins before anything that can reasonably be identified as historical and continues long after everything that can be identified as historical. The Jesus of story is the larger entity of which the Jesus of history is but a part. History is a part of the story, so understanding Jesus as a figure in history remains significant to anyone who wants to believe the story and trust the Jesus it reveals (Powell 1998a:9).

Between the Gospels, 44% to 59% of the verbs used are either about Jesus or in his teaching (Burridge 1992:191-257). The study of verb concentration within the Gospels demonstrates the centrality of Jesus as

subject. In turn, the Gospel of Matthew was a story narrative leading the new community in the significance of Jesus (van Aarde 1997:126). It was formational more than informational. Hannan has concluded it was an instruction manual on the rule of God in the new community (2006:230).

3.2.3 Social Milieu: Mediterranean Values of Honor, Family and Patronage

Understanding the social environment of the New Testament is imperative for the study of a text. What Matthew wrote and how he wrote it must be investigated alongside the social milieu in order to obtain any semblance of meaning on his part. The social context for this study focuses on the Mediterranean values of honor/shame, kinship, and the patron/client relationship.

3.2.3.1 Honor and Shame

Honor and shame were foundational social values of the first century Mediterranean world (Malina 1981:25-48; White 1986:77; Hanson 1994b:83-90; Neyrey 1998:3-4; deSilva 2000a:23; Lawrence 2002:688; Ferguson 2003:69; Crook 2009:591; Schwartz 2010:171-176). Honor holds value in all cultures but, specifically, an honor culture (like the past Mediterranean world or present-day Japan) “is defined by the seriousness with which the people who inhabit it protect their honor and fight to retrieve it if it has been lost (Crook 2009:593). Shame was the absence of expected conduct but not done in society (Ferguson 2003:69).

(a) *Group Idea*: Honor and shame were relational ideas found within a defined group (Daley 1993:531; Neyrey 1995:141; deSilva 2000a:25; Crook 2009:598-599). Individuals within the group (family, religious, political, etc.) were responsible to promote conduct that would be honorable for the continuation of the group. Ben Sira wrote (190-175 BC) to the Jewish minority about the clash of their culture with Hellenism. He used honor and shame as means to promote their Jewish value-system, seeking to protect them from the Hellenistic cultural force attacking Jewish loyalties (deSilva 1996:455).

What race is worthy of honor? The human race.
What race is worthy of honor? Those who fear the Lord.
What race is unworthy of honor? The human race.
What race is unworthy of honor? Those who transgress the commandments.
Among brothers their leader is worthy of honor, and those who fear the Lord are worthy of honor in his eyes (Sir 10:19-20, RSV).

Group members, who experienced hostility as a minority culture, could do so honorably, through non-retaliation and being faithful to their cause. Therefore, persecution or insults were seen as opportunities to further the group's mission through the value of honor. Matthew could be seen as alluding to this concept in Matthew 5:10-12 with language reminiscent of honorable actions in the midst of persecution. Could this be why he used the imperatives "Rejoice and be glad" even when the early community experienced insults and threats?

(b) Public Opinion Matters: Malina has been the proponent of differentiating between ascribed honor (claim of worth because of birth, gender or family) and acquired honor (recognition of worth) within the Mediterranean world (1981:47). Lawrence has also contributed with her model of honor precedence and honor virtue (2002:699-702). Honor precedence was those actions performed for public acclaim, while honor virtue was the internal conscience at work (Lawrence 2002:699-700).

Crook takes issue with the definitions offered by Malina and Lawrence because they concentrate too much on the individual and not on the "public court of reputation" for which Crook builds his model (Crook 2009:598-599). For Crook, the public opinion was the basis for all judgment of honor and shame being "the first, last, and only arbiter of honorable and shameful behavior" (p. 599). Why, he asks, would the powerful religious elites be shamed or embarrassed with the actions of Jesus? Public opinion concerning Jesus had the final word (p. 601).

Neyrey has concurred, "honour is not honour unless publicly claimed, displayed and acknowledged" (1995:141). White, too, has stressed the

significance of honor and shame being found within public recognition, rather than an internal force, that gives one a sense of worth (1986:78). In the final analysis, Crook offers his model, which is based on the court of public opinion: attributed honor (what the public attributes to a person when they are born) and distributed honor (the autonomous and arbitrary public opinion of someone) that guides the process without rhyme or reason (2009:610).

(c) *Honor and Shame Values in the Beatitudes*: One facet the Beatitudes addressed was the shame of social rejection as experienced within the new community (Matt 5:10-12). Although the community was convinced of its righteousness, it had to deal with the social rejection of not being seen as righteous by other communities (White 1986:79-80). The value of honor must be seen as a “social commodity...the object of continuous competition” (Hanson 1994b:84). Honor was more a social value than psychological one (p. 83). Concern for honor and reputation was widespread in the ancient world and would be a concern of the Matthean community (Neyrey 1998:5).

To this cultural frame of reference, Jesus’ words of blessing were spoken. Throughout the Beatitudes, those who were in shameful positions were called blessed (Matt 5:3-6) and those who passed on the need to pursue reputation were blessed (Matt 5:7-10). To motivate the new community, Matthew drew on Jesus’ comparison of the Old Testament prophets who suffered public humiliation for their righteous message. For Matthew, this was analogous to the respect of one’s neighbor by demonstrating the value and honor of the past as an affirmation of the value of Jesus to the new community (Daley 1993:531).

Concern for honor arose when one group felt threats from another, or internal loyalties were questioned (Schneider 1971:2). Matthew addressed those issues found in a group struggling with the value of honor. For Lawrence, honor should “be limited to those occasions in which talk of reward or conferral of status is explicitly assumed” (2002:689). Matthew pointed to the great reward in heaven (Matt 5:12) as a worthy honor despite their experience of social shame (White 1986:81).

3.2.3.2 *Kinship and Family*

The family unit was essential in shaping the values and relationships of the Mediterranean world. The society was “enculturated” with language from the institution of kinship and the Gospel texts demonstrate thought from that arena (Malina 2001:16-17). Society did not see individuals as much as they saw the ancestral lineage and reputation (deSilva 2000a:158). For the Matthean community, brotherhood language prevailed (Duling 1995b:154).

(a) *Nature and Nurturing*: Malina has illustrated two concepts that surrounded kinship in Mediterranean culture (2001:22-23). Human reproduction along with a domestic, agricultural economy supplied the basis for the home as a place of nurture. Within a family, solidarity and cooperation were considered the norm among its members, along with the gift of family honor bestowed at birth (deSilva 2000a:163-167).

(b) *Father as Head of Family*: Within the Roman, Jewish and Hellenistic societies, the father was the heart of the household unit. This was due in part because of his descriptive duties as father, husband, and master (deSilva 2000a:173). Women were treated as property while children were to bring honor to the family. Ben Sira described these ideas in his writings (Sir 22:3-5). Within the Mediterranean culture, fathers were protective against aggressors for their land (pastoralists) and family honor. The land and family owned by the father could be thought of as a “property holding group” which continually struggled “to define, enlarge, and protect its patrimony” in a competitive culture (Schneider 1971:2).

(c) *Fictive Kinship*: For the Gospel writers, the role of God as Father and those who belong to the Jesus community were designated as a family (Matt 12:46-50; 19:27-29). Matthew clearly advanced the family of Jesus concept as those who do the will of the Father (cf. Matt 5:16; 7:21-23; Riches 2000:209-213). The ideology was God as Father, Jesus as teacher, and the new community as brothers (Duling 1995b:173).

The emerging community of disciples becomes
this hundredfold family, a body of people united by

a common devotion to Jesus and his teaching, committed to love, support and help one another as completely as any natural family (deSilva 2000a:197).

Throughout the New Testament, as well as in the Beatitudes pericope, Jesus was seen as the brother reminding the new community of its special status with God the Father (Matt 5:9). The term “brothers” was used more often in Matthew than the other Synoptic Gospels, bringing attention to the new community as a “fictive kinship association” or “brotherhood” (Duling 1995b:159-160). To be called a “son of” a particular father was to emphasize more the character of that father than a position (Carson 1999:28).

In its early expansion, the new community stressed the love and nurture found among its members as a way to encourage and legitimate its solidarity. Any reading of the New Testament that does not consider the concerns of kinship will fail to see how the early community, and subsequent communities, saw themselves (Malina 2001:160). Stegemann goes further in seeing fictive kinship as an ethnic description of early Christianity, that is, the materialization of a new people in the household of God (2006:34-39).

3.2.3.3 Patron-Client Relationship

Without an understanding of the patron-client relationship of the Mediterranean world, the meaning of many idioms and ideas found in the New Testament will be lost (Jeffers 1999:299; deSilva 2000a:96; Malina 1988:2-3). Malina has gone as far to stress that the patron-client relationship, as practiced in the Mediterranean world, was the “main analogy employed to understand and present the God of Israel” in the Gospels (1988:2). Jesus, in turn, would be considered as the broker in the relationship between patron (God as Father) and client (people) within the Gospels (Malina 1988:17).

(a) *Power Elite Class*: In the Roman Empire, most of the wealth and political power existed among a few families (Jeffers 1999:298). A patron was one who had the wealth and power to help those in lower classes (client), which was also expected of those in public life (deSilva 2000a:97). This system was based on the mutual exchange of goods and services. The client

would work to ensure the honor due the patron for his benevolence, while the patron would commit to providing benefits and protection to his clients (Jeffers 1999:299; deSilva 2000a:96-97).

(b) *Peasant Class*: The people in Palestine were primarily a peasant society (Malina 1988:3). Within peasant societies, tenancy was a common medium for the patron-client relationship to emerge. Large landowners looked for those who could manage their estates with honor. Clients were looking for a patron to take care of their needs. Mutual trust was not practiced since it was suspect. Lower classes saw politicians as taking advantage of the people. Males from the lower classes would seek patrons as a support for the client's family (pp. 5-7). These interactions between patron and client were joined by mutual commitment and loyalty in a context of reciprocity (p. 8).

(c) *Patronage in Matthew and the Beatitudes*: Matthew, more than any other Gospel writer, referred to God as Father (forty-nine times). The Sermon on the Mount referred to God as Father over seventeen times. For Matthew, Jesus could be compared as a broker between God the Father (patron) and those who do his will (clients). The job of a broker was to bring the patron and client together for a beneficial relationship (Malina 1988:13).

As Jesus announced the kingdom of heaven in the Beatitudes, he was offering the benefits of a patron-client relationship. God as patron provided comfort, possession of land, and satisfaction to the clients (Matt 5:4-6). As their patron, he offered protection, honor, and help as reciprocity for the clients who were expected to honor the patron (Matt 5:7-12). Reciprocity was expressed through gratitude to the patron, which, if not offered, was a disgrace to the relationship (deSilva 2000a:155).

3.2.4 Political Milieu: The Roman Empire and the Ekklesia

The earliest, formative years of Christianity were within the Jewish context (Hooker 1986:54). Yet, how early Christians were viewed by outsiders in the Roman context served as a factor in Christianity's later development (Wilken 1980:101). By the 2nd century, there were several forms of Christianity (Wilken

1980:104; Skarsaune 2002:243-258). How did Rome view the early Church movement? How did the Church see its role compared to Judaism?

3.2.4.1 Legal Status

The problem for the early Church came from Rome viewing them as independent associations and separate from Judaism (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:252). The embryonic years of Christianity found protection from Rome by being associated with a Jewish heritage (Jeffers 1999:75; Skarsaune 2002:59-64; Ferguson 2003:609). Rome recognized ancestral religious heritage and granted legal protection for assembly (Ferguson 2003:602). The Roman Empire limited lawful assemblies for three groups: professional associations of people with common trades, religious associations for worship of a particular god, and burial societies among the urban poor (Repschinski 2000:55).

Eventually, Rome recognized that Judaism and Christianity were separate and treated Christians as a threat. Wilken has given three examples of how the outside world viewed Christianity during the first century: as a superstition and philosophical school, a religious association devoted to Christ and a rebellious Jewish sect (1980:104-122).

Romans believed one should be loyal to their religious heritage. Because the monotheistic practice of Judaism was recognized by Rome, Jews were not expected to participate in emperor worship. Yet, for Christianity this was not the case, since it had no heritage that would exempt it from participating. Rome never made Christianity illegal, but it was also never made legal (Skarsaune 2002:61-62).

3.2.4.2 The Ekklesia and Matthew

Matthew was the only Gospel to speak of the Church (*ekklesia*). Duling has suggested that Matthew saw the community as an association built on “voluntary marginality” (1995a:362-363). Voluntary marginality groups were those who chose to live outside the norms or values of conventional society. Saldarini has also suggested Matthew’s group would have been viewed as a private, voluntary association in Roman society (1994:197). Yet, the one key difference between the voluntary associations of Greco-Roman culture and

early Christianity was that early Christian communities believed they were connected worldwide because of their belief in Jesus (Jeffers 1999:80).

Ascough has pointed out that the Matthean community, since being identified with Jesus as Messiah, needed to have a social unit separate from the synagogue (2001:102). The Gospel of Matthew became the authoritative text for this community (p. 101). For Christians in the Matthean community, their group was differentiated from Judaism resulting in conflict from both Roman and Jewish authorities (Matt 10:17; 24:9-14). It seems the Matthean Christians wanted to be differentiated from Judaism (p. 113).

Matthew wrote to encourage the believers in the face of persecution by reminding them of both their status ("blessed", Matt 5:3-11) and their role ("because of me", Matt 5:11). By using *ekklesia* as the designation for the new community, Matthew demonstrated key differences from their synagogue associations (Ascough 2001:114). Therefore, as Stegemann and Stegemann have concluded about the New Testament use of *ekklesia*, there were two central ideas about the new community: a Christ-confessing *ekklesia* that comes together and a community always bound together outside actual meetings (1999:264).

3.3 A Summary of the Contextual Analysis of the Beatitudes

The Matthean community was addressed through the Beatitudes. The composition exemplified the political, social and religious context through its themes of kingdom, righteousness, persecution, world, and father. Matthew was clearly using a metanarrative conducive to both the Jewish religious mentality, as well as the adoptive ideas of the new community. It was through the Beatitudes that Matthew cultivated a new paradigm for the Christian community (cf. Riches 2000:181-183). It was one constructed on well known past referents (covenants, temple and Torah), while it also displayed an awareness of new responsibilities as the *ekklesia* (Westerholm 2006:78).

The *ekklesia* Matthew addressed was created in an oral environment as it disseminated both the sayings and life of Jesus (Gospel of the Kingdom).

Like the Essenes, who stood outside the religious mainstream, the early Christians existed as a community. The DSS pointed to how a community existed as a minority, with the rejection of the religious majority. For Matthew, the Beatitudes point to a community that saw itself as blessed with a responsibility to the world appropriate to the blessing. Even more, the new community was displayed as the family of God by Matthew (Riches 2000:211-216). The following contextual issues must not be ignored as one focuses on the Matthean composition of the Beatitudes.

- (a) Jesus, more than the temple, is the presence of God in the *ekklesia*.
- (b) Jesus' teachings, as fulfilled in the Torah, are authoritative for the *ekklesia*.
- (c) The *ekklesia* is a community (microcosm) displaying the kingdom of God (macrocosm).
- (d) The *ekklesia* must remember its oral foundations and the role of rhetoric through its expression of Jesus' story.
- (e) Ultimately, the *ekklesia* is a family brought together by Jesus to honor its father in the world.

Chapter 4

The Immediate Circumstances Surrounding the Beatitudes

The understanding that Jesus came and continues to be the presence of God to a Christ-confessing community served as the inclusio of Matthew's composition (Bauer 1988:109-127; cf. Matt 1:23; 28:20). Matthew has constructed a story that makes no pretense of the claims elucidated in the teaching and ministry of Jesus. For Matthew and the early Christian community, Jesus was the presence and authority of God on earth, and continues to be through the new community bearing his name (Matt 16:16-18; 18:20; cf. Kingsbury 1975:96; Kupp 1996; Luz 2005:85).

Matthew used the word *exousia* throughout his Gospel, demonstrating the authority Jesus repeatedly displayed in his ministry (Matt 7:29; 9:6, 8; 10:1; 21:23-27; 28:18). For Plato, *exousia* was the power one had in "legal, political, social or moral affairs" (Betz 1986:607). The authority of Jesus was elucidated in his teaching, differentiating him from the scribes (Matt 7:29) by his pronounced forgiveness of sins (Matt 9:2-8), in commissioning the disciples (Matt 10:1), and in the temple cleansing (Matt 21:12-17). This authority extended to the teaching and pronouncements of Jesus (cf. Matt 11:25-30).

For this study, attention is drawn to the hearers of Jesus' teaching, and the perception of authority that was elicited by his words as he taught them (cf. Davies and Allison 1988:397; Stanton 1993:382-383; Luz 2007:390). Matthew depended upon this authority, both, in the construction of his Gospel

and in describing the new community. The authority and presence of God situate the setting of the Beatitudes. In the end, the Beatitudes by Jesus were spoken from God's point of view (Garland 2001:54)!

In what ways did Matthew demonstrate this authority leading to the pronounced Beatitudes? What concepts were placed in the narrative to cue the reader/hearer with an understanding of the Beatitude pronouncements? What did the Beatitudes mean to the hearers? In what way did Matthew compose the Beatitudes to be understood and adopted by the new community as descriptive of their experience?

4.1 Semantic Observations Directing the Beatitudes

For this study, the position is taken that Matthew's Gospel was a story about Jesus and his divine significance (Howell 1990; Burrige 1992; Stanton 1993:383; Kupp 1996:9; Overman 1996:2; Luz 2005:85; 2007:11-12, 73; Black 2008:24). Reflections of Jesus' life were portrayed in the Matthean narrative, eventually being inculcated by the early Christian community as a "foundational story" (Luz 2007:11).

When examining the Matthean story, separating the literary and theological markers is important (cf. Black 2008). Matthew, no doubt, used many literary markers, primarily due to the oral culture with its need for mnemonic devices (Dunn 2003a:161; Luz 2007:5-8; Hearon 2009). In contrast to the literary, the theological emphasis guides the ultimate study of Matthew's Gospel (Kupp 1996:13-17). To understand the semantic possibilities of the Beatitudes, certain semantic observations must be explored.

4.1.1 *The Speaking Agent of the Beatitudes: Jesus as Christos*

Any explanation of the Gospel of Matthew must deal with the idea of "God with us" (Matt 1:23) and its antecedent, "his people" (Matt 1:21), as the recipients of Jesus' ministry (Kingsbury 2001:162). Just as Abraham and David were mediators of salvation history among God's people (Matt 1:1-6), so "Jesus the Christ" (*Iēsou Christou*, Matt 1:18) was the presence of God to

save (restore) “his people” out of exile for liberation (Wright 1996:561; Eloff 2008:94). It was important for Matthew that Jesus was presented, not only as the promised one who came, but also, as the continuing presence of God among the Christ-confessing community within the world (cf. Matt 1:23; 28:18-20).

Matthew wanted his Gospel to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel (Charette 2000:35). By introducing the “origin” (Matt 1:1) of Jesus with a genealogy in sets of three, Matthew narrated the ages of Abraham, David, and the exile as precursors to the new age depicted in Jesus (Hamm 1990:70-73; Kupp 1996:52-53; Kingsbury 2001:156-159; Hamilton 2008:239). Matthew transitioned Israel’s hopes and dreams, as found in the Old Testament, with the life of Jesus completing the denouement for them.

The one distinguishing characteristic of Matthew’s Gospel from the Qumran literature was the Christocentric emphasis on Jesus (Witherington 2006:12). It was precisely because of Jesus’ perceived messianic authority that the oral transmission of his teachings and stories continued through the early Church (Riesner 1991:209).

A focus on Matthew 1:18-25 demonstrates how Jesus was presented to the reader/hearer of Matthew’s Gospel. The name “Jesus” was his given name (Matt 1:25), while Emmanuel explained the result of his presence (Matt 1:23). Yet, one should not conclude that the name “Jesus” had no Christological significance (Kupp 1996:57). By combining both “Jesus” and “Emmanuel” (Matt 1:21-23), Matthew was anticipating the conclusions of his story and the further development of that recognition among Jesus’ followers (Kupp 1996:57-62). In other words, beginning with his birth, those called “his people” were the ones who also recognized that Jesus is “God with us”, (Kingsbury 2001:161).

In the midst of Matthew’s portrait of Jesus, he also identified him as “the Christ” and uses *Christos* seventeen times in the Gospel (Matt 1:1, 16, 17, 18; 2:4; 11:2; 16:16, 20; 22:42; 23:10; 24:5, 23, 24; 26:63, 68; 27:17, 22). Matthew was not simply saying that God acted through Jesus as a mediator, more than that, “the abiding presence of God is tied to the very existence of Jesus” (Powell 1998b:350). Why does Matthew employ *Christos* and what understanding did it bring to Jesus’ followers?

The term *Christos* served, in the first century, as a reference point to describe the Old Testament understanding of a “Messiah” or “Anointed One.” In addition, it usually referred to special functions of priests and kings (Carson 1982:100; cf. Lev 4:3; 6:22; I Sa 16:13; 24:10; Is 45:1). Yet, it did not convey an absolute sense as much as a qualified one, such as “Messiah of Israel” or “Messiah of Aaron” (Bird 2009:35; cf. Kingsbury 1975:97; Ferguson 2003:553). The kingship of Israel served foundationally for a messianic figure, fostering the messianic expectation of a future Davidic ruler (Charette 2000:30).

Schiffman is adamant in his assertion that the emphasis within Jewish messianism was concerned with this world and expressed in those concrete terms (1987:235). Throughout the prophets, the “Day of the Lord” motif was utilized to portray a future utopia, resulting in a restoration of God’s people to the land of Israel (Schiffman 1987:236-237). At the time of Jesus’ birth, there were messianic expectations within diverse religious settings (Carson 1982:100). Jewish expectation was that the Messiah would be able to impart the Torah inwardly to the heart (Davies 1966:37-38).

The Qumran community expected two messiahs: a royal messiah of Israel and a priestly messiah of Aaron (Skarsaune 2002:304; Ferguson 2003:552). Within their writings, a time was envisioned in which the Messiah would introduce changes in the laws for their community, as he would be the correct interpreter (Davies 1996:45-47). Ben Sira referenced a time in Judah’s restoration resulting with celebrations in Jerusalem and in the temple (Sir 36:11-17). There were also political messianic aspirations (“social banditry”) within groups, such as the Sicarii and Zealots formed in resistance to Roman power (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:173-182). Within the apocalyptic worldview, “messiah” had become a description for one who would bring eschatological salvation (Strecker 2000:92).

For Bird, the point of the New Testament Gospels was not so much in the designated term of messiah, as much as the belief that there would be a divine agent who would be the anointed of God on earth (2009:36; cf. Skarsaune 2002:305). Hengel has noted this supreme importance in that “to believe in the messianic messenger thus meant believing in God himself and to follow that messenger meant following after God himself” (1981:22).

Matthew was introducing Jesus as that agent, using his narrative in pointing to the telic affirmation of Peter about Jesus, “you are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16; cf. Charette 2000:36). The Matthean narrative reached a profound level in the combination of “Christ” with “the Son of God” (Kingsbury 1975:98; cf. White 2010:316-317). The narration of the baptism of Jesus demonstrated the understanding of the early church that Jesus was presented as messiah (Matt 3:15-17; cf. Skarsaune 2002:311). This has led Kingsbury to affirm the position that in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus fulfilled his role of messiah as the Son of God (1975:98).

An interesting chiastic formation demonstrates key questions arising within Matthew’s composition over Jesus as *Christos*. The rhetorical queries demanded a response from the reader/hearer over his Messiahship (Matt 27:22). Matthew has John the Baptist inquiring over proof that Jesus was the messiah (Matt 11:2). Meier understands John was dismayed because of his own “fantasies” not being fulfilled in Jesus’ ministry (Meier 1980a:392). Jesus answered by pointing to the “works of Christ”, which referenced his merciful healings and acts of forgiveness.

Within the scope of John’s question comes Peter’s affirmation of Jesus as Messiah (Matt 16:16). In response to Peter’s testimony, Jesus pronounced a blessing upon him (Matt 16:17). The second question was posed by Jesus to the Jewish leaders concerning his messiahship. Matthew demonstrates how serious it was to reject God’s presence in the life of Jesus by simply referring to him as a human teacher, as done by the Pharisees (Matt 22:42; cf. 23:1-33; Hagner 1995:651-652). Finally, out of the mouth of Pilate (Gentile), Matthew brings the narrative to its rhetorical denouement with the obvious question, what must be done in light of Jesus’ presence and ministry on earth (Matt 27:22). These patterns seem to reflect an authorial intent by Matthew in demonstrating the Christological nature of Jesus (cf. VanderWeele 2008:673).

***Christos* Rhetoric in Matthew**

Preamble

A. 1:1 “the origin of Christ”

B. 1:16 “Jesus was born, who is called Christ”

A.1:17 “deportation to Babylon to the Christ”

B. 1:18 “now the birth of Jesus Christ”

B. 2:4 “where the Christ was to be born”

Body

A. 11:2 “the deeds of the Christ...are you he who is to come...?”

B. 16:16 “You are the Christ”

C. 16:20 “tell no one that he was the Christ”

A. 22:42 “What do you think of the Christ?”

B. 23:10 “for you have one master, the Christ”

C. 24:5 “many will come..., saying, ‘I am the Christ’

C. 24:23-24 “if any...says..., ‘here the Christ...false Christs”

B. 26:63 “tell us if you are the Christ”

C. 26:68 “Prophecy to us, you Christ!”

B. 27:17 “Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?”

A. 27:22 “Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?”

(Figure 4.1)

The importance of Jesus as *Christos* was found in the conclusion drawn by Jesus that those who were not offended by his ministry were blessed (Matt 11:6). The reader would be reminded of the preceding Beatitudes. The list of accomplishments through the ministry of Jesus served as the rationale for answering John's question: the blind received sight, the lame walked, lepers were cleansed, deaf healed, dead were raised, and the poor had good news preached to them (Matt 11:3-5). Here, allusions to Isaiah were prominently used in explaining who Jesus was and what he did (Isaiah 26:19; 29:18; 35:5-6; 42:7; 61:1-2).

The Messianic Apocalypse (4Q521) used three of the same Isaianic phrases. By comparing 4Q521 and Jesus' reply, many scholars conclude that

his reply was characterized by messianic intentions (Evans 2000:697; Bird 2009:101-104). As Matthew drew upon the Old Testament texts, he composed chapters 4-10 to remind the early Christian community of the paradox in both blessing from Jesus and rejection of Jesus was present in the presentation of Jesus as the Messiah (Hagner 1993:302).

Matthew demonstrated, from the genealogy of Jesus to his miracles, that God was present in Jesus as historically situated in the stories told about him. For the Matthean community, its identity and purpose was built on the acceptance of the messiahship of Jesus (cf. White 2010:314-317). Jesus, then, was the apocalyptic Messiah with the kingdom message as affirmed by the new community.

Before the pronouncement of the Beatitudes, Matthew noted that Jesus was teaching, preaching, and healing throughout Galilee (Matt 4:23-24). Matthew used *kērussō* (“preach”) exclusively for the announcement of the gospel (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; 26:13). This, too, was alluded to in Isaiah (41:27; 52:7; 61:1-2) and “connotes a Christological affirmation in Matthew” (Guelich 1982:45; cf. Thiselton 1992:288). Bruner has stressed that “without the Son of God, the Sermon on the Mount is not only impossible; it is impertinent” (2004:152)! Jesus expressed messianic claims as displayed by his use of the Old Testament texts (cf. Ellis 1993:68). Using speech act theory on the sayings of Jesus will demonstrate that Matthew’s emphasis on those sayings was strictly due to his view of Jesus as authoritative.

If the implicit Christology is false, the entire performative and exercitive dimension collapses and falls to the ground as nothing more than a construct of pious human imagination (Thiselton 1992:288-289).

Therefore, the pronounced blessings by Jesus, as found in the Beatitudes, confirmed that God was making his presence and blessing known to his people. The testimony of Matthew throughout his Gospel, was that Jesus came specifically as Israel’s Messiah (duToit 1977:36; Eloff 2008:93; Bird 2009:158) and blessings would be experienced as a result (cf. Matt 11:6; 16:17).

4.1.2 The Prerequisite in Receiving the Beatitudes: the Necessity of Repentance

The concept of repentance was central to the Matthean narrative. If the intention of Matthew was to encourage a paradigm shift within the new community, the word *metanoia* (“repentance”) conveyed the process needed for its accomplishment. What began with John the Baptist (Matt 3:2, 8), continued with Jesus as well (Matt 4:17). The use of *metanoia* by Matthew was important in conveying the proper response to Jesus’ message (Matt 3:2, 8, 11; 4:17; 9:13; 11:20, 21; 12:41; 21:32).

Matthew’s use of *metanoia* pointed to a new way of thinking, a new reference point, that is, a paradigm shift offered in the mission of Jesus. Throughout the New Testament, *metanoia* was always used in a religious sense (Crossley 2004:155). The emphasis was on the change within the life of the person in turning to God, not just a change in the will (Goetzmann 1986:358; Nave 2006:90). For Matthew, the call to repent was equivalent to becoming a disciple of Jesus (Goetzmann 1986:358; cf. Riches 2000:210).

What are the clues to understanding the use of *metanoia* in Matthew’s Gospel as compared to other Semitic literature? Does its usage demonstrate more of a conceptual understanding (“change of thinking”) or an ethical understanding (“change of conduct”) ? Finally, what relation might it have with the Beatitudes and the self-understanding of the new community?

4.1.2.1 Use of metanoia in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Sirach

For a first century Jew, repentance would include both the idea of moral action and ritualistic behavior (Hagerland 2006:167). The Semitic term, *teshubah*, signified a “complete change of practice” in light of eschatological assurance (Crossley 2004:139-140). The Qumran community placed an emphasis on repentance. Throughout their writings, evidence pointed to both ideas being represented.

(a) *IQS5:1-14; 10:20*: In IQS (Rules for the Community Conduct) the rules for living in the community were given. The men of Yahad (“unity) were

addressed as “volunteers of repentance from evil” (IQS5:1). In the text, those who have repented are described as separate from perverse men, gathering for learning the Law, and placing themselves under the authority of the sons of Zadok (5:2). As repentant ones, they were to practice truth with “humility, charity, justice, lovingkindness, and modesty” (5:3-4). The necessity for repentance was demanded before they entered the purifying waters (5:14). The same idea was expressed in IQS10:20 with the prayer for righteousness to be established by not being “angry at those repenting of sins.” The incentive to repent was achieved by meditating on God’s deeds and power (10:16). An interesting parallel is found with Jesus’ warning to the unrepentant cities in Matthew 11:20-24).

(b) *CD 4:2; 6:5; 19:16; 20:17*: The Damascus Document emphasized repentance as a characteristic of the priests who were the key leaders of the Qumran community (4:2). The metaphor of the well was used of the Law, with the “diggers” being the “repentant of Israel” (6:5). The implication was that in order to understand and teach Torah, one must demonstrate the characteristic of repentance. In CD 19:16, ideas of mourning and lamenting were characteristic of “the poor of the flock.” There were the ones who gave heed to God and turned away from the common people (19:13-16). Finally, in CD 20:17 the ones who kept God’s covenant and repented of their sins were protected from God’s anger.

(c) *Sirach*: For Sirach, repentance was a needed condition in forsaking sins and returning to God (17:24, 26; 18:21; 48:15). He also combined the act of reproof with the result of repentance (20:3; 21:6). Sirach was pointing to “conversion in the full sense” (Behm 1985:641). What was significant at the time of Sirach, was the Jewish understanding that repentance involved a turning away from sin, a return to God and his covenant, resulting in a changed life (Hagerland 2006:169).

4.1.2.2 *Summary of metanoia in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Sirach*

In the passages examined, two central ideas emerge in the use of *metanoia*: a point of departure from a perceived, harmful state of affairs, and the return

to God and the covenant as a new way of living juxtaposed to the former way of life. In the DSS, the imagery of sinners coming back to God was prominent (Crossley 2004:141-142). For the Qumran community, repentance was the key characteristic of its members, departing from Israel in forming a new, restored community (Abegg 2006:65-66; cf. Evans 2006:59-60). There was no entrance into the community unless there was evidence of repentance. Repentance was the defining moment, leading to the beginning of righteousness in the community (Abegg 2006:66).

4.1.2.3 *Use of metanoia the Gospel of Matthew*

The idea of repentance used by Matthew was a return to God, not simply a change of mind (Keener 1999:120). This repentance began as an internal change (Meier 1980b:23). Through an examination of the texts, a pattern will emerge, reflecting *metanoia* as a key prerequisite for understanding Jesus' pronouncements.

(a) *Matthew 3:2, 8, 11; 4:17*: The preaching of both John the Baptist and Jesus was characterized by the motif of repentance. For both, the call to repentance was grounded in kingdom awareness. This involved both a national wake-up call and individual invitation (Davies and Allison 1988:306). For Hagner, the understanding of the kingdom's proximity was more important than the call to repent (1993:74). Luz disagrees by noting the call to repent was an emphasis at the beginning of Jesus' ministry to the orientation of life characterized by kingdom presence, and that emphasis continued to have a vital role in Jesus' ministry (2007:135).

Throughout the prophets, repentance was a return to YHWH resulting in a restoration (Wright 1996:248; cf. Is 44:22; 45:22; Jer 3:10-22; 18:8; Ezek 14:6; 18:30; Hos 3:5; 6:1; 14:1; Joel 2:12; Zech 1:3-6). Both John and Jesus were adopting the theology of Isaiah (Is 56:1), who saw repentance as a prerequisite of the kingdom of God (Betz 1991:64). The demand by John the Baptist for repentance was evidenced by its "fruit" (Matt 3:11).

In the context, John warned the Jewish leaders that ancestral blessing would not produce the "fruit" of the kingdom (Matt 3:8-9). It was simple for John, the "fruit" of repentance was obedience, evidenced in the baptism ritual

(cf. IQS5:1-14). For Jesus to be baptized by John, the importance of repentance was accentuated. Jesus, too, took up the same message. This act was a specific once-for-all turn toward the kingdom seen in the act of baptism (Keener 1999:120). Although Matthew identified Jesus' preaching with John's, the Gospel composition will be further developed in light of responding to Jesus himself (Nolland 2005:175). Ultimately, repentance was the new way of thinking about "the better righteousness" that was realized in Jesus (Luz 2007:160).

(b) *Matthew 9:13*: Some MSS have added *eis metanoian* ("to repentance") to this verse (C,L,Θ, and Majority Text). It does parallel Luke 5:32 with the note of repentance. The emphasis by Matthew was that Jesus' message of repentance was understood by those who associated with Jesus (Carey 2009:25). As noted by Hagerland, Jesus did not create an alternative rite of repentance, but, rather, asked for those associating with him to accept his preaching and teaching (2006:187). Thus, Jesus' call to discipleship was a call to follow him out of their self-righteousness into the healthy righteousness he provided (Hagner 1993:239-240).

(c) *Matthew 11:20-21*: Matthew equated the lack of repentance to unbelief in this pericope. Repentance was seen as the proper response to the ministry of Jesus. By pointing to the practice of "sackcloth and ashes", Matthew characterized the repentant act with ritualistic sorrow (Keener 1999:345). Recognizing the need for change was the first act of change.

(d) *Matthew 12:41*: By comparing the response of those who heard Jonah as compared to those who heard Jesus, Matthew demonstrated that the "one greater" expected an equal or greater response of repentance as well. Ultimately, the resurrection of Jesus would prove to be the greater opportunity for repentance (cf. Turner 2008:327).

(e) *Matthew 21:29, 32*: Matthew associated repentance with righteousness and belief. The stress in this passage was placed upon

obedience that resulted in repentance. In addition, the juxtaposition of belief with repentance brings clarity to how the early community understood *metanoia*. It must be noted that in the Gospel of Matthew, the refusal of repentance was placed upon the Jewish leadership, while “sinners” were associating and believing in Jesus’ ministry (Hagner 1995:614).

4.1.2.4 *Summary of metanoia* in the Gospel of Matthew

Did Jesus call for repentance? Carey has observed that Jesus did encourage repentance generally, but not specifically of individuals (2009:29; cf. Dunn 2003b:503). Hagerland has argued that if the broadest sense of changing one’s way of life is meant by repentance, “we may safely assume that Jesus did call sinners to repentance” (2006:170-171). Other scholars have stressed that Matthew thought of repentance as “entrance into the Christian community” (Davies and Allison 1988:389). McKenna understands Jesus’ message of repentance (4:17) to be a key in understanding the entire Matthean Gospel (2007:56).

For the Jewish community, repentance would have been associated to the exile and restoration motifs of the prophets (Wright 1996:250-251; Dunn 2003b:506; Eloff 2008:107). What the prophets demanded was a national return to the Torah and a renunciation of political violence, leading to national restoration (Howell 1990:188). Yet, in contrast to the prophets, Matthew has placed true repentance as an “adherence and allegiance to Jesus himself” and not through the Jewish system (Wright 1996:252). The symbol of returning to God was equated in turning to Jesus (Hannan 2006:36).

For those who heard the pronouncements of the Beatitudes, repentance would make possible the true understanding of what Jesus stressed. The demand for repentance was also a demand for righteousness, howbeit, a righteousness Jesus provided (Patte 1987:70; Talbert 2006:144; Hannan 2006:41; Nave 2006:92). Ultimately, Jesus was offering a new way of living in God’s presence through a worldview shift, a change in how life was perceived (cf. Talbert 2010:73). His call to repentance was an affirmative invitation for people to take his kingdom message upon their lives, much like a gift offered (Pamment 1981:214; Luz 2007:160), and experience life through the new worldview.

The Gospel of Matthew addressed the inauguration of this kingdom and repentance was the key to understanding it (Kingsbury 1985:77; Talbert 2006:33). Matthew saw repentance as the only means of becoming involved with Jesus (Luomanen 1998b:215). The kingdom Jesus proclaimed created a situation demanding a fundamental change in thought and living (Bornkamm 1960:46; Nave 2006:89).

John the Baptist brought attention to the results of repentance with the phrase “*axsion tēs metanoias*” (cf. Matt 3:8). The word *axsios* meant “high degree of comparable worth or value” (Danker 2000:93). In other words, repentance would be visible in a lifestyle demonstrative of change. A rejection of Jesus’ authority was a rejection to consider the way of righteousness he offered, since it required personal commitment to him (Keener 1999:120; cf. Matthew 5:17-20; 23:1-39). “However absolute the call to repentance, it was a message of joy, because the possibility of repentance exists” (Goetzmann 1986:358). The Beatitudes reflected the result of repentance in the life of the new community.

4.1.3 The Recipients of the Beatitudes: Followers of Jesus

Sociological models have understood Jesus’ followers in three different ways: a sect, a millenarian group, or a charismatic movement (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:191-195). The weakness of the sect model is the narrow focus on the Jesus’ followers as competitors against other sects. The millenarian group would primarily appeal to the first century, but die off as time proved its enemy. What seems best is the charismatic model, pointing to the transformative power of Jesus’ ministry in the lives of his disciples (p. 194-195).

Thus for charismatic movements the violent death of the genuine bearer of charisma is in no way a catastrophe; rather, it can be the initial spark, as it were, for the development and reshaping of the charisma (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:195).

In regard to the Beatitudes, the preceding narrative served to demonstrate the positive results of Jesus' ministry as the kingdom of heaven was being introduced (Matt 3:1-4:25). What resulted from repentance was the actualization of following Jesus as a disciple. The immediate context of the Beatitudes served as a portrayal into the beginning of Jesus' ministry in forming disciples (Matt 4:12-25; cf. Riches 2000:186). Matthew was posturing Jesus as the kingdom authority, demonstrating the implications involved in Jesus' mission (cf. Guelich 1982:56).

The word *akoloutheō* ("follow") was employed to express a Christological understanding within this pericope (Matt 4:19, 20, 22, and 25). What was introduced in this section was true of Matthew's Gospel, that the call of Jesus to discipleship was both rewarding and demanding (Stanton 1993:306). For the follower of Jesus, the blessings (Beatitudes) were evidence of the kingdom rule in their lives.

4.1.3.1 Use of akoloutheō in Classical Greek and Early Judaism

The term *akoloutheō* was used by Homer in referring to a path, conveying the idea of going along with someone. It was also used in a negative sense of a hostile pursuit after someone (Blendinger 1986:481). Legend states that as Pythagoras spoke on one occasion, over two thousand people became so enamored with him that they would not return home, but, instead, followed him (Hengel 1981:25). In 530 BC, through his charismatic teaching, he brought change in the lives of the citizens of Croton to abandon luxurious living in exchange for the moderate lifestyle (Riedweg 2005:61). In the *Vita Pythagorica* (137) by Iamblichus, he recalled what a Pythagorean lifestyle meant before the gods.

All their decisions about what to do or not to do aimed at being in accord with the divine. This is the principle; all of life is so ordered as to follow the god, and the rationale of this philosophy is that people behave absurdly when they seek the good anywhere but from the gods... (Clark 1989:60-61).

By the time of Plato, it would reference a philosophical direction and the following of a particular opinion (Blendinger 1986:481). Plato was the first

to apply “divine man” to the philosopher (Hengel 1981:26). This philosopher would have his own “school” for those wanting to follow his teachings. The Stoics would develop the religious understanding of following the nature of God or becoming incorporated with one’s being into the nature of God (Blendinger 1986:481).

Within Judaism, there are no stories of a rabbi “calling” a pupil to follow him. In fact, usually the pupil took the initiative to follow a rabbi (Hengel 1981:50-51; Gundry 1994:62). This was classified as “learning” and not “following after.” When the idea of “follow after” was used, it was employed in the actual wandering and traveling of the disciple with his rabbi (Davies and Allison 1988:398).

*4.1.3.2 Use of *akolouthēō* in the New Testament*

Primarily it was used in the Synoptic Gospels. It described the actual following or accompanying of Jesus, as well as a vivid term for discipleship to Jesus’ ministry (Blendinger 1986:482; Hagner 1993:77; Hannan 2006:40). Throughout Matthew, *akolouthēō* was used both literally and metaphorically. Kingsbury has provided two factors in clarifying the metaphorical from the literal: a personal commitment and an individual cost (1978:58). When these two factors are present, there is no doubt that discipleship was the intentional sense of the metaphor (Kingsbury 1978:58-73; Cousland 2002:146; Minear 2004:73-78).

Jesus never called people as a whole to follow him, only individuals (Hengel 1981:59). When used by Jesus, it was always “the call to decisive and intimate discipleship” with him (Blendinger 1986:482; cf. Guelich 1982:50). There are no records in rabbinic tradition that expressed such a personal call to discipleship as Jesus did (Hengel 1981:2; Dunn 2003b:556). The call of rabbinic disciples was to follow Torah, not so much in following an individual teacher (Byrskog 1994:133). Rabbinic disciples were only disciples until they became a rabbi, whereby disciples of Jesus would remain in that state (cf. Wilkins 1988:146).

Another observation of those who responded to Jesus in the Gospels was they did so due to his proclamation of kingdom imminence, not simply to his effectiveness as a teacher (Hengel 1981:15). Furthermore, he directed his

disciples to follow, not his everyday actions, but the kingdom and will of God as demonstrated by his life (Hengel 1981:53).

4.1.3.3 *Use of *akoloutheō* in Matthew 4:18-25*

The term occurs more in Matthew than the other Synoptic Gospels and usually conveyed the idea of discipleship (Kingsbury 1978:56-73; Hagner 1993:77; cf. Matt 4:19, 20, 22, 25; 8:1, 10, 19, 22, 23; 9:9, 19, 27; 10:38; 12:15; 14:13; 16:24; 19:2, 21, 27, 28; 20:29, 24; 21:9; 26:58; 27:55). Usually, Jesus initiated the call to become his disciple (*mathētēs*), with an authority requiring radical obedience (Hare 1993:30; Cousland 2002:156; France 2007:147).

The importance of this event was in the initial calling by Jesus for disciples to follow him, with the positive response of those he called. This story gave a depiction of Jesus' purpose and the expectation of how people should respond (Edwards 1997:20). The radical response was demonstrated by those who responded in departure from their vocations and family obligations (i.e. synagogue relationships, Luz 2007:163), for a new ministry (Matt 4:18-19) which formed a new community (Matt 4:21-22). Practically speaking, it was a call "to homelessness" (Davies and Allison 1988:399).

Thus, the response of the four fishermen demonstrated their evaluation of Jesus as worthy of their trust and lives (Edwards 1997:26). Later, in the Matthean composition, Jesus illustrated, with the wineskins metaphor, the radical new way of life offered by following him (Morris 1986:137; cf. Matt 9:14-17). Following Jesus could not be continued within the previous Jewish worldview. Discipleship to Jesus was the call to be in "solidarity with Jesus in mission, authority, and suffering" (Wilkins 1988:146). What brought such a worldview change?

The introduction of the kingdom of heaven (Matt 4:17) highlights the eschatological drama which Jesus and his followers thought in terms of their ministry (Stegemann and Stegemann 1999:205). Jesus, as a charismatic leader, coupled with his eschatological message, was a powerful force among the people (Hengel 1981:20). Matthew demonstrated how Jesus promised to teach his disciples, to reorient them to the understanding of kingdom living (Carter 2004:217).

By using the metaphor “fishers of men”, Jesus emphasized the disciples’ ministry of bringing the demands of the kingdom to the people (France 2007:147). The goal of following Jesus was not simply to create a new Jesus tradition, but “to prepare a people for the presence of God’s rule (cf. Hengel 1981:81).

In regards to the new community, the implication was it, too, needed understanding of its faith and ministry to continue the work of Jesus (Luz 2005:123; cf. Davies and Allison 1988:406; Howell 1990:258-259; Burridge 2007:220). Further, those who have committed to following Jesus are the ones to whom the Beatitudes are directed (Luz 1995:43; Hauerwas 2006:61; Turner 2008:144). The reader of the Gospel is equated with being a disciple of Jesus (Howell 1990:18). Understanding the meaning of the Beatitudes was situated in the context of discipleship to Jesus (cf. Beare 1962:53; Blomberg 2004:5). The Beatitudes, as well as the Sermon, was a continuation of Jesus’ activity of healing, preaching and teaching, surrounding the kingdom of heaven motif (Palachuvattil 2007:92).

4.2 Structural Indicators Framing the Beatitudes

The Gospel of Matthew was framed within the inclusio of “God with us” (Matt 1:23) and Jesus’ promise, “I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matt 28:20). The entire Matthean composition rested on this structure (Smyth 1982:219; Kupp 1996:235-236). Beyond this recognition, Gundry has stated that Matthew had no clear structure (1994:11).

Allison has concluded that the compositional “parts may exhibit something the whole does not” (1987:424). Weren has countered with the argument that the Matthean composition was coarse, but patterns were still distinguishable in exhibiting a structure (2006:199). Yet, too rigid of a structure should be ruled out, since the “living historical reality of which Matthew gave witness was so rich and dynamic that even a thorough compositional activity could not force it into too rigid a scheme” (duToit 1977:37).

France has concluded that no markers existed in the Matthean narrative, and any suggestive structure is an imposition by the interpreter

(2007:2). Yet, even without direction from the author, structural markers can be observed by the interpreter since the narrative has a story line and plot (Kupp 1996:7). Even France has admitted that the Matthean composition was created for oral presentations, and that fact alone would demand sections to be created within the narrative (2007:5).

How was the Sermon on the Mount featured within the overall purpose of Matthew? In what way does the Sermon compare or contrast with the other blocks of teachings in the Gospel of Matthew?

4.2.1 The Place of the Beatitudes in the Overall Structure of Matthew

Without doubt, the teaching of Jesus was a major emphasis for Matthew, leading scholars to outline the Gospel with the five discourses ending in “and when Jesus finished these sayings” (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1; cf. Bacon 1918:56-66; 1930:165-249; Carson 1984:50-57; Davies and Allison 1988:61; Smith 1997:540-551; Liroy 2004:117; Turner 2008:9). The appeal to this structure is seen in the correspondence between themes introduced through narrative and expounded through discourse (cf. Carter 1992:463-481; Smith 1997:545). Luz has taken exception by noting that these phrases, alone, do not move the story along (2007:12).

Another option offered by scholars, was that Matthew used *apo tote erzato* (“from that time on”) in two strategic places (Matt 4:17; 16:21), and this literary composition has been suggestive for viewing the Gospel’s structure in three acts (Strecker 1967:220; Kingsbury 1975:17-21; Guelich 1982:56; Senior 1997:28-29). Powell differs slightly, by arguing for a main plot (Matt 1:21) and two subplots highlighted with *apo tote erzato* (1992:192-199). The emphasis, then, was on Jesus’ initial ministry and the conclusion of that ministry.

Yet, the exact phrase also occurred in Matthew 26:16 and was simply adjectival of Judas’ action. In addition, the phrase only occurs in two places, making it a “slender basis” to construct the entire composition into a unified structure (France 2007:2). It seems better to take this phrase as the gradual

unfolding of Jesus' ministry, rather than strict literary markers (Eloff 2008:100-101).

Eloff has advocated another structural option, serving more precisely as literary markers and consisting of theological significance in three acts. The markers were in the threefold use of "*apo...eōs*" (Matt 1:17; 11:1-18; 23:39), describing salvation history within the Matthean composition (Eloff 2008:85-107; cf. Westerholm 2006:145). The strength of this view is found in viewing the Gospel of Matthew as addressing the prophetic promises of the past, the time of Jesus' ministry, and, finally, the time of the events of the author in the new community, as the unfolding of salvation history (Eloff 2008:107). The Beatitudes, then, were situated within the first section that introduced the past promises to Abraham, David, and the exiles (Matt 1:17). Notions of blessing, kingdom, and restoration were key elements in these covenants (cf. Gen 12:1-3; II Sam 7:12-16; Jer 31:31-36).

Yet, the same objection can be sustained with Eloff's position. Is not the usage of "*apo...eōs*" another description of Jesus' actions and sayings? Should the phrase be considered more in the temporal sense without becoming definite structural markers? The usage of "*apo...eōs*" was also present in the eschatological teaching of Jesus as well (cf. Matt 24:21; 26:29). Overall, the phrase cannot support the variables found within certain pericopes or texts.

The structural position of this paper is founded on the imperatival statements of Jesus, serving as thematic movements in the Matthean narrative and discourse. It is assumed that Matthew used Mark's Gospel as his outline, but added the five distinct discourses to suit his theological presentation and the needs of his community (Overman 1996:4; France 2007:3-5). The imperatives highlighted the flow of thought within the discourse, serving to address potential followers of Jesus beyond the historical event itself (cf. Howell 1990:223; Brown 2005:20-34).

One cannot help but notice the ministry of Jesus in three geographical areas: Galilee, area between Galilee and Judea, and Jerusalem. The inclusion of Jesus' divine presence and authority was the main structure, as found in the introduction (Matt 1:1-4:11) and conclusion (Matt 28:16-20). The body narrative was Matthew 4:11-28:15, indicating a mixed genre of narrative story

and *bios* (Kupp 1996:7-9; Hannan 2006:230). The Matthean narrative world was delivered as a meaningful, rhetorical composition, consisting of “partial meanings” which were “dependent upon their relationship to the whole” (Howell 1990:33). Thus, the structure, advocated by this paper, understands the thematic statements of Jesus as narrative and discourse markers, which progressively developed the story (cf. Kupp 1996:7; Edwards 1997:1-3).

Stanton has addressed the creative use employed by Matthew of the Jesus sayings, concluding that they were intertwined and interdependently elucidated for the new community (1991:257-272). Matthew arranged his composition with topical links, not chronological ones (Hare 1993:24; Scaer 2002:18; Derickson 2006:426). Luz has also noted Matthew’s propensity to accentuate central texts with cross-referenced connections (Luz 2007:6).

These thematic statements are imperatives, addressing both the historical urgency, as well as, the expectations placed upon the new community. Matthew emphasized the Gospel proclamation using imperatives (Meier 1980a:388). It should also be noted, that within each section there was an elaboration over an act, or concept, of blessing. The blessings played a major role in the Matthean story.

(a) *“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand”* (Matt 4:12-9:35). This section began after the news that John the Baptist had been arrested. The central motif for this section is the “teaching, preaching, and healing” of Jesus. The Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7) and the healings of Jesus (chs. 8-9) portrayed the presence of the kingdom of heaven. The blessings of the beatitudes formed a foundation for the understanding of Jesus’ ministry and those who responded to him.

(b) *“Pray, therefore, the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest”* (Matt 9:36-11:24). Related to this prayer imperative was the commissioning of the twelve disciples (ch. 10). John the Baptist’s question was examined with the implications that Jesus’ miracles proved his ministry superior to that of John’s (ch. 11). Jesus pronounced a blessing on those who were not offended because of his teaching and ministry, demonstrating he was “greater” than John (11:6).

(c) *“Come to me...Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me...”* (Matt 11:25-16:20). The invitation of Jesus was framed with the authority of the Father (Matt 11:25-27). Jesus was appealing to his teaching and wisdom, which the yoke concept represented in Jewish thinking (cf. Sirach 6:24; 24:19-21; Freeborn 2004:157). In this section, references to Jesus’ mercy (12:1-14), obedience to will of God (12:15-50), and compassion (14:13-21) were demonstrated. The parables of the kingdom of heaven (ch. 13) pointed to Jesus’ teaching, (“learn of me”). Different vignettes exhibited the struggle over faith (14:22-33), as well as confessions of faith (15:21-28; 16:13-20). The blessings in this section were specified for those who would listen and obey Jesus’ teaching (13:16), as well as recognize his messiahship (16:17).

(d) *“If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”* (Matt 16:21-20:19). Three imperatives were stressed by Matthew: deny, take up, and follow. Within this section, events were portrayed demonstrating why one should be so committed to Jesus: the transfiguration of Jesus (17:1-13), power over the demonic (17:14-21), Jesus’ acceptance of childlike faith (18:1-14; 19:13-15), the presence and authority of Jesus among the new community (18:15-35), and a rewarding future (19:16-30). The act of blessing was vividly portrayed in this section, serving as reminders of the blessing context of the Old Testament, evidenced in the use of spoken words and the laying of hands on the children (19:13-15; cf. Luz 2001:507; France 2007:727).

(e) *“It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant”* (Matt 20:20-23:36). The future *estai* should be interpreted as imperatival (Turner 2008:489). The Matthean narrative demonstrated the humility of Jesus in the healing of the blind men and his entry into Jerusalem upon a donkey (20:29-21:11). Jesus healed as an act of demonstrating the mercy of God (Freeborn 2004:160). Jesus was also questioned by the religious authorities in the temple over his healing (21:12-17) and teaching (21:23-27). This was a literary reminder that ultimately, the one who serves God was the righteous one doing the will of God (21:28-32).

The disciples were warned that they should not expect any better treatment than Jesus received on earth in the teaching of righteousness, which led to his rejection (21:33-46). The section ended with challenges by the Pharisees and Sadducees (22:15-46), as well as Jesus' denouncement of the religious leaders for not being servants to the people as they taught them (cf. Matt 23; Wayment 2004:289-311). In this section, the crowd blessed Jesus' presence on earth (21:9). The root term for "blessed" was *eulageō*, meaning, "to greet" and "acclamation" (cf. Danker 2000:408).

(f) *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together...and you would not!"* (Matt 23:37-28:15). The rejection by Israel's leadership of Jesus' mission was rhetorically communicated by the grieving Jesus. This was the climax of Jesus' ministry (Turner 2008:561). Yet, even in his grief there was the promise of hope that he would be accepted in the future, "...until you say, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matt 23:39).

The caution issued by Jesus for the future (chs. 24-25), combined with his arrest and crucifixion, brought the narrative to its grand finale. The resurrection was the vindication of the narrative, demonstrating that hope was still a factor for Israel's future. Blessing was alluded to three times in this section by Jesus: the promise of the future recognition by Israel of Jesus' coming (23:39), the blessing of being faithful in serving God (24:46), and the ultimate blessing of God upon those who ministered for Jesus (25:34). In Matthew 23:39 and 25:34, *eulageō* was used, expressing "acclamation." The following chart serves as a summary of the **imperative themes** (Figure 4.2).

Passage	Lead-in Verb	Imperative	Inference/Blessing
4:17	<i>kērussein</i> “proclaim”	<i>metanoēite</i> “repent”	<i>gar...Basileia ēngiken</i> “for ...kingdom near”
*Blessings pronounced in Beatitudes (ch.5).			
9:35-38	<i>kērussein</i> “proclaim”	<i>deēthēte</i> “pray, beg”	<i>oun...kuriou ekballein</i> “therefore...Lord to send”
*Blessing pronounced on those not offended by Jesus (11:6).			
11:28-30	<i>apokritheis</i> “answered”	<i>arate...mathete</i> “take...learn”	<i>hoti...praus...anapausin</i> “for...gentle...rest”
*Blessing on those who see and hear Jesus (13:16), seeing him as Christ (16:17).			
16:21-26	<i>deiknuein</i> “to show”	<i>aparnēsasthō</i> “to deny” <i>aratō</i> “take up” <i>Akoloutheitō</i> “to follow after”	<i>gar...psuchēn...heurēsei</i> “for...life...will find”
*Blessing on those who come to Jesus, living in kingdom awareness (19:13-15).			
20:25-28	<i>proskalesamenos</i> “call to himself”	<i>estai...estai</i> “it shall...it shall”	<i>ōsper...diakonēthēnai</i> “even as...to serve”
*Blessing on those aware of divine presence in Jesus (21:9).			
23:37-39	<i>Ierusalēm</i> “O, Jerusalem”	<i>idou</i> “Behold, see!”	<i>gar...eōs an eipēte</i> “for...until you say”
*Blessings on the recognition of Jesus as sovereign (23:39), on those who faithfully serve God (24:46), and those who ministered for Jesus (25:34).			

(Figure 4.2)

This structure can also be expressed in a chiasmic formation, expressing the Matthean message of Jesus as divine presence and authority necessitating the response of discipleship. Throughout Matthew, chiasms were used to demonstrate the narrative points being made, “whether explicitly stated or implied” (Derickson 2006:424; cf. Man 1984:146-157).

Chiastic Formation of Kingdom in Matthew

Introduction: Jesus as Presence of God (1:1-4:11)

A. Presence of Kingdom Demands a Response (4:12-9:35)

B. Need for Kingdom Servants (9:36-11:24)

C. Invitation to Learn of Jesus (11:25-16:20)

C. Invitation to Follow Jesus (16:21-20:19)

B. Kingdom Characterized by Service (20:20-23:36)

A. Presence of Kingdom Potential Rejected (23:37-28:15)

Conclusion: Jesus as Continual Divine Authority and Presence (28:16-20)

Figure 4.3

What this structure of the Matthean narrative accomplished, was the gradual development of what it means in being a disciple of Jesus. One must recognize that Jesus offered a kingdom to which he ushered into this world. It took a change (“repent”) of heart and mind in responding to his invitation. Jesus’ desire was for kingdom workers (“harvest”) to share the same message. In becoming Jesus followers, the community was to live by his teaching (“yoke”) and ministry (“cross”), always serving (“great must serve”) others. One should not be disillusioned with rejection (“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem”), for hope always remains. Thus, the Beatitudes began with the observation that the kingdom was being announced in Jesus’ ministry.

4.2.2 The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount and its Introductory Beatitudes

Many proposals have been given for the compositional structure of the Sermon on the Mount. Scholars tend to agree upon the thought units of the Sermon. Differences appear as relationships between the units are investigated (Talbert 2006:26). Hagner has concluded the Sermon was created from the ethical sayings by Jesus and arranged by Matthew (1993:84). Keener is careful to point out that ancient writers were not generally too concerned with precise outlines (1999:163). Yet, most scholars

have argued for a unified structure to the Sermon on the Mount. For the purposes of this paper, five views will be presented.

(a) First, Luz views the Sermon in a ring-shaped structure with the Lord's Prayer (6:9-13) as the central core (2007:172; cf. Schweizer 1975:202; Guelich 1982:323-325). The entire Sermon, Luz contends, was governed by the theme of the kingdom of heaven with the Lord's Prayer corresponding to all the units of the Sermon.

(b) Second, Kennedy brings the discipline of rhetoric to the Sermon (198:49-62). The rhetorical structure is the *exordium* (5:3-16), the *argumentatio* (5:17-7:20), and the *peroratio* (7:21-27). The key thought would be the higher righteousness, serving as the *propositio* (5:17-20). Nevertheless, caution should be taken since Matthew most likely had no vast exposure to rhetoric as a discipline (Keener 2009:ix). Keener further notes that, the Gospel was not a rhetorical speech as compared to the Greco-Roman rhetorical handbooks (2009:ix).

(c) Third, Allison views the sermon through a series of triads: the Torah (5:17-48), the Christian cult (6:1-18), and social issues (6:19-7:12), with each unit having a threefold structure (1987:429-440; 2005:198-205; cf. Stassen 2003:267-268). Davies has argued a similar position, in that the Sermon on the Mount was structured around the rabbinic context of the teaching of Simon the Just and his three pillars: the Law (Torah), temple service, and deeds of loving-kindness (1966:88-89). Davies contends that Matthew was using rabbinic forms to bring the Christian answer amid current debates within Judaism (1966:90), with Allison also understanding Matthew as reinterpreting the pillars of Simon the Just (1987:442-445; 2005:206-210). Keener has suggested that framing an entire structure around an obscure rabbinic statement is too much of a literary extension (1999:163).

(d) A fourth position, that of Betz, argues that the Sermon belonged to the genre of philosophical epitome (1985:7-16). The basis for this position is Epictetus's *Enchiridion*, a group of sayings used for training his students (1995:73), as well as the *Kyriai Doxai* of Epicurus (1979b:293-294). The epitome was a philosophical representation that condensed the larger works of a philosopher in the Hellenistic culture. The purpose of the epitome was to

aid in the learning process of those who followed a particular philosopher and his system of thought (Betz 1979:295-296).

Betz assumes, then, that the Sermon was an epitome of Jesus' teaching, centered on living the will of God (1985:52-53). Matthew would have imported, according to Betz, a block of material used in his own composition. However, Stanton has argued that Epictetus' *Encheiridion* and *Kyriai Doxai* contained no literary structure as the Sermon on the Mount, which meant there was no pre-Matthean epitome (1993:310-311). Further, Carlston has argued for caution in regarding the epitome status to the Sermon, since this genre does not have specific evidence within Jewish-Christian circles (1988:50).

(e) Fifth, the position that the Sermon was governed by the theme of the higher righteousness offered by Jesus, is representative of Guelich (1982:38-39) and Kingsbury (1987:131-143). Jesus was arguing for the disciples to be characterized by conduct "commensurate with the present age" of the kingdom (Guelich 1987:129). Guelich understands the Lord's Prayer as the ordering principle of the themes (1982:323-325). Kingsbury views all the units of the Sermon as demonstrating the greater righteousness (Kingsbury 1987:141-143).

Despite the peculiarities and differences in these various views, a common thread seems observable: the righteousness for which Jesus proclaimed. What does seem certain concerning the Sermon on the Mount was the pronounced righteousness in reference to the kingdom Jesus announced as a contrast to the way of unrighteousness outside the kingdom realization. The "two ways" motif was prevalent in early Christian literature (cf. Hvalvik 1996:137-157; Syreeni 2005:87-10).

This study takes the position that any structure placed upon the Sermon on the Mount must regard the dyadic thought of the kingdom of heaven and greater righteousness as central motifs governing the teaching of Jesus (cf. Hannan 2006:230; Burrige 2007:203-204; France 2007:102; Luz 2007:177; Thom 2007:306-307; 2009:314-320; Pennington 2009:84-86). Matthew emphasized that the pursuit of righteousness was "a lifestyle that makes the agenda of God's reign the supreme concern of one's life"

(Chouinard 2003: 238). Structure becomes secondary in light of these two themes (cf. Guelich 1973:51-52).

4.2.3 The Narrative Setting of the Beatitudes (Matthew 4:23-5:2)

Three participles conveyed how Jesus was ministering in Galilee and why people followed him: teaching (*didaskōn*), preaching (*kērussōn*), and healing (*therapeuōn*). An internal inclusio is found in the summary statements of Matthew 4:23 with Matthew 9:35 with almost identical wording. These statements summarized the ministry of Jesus over, probably, a long period of time (Lioy 2004:117; Weren 2006:182).

Within this section of Matthean material (Matt 4:23-9:35), the teaching ministry was elaborated on in chapters 5-7, while the healing ministry was the focus of chapters 8-9. Matthew did not differentiate between the teaching and preaching of Jesus, but, instead, focused on the content of the kingdom as communicated (duToit 1977:35). Betz begs to differ, by pointing out that the proclaimed gospel (*kerygma*) was clearly different from the instructional teaching of Jesus (1995:81). Disciples would hear the gospel of the kingdom, after which, they would develop as disciples through teaching. Yet, the crowds also heard and responded to the teaching (Matt 7:28-29; cf. Davies and Allison 1988:415).

There was no difference in the teaching and preaching of Jesus, since both were concerned with the kingdom of God (Luz 2007:168-169). These verbs demonstrated the importance of the kingdom message in Jesus' ministry as a whole (Carter 1997:5-9). One stressed repentance for the kingdom, the other specified kingdom living (Cousland 2002:104). Central to Jesus' proclamation was the kingdom, along with its characteristic righteousness (Matt 4:17, 25; 5:3, 6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33; cf. Overman 1990:91-94; Draper 1999:32; Turner 2008:142-143). Within the scope of these verses, then, Matthew pointedly demonstrated that the first act of Jesus was not obligation to his commands but the graciousness of his words (Allison 1987:441).

4.2.3.1 *Potential Disciples: the Crowds*

The response to Jesus' ministry was found in the crowds that began to follow him (4:25). Matthew noted that Jesus saw (*idōn*) the crowds. This participle could be taken temporally ("when he saw"), causatively ("because he saw") or as a finite verb ("he saw"). The key to understanding the *ochloi* ("crowds") in Matthew is to see its usage throughout the Gospel (Minear 2004:73-74).

Some see a Matthean distinction between the crowds, who were mixed in their allegiance to Jesus, from the disciples who remained with Jesus (Guelich 1982:49-50; Hagner 1993:81; Saldarini 1994:37; Draper 1999:29; Minear 2004:73-78; Talbert 2006:13; France 2007:152; Turner 2008:140). Kingsbury views the crowds as a "flat character" in the story (1986:24). Others view both groups as complementary of each other, since the crowd would be potential disciples (duToit 1977:34; cf. Stanton 1993:374; Nolland 2005:192; Luz 2007:166-167). What can be observed is that the crowds were sometimes viewed favorably, while on other occasions they were judged unfavorably, much like a "Jekyll and Hyde" feature (Wilkins 1988:150; Cousland 2002:8).

Matthew used the term *ochloi* almost exclusively to portray the crowds (Cousland 2002:39). Usually, the crowds appear curious or mystified (Saldarini 1995:244). For the other Synoptic writers, other terms were also combined to describe the people around Jesus. Comparing how Mark and Luke gave more detail of the crowds, Matthew surprisingly gave little details, so that the crowds were more of a literary construct demonstrating various responses to Jesus' teaching and ministry (Cousland 2002:43).

The crowds were primarily there because of Jesus' healing ministry (Davies and Allison 1988:427; Cousland 2002:122; Minear 2004:73-74). As Jesus spoke, he addressed both the inner circle (disciples) and the outer circle (crowds) of people (Davies and Allison 1988:422; Strecker 1988:25). As the crowds listened in amazement, they too, had the opportunity to become followers by "hearing and doing" what Jesus said (Matt 7:24; cf. Mowery 1988:33; Wilkins 1988:170-171; Draper 1999:31).

The crowds brought attention to Jesus and his ministry throughout the Gospel of Matthew. This served a Christological purpose by having the crowd come to recognitions of Jesus as the Son of David (Matt 20:29-34; 21:9; cf.

Cousland 2002:303). In this compositional structure, Matthew was beginning to expose the disparity of Jesus with the scribes (Carter 1993:59). For the crowds, their response was to the compassion of Jesus as they became aware of a unique presence among them (Matt 9:36; 11:7-15; 14:14-21; 17:14-20; 20:29-34; cf. Davies and Allison 1988:419-420; Minear 2004:76-78). The same purpose was served in the setting for the Beatitudes; Jesus was the divine presence who would pronounce kingdom blessings upon those recognizing their need.

4.2.3.2 *Transformative Experience: the Mountain*

Much discussion has been made of the geographical use of “mountain” by Matthew. Did Matthew intend “the mountain” (*to oros*) to reference a typological parallel with Moses (Davies and Allison 1988:427; Overman 1990:77-78; Allison 1993:172-180; Swartley 1994:63; Senior 1997:102; Turner 2008:149)? Was it, instead, a reference to “Mount Zion” which was theologically prominent in Jewish thought at the time of Christ for a restored future (Donaldson 1985:81-83)?

For Donaldson, the beginning of Jesus’ teaching was eschatological, so the mountain served to highlight the fulfillment of Old Testament promises of a new Zion (1985:114). Waldman has pointed to Semitic literature serving as metaphors for wealth and abundance, both in the Old Testament and Akkadian texts (1981:176-180). Finally, could the mountain simply have been a general reference, without any allusion (Guelich 1982:52; Hare 1993:35; Nolland 2005:192; France 2007:157)?

Meier is certainly correct to see, for the most part, the importance of mountains as reflective of “divine action and revelation” (1980b:38; cf. Bauer 1988:89; Davies and Allison 1988:422). Along the same line of thought, Hagner has observed that in Matthew, mountains were where special events took place (1983:85-86). Hanson has suggested the mountain motif, as used by Matthew, was to “communicate transformative experiences of and with Jesus: actually moving disciples through the process of formation as disciples” (1994a:155).

Interestingly, Matthew primarily portrayed Jesus as teaching on mountains, along the sea, and roadsides (cf. Newman 1975:111). This study

understands the mountains of Matthew as demonstrating transformation experiences of the disciples. The mountains should not be restricted simply to Mosaic or eschatological allusions (cf. Rukundwa and van Aarde 2005:930). Within the transformation motif, the past (Mosaic allusion), the present (new community of disciples), and the future (eschatological restoration of Israel) would be understood and encompassed within one concept, without reducing the phrase too narrowly. Mountains were important for Matthew because of Jesus' presence and ministry on them (Donaldson 1985:202).

4.2.3.3 *Authoritative Pronouncement: Sat Down and Opened His Mouth*

The beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, as well its ending, was found with the characteristic "teaching" motif (Matt 5:2; 7:28; cf. duToit 1977:35; Hagner 1993:86). Jesus appeared to be like other rabbis in that he taught his followers sitting down (Lachs 1978:101; Burnett 1985:99), yet he was not rabbinic as much as charismatic in his teaching (Hengel 1981:46-47). Lachs has noted that rabbinical sitting was a late first century development and Matthew adopted the practice for his composition (1987:67-68).

However, what differentiated him from the rabbis was the authority by which he spoke and the content of his teachings (Matt 7:28; cf. Guelich 1982:43; Hengel 1981:47; Yieh 2004:20). Allison, in keeping with his proposal that Matthew portrayed Jesus as the new Moses, contends that his composition would recall the Mosaic imagery of Mt. Sinai and the reception of the commandments (1993:180).

The disciples "came to" (*prosēlthan*) Jesus, a phrase used in reverential approaches to a deity or king (Keegan 1982:420; cf. Gundry 1994:66). Matthew conveyed concepts of the disciples approaching Jesus throughout the Gospel (5:1; 13:10, 36; 15:12; 18:1; 28:17). By using the phrase, "opening his mouth," Matthew emphasized the solemnity of Jesus' teaching with allusions to the Semitic idiom (Guelich 1982:54; Harrington 1991:78; Gundry 1994:67; Keener 1999:164; France 2007:158; Luz 2007:183; cf. Job 3:1; 33:2; Ps 78:2; Dan 10:16). Kennedy has suggested this was an allusion to the Greco-Roman practice of "warming up" the audience (1984:51)!

Since the transmission of the sayings of Jesus was based on the belief of Jesus as teacher, Matthew highlighted the physical elements of Jesus'

initial sermon in the Gospel (Byrskog 1994:21). The beginning of each clause in Matthew 5:1-2 began with “he” or “his”, emphasizing “Jesus as front and center” of the Sermon (Bruner 2004:152). Matthew first arranged the unique status of Jesus, and then composed the teaching of Jesus calling for an obligatory response (Kennedy 1984:104). The Sermon on the Mount can only be rightly interpreted with the understanding of the person of Jesus (cf. Strecker 1988:26).

4.3 A Summary of the Circumstances

A proper understanding of the context surrounding the Beatitudes is needed in appreciating the weight of Jesus’ pronouncements. For this study, three areas were deduced as semantically important: Jesus presented as the Christ, the role of repentance, and the call to follow Jesus. The value of the Beatitudes, it must be remembered, was due to the one who pronounced them (cf. Aune 1991:211-213; Luz 1995:46; Kupp 1996:66-67; Bird 2009:147).

Jesus had the “starring role in the eschatological drama” and we must always consider that “a domesticated Jesus who sounds like us, makes us comfortable, and commends our opinions is no Jesus at all” (Allison 2009:88, 90). As such, Jesus commanded repentance as a changed view in order to understand and participate in his ministry. It took a new worldview, as opposed to the worldview so long embedded within the Jewish religious system, to incorporate the teachings and ministry of Jesus (cf. Wright 1996:244-258). With the new paradigm offered by Jesus, it was natural to become his follower. Matthew used *akoloutheō* in pointing toward discipleship. For the followers of Jesus, the kingdom pronouncements were given as a basis for understanding the core of Jesus’ ministry (Westerholm 2006:131).

The Beatitudes served as the introduction to the Sermon on the Mount. This study has found that the kingdom of heaven was structurally important to Matthew, which was portrayed thematically throughout the Gospel. Matthew composed the first section of his Gospel (4:17-9:35) in expressing what the

proper response to the kingdom announcement meant to anyone desiring to follow Jesus. Matthew's theological position, as well as the understanding by the new community was incorporated into this pericope (Lachs 1987:69). As an introduction to the kingdom, the Beatitudes served to demonstrate that God was the source of all blessing and kingdom realization.

Jesus was portrayed as the kingdom authority with both the mountain and "opening his mouth" motifs. With these motifs, the experience of transformation, as well as the authoritative teaching of Jesus was emphasized, juxtaposed before the blessing pronouncements. With the Sermon, Matthew was making a Christological statement (Hare 1993:34). The kingdom, then, served as an imperative to the followers of Jesus, equating their desire to follow him as the "seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matt 6:33).

Chapter 5

Exegetical Analysis of the Beatitudes: Its Contextual Meaning and Verbal Threads

The Beatitudes exemplify one of the most beautiful literary pieces penned. The beauty, though, cannot be restricted simply to its poetic structure. The fundamental nature of the Beatitudes was in the pronouncement by Jesus, resulting in meaning and purpose to those who heard and followed him (cf. Davies and Allison 1988:434). The Sermon on the Mount exhibited the nucleus of Jesus' preaching concerning the kingdom (Lambrecht 1985:40).

Matthew composed the Sermon for the new community to which he addressed. One scholar has concluded it was the "cornerstone" for the operation of the new community (Gale 2005:32). The beginning of the Sermon consisted in a form known as "the Beatitudes". What was a Beatitude? A beatitude was a literary form used with "a short cry of joy", included with a reason for good fortune (Viviano 2007:64). We have examples of various "beatitudes" from the Old Testament (Ps 1; 32; 119; 128), Ben Sirach (Sir 14:20-27; 25:7-9), and the Qumran community (4Q525). Did Matthew use certain "forms" available for his use, or did he compose the gist of Jesus' sayings into his own theological framework?

5.1 Syntactical Analysis of the Beatitudes

Some scholars, through redaction and form criticism, have deduced that Matthew used fixed forms of Jesus material that had passed through oral tradition (Betz 1985:18; Strecker 1988:12-14; Hollander 2000:349-357). The

forms were merely the result of oral tradition within communities, rather than the actual sayings of Jesus. Hollander goes further to claim that there are too many barriers in finding “any veracious saying of the historical Jesus” (2000:355). One scholar has concluded that it is “lamentable” that the actual words of Jesus “have not been handed down to us” as originally given (Day 2004:12). Further, Day suggests that through the study of Hebrew and Aramaic equivalents to the Greek text, one can construct what Jesus actually said (Day 2004:18).

In contrast, other scholars point to Matthew’s composition based upon the various times in which Jesus taught and spoke, bringing the sayings together, thereby forming a theological “sermon” for the followers of Jesus (McEleney 1981:10-13; Turner 1992:31; Hagner 1993:83; Tuttle 1997:214; Carson 1999:284-287). Jesus was an itinerant preacher who spoke on many occasions, and more than likely, the same thoughts were reworked for the particular audience at the time of his presentation (Wright 1996:170). Wright goes on to point out that Jesus left these villagers with a wealth of anecdotal sayings and stories, told in remarkable and memorable ways (1996:170).

Since we do not know the exact context of Jesus’ teachings, we must rely on the authorial intent of Matthew, even contrasting it with the Lukan account as well for a clearer understanding (cf. Luke 6:20-26; Hoyt 1980:37; Byrskog 1994:30). The Gospel writers were writing with the needs of the community, if not in the forefront, at least in the back of their minds (Stanton 1993:286; Schnackenburg 1996:265).

Luke presented four beatitudes as compared to the nine of Matthew. Luke also had four corresponding woes, whereas Matthew had none. Matthew did present the seven woes against the Pharisees later in the Gospel (Matt 23). Luke used the second person pronouns in contrast to Matthew’s third person pronouns. Why were there differences? Betz does not see a difference, but instead a Matthean elaboration on the Lukan account (1995:576). Hanson understands the use of third person formulations as affirmations of honorable conduct for the community to emulate (1994b:92). Others see the Lukan version as the historical account, with Matthew added further teachings of Jesus to the outline (Carson 1999:287; France 2007:155; Luz 2007:174).

However, Puech, in comparing the Matthean Beatitudes to 4Q525 and Sirach 14:20-27, has concluded the priority of Matthew over the Lucan account (1993:361-362). It was more common for macarisms to be written in third person (Leske 1991:819). Why did Matthew compose what he did? Why stress certain themes to a paramount position and in repetition?

5.1.1 The Meaning of makarioi in the Beatitudes

The setting of the Beatitudes was the assurance of divine help in the midst of suffering and persecution for being a Jesus follower (Viljoen 2006a:141). The dilemma facing the new community was the lack of experiencing the present “eschatological age” to which Jesus spoke (McEleney 1981:9). Many questions surfaced because of this apparent void between message and experience.

Did the new community understand the blessings of Jesus as commands or as entrance requirements to the kingdom (Windisch 1951:87-88; Bornkamm 1960:108; Strecker 1988:30-33)? Was Matthew outlining the way of wisdom in life, exhibiting ethical results (Kennedy 1984:39-72; Hagner 1993:83; Betz 1995:93-97)? Might the Beatitudes have been declarations of eschatological blessings in a context of grace (Guelich 1976:415-434; Davies and Allison 1988:466; Keener 1999:161)? Was it the promise of salvation in light of Christian living (Luz 2007:200)?

This study has found that the “precedence of grace could not be plainer” (Davies and Allison 1988:466). Matthew began Jesus’ teaching on the assurance that grace precedes command. Jesus displayed authority in pronouncing the Beatitudes (Strecker 1988:31; Betz 1995:94). The good news of the kingdom was that he was the divine blessing to humanity. Jesus’ message to the eager crowds indicated his desire for their lives to be lived in that realization (cf. duToit 1977:37; Allison 2005:178). Jesus was affirming the existing state of kingdom living (cf. Bailey 2008:67-68). This study will focus on the implications of that realization.

5.1.1.1 *Various Ideas on the Translation of Makarioi*

The repetition of “*makarioi...hoti*” set the tone for the Matthean composition of Jesus’ pronouncements. The redundant form was intentional, demonstrating a context of grace, apart from imperatives and commands (Davies and Allison 1988:439-440; Wudel 2000:279). The rhetorical effect of this arrangement was the reality of an expectant hope due to the eschatological promises (cf. Kingsbury 1975:141; Schweizer 1975:81; Senior 1997:104).

However, Betz has pointed out that the promises were unknown and unexpected, providing a shock value to the hearer (1995:96). In what way did the hearers of Jesus understand themselves as *makarioi*? By observing both a diachronic and synchronic approach to language use, the “network of interactions” that were present will demonstrate the compositional milieu of Matthew (Black 2002:25-32).

There have been numerous suggestions for the meaning of *makarioi* by scholars. Some have pointed to its various usages in the lack of a suffering state of the gods, of those being prepared to meet the gods after death, or of humanity in their freedom from daily anxiety of poverty or prosperity (cf. Davies and Allison 1988:431; Martin 2001:231). Aristotle thought of transcendent beings as “privileged” (Danker 2000:610-611). Even the Egyptians considered drowning in the Nile as a blessing for the afterlife (Lindsay 1968:297).

Lindsay has shown that Tertullian knew of the belief, and it infiltrated both Greek and Roman religious thought as well (1968:305-306). The significance of Moses’ life being saved from death in the Nile was a “rebirth”, demonstrating escape from danger, death, and servitude into the freedom of a new life situation (Lindsay 1968:309-310). Could the hearers of Jesus been aware of this cultural irony in Jesus’ pronouncements? Were not the blessings offered descriptive of a new life situation?

Scholars agree that by focusing on the use of *makarioi*, a positive action was intended. Some have concluded it was a deep happiness to be experienced (Hagner 1993:91; Betz 1995:95-97; France 2007:160-161). Although France translates *makarioi* as “happy,” he has conceded that the psychological connotation is misfortunate (2007:161). Barclay suggested one

must not confuse happiness with joy, since joy exceeds daily happenings (1958:84-85). Guelich has advocated a translation depending upon the approach one takes to the Beatitudes: the wisdom idea would be conveyed as “blessed”, the ethical tone would be “happy”, while a greeting of grace would be “congratulations” (1982:67).

By focusing on the values of honor and shame in the Mediterranean culture, some have suggested *makarioi* is most appropriately translated as “honor” (Hanson 1994b:81-90; Neyrey 1998:165-167). Further, the sense of honor was not a state of personal awareness as much as the point of view and judgment of others (Hanson 1994b:89-90). However, was Jesus simply referring to what the public ascribed to his followers?

With all the options, no particular choice could definitively describe the quality of *makarioi* (Luz 2007:190). One scholar has concluded that any distinction is ultimately what the interpreter wishes to clarify (Charlesworth 2000:27). What should guide the interpreter in properly conveying the meaning of *makarioi*?

5.1.1.2 The Use of Makarioi in the Semitic Literature

The literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrates the usage of blessing in wisdom and apocalyptic settings (cf. postexilic). It has never been found in legal texts, but has been used extensively in wisdom and eschatological texts (Fitzmyer 1992:511; Vorster 1999b:120-122; cf. 1QSb; 4Q525). The Qumran texts (4Q185:1-2; IQH 6, 13; 4Q525) qualified the blessing within obtaining wisdom and understanding. No other Semitic text parallels the Beatitudes closely as 4Q525 (Brooke 1989:35-41). Brooke contends that this DSS text was a wisdom exhortation, probably spoken to new members joining the community (1989:40; cf. de Roo 2000:151). Another DSS text (1QSb), commands the priests to continue, “blessing” the congregation so that the name of God would be invoked, resulting in blessing upon the people (Arnold 2005:524).

The Qumran community relied on the language of Numbers 6:24-26 (*bārak*) in directing its leadership and its activity among the sect (cf. IQS 2:1-4; Timmer 2008:389). The one key difference between the Qumran community and Israel of the past was the Qumran community did not consider

covenant fidelity as constituting the receiving of divine blessings (Timmer 2008:391). This was due largely to the community's idea of their corporate election by God, and their legitimate position as the people of God (Timmer 2008:396).

Two terms were used in the Old Testament for the term "bless", *bārak* and *āšar*. The LXX translated *bārak* with the Greek term, *eulogeō*, which conveyed ideas of praise and blessing spoken by both God and humanity in patriarchal, covenant, and priestly contexts (Mitchell 1983:29-57; cf. Gen 12:1-3; Deut 7:6; 26:19; 28; Num 6:24-26). The central idea of *bārak* was the favorable disposition of God upon those recipients of his blessing (Mitchell 1983:165). Central to *bārak* was the covenant fidelity experienced in blessing.

Throughout the Old Testament, the LXX used *makarioi* to translate the Hebrew, *āšar*, referring to the state of well-being and happiness (cf. Becker 1986:215). The blessing (*makarioi*) was upon the life lived by wisdom (Psalm 1; 41:1; 119:1; Prov 3:13), as well as the eschatological (apocalyptic) hope of blessing in the new world (Dan 12:12). Guelich has claimed there are forty-five occurrences of the blessing format (blessing and a description of recipient) in the Old Testament (1982:63). In the LXX, *makarioi* emphasized the person's fortunate and happy condition because of divine blessing (Arnold 2005:511). When used in the divine context, it was God's actions toward humanity and not humanity toward God (as *eulogeō* would be used instead).

Ben Sira also referred to the idea of blessed (*makarioi*) ten times in a wisdom pericope (Sir 25:7-11). During the intertestamental period, Jewish literature reflected a distinct change from teaching that happiness was for the present to happiness for the life to come (Garland 2001:54). The Semitic understanding and use of *makarioi* "seems to be indisputable" evidence that Matthew was dependent upon its familiar use (Dormeyer 1998:349). Within Jewish thought, *makarioi* had the concept of total well-being (Vorster 1999b:120-121).

The assumption is Jesus borrowed from the wisdom tradition with the understanding that happiness was living correctly with present rewards for doing so (Meier 1990:281; Vorster 1999b:121). Yet, within the usage of the Gospels, there was a greater emphasis on blessings as a "paradox behind the eschatological hope", than with a reward for proper behavior (Koch 1969:18).

Further, those who were lacking power and marginalized were commended by Jesus, despite their struggles (Domeris 1990:72-73). How did Matthew intend *makarioi* to be understood by the new community?

5.1.1.3 *The Use of Makarioi in Gospel of Matthew*

Matthew was fond of using the term *makarioi* in his Gospel (5:3-11; 11:6; 13:16; 16:17; 21:9; 23:39; 24:46; 25:34). In these Matthean passages, the idea of a commended state was clear (Guthrie 1981:899; France 2007:161). However, it also expressed a process of experiencing blessings by way of participation (Viljoen 2008:207). Viljoen further explains that the recipient of blessing must live a life commensurate to the blessing (2008:209).

What must be provided in the Beatitudes, then, is a translation conveying a realization of the state of divine approval for which Matthew intended to communicate to the new community (cf. Carson 1999:16). The richness of the term *makarioi* was in its expression of “a qualitative condition as well as a process” (Viljoen 2008:207; cf. Dumbrell 1981:8; Bailey 2008:68).

In the Beatitudes, *makarioi* was the nominative plural of *makarios*, serving an adjectival position with the force of a noun (Wallace 1996:154). Two suggestions close in meaning are accurate renditions of *makarioi*: the notion of “congratulations” (Turner 1992:39; Gundry 1994:68) and the notion of “fortunate” (Keener 1999:165; Holladay 2008:83). The Greco-Roman perspective of “one on whom fortune smiles” may have influenced the Matthean understanding (Danker 2000:611).

What was for certain, Matthew’s portrait of the blessing was not a wish, but “a highly emotional statement of fact” (Hoyt 1980:34). The promise for the future involved the radical alteration of present circumstances (cf. Becker 1986:217). Jesus was speaking of God’s gracious activity among his people (Garland 2001:55). Keener has blended the best of ideas with his “it will be well with” in translating *makarioi* (Keener 1999:165-166). The emphasis was on the ontological state of the recipient with respect to God (cf. Hamm 1990:9). This study suggests the word “blessed”, with the qualifications of a congratulatory or fortunate state, to be, after all options considered, the best possible choice in conveying the meaning for which Jesus pronounced (cf.

Patte 1987:106,fn8; Morris 1992:95; Stanton 1993:298; Martin 2001:232; Vaught 2001:12-14).

5.1.2 *The Rationale for Blessings: basileia tōn ouranōn*

Within the Hellenistic culture of Jesus' time, divine rule was interpreted as the exercise of the gods through the medium of the human king (Beavis 2006:88). Divine law, then, was exercised through the rule of the king. The distinction between human kings and the gods was not sharply maintained (Ferguson 2003:202). Ferguson also observes that by the first century, the loyalty of a citizen to the empire was evidenced by participation in the cult of the emperor (2003:203). Augustus was considered as a savior by the populace during the *Pax Romana*. At his death, the Roman Senate conferred to Augustus a divine status.

One study has demonstrated Matthew's use of irony in his Gospel to subvert the political powers at the time of Jesus. In so doing, Matthew demonstrates through the kingdom message "the impotence of all human power in the political arena vis-à-vis the genuine potency of divine initiative" (Weaver 1996:195). To this view, the Gospel was a subversive political statement to the Matthean community. However, the kingdom Jesus announced was both a blessing upon the recipient and for the world.

5.1.2.1 *Kingdom Concept in Semitic Literature*

The kingdom concept was prevalent in Semitic literature. Throughout the Old Testament and Dead Sea Scrolls, the conceptual image of a coming kingdom, in divine sovereignty, was portrayed (O'Neill 1993:133). The Jewish hope of a kingdom can be traced to the promise made to King David (II Sam 7:11-16). In the Psalms, God's rule was associated with the temple and Israel, with the assurance that one day justice would prevail out of Zion (Chilton 1996:32-42; cf. Psalms 9, 10, 29, 44, 47, 97, 98, 114, 145). The anticipated kingdom was reenacted through temple worship (chants of "YHWH reigns", cf. Ps 93, 113-118) and Feast of Tabernacle celebrations (cf. Ps 24:3-10; Marcus 1988:666-667). Even the promise to Isaiah of the coming ruler of Israel was a reference to the "government" in which he would rule (9:6).

As Hellenism arose, the Jewish idea of a kingdom was conceived through the apocalyptic worldview, combining both nationalism and universalism (Buzzard 1992:114; cf. Beavis 1996:74). In apocalyptic thought, the transcendence of God was affirmed (Kingsbury 1975:135). There were continual promises for the faithful of “the Day of the Lord” as divine intervention in the establishment of a kingdom (Morris 1986:129).

The Qumran community taught that God would intervene for the Sons of Light by overthrowing their enemies (Sons of Darkness) and establishing a kingdom (WAC 2005:147; cf. Guthrie 1981:411). In the War Scroll (12:7-16) the hope for the kingdom was presented along with the three results in its appearance: divine intervention, material blessings, and joy in God (cf. Viviano 1987:104-106). A common thread throughout the Semitic literature was the identity of a political, earthly rule in kingdom of God.

Ultimately, the symbol was a description of how God was relating to his people and the desire for vindication in a world of political chaos (cf. Farmer 1987:120; Chilton 1996:56; Dunn 2003b:389-390). Did this thinking influence Jesus’ understanding and teaching of the kingdom? How did Matthew understand Jesus’ teaching on the kingdom of God? How did those who heard Jesus understand the kingdom message? Was it symbolic?

*5.1.2.2 Matthew’s Exclusive Use of the *basileia tōn ouranōn**

Matthew was the only New Testament writer to use *basileia tōn ouranōn*. It was used thirty-two times in his Gospel and the prominence of the kingdom motif has led some to conclude that it was the theme of Matthew’s work (Kingsbury 1975:128; Neusner 2005:280-282; Westerholm 2006:81-104; Pennington 2009:279; cf. Dunn 2003b:383). For Kingsbury, it was the “single most comprehensive concept in Matthew” (1977:58).

A common understanding is that the phrase was a circumlocution for “kingdom of God” (Kingsbury 1975:134; Morris 1986:128; Blomberg 1992:73; Hagner 1993:48; Hare 1993:37; Carson 1999:11; Vaught 2001:17; Talbert 2006:50; Luz 2007:135; Turner 2008:107). This view is defended by pointing to Matthew’s “reverential bias” in not using the name of God, so the adoption of “heaven” as its substitute (Newman 1975:113; Guthrie 1981:409;

Harrington 1991:79; Hagner 1993:47-48; cf. Klappert 1986:376-377; Danker 2000:168).

Yet, an examination of Matthew's Gospel finds four references to "the kingdom of God" (Matt 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43). Furthermore, Matthew used *theos* more than fifty times in his Gospel. Some see a simple stylistic variation by Matthew (Davies and Allison 1988:392), although Pamment understands the kingdom of heaven as future and the kingdom of God as exercised in the present (1981:232). Davies and Allison have countered Pamment by pointing to examples of the kingdom of heaven having a present temporal sense and the kingdom of God with a future view (1988:390-391; cf. Matt 6:10; 11:1, 12; 21:31).

It is clear that "heavens" was a metonym for "God" in Matthew's composition, but it was employed for rhetorical or theological reasons (Thomas 1993:146; Foster 2002:488; Pennington 2009:36). In what way, then, was the *basileia* understood? Was the emphasis on the spatial (kingdom) or the dynamic (reign/rule)? On the other hand, were both concepts employed in Matthew's linguistic usage?

A few scholars have suggested that *basileia* be understood and translated as "empire" to convey what Jesus intended: to live life opposite of the Roman culture and monarchy (Crossan 2007:108-127; cf. Carter 2000:372). This spatial view understands the kingdom as a socio-political, religious response to the selfish empires throughout human history (Malina 2001:160; Crossan 2007:237-242). However, is this view setting limitations on the actual extent of what Jesus intended? Jesus' message was more than the building of an empire; it was the inauguration of a transformed universe (Beasley-Murray 1992:20). For Jesus' hearers, the kingdom announced was linked to himself.

The distinctive feature of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God is not therefore that he brought a new doctrine of the kingdom, or that he revolutionized people's apocalyptic and eschatological expectations, but that he made the kingdom of God inseparable from his own person (Klappert 1986:386).

Jesus identified his message by his connection to God, or in Matthew's words, the heavens (Pennington 2009:83). Why, then did Matthew use "kingdom of the heavens" as opposed to "kingdom of God" in the Synoptic Gospels?

*5.1.2.3 The Matthean Understanding of *basileia tōn ouranōn**

Although several explanations can be given, the result was Matthew utilized the phrase "kingdom of heaven" with a "radical christological modification" (Kingsbury 1975:166; cf. Aalen 1962:226). First, Matthew used the motif of "heaven and earth" to affirm and differentiate those who followed Jesus ("heaven") from those whose focus was on human endeavor ("earth"; cf. Foster 2002:490; Pennington 2009:348). Foster has pointed out that this would be the reason Jesus addressed his discourses to the disciples throughout the Gospel (2002:495).

The message of Jesus was counter-cultural, becoming more pronounced through the list of Beatitudes. Through repentance ("change of worldview"), the follower of Jesus would see the tension of the will of God juxtaposed with the ways of humanity (cf. Robbins 1985:42; Pennington 2009:342-345). In this view, the dichotomy was "the innate separateness of the heavenly and mundane spheres" (Syreeni 1990:3). Syreeni understands, then, the kingdom of heaven used as a symbolic universe for the Matthean community, demonstrating the tension and polarization it found in following Jesus (1990:3-13).

In this way the heaven and earth theme provides solace and hope for the disciples by emphasizing that in fact the world consists of two realities: the heavenly one and the earthly one, the first of which is universal and abiding, while the other is limited and temporal (Pennington 2009:344).

Second, for those who understand it as a metonym, Matthew spoke of "the kingdom of heaven", not out of reverence, but for theological reasons originating with the kingdom motif in Daniel (Collins 1993a:90-123; France 2007:101; Zamfir 2007:300-302; Pennington 2009:279-317; cf. Carter 2004:163). Gundry understands the book of Daniel as the origin for Matthean

use (1994:43). Clearly, the Son of Man references by Jesus were identity allusions to the Son of Man in Daniel 7 (cf. Caragounis 1992:425).

Throughout the book of Daniel, emphasis was placed upon the kingdom and God's activity in heaven (Daniel 2:18, 19, 37, 44 - "God of heaven"; 2:28 - "God in heaven"; 4:37 - "King of heaven"; 5:23 - "Lord of heaven"; 7:13-14 - "son of man coming with the clouds of heaven"). Three texts from Daniel alluding to a future kingdom were significant to Matthew and the acknowledgement of God's rule.

- (a) Daniel 2:44 = "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed...it will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever."
- (b) Daniel 4:26 = "The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules."
- (c) Daniel 7:27 = "Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him."

Matthew alluded to Daniel at least thirty times in his Gospel (Pennington 2009:287-288). With Matthew's emphasis on announcing the kingdom of heaven by John the Baptist and Jesus, the phrase was expressed in an "apocalyptic or restoration-eschatological context" clearly drawn from the book of Daniel (Collins 1993a:92). In the apocalyptic thought of Daniel, the cosmic conflict was between the kingdoms of earth and the sovereign kingdom of God (France 2007:103; Pagola 2009:103; cf. Dan 4:26).

For Matthew, the kingdom of heaven was the link to an eschatological understanding of Jesus' message that God's presence had come as promised, but not through earthly force. From Daniel, Matthew understood that God's kingdom, originating from heaven, had no earthly equivalent (Pennington 2009:323). The phrase *basileia tōn ouranōn* could be considered as an attributive genitive, describing the innate quality of the "heavenly kingdom" (Zamfir 2007:295-296). Alternatively, it could be expressed as a

subjective genitive, qualifying the kingdom as belonging to God (duToit 2000:548). In both cases, similar thought was achieved with the expression.

Third, the eschatological context was expressed as a reversal, underlying the hope of those pronounced as blessed in being assured of the kingdom reality in their lives (Carter 1997:25; Dunn 2003b:412-417). In the *Gospel of Thomas*, Jesus' answered the disciples question on who should enter the kingdom of heaven by pointing to "those who make the female male and the male female enter in", implying a reversal of circumstances (Wayment 2004:300). The context of reversal implied a rhetorical use of the kingdom in demonstrating the new experience of humanity (cf. Moore 2009:283-285).

Jesus and John the Baptist announced a kingdom that was near (*ēngiken*). The term *ēngiken* expressed the reality of the kingdom and its presence (Matt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7). The meaning was literally "drawing near" or "approaching" (Rogers and Rogers 1998:5; Danker 2000:270). The perfect tense of the verb conveyed the idea of something at the point of arrival and remaining near (Hagner 1993:47). Bruner has captured its meaning with "here comes", expressing its "dynamic" entry into the world (2004:87). It was so near as to almost be completed, on the "cusp between the process of arriving and arrival itself" (Chilton 1996:61; cf. Ladd 1974:139).

By demanding repentance, Jesus (and John the Baptist) spoke to the initial arrival of the kingdom with its life-changing presence (Luz 2007:160; Turner 2008:107). Jesus assured the hearers that things were being made right by his coming (Westerholm 2006:82). As Wansbrough has surmised, a proper reading of Matthew brings the realization that in the ministry and message of Jesus the will of God was accomplished and constituted as the kingdom (2000:18-21).

The presence of the kingdom was certainly not an immediate spatial realization for Jesus' hearers. Jesus did not link the kingdom to territorial boundaries (cf. Burge 2010:30-33). Instead, the dynamic rule of God in the lives of people was being expressed through the message and person of Jesus (Ladd 1974:324; Kingsbury 1986:61; Morris 1986:128; Marcus 1988:672-675; Balabanski 1997:151; Schnackenburg 2002:41; McKenna 2007:58). The "kingdom of heaven", therefore, expressed the idea of "reign" or "rule" as demonstrated and inaugurated in the presence of Jesus (Ladd

1974:141; Kingsbury 1975:134; Guthrie 1981:409; Guelich 1982:78; Hamm 1990:21; Beasley-Murray 1992:20; O'Neill 1993:131; Carter 1997:20; Martin 2001:234; Yieh 2004:251; Beavis 2006:94; France 2007:102).

Matthew's use of "kingdom of heaven" in the proclamation of Jesus was significant in its use at the beginning and ending of the beatitudes, forming an inclusio (Matt 5:3, 10; Caragounis 1992:427). In both cases, the use of *autōn* ("theirs"), a genitive of possession and in the emphatic position, pointed to the beginning of the eschatological fulfillment in Jesus' ministry (Hagner 1993:92). The third person pronoun was a key difference in comparison to the Lukan account with its second person pronoun ("yours"; cf. Luke 6:20-26). In addition, the present tense verb "is" (*estin*) was used in both verses, as opposed to the future tense in the other Beatitudes linking them together.

Yet, too much should not be made of verb tenses alone. At times, the present tense can also be used in a futuristic sense (Allen 1912:40; Carson 1984:132; Morris 1992:97). In addition, verbal aspect theory states that the viewpoint of the author or subject within the text defines the action (Campbell 2008:19-22). By focusing on the verbal aspect of the Beatitudes, the blessings are seen as a complete whole, not limited to the temporal sense (cf. Campbell 2008:18-32). The present tense was simply "expressions of certainty" (Allison 1999:42). In the end, the rhetorical use of "kingdom" best explains how it was to be received by the hearers in the utterance by Jesus (cf. Moore 2009:284).

Matthew's intention was to express the certainty of kingdom "rule" arriving with Jesus, understanding that the full demonstration of the kingdom on earth (spatial) still waited for consummation (Morris 1986:129). The kingdom Jesus announced was a present reality with a future teleological completion ("now but not yet" idea), like a "process event" (Meier 1980:23) in that the "eschatological activity" had begun (Allison 1999:46; Flusser 2007:81). What did this mean in view of the past covenant promises to Israel?

To Israel, the promises of a kingdom had been delivered to the faithful remnant through the prophets. Through the proclamation of Jesus' message and presence, the promises made in its past were being fulfilled in a messianic sense (Kingsbury 1977:76; Wierzbicka 2001:18; Zamfir 2007:82).

With Matthew's allusions to Isaiah in the Beatitudes, he interpreted the Old Testament motif of a "faithful remnant" as those who had repented and followed Jesus (Ladd 1974:250; Kvalbein 1987:83).

For Jesus' hearers, their lives could be lived in the present "rule of God", knowing that the dynamics of that rule was moving history toward a climax (cf. Aalen 1962:225-226; Kingsbury 1975:138; Talbert 2006:50-51; Chilton 1996:73). The paradoxical message was, "God's future is God's call to the present, and the present is the time of decision in the light of God's future" (Bornkamm 1960:93). Matthew expressed living in God's rule, as doing the will of God (Neusner 2005:293). It was the combination of the present to the future in that the new community was reenacting the consummate rule of God in its lives (Overman 1996:64-65; cf. Marcus 1988:674; Chilton 1996:62).

Without reference to political and national ties, Jesus announced a kingdom that had its source in God ("heavenly"). God took the initiative and was in control of accomplish his purposes on earth (France 1984:26). This would be "startling" news for Jesus' hearers (Allison 1999:43). Matthew, as well as the new community, believed they were experiencing the inauguration of the eschatological hope Israel had been promised (cf. Viviano 2007:78-80).

The one distinguishing facet was the new community believed they were living that promise as they responded to Jesus' announcement, providing a new "context of meaning" in relation to God's purpose (France 1984:24). As Matthew observed, Jesus was reshaping the story of Israel in light of his coming and inviting those who heard him to make it the story of their lives (Wright 1996:173).

Subsequently, for Jesus' followers "repent for the kingdom of heaven is near" meant to live lives in the reality that God was already king (Burridge 2007:43-46; cf. Neusner 2005:291; Moore 2009:285). The Beatitudes were affirmations of what kingdom possession meant in the lives of those referred to as the blessed, a relationship with God through Jesus.

5.1.3 *The Depiction of the Blessed: Protasis of the Beatitudes*

Whom was Jesus addressing in the Beatitudes? How did the recipients of the Beatitudes receive such blessings? What did the blessings mean to the hearers? The substantives (“*makarioi*”) were constructed with no verbs, necessitating a predicate structure ascribed to them (Porter 1994:118). Most likely this was for literary reasons. The framing of each Beatitude was a guarantee about the “validity of the promises” that were “essential for the veracity of the conclusion” (Palachuvattil 2007:93). Attention to each blessing in the Beatitudes will demonstrate a composition for the new community with the intention of describing its identity through the kingdom of heaven motif.

5.1.3.1 *The Deficient: ptōchoi tō pneumati (Matt 5:3a)*

Poverty was not something to be cherished. Neither was Matthew esteeming a life of poverty (Keck 1965:111; Kloppenborg 2008:216). Anyone who concludes Matthew was pointing to poverty as a blessing “simply fails to take notice of reality” (Morris 1992:96). What did Matthew mean by poor? What was the meaning of “in spirit” which Matthew added, but not used by Luke?

The expression “poor in spirit” only appeared one time in the New Testament. One scholar has chided Matthean scholarship for divorcing their exegesis from the social context (Blount 1997:262). Was this expression an economical reference, a description of the people of God, or simply a spiritual metaphor? Kodjak has warned that viewing the phrase as a simple metaphor would be deficient, since what it meant would remain unknown (1986:47). Yet, metaphor involves the interaction of the unfamiliar with the medium of the familiar (cf. Deutsch 1996:9)? All the Beatitudes could be seen in the setting of poverty, which was the lack of material and spiritual security (Kodjak 1986:48).

There were two classes of people in Hellenistic times: the wealthy and the poor. The primary indicator of class was “wealth or its absence” (Rosivach 1991:190). The Greeks had two words for poor: *ptōchos* and *penēs*. Aristophanes has been credited with distinguishing between the two terms: *penēs* as living very modestly, but poor, and *ptōchos* as the life of a beggar, having nothing (Macchioro 1932:42; Rosivach 1991:189).

For Aristophanes, the *penēs* was satisfied with his lot in life, but the *ptōchos* was continually restless and begging (Macchioro 1932:44). Even among the poor, there was a distinction between poverty and destitution (Crossan 1991:272). Within Athens, the idea surrounding the cause of poverty was illness, debt or misfortune, but not laziness. Consequently, the poor were viewed not in a permanent status of poverty, but a temporary position of not being able to maintain their inherited status (Malina 2001:99).

Socially, the poor were not held to high standards because of their poverty, resulting in the rich demeaning the plight of the poor (1991:191). Rosivach goes further in translating a description of the *ptōchos* by Xenophon, that “among the masses there is the greatest ignorance, disorder and wickedness, for poverty leads them rather toward things that are shameful, as does their lack of education and their ignorance...” (1991:191). However, one should not conclude that the wealthy were always highly esteemed.

The designation of being rich could easily have pointed toward a moral state of greed and avarice (Malina 2001:110). Over time, Hellenistic culture lost the differentiation between *ptōchos* and *penēs* (Macchioro 1932:46), but not the socioeconomic emphasis of the terms (Guelich 1982:68). However, the Gospels only used *ptōchos*. Macchioro maintained that the Gospels continued with the differentiated meanings of the two terms: *ptōchos* as beggary, and *penēs* as relatively poor (1932:47).

One must look to the Semitic literature to understand the contextual use of *ptōchoi tō pneumatī* by Matthew. The notions of poverty and piety have been equated throughout biblical tradition (Hagner 1993:91; Kloppenborg 2008:201). Where did this concept originate? By looking to the Old Testament, one finds many references to the plight of the impoverished among the faithful, since those who are without have nothing more than hope in God (Strecker 1988:31-32; Schnackenburg 2002:45).

Possibly, Matthew “spiritualized” the concept of poverty, serving as a reminder that the “dichotomy of pious poor and wicked rich was a gross oversimplification” (Hare 1993:36; Draper 1999:36). How was the grammatical construction (dative) of *tō pneumatī* employed by Matthew: as an instrumental dative or dative of sphere?

The Dead Sea Scrolls provide a wealth of material in clarifying the understanding of “poor in spirit” with comparisons to other dative and adjectival usages (translation by WAC 2005 unless noted).

- (a) 1QM 11:10 = “humble of spirit”
- (b) 1QM 14:7 = “poor in spirit”
- (c) 1QS 3:6 = “spirit pervading”
- (d) 1QS 3:8 = “humble attitude” (“spirit of meekness”-Flusser 1978:42)
- (e) 1QS 4:3 = “spirit engenders humility”
- (f) 1QS 11:1a = “errant of spirit”
- (g) 1QS 11:1b = “broken spirit”
- (h) 1QH 6:14 = “humble of spirit” (“poor of spirit”-Puech 1993:357)
- (i) 1QH 23:13-16 = “good news to the poor” and “contrite of spirit” (Puech 1993:362-363)
- (j) 4Q521 2:6 = “over the humble His spirit hovers”
- (k) 4QpPs 37,1:21 = “congregation of the poor”
- (l) 4QpPs 37, 2:9-10 = “the poor shall inherit” and “congregation of the poor”

These texts reference ideas of crushed spirits, brokenness, and despair (Strecker 1988:32; Martin 2001:234; Luz 2007:191; Holladay 2008:88). The Semitic grammatical construct of these phrases can include several meanings, as well as a play on meanings, so that context and comparison must guide the interpreter (Flusser 1978:42-45). The War Scroll (1QM 11:10; 14:7) spoke to an internal dependence upon God for their external battles (McEleney 1981:6; Turner 2008:150) and courage for their lowly spirits (Best 1961:257). The dative of sphere best explains the use of these phrases. The idea was best understood as being “spiritually poor” (Davies and Allison 1988:444).

The Dead Sea community spoke of itself, not as poor in economic conditions, but as a people submitted to the will of God as opposed to the rest of Israel (Green 2001:183; Bailey 2008:158). This proposal, from the DSS texts for “poor in spirit”, is that of the heart and spirit being humbled in light of an eschatological hope (Puech 1993:363; Luz 2007:192).

Without question, passages from Isaiah and the Psalms were background references for the Matthean composition (Barclay 1958:86;

Guelich 1982:69-71; Hagner 1993:91-92; Gundry 1994:67; Nolland 2005:200; France 2007:165). The Old Testament influence was upon both the content and wording of Matthew's composition (Green 2001:46).

- (a) Ps 14:6 = "plans of the poor"
- (b) Ps 34:6 = "poor man called"
- (c) Ps 35:10 = "rescue the poor"
- (d) Ps 37:14 = "to bring down the poor and needy"
- (e) Ps 40:17 = "poor and needy"
- (f) Ps 72:4 = "children of the needy"
- (g) Ps 72:12 = "deliver the needy"
- (h) Ps 82:3 = "rights of the poor"
- (i) Ps 86:1 = "poor and needy"
- (j) Isaiah 11:4 = "poor of the earth"
- (k) Isaiah 26:6 = "footsteps of the poor"
- (l) Isaiah 29:19 = "needy will rejoice"
- (m) Isaiah 32:7 = "to destroy the poor"
- (n) Isaiah 57:15 = "lowly in spirit"
- (o) Isaiah 61:1 = "good news to the poor"
- (p) Isaiah 66:2 = "contrite in spirit"

The Hebrew *'anwey ruah* certainly inclined Matthew's use of "poor in spirit" (Puech 1993:362). In the Old Testament, *'nwy* referred to the powerless, being exploited due to their vulnerability (Guelich 1982:68). Generally, references to the poor in the Old Testament explained the desperation and vulnerability of those who had turned to God with hope (Hoyt 1980:39-40; Guelich 1982:69; Keener 1999:169; Martin 2001:234; Zamfir 2007:80).

For Isaiah, the anointed one (Is 61:1-3) was responsible to bring "good news" to those in need of restoration. In the ancient Near East, a good king was judged by his care of the poor, as seen in the reprimand of King Keret by his own son for not being responsible to his people.

You do not judge the cause of the widow;
you do not try the case of the importunate. You do
not banish the extortioners of the poor; you do not
feed the orphan before your face (nor) the widow
behind your back (Gibson 1978:102).

Throughout the Old Testament, the poor were the object of God's care. Israel's laws protected the rights of the poor: the right to glean in the corners of the fields, the importance of giving alms to the poor, not withholding wages from poor laborers, and the care by fellow Israelites of those in need (Bowman 1947:163; Kloppenborg 2008:205; cf. Ps 12:5; 34:6; 70:5). Judaism sometimes used the term "poor" as a title of honor for righteous living (Schweizer 1975:86), but it should not be deduced that it was a title for piety (McCown 1927:56; Kvalbein 1987:81; Zamfir 2007:80).

The early Church would also later use "poor" in describing its actual economic situation, but no technical designation of "the poor" was employed by the Church of itself (Keck 1965:110-112). The study of Semitic literature confirms that the poor motif developed into a religious designation by the first century (Meadors 1985:308; Kloppenborg 2008:213). To be poor before God, then, was to be as a "beggar" in need of God, seeking him to act on their behalf due to uncontrollable life situations (Rife 1967:109; Kvalbein 1987:83). The poor would be restored out of their helpless and defenselessness because of justice served.

For Matthew, the promise delivered by Isaiah to the poor ("exiles" cf. 61:1-2) certainly was the source for the first Beatitude (Guelich 1982:74; Blomberg 1992:98; Hagner 1993:92; Carson 1999:17-18; Zamfir 2007:81; Bailey 2008:69; Turner 2008:150). The impoverished spirit of the exiles was strengthened with the divine promise of restoration. Was Matthew insisting that the poor were blessed "by the Spirit" (instrumental dative, cf. Smith 1998:391; Domeris 1990:69; Hannan 2006:47-48), or "in the spirit" (dative of sphere, cf. Best 1961:256; Guelich 1982:73; Nolland 2005:199; Luz 2007:190-191)?

A key argument against the instrumental dative is that Matthew used attributes to explain references to the Spirit throughout the Gospel (Luz 2007:191). In addition, Matthew did not speak much of the activity of the Spirit among the Christian community since Jesus was the presence of God (Keck 1995:149-155). In addition, the "pure in heart" (Matt 5:8) better parallels "poor in spirit" as a dative of sphere, pointing to the realm where the poverty exists

(Hagner 1993:89; cf. Wallace 1996:154). The dative functions adverbially and means “the spiritually poor”.

Matthew, by opening his Gospel with the covenant themes (Mt 1:17), continued the analogy of the “poor in spirit” (exiles) in Israel’s past with the new community of Jesus (cf. Hannan 2006:21, 35). The first Beatitude should be understood more as a metaphor for neediness than an indictment against economic poverty. Lambrecht, although preferring an economic explanation of the phrase, agrees that “poor in spirit” does point to the “interiorly detached” (1985:64-65). Matthew said very little about poverty in general (Kloppenborg 2008:224).

What Jesus addressed, was not simply the devastating circumstances of life, but of the inner void within the spirit of humanity. Poverty communicated the state of neediness (Nolland 2005:198; cf. Allen 1912:39; Betz 1985:34; Allison 1999:44-45). To this void, or emptiness, Jesus pronounced the good news of his kingdom. The introduction to this kingdom motif was Jesus’ rejoinder to a life lived and ruled in the “exile of one’s spirit” (cf. Hoyt 1980:39; Carson 1999:18).

One good mark of a king was his actions on behalf of the oppressed in his country (Lambrecht 1985:57). In the Kingdom of God, the oppressed have their needs met as they depend upon the one who acts on their behalf, since they were not able to sustain themselves (Kvalbein 1987:86). The proper response to God was not self-aggrandizement through external observances (Blount 1997:273; cf. Hoyt 1980:39; Liroy 2004:122-123). Humble dependence on God was the appropriate response (Hare 1993:37; cf. Is 57:15; Stanton 1993:381; Gundry 1994:67; Allison 1999:45; France 2007:165; Zamfir 2007:85). Needing God was acknowledging the need of direction (cf. Hamm 1990:50). Ultimately, Jesus pointed to the replacement of self-rule with divine rule.

5.1.3.2 The Grieving: hoi penthountes (Matt 5:4a)

The second Beatitude was concerned with sadness due to grief (Danker 2000:795). By using a present tense participle of *penthein*, the focus was upon the present experience of sorrow in the lives of people (plural). The grief

was usually associated with death, but could also be associated with national catastrophe, or oppression (Powell 1996:466; Hannan 2006:49).

Within Greco-Roman literature, the thought of mourning was associated with the uneducated masses (Carter 2000:132). The term became a common metaphor for Israel's state of affairs (Betz 1995:21). The expression of mourning in the Hebrew, *abelim*, conveyed the physical manifestation of tearing one's clothes and loud crying (Wierzbicka 2001:32). For Matthew, was it grief over the present era, penitent grief, or a personal bereavement (Strecker 1988:35; Green 2001:221)?

Again, as in the first Beatitude, the phrase was a clear reference to Isaiah 61:2, where comfort was promised to those who mourned. In the Isaiah passage, the mourners were either mourning because of the conditions they faced in Zion or because they wanted Zion restored. Their disobedience was interpreted as a divine judgment in losing their land. For those in exile, the mourning was both an act of repentance and a desire to see restoration of the land as the people of God (cf. Wardlaw 2008:301).

It is probably best to see both options, since both conditions were involved (Young 1972:460; Guelich 1982:80). The people were grieving over their spiritual condition, analogous to the loss of their lands. However, along with the grieving came the promise of messianic comfort for the future. The prophet Joel associated mourning with repentance, leading to a restoration of the exiles (Joel 2:12-13; cf. Jer 31:13; Bowman 1947:164).

The Thanksgiving Scroll (1QHa) from the Dead Sea Scroll collection, was a recounting, in a poetic hymn fashion, of horrific persecution from those opposed to the ministry of the Teacher of Righteousness in the Qumran community (WAC 2005:170-171). Within the hymns, there were allusions to grief and mourning, yet God was praised for bringing continual comfort.

(a) 1QHa 13:33 -37

My heart is tormented within me. I have put on the garment of mourning, and my tongue clings to the roof of my mouth...But You, O my God, have opened a wide space in my heart, but they continue to press in, and they shut me up in deep darkness, so that I eat the bread of groaning, and

my drink is tears without end. For my eyes have become weak from anger and my soul by daily bitterness. Grief and misery surround me, and shame is upon my face (WAC 2005:187).

(b) 1QHa 17:11b-14

You have not forsaken my hope, but in the face of affliction You have restored my spirit. For You have established my spirit and know my deliberations. In my distress You have soothed me, and I delight in forgiveness. I shall be comforted for former sin. I know what there is hope in Your mercy, and an expectation in the abundance of your power. (WAC 2005:193).

(c) 1QHa 23:15-16

To [raise up] according to Your truth the herald of good news, [to recount] Your goodness, bringing good news to the humble in accordance with the abundance of Your compassion, [to satisfy] from the fountain of kn[owledge] all the trou[ble]d of spirit and those who mourn for eternal rejoicing (WAC 2005:201).

There was an uncanny literary likeness between the Thanksgiving Scroll and the composition of the Beatitudes. Did both originate from a common source, like Isaiah (Collins 2006:23)? Alternatively, did the Scroll lead to the formation of the Beatitudes? Flusser concluded that there was a connection between the Scroll and Jesus' use of the blessings to describe his followers (1960:4-5).

Similar to the eschatological worldview of the Essenes, Jesus couched his kingdom pronouncements as the fulfillment of Isaiah (Flusser 2007:69-75). To see a direct correspondence between Jesus and the DSS can be ambiguous. For the Essenes, purity rites and strict adherence to the Torah was the core of their teachings (VanderKam 2001:191-192). Far better, is the opinion that recognizes that because the early Christians were also Jews, many parallel ideas and thoughts would be transferred into the literature they composed (Collins 2006:19).

For Matthew, the mourning was the combination of all the sorrows of this age that will be replaced with the kingdom (Schweizer 1975:88; Guelich 1982:81; Betz 1995:123; Wierzbicka 2001:32; France 2007:165; Luz

2007:194). These conditions would concern human misery, loss, and death. During the time of Jesus, the heavy tax burdens on the poor were astounding, due to political greed (Hare 1993:38).

After the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, there were Jewish groups known as “mourners for Zion” (Buchanan 1983:168). They would gather around Jerusalem, fasting, praying, and weeping for God to return the land of Israel back to them. Throughout the prophets, God’s people came together in solidarity over their situations of grief (Martin 2001:235).

Gundry views the mourning as the result of being persecuted as a Christ follower, not as sorrow over sins (1994:68). Mourning suggested that no contentment was possible until the eschatological reversal brought change to the present situation (Davies and Allison 1988:448). Just as the people of Israel longed for Zion to be restored, so the sadness in this age waits for the time of joy through the kingdom renewal. In the Matthean composition, “God’s consolation receives a human face in the person of Jesus—God with us (Matt 1:23)” (Hannan 2006:50).

5.1.3.3 *The Unassuming: hoi praeis (Matt 5:5a)*

The use of *praeis* (“*praus*”) was a distinctive Matthean term (Brawley 2003:611). It occurred four times in the New Testament, three in Matthew’s Gospel and once in I Peter (Matt 5:5; 11:29; 21:5; I Peter 3:4). No doubt, this Beatitude reflected almost verbatim the text of Psalm 37:11. The Psalmist was considering why the wicked prospered, even to the point of taunting the righteous. The solution to this theodicy was the future expectation that God would intervene and correct it (Lohfink 1997:240). It was a trust in God’s intervention and not a turn toward retaliation (Manns 2000:41).

The foundation of *praeis* was the Hebrew word *anawim*, found in Isaiah 61:1. The LXX translated *anawim* as “poor” in the Isaiah passage, leading many scholars to see a close resemblance between this Beatitude and the first one (Davies and Allison 1988:449; Hagner 1993:92; Gundry 1994:69; Talbert 2006:51-52).

The *praus* was used to describe rulers who were “unassuming” toward their citizens (Good 1999:4-5; Danker 2000:861). The Qumran community,

while waiting for the messianic age to come, used the term in describing themselves amidst the difficult experiences and enemies encountered in life (cf. 4QpPs 37; Guelich 1982:82; Harrington 1991:79; Hagner 1993:92).

Luz has concluded that the Semitic understanding took on the meaning of humility (2007:194). Yet, the humility was not due to being mild or submissive. It was due more to the circumstances on those who had been “bent over by the injustice” experienced in their lives (Hagner 1993:92). As a result, there was the lack of aggression or violence that could characterize such a situation. The *praus* were those who were humbled, yet remained kind and gentle through the injustice (Luz 2007:194).

During the time of Jesus, many peasants were manipulated or forced to surrender their land, due to economic hardships (Rukundwa and van Aarde 2005:934). Davies and Allison view the term as indicating how those outside the new community saw it, a powerless situation (1988:449). Nolland objects by pointing out it was not a “state of powerlessness”, but, instead, personal strength in the midst of chaos (Nolland 2005:201).

With the idea of purposed control, *praus* was used to describe a colt broken to harness (Baker 1953:35). Wierzbicka contends the image of a lamb was the best metaphor in conveying the true meaning of *praus* (2001:42-44). The *praus*, then, were those rejecting domination and hubris for gentleness (Guthrie 1981:901). Nevertheless, meekness was not a virtue cherished in a Mediterranean culture obsessed with honor and shame (Clarke 2003:66). Jesus used a term that was perceived negatively within society.

More importantly, Matthew used *praus* to describe Jesus on two occasions and once in Jesus’ ministry (11:29; 12:15-21; 21:5). In both contexts, Jesus was referring to the element of kindness and gentleness toward others (Green 2001:186). The quotation of Isaiah in Matthew 12:15-21 was the longest in Matthew’s Gospel, and hardly accidental for a description of Jesus’ ministry (Muller 1999:168). Despite the harsh and undeserving treatment by others, Jesus portrayed a kindness that made obvious his trust in God to vindicate his cause (Lioy 2004:124; Turner 2008:151). Jesus pronounced a blessing on those, who despite their economic and social problems, ultimately trusted in a divine solution (Brawley 2003:612).

Ultimately, it was not a condition as much as an active display of

kindness (Strecker 1988:36). Kindness and gentleness marked the display of Jesus in both his ministry and teaching of the kingdom. For the follower of Jesus, kingdom rule was gentleness in action, regardless of a culture characterized by honor and shame.

5.1.3.4 *The Empty: hoi peinoñtes and dipsōntes (Matt 5:6a)*

With this Beatitude, images from the Old Testament clearly influence the text. The provision by God in the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites (Ex 16-17), the craving for God by the Psalmist (Ps 42:2; 63:1; 107:5-9; 143:6), and the prophetic promise of the future banquet with God (Is 25:6; 41:17-18; 43:20; 49:10; 55:1-2; 65:13; Jer 15:16; Amos 8:11) were the backdrop for the “hunger and thirst” motif (Schnackenburg 2002:48).

The motif was sometimes combined with fasting and mourning (Keener 1999:170; cf. Joel 1:14; 2:15; Jonah 3:5). The common thread in the Old Testament was the dire need for satisfaction from God in all situations of life (Guelich 1982:103). For the people of God, to eat and drink in abundance was a gift of God, resulting in happiness (Sicari 1991:594). One of the supreme characteristics of an Egyptian ruler was his role in preventing hunger and oppression among his people (McCown 1927:53).

Matthew also used the hunger and thirst motif in various pericopes: the temptation of Jesus (Matt 4:1-11), the prayer Jesus taught the disciples (Matt 6:11), the good gifts of the Father (Matt 7:9-12), the feeding of the five thousand (Matt 14:13-21), the feeding of the four thousand (Matt 15:32-39), the parable of the wedding banquet (Matt 22:1-14), and the Lord’s supper with the disciples (Matt 26:17-30). While Matthew used the term hunger on eight occasions to express the literal condition of food deprivation, the use in the Beatitude was clearly metaphorical (Morris 1992:98).

Both *hoi peinoñtes* and *dipsōntes* are present tense participles. Jesus was addressing the continual desire due to deprivation, similar to starvation (Powell 1996:468). By pointing to the deep yearnings within humanity, Jesus spoke to the vacuum needing to be filled (Lioy 2004:125). Two ideas could be expressed with *hoi peinoñtes* and *dipsōntes*: longing (Morris 1992:99) and exertion (Luz 2007:195-196). To what was this longing and exertion?

It is understood, that the hunger was satisfied by that for which one was hungry (Talbert 2006:52). From the context of the beatitudes and the Old Testament allusions, justice was the object of the hungering and thirsting (Hagner 1993:93; Powell 1996:468; Chouinard 2003:238-240; Keener 1999:169-170). One study has suggested that justice must be seen as a fundamental and basic human need (Taylor 2003:209-219). Dunn has suggested the phrase “hungering for what is right” best conveys the understanding of the blessing (2003b:563-565).

What must be recognized, however, was Jesus’ promise of a divine solution (cf. passive voice of “filled”). Jesus was the demonstration of God’s intervention, being seen as the solution to the longing and exertion of humanity for justice (Chouinard 2003:239). There was a universal dimension to this blessing (Trites 1992:187-188; cf. Matt 6:10). Through the righteousness of God, a restoration of what was promised in covenant faithfulness was described as blessing to the world (cf. Gen 12:1-3; Leske 1991:831).

However, this justice would not exclude the spiritual effect within the personal dimension. The personal and universal dimensions were both reflected in its rich imagery (Carson 1984:134; Hagner 1993:93; Lioy 2004:127). Although the “hungering and thirsting” continue, the solution will always be found in the activity of God on our behalf (Carson 1999:23-24; Vaught 2001:24).

5.1.3.5 The Merciful: hoi eleēmones (Matt 5:7a)

Mercy (*eleos*) was a key theme within the Matthean composition (Schweizer 1975:92; Bauer 1988:62; Leske 1991:832; Hare 1993:41; Hinkle 1998:358; cf. Matt 6:12; 9:12; 12:7; 15:22; 17:15; 18:21-35; 20:30-31; 23:23; 25:31-46). Jesus confirmed that the practice of religion without mercy was fraudulent (Matt 23:23). Jesus embodied divine mercy throughout Matthew’s Gospel in his compassionate ministry of healing (Hinkle 1998:357; cf. Matt 15:22; 17:15; 20:30-34). The healing accounts gave a “therapeutic dimension to Matthew’s understanding of mercy” (Holladay 2008:92).

Central to the history of Israel, was the mercy (*hesed*) of God in a covenant relationship (Ex 34:9; Ps 25:6; 40:11; 51:1; 69:16; Is 63:7; Hosea

2:19; 6:6; Jonah 4:2; Zech 7:9). The meaning of *hesed* was used to describe covenant faithfulness, forgiveness, and kindness of God to Israel (Essex 1986:594). In the Qumran community, *hesed* was a common explanation for the loyalty of God to the covenant (Essex 1986:595; cf. 1QS 1:8, 22: 2:1, 4; 10:4; 1QM 12:3; 14:4; 18:11; 1QH 1:32; 2:23). Consequently, those in the community were to act mercifully toward one another. From Jewish usage and thought, Matthew knew *hesed* in terms of covenant loyalty (Hill 1977:109). How did Matthew express the understanding of *hesed* in his composition?

On two occasions, Matthew used *eleos* to demonstrate that the ministry of Jesus involved notions of reconciliation, acceptance, and forgiveness, not condemnation (Matt 9:12; 12:7; cf. Carey 2009:21-35). In both cases, Jesus addressed the attitude of the religious leaders for not practicing the truth of *eleos* by reminding them of Hosea 6:6. Jesus made a bold claim in insisting on mercy being greater (*meizon*= neuter form) than the temple itself (Matt 12:1-7; cf. Luz 2001:181-182)!

For Hosea, stubborn Israel had refused to repent and take advantage of Yahweh's covenant mercy. Instead, Israel continued with the ritualistic behavior as the theoretical means to honor Yahweh. By alluding to the prophet Hosea, Matthew was underscoring the importance of understanding God through his compassionate mercy and its foundation to a relationship with God (Hill 1977:110; cf. Hays 2005:181-182).

As a result, the mercy received will always be the mercy demonstrated (Guelich 1982:89; Davies and Allison 1988:455). This mercy has been described as the response to the "misery and helplessness of others" (Carson 1999:25), the concern of people in their need (Danker 2000:316), "providing healing of every kind" (Blomberg 1992:100), and "kind, charitable, and ready to empathize with the sufferings of the afflicted" (Lioy 2004:127).

In the Beatitude, Jesus was praising conduct that corresponded to God's actions toward the blessed (Hagner 1993:93). Guelich, however, understands the blessing to be upon a condition rather than conduct (Guelich 1982:103-104). The differences do not need to be mutually exclusive. Actions of mercy naturally result from being characterized as merciful (Dunn 2003b:591; Lioy 2004:128; Turner 2008:152). The natural inclination of one blessed through mercy is the initiative to exhibit mercy toward others

(Strecker 1988:39). Jesus was demonstrating that there was a reciprocal nature to those who had experienced the mercy and forgiveness of God (Green 2001:209; cf. Ps 112:5; Prov 14:21).

This Beatitude was the only reciprocal one. In so doing, Jesus was not arguing for a “commercial bargain” of reciprocity with God, but, instead, expressing the obvious conclusion: those who have received mercy will show mercy (Jeremias 1963:26). Jesus pronounced blessed those who knew the value and reality of mercy under the rule of God (Powell 1996:471-472). Revenge and retaliation were not to be a part of those who followed Jesus (France 2007:168; cf. Matt 5:38-42, 43-48; 6:14; 7:1-5).

5.1.3.6 The Devoted: hoi katharoi tē kardia (Matt 5:8a)

This Beatitude parallels the *ptōchoi tō pneumati* in Matthew 5:3 as a dative of sphere (Wallace 1996:154). The concept of “purity” dominated the Jewish way of thought and life (Neusner 1973:108-130; Klawans 2006:19-48; Haber 2008:9-71, 161-179). The underlying tenet in the teaching of the Law was that no impurity could touch or contaminate the sacred (Haber 2008:162).

Neusner understands purity in ancient Judaism as “a term for a basic, probably unanalyzable religious experience” (1973:128). Klawans has argued for the distinction between two types of impurity: ritual and moral (Klawans 2006:53-58). He further notes that ritual impurity was distinguished by natural processes, such as death and sexual relations, while moral purity was a consequence of serious sin (2006:53-56). Neusner contends that idolatry was the worst impurity fostered by the people (1973:13-14).

The role of the temple, in discussing and appropriating purity issues within Second Temple Judaism, was the central and paramount concern (Neusner 1973:128-129; Haber 2008:162-165). Purity was the prerequisite of approaching God or understanding Torah (Neusner 1973:115). There was a great emphasis on the skin and body surface for the worshipper, since the physical was also analogous to the purity of the social body (Neyrey 1996:81-85). But it was also a matter of moral legitimacy, since the approach to God was through the temple and ritual purification (Garland 2001:58; Boyle 2002:46; Holladay 2008:92; Zamfir 2007:87; Repschinski 2008:379).

For Klawans, ritual purification was a means of separating humanity from its humanness, to participate in the sacrificial system that maintained the presence of God in *imitatio Dei* (2006:68-72). The purity systems provided a designation for both people and objects as clean or unclean, pure or undefiled (Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:396). Jewish culture was classified according to the purity of places (“ten degrees of holiness”), persons, time/events (“holy days”), and physical contact with objects (Neyrey 1996:92).

After separating from the corrupt religious system in Jerusalem, the Qumran community placed an emphasis on ritual purity as an indication of their desire for holiness in the community (Yieh 2004:154-155). Kopp has listed four ways *katharos* was used in the ancient world: gold unalloyed, spotlessly clean linen, transparent water in a glass, and an army purged of cowards (2003:41). Finally, during the Roman period, there was a purification spell to Agathos Daimon the intermediary between humanity and the gods. The spell demonstrates the importance of purity with the gods.

Ho, I am Murai, Muribi, Babel, Baoth, Bamui, the Great Agathodaimon, Murabho...form of soul that rests above in the heaven of heavens. Tabot...Yohel, the first servant of the great god, he who gives light exceedingly, the companion of the flame, he in whose mouth is the fire that is not quenched, the great god who is seated in the fire, he who is in the midst of the fire that is in the lake of heaven, in whose hand is the greatness and power of god: reveal yourself to me here today in the fashion of your revelation to Moses, which you made on the Mountain, before whom you yourself did create darkness and light—I pray you to reveal yourself to me here tonight and speak with me and give me answer in truth without falsehood. For I will glorify you in Abydos... (Lindsay 1968:313).

With this varied background, what did purity of heart indicate in the Beatitude?

There was a Semitic foundation for the phrase “pure of heart” (Boyle 2002:45). Since purity was a cultic requirement for Israel, Jesus contrasted it with the symbol of the heart, capturing the essence of the righteousness he presented (France 2007:168). According to Semitic understanding, the heart

was the core of a person, the total sum of their thoughts, will, and desires (Morris 1992:100; Kopp 2003:41; Lioy 2004:128; Luz 2007:196).

Old Testament allusions were surely influential in referencing the “pure heart” (cf. Ps 24:3-4; 51:10; 73:1; cf. Green 2001:239-240; Nolland 2005:204). For the Psalmist, the pure of heart were those who were not involved in idolatrous worship or deception (24:3-4), those desiring their inner core to be divinely altered (51:6, 10), and those in a position for the reception of God’s blessings (73:1). One of the consequences of a pure heart was the ability to experience the presence of God in the temple (Ps 24:5).

The blessing by Jesus needed no further explanation, since the understanding would have been clear to all who heard (Boyle 2002:47). It meant an integrity and sincerity of being, as opposed to a divided state of being (Green 1975:78; Powell 1996:473; Guelich 1982:105; Hare 1993:41; Schnackenburg 2002:48; Turner 2008:152). The contrast was in the religious practices of the Pharisees, criticized for internal fraud by Jesus (Matt 15:1-20; 23:1-36; cf. Strecker 1988:40). Just like actors on a stage, their actions and conduct appeared one way, but their internal motivation was hidden from the audience (cf. §2.4.4.2).

With Jesus’ assertion that Jerusalem’s temple had been deserted, the consequence was such “that the place where purity means most, and where lost purity can be restored” was no longer accessible (Repschinski 2008:383; cf. Matt 23:38). Matthew composed the essence of Jesus’ thought in expressing that ceremonial purity was not enough in dealing with the inner being of a person (Guthrie 1981:902). Although purity was of supreme value for Second Temple Judaism, Jesus addressed where purity mattered most, the “heart” (Powell 1996:473; Dunn 2003:576).

Matthew developed the purification theme with the Christological concept of forgiveness (Matt 26:26-29). The ministry and work of Jesus replaced the temple purification system (Repschinski 2008:384). Therefore, Matthew deduced that inner purification was grounded in the forgiveness offered through the death of Jesus. Inner purification was the consequence of turning (*metanoia*) and following (*akoloutheō*) Jesus. For this study, purity of heart is considered as an appositive of complete devotion to God (Keener

1999:170; Hannan 2006:51), as well as being “centered on God” (Bruner 2004:175).

5.1.3.7 *The Reconciled: hoi eirēnopoioi (Matt 5:9a)*

This was the only time the adjective *eirēnopoioi* was used in the New Testament. In Hellenistic culture, it described the endeavor of someone “to reconcile persons who have disagreements” (Danker 2000:288), or of rulers after war forcing peace and security upon the peoples (Hill 1981:113; Guelich 1982:91). One scholar has fittingly stated this Beatitude had the presupposition that “the deity is a God of peace” (Holladay 2008:94).

In Psalm 34:14, one was encouraged to seek peaceful relations. With the Old Testament prophets, references were made to the Messiah being the Prince of Peace among the kingdoms on earth (Green 2001:216-217; cf. Isa 9:6; Zech 9:9-10). Isaiah used the peace motif in pointing to the future hope of Israel: “proclamation of peace” (52:7), “covenant of peace” (54:10), “children’s peace” (54:13), “led forth in peace” (55:12), and “peace your governor” (60:17).

A key text behind this Beatitude was Isaiah 52:7-10 with the “gospel, peace, and reign of God” motif (Swartley 2006:16). It was set as the backdrop to Isaiah 53 and the suffering servant. Jesus adopted the “gospel, peace, and reign of God” motif as descriptive of his ministry and culminating in his suffering (Swartley 2006:16-23). The Hebrew term for peace, *shalom*, conveyed the positive notion of harmony and well-being enveloping every area of a person’s life (Powell 1996:474-475; Kopp 2003:43; Holladay 2008:93). As in the previous Beatitudes, Matthew alluded to Isaiah with its hope for *shalom* by using “peacemaker” (Guelich 1982:92; Leske 1991:833; Hare 1993:42).

Within the Matthean context, reconciliation played a major role and was the intent of this Beatitude (Allison 1999:54; cf. Matt 5:21-26; 6:14-15; 18:15-20). Peacemaking was needed wherever peace was absent (Nolland 2005:205). Within the context of the Beatitudes, the peacemaking would be a call to not seek revenge or feel hatred toward those persecuting the new community (Wardlaw 2008:304-305). The concern for peace by the new

community rested on God's will and Jesus' ministry of reconciliation (Schnackenburg 2002:49).

For Jesus, the natural reaction of being reconciled was to be a reconciler (Davies and Allison 1988:457; France 2007:169). Early rabbinic teachings highlighted the importance of taking risks in bringing peace in the midst of conflict (Martin 2001:228). Rabbi Hillel, in the Mishneh (Abot 1.14), advised, "Be of the disciple of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving mankind and bringing them near to the law" (Green 1975:78). During the time of Jesus' pronouncements, many Jews, due to an expectation of war with the Gentile political powers, advocated violence (Hagner 1993:94; Keener 1999:168). As Matthew composed his Gospel post 70 AD, the new community was reminded that violence was never the answer for peaceful relations.

The juxtaposition of mercy (Matt 5:7) and peace (Matt 5:9) could be an allusion to Psalm 85:10. The importance of this Psalm cannot be overstated. Themes of restoration and righteousness dominated the future hope of the Psalmist, with the assurance that good comes from God when mercy and peace work together (Bowman 1957:390; Green 2001:207). For Jesus, the heart of peacemaking was to love one's enemies (Swartley 2006:60-76; Konradt 2008:273). Matthew was addressing the new community to express the love Jesus taught in the Sermon (cf. Matt 5:43-48), as well as what he demonstrated in doing good toward others (Guelich 1982:107).

5.1.3.8 *The Pursued: hoi dediōgmenoi (Matt 5:10a)*

With this Beatitude, the last component of the inclusio was expressed in the similar ending of the "kingdom of heaven" (Hagner 1993:95; Lioy 2004:130). The emphasis of the Beatitudes was upon the two guiding themes of righteousness and the kingdom of heaven (Luz 2007:199). The previous seven Beatitudes were actions or conditions on the part of the subject. This Beatitude expressed that the one blessed was the one experiencing persecution by an outside agent.

The grammatical construction of *dediōgmenoi* was a perfect passive participle of *diōkō*, implying a past persecution leading into the present (Davies and Allison 1988:459; Guelich 1982:93; Gundry 1994:73). The term conveyed the idea of a "harassment of someone due to beliefs" (Danker

2000:254). It could also be used for a “pursuing” and “chasing” with intensity (Ebel 1986:805).

Some scholars suggest the probability of pun being employed by Matthew, with allusions to Deuteronomy 16:20, “righteousness, righteousness you must pursue” and Isaiah 51:1, the “pursuit of righteousness”. The pun revealed the paradox reversal in that being persecuted was due to the pursuit of righteousness (Flusser 1978:45-46; Day 2005:157). The same phrase “pursue righteousness” was used twice in 4Q298. The LXX used it of a hostile pursuit by soldiers (Ex 15:19; cf. Morris 1992:101).

The understanding of this persecution was referenced by Matthew with the phrase “on account of” (*heneken*). The term *heneken* could convey the cause or occasion of an event. It was a persecution due to the righteousness Jesus described of those in the kingdom (Morris 1992:101; Hagner 1993:94). By using *heneken* in Matthew 5:11 as well, Matthew indicated that the persecution of the new community was ultimately due to the result of following (pursuing) the claims of Jesus (Stanton 1993:314; Kopp 2003:46). The pun would suggest that “pursuing” righteousness was equivalent to being “persecuted” for righteousness (cf. Day 2004:224-229).

In the Matthean composition, there was the underlying assumption that the followers of Jesus would encounter persecution (Matthews 2003:340; cf. Matt 13:9-13; 22:2-10; 23:34-37). Ultimately, Matthew used the experience of persecution as a positive phenomenon for the new community in understanding their existence in “the practice of *imitatio Christi*” (Matthews 2003:343).

The obvious placement of this Beatitude before Matthew 5:11-12 was due, in part, to bring encouragement to those in the new community experiencing persecution (Hoyt 1980:35; Hagner 1993:95; Nolland 2005:206). There was no hint of a blessing for persecution in the Old Testament (Davies and Allison 1988:459). In contrast, Jesus both blessed the persecuted and warned his followers of its reality in their future experience (Matt 10:16).

One scholar has suggested this was the most soul-searching of all the Beatitudes, since persecution was due to all the qualities that were named previously as demonstrated in their lives (Carson 1999:29). The persecuted were blessed because the presence of Jesus brought the reality of the

kingdom presence despite earthly troubles (Garland 1992:79). Matthew desired the new community to be persuaded that as committed Jesus followers, they, too, shared in the destiny of Jesus (Carter 2004:217).

5.1.4 The Results of Being Blessed: Apodosis of the Beatitudes

5.1.4.1 The hoti Clause

Within the individual Beatitudes, the blessings were affirmed in the first component, while the *hoti* clause brought the explanation in the second component (Patte 1987:66). Outside of the New Testament, the *hoti* clause was rarely used (Guelich 1982:75). The subordinated position of *hoti* gives the reason and basis for the blessing (“marker of causality”), and should be translated as “because”, “since” or “for” (Danker 2000:732; France 2007:164).

For some, the *hoti* clause should be consistently applied throughout the Beatitudes, making the idea of promise a better choice in being described as blessed (Strecker 1988:31; Luz 2007:193). Powell has sought to distinguish the second clause between “reversals” and “rewards” (1996:460-479). He understands the first four beatitudes as reversals and the last four as rewards. What must be kept in mind is the kingdom of heaven was mentioned in the first and eighth Beatitude alike so that both sets have a shared theme.

Reversal was a theme throughout the Beatitudes. Betz prefers to distinguish the *hoti* clause based on the form in the text. The clause pointed to the reason for the blessings in the first and last Beatitude, structured with the present tense verbs and the repetitive “kingdom of heaven”. The other six Beatitudes contained promises with future and passive syntactical constructions (Betz 1985:32). This best explains both the grammatical and literary form of the text. How the interpreter should conceive of the notions of each apodosis can be challenging. The expressions throughout the Beatitudes have a “deliberate obscurity” in which they were “used without specific definitions, implying meanings beyond the power of human minds to verbalize or define” (Palachuvattil 2007:95). One should take into consideration the key themes of reversal and expectation with the interpretative conclusion.

5.1.4.2 *Reversal of Experience: The Divine Passives*

The passive voice was used in the Greek language to convey that the subject was receiving the action or being acted upon as expressed by the verb. The passive voice was employed when the direct agent was not expressed directly. It is far better to see literary or contextual reasons for its use. The reasons could vary: the agent was obvious from the context, the focus of the context was on the agent itself, it was too obtrusive to speak of the direct agent, or for rhetorical effect (Wallace 1996:438).

Whenever a passive voice was used in the New Testament, and God was clearly the agent, it is considered as a divine passive. Wallace has stated that although the divine passive is a common description by interpreters, it may be overstated since God was behind the scenes in the stories, as well as the frequent subject in the sayings of Jesus (1996:438). Clearly, Matthew pointed to God as the agent four times in the apodosis of the Beatitudes with the specific passive voice: *paraklēthēsontai* (5:4b), *chortasthēsontai* (5:6b), *eleēthēsontai* (5:7b), *klēthēsontai* (5:9b). Betz contends its use was due to the avoidance of using the name of God (1995:124). This seems to make too much of a grammatical construction, especially in light of Matthew using the name of God throughout his Gospel. The use of the divine passive in the Beatitudes was for rhetorical effect in its literary composition (cf. Kennedy 1984:41-53).

(a) The first use was *paraklēthēsontai* (5:4b). It was used in Hellenistic times of one who encouraged, comforted, or cheered up another (Danker 2000:765). It also conveyed the ending of grief over death as time passed for grieving (Sirach 38:16-20). The term was used in Isaiah (LXX) in reference to the comforting mission of the Messiah for those who sorrowed over Jerusalem (Hagner 1993:92; cf. Is 49:13; 51:12; 60:10; 61:2-3; 66:13). In 1QS10:21, the Essene community was encouraged not to comfort the wicked until they had first repented.

Within Jewish tradition, a common theme was God turning sorrow into joy (Davies and Allison 1988:449). The comfort was in the assurance produced through Jesus' promise itself (Guelich 1982:81). Jesus' hearers lived with the expectation that God would eventually intervene through the Messiah (Newman 1975:115). With this in mind, the understanding that Jesus'

presence translated into the absence of mourning made greater sense to the Matthean community (Matt 9:15). With Jesus' coming, the comfort was beginning to be realized (Carson 1984:133).

(b) The second use was *chortasthēsontai* (5:6b). The verb was only used here in the New Testament. It was used, outside of the New Testament, for the fattening of animals (Morris 1992:99; France 2007:168). It also expressed the "experience of inward satisfaction in something" (Danker 2000:1087). Within Semitic literature, it referred to the time of justice and vindication, exemplified in terms of the messianic feast enjoyed by God's people in the DSS (1QSa; 11Q13 2:2-25; cf. Gundry 1994:70). There were also references made to a satisfaction gained from wisdom (cf. 1 Enoch 48:1). The sapiential text used the same imagery as Matthew: righteousness, thirsty, and filled.

In that place I saw the spring of righteousness and it was inexhaustible, and many springs of wisdom surrounded it. And all the thirsty drank from them and were filled with wisdom; and their dwelling places were with the righteous and the holy and the chosen (Nickelsburg and VanderKam 2004:61).

The imagery of thirst and hunger being relieved with divine intervention was found throughout the Old Testament (Ps 42:1-2; 107:9; Isaiah 25:6; 49:10-13; 61:11). The same imagery was used by Sirach with his invitation to gain wisdom (Sir 24:19-21). Matthew, in using the hunger and thirst imagery, pointed to righteousness as being both the object of and answer to the cravings (Talbert 2006:52). All the imagery pointed to the central truth that Matthew intended the new community to adopt, that their "deepest needs are met by God's redemptive activity" (Guelich 1982:88).

(c) Matthew employed a third passive with *eleēthēsontai* (5:7b), found in the second half of the Beatitudes. This was the passive form of *eleeō*, which expressed the pity or compassion shown to one in need (Danker 2000:315). Strecker views this Beatitude as a "statement of divine right" (1988:39).

The point was emphasized with the parable Jesus told of the forgiven servant in light of the question Peter asked concerning the degree of forgiving others (18:21-35). The key moment in the parable was the rhetorical question, “should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you” (v. 33)? After the question, the verdict was stated that the measure of mercy desired, was comparable to the mercy extended to others (v. 35).

Mercy and forgiveness were equated, and served as defining qualities of being a Jesus follower through the ethic of love (cf. Matt 6:14-15; Luz 2007:327). Jesus was stating that the one who has experienced the mercy of God was the one who demonstrated God to others with mercy and a forgiving heart (cf. Trites 1992:188; Hare 1993:40). Some scholars view this Beatitude in the eschatological sense of God demonstrating his ultimate mercy at the end time (Talbert 2006:53; Turner 2008:152). Even if that were the case, the “future conditions the present” so that mercy demonstrated now will ultimately be expressed as the mercy of God eschatologically (Guelich 1982:104-105).

(d) The final passive form used in the apodosis of the Beatitudes was *klēthēsontai* (5:9b), from the verb *kaleō*. Generally, the action of the verb was simply the calling or naming of someone. Danker has clarified that in many cases, the emphasis was not on the calling as much as what the name said about the one called (2000:503). In this case, the passive voice would emphasize the idea of “to be.”

In the Old Testament, Hosea viewed the day when Israel and Judah would be called “sons of the living God” (Hosea 1:10). Rabbis in Jesus’ day used the “sons of God” metaphor to speak of the people of Israel (Guelich 1982:92; Liroy 2004:129). Roman emperors were referred to as sons of the gods (Strecker 1988:41). In what sense was it used in the Beatitudes?

Both intimacy with the divine and likeness to the divine were emphasized with the sonship motif (Davies and Allison 1988:459). Throughout the Gospel, Matthew incorporated the “sons of” phraseology to show character traits of what was being described (France 2007:169). He spoke of the “sons of the kingdom” (8:12); “sons of the evil one” (13:38); and “sons of those who killed the prophets” (23:31). Does it not follow that Matthew was describing the “sons of God” as those who exhibit peace in a world of violence and brokenness (Chouinard 2003:239)?

Luz contends that there was no direct relationship between making peace and being named with divine sonship (2007:198; cf. Guelich 1982:92). He further explains that the final proof of divine sonship will be in the future eschaton, when obedience will be rewarded. However, it was more likely that Matthew was addressing the new community as the family of God, which served as an impetus for reconciliatory behaviors among themselves and toward others (cf. Matt 5:43-48; 18:15-20).

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus emphasized his relationship with the Father, as well as the privileged position of his disciples to the Father (cf. Bauer 1988:62). With the divine passive, the assurance was given that God recognized those who were his own (France 2007:169). Jesus was pointing to the reality that peacemakers were reflective of being in the family of God since God promised to bring ultimate *shalom* on the earth (Turner 2008:153). Peace differentiated the children of God because it was the nature of God to make peace (cf. Talbert 2006:53).

5.1.4.3 *Expectation of the Divine: Future With Objects*

There were two promises given in the Beatitudes without the passive voice. Both are future, with one in the active voice and the other in the middle voice. Both these constructions have an object to which it modifies.

(a) The first object promised was *klēronomsousin tēn gēn* ("inherit the land", 5:5b). The term, *klēronomsousin*, expressed the future active of *klēros*. Originally, with Homer, the term was used to describe the drawing of lots in discovering the will of the gods (Eichler 1986:296). In the Qumran community, it was believed the use of lots demonstrated the predestined will of God (1QS 2:17; 1QM 13:9; cf. Eichler 1986:298). In time, the term also expressed the thought of an inheritance or coming into the possession of something (Danker 2000:547). For the Qumran community, the eventual inheritance of the land was representative of salvation from God over their enemies (Mann 2000:46).

The focus of the blessing was an allusion to Psalm 37:11. Within this Psalm, attention to the land possession was emphasized six times (Ps. 37:3, 9, 11, 18, 29, and 34). For the people of God in the Old Testament, possession of the land was demonstrative of God's blessings and promises

(Guelich 1982:82; Eichler 1986:298; Leske 1991:829). To be landless meant to be a stranger or a wanderer without an identity (Rukundwa and van Aarde 2005:935).

For the new community of Jesus followers, this served as a metaphorical concept of the ideal state, bringing hope of the eschatological reversal through God's kingdom (cf. Bowman 1947:165; Eichler 1986:300; Davies and Allison 1988:450; Charlesworth 2000:15; Brawley 2003:615; France 2007:166-167; Burge 2010:33-35). This hope was founded on the Abrahamic covenant with its land promise (cf. Gen 12:1-3; Dumbrell 1981:8). The land referred to, not just Israel, but the whole earth under the reign of God (Green 2001:188; Luz 2007:194-195; Zamfir 2007:87).

Matthew argued that the injustice on earth would be made right because the kingdom was characterized by divine justice (Davies and Allison 1988:450; Betz 1995:128-129; cf. Matt 5:13, 18, 35; 6:10, 19; 9:6; 11:25; 12:42; 16:19; 18:18-19; 23:9; 24:30; 28:18). The thrust of the Lord's Prayer was for the earth to experience the kingdom rule of heaven (cf. 6:10). For Matthew, the land inheritance was clearly an allusion to the Abrahamic Covenant, involving blessing and a land promise (cf. Brawley 2003:608-616).

Just as the Jews in exile longed for the future restoration of the land, so the new community longs for the consummation of the kingdom upon the cosmos (cf. Buchanan 1983:167; Nolland 2005:202). The blessing pronounced by Jesus must be understood from its messianic context as the land inheritance symbolic of kingdom possession (cf. Choi 1993:77; Hare 1993:39; Allison 1999:47; Mann 2000:50-51). Jesus was proclaiming his message as the "liberating force" without the spectacular cosmic disruptions so many anticipated (Pagola 2009:104-106). The power was in the word!

Consequently, the equivalent meaning was, "receiving what God has promised" (Newman 1975:116). Therefore, whether the land was actual or symbolic, the "possession" would come from God. Jesus used a powerful symbol ("the land") to demonstrate it could not be demanded of God, but was, instead, God's gracious gift to those who were blessed (cf. Burge 2010:35).

(b) The next Beatitude has been claimed as the favorite of the early Church Fathers (Vaught 2001:26), although being the most contextually difficult (Hagner 1993:94). An expectation of experiencing God's presence

was a continual desire in the worship of Israel (Ps 17:15; 24:4-6; 27:5; 63:2). The allusion to this concept was the basis for the second future with object: *ton theon opsontai* (Matt 5:8b). The middle voice emphasizes the subject will perform or experience the action of the verb.

Corresponding to other allusions in Isaiah, Matthew could have been drawing upon Isaiah 6. The phrase “seeing God” became a Semitic idiom for the cultic concept of a worshipper in the temple where God’s presence was presumed (Buchanan 1983:174; Strecker 1988:40). Buchanan has further argued that after the temple was destroyed, the Torah substituted in providing the assurance of God’s presence among his people (1983:174). The “seeing” was more of a faith oriented concept, sense the Israelites knew they could not literally see God and live (cf. Gen 32:30; Ex 33:20; Deut 5:26).

There were two theological ideas drawn from the Old Testament warnings about death and the sight of God. First, the holiness of God was contrasted with humanity. Second, the transcendence of God stood in contrast to humanity’s finiteness (Green 2001:241). Within Hellenistic culture, the highest form of knowledge was through the mediation of “seeing” the divine (Strecker 1988:40; Luz 2007:196-197). Plato argued that the initiated (“purified”) would ascend to the gods, while the “impure would wallow in the mud” (Boyle 2002:48). What did Matthew intend in his context? What was understood by “seeing God”?

Allison has conjectured that Matthew’s audience would have taken the concept and theology of the vision of God literally (2005:60-61). Allison has summarized the various meanings of “seeing God” within the context of Matthew’s composition and the Church’s understanding over the centuries (2005:45-60).

- (a) By taking the phrase “seeing God” literally, the idea of an embodied deity was assumed. Even Jesus referred to the angels seeing the “face of my Father” (Matt 18:10).
- (b) The early Church Fathers understood the phrase through a Christological interpretation. They stressed that Jesus would be the one viewed by the people of God, not God himself. For Matthew,

the understanding of Jesus as “Emmanuel” would be further indication of the importance of Jesus (Matt 1:23).

- (c) Since the time of Origen, there have been interpreters who have conceived of the phrase as a metaphor for insight into the divine.
- (d) Augustine argued, in the *City of God*, that in the new world of perfection, humanity would be able to observe God.
- (e) Gregory of Nyssa compared humanity viewing the sun with that of God. Humanity could see reflections of God as perfection was being worked through the lives of one’s neighbor or self.
- (f) Finally, interpreters have suggested the phrase was an idiom for both a present and future experience. This view would be more comprehensive of the other interpretations as well.

Allison has suggested that no one view dominate the interpretation of the Matthean Beatitude, since “anything less than all of these together would be less than the *summum bonum* and so not the *visio dei*” (2005:62). A pertinent observation is that there was a “deliberate obscurity” in the phrase, implying meaning beyond the verbal understanding of the human mind (Kennedy 1984:52).

Zamfir dismisses any interpretation emphasizing a personal “vision” of God over the intention of Matthew to reference the intervention of God (2007:87). Matthew was connecting the Emmanuel theme (Matt 1:23) with the kingdom blessing in the seeing of God (Nolland 2005:205). The position of this study is that the Beatitude assured the blessing of experiencing the presence of God because of a devoted heart, using the idiomatic *langue* within the Semitic context to convey that thought (cf. Leske 1991:833). Jesus was the divine intervention that brought new possibilities in experiencing God.

5.1.5 The Core of the Blessings: *dikaiosunē*

Matthew used *dikaiosunē* seven times in his Gospel, with five of the seven appearing in the Sermon on the Mount and two in the Beatitudes (Matt 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, 33). As a summary of Jesus’ message, it was supremely important (Seebass 1986:360; Strecker 2000:382; cf. Holladay 2008:91).

Many scholars view the theme of righteousness as a prominent theme in the Sermon (duToit 1977:38; Davies and Allison 1988:452; Guelich 1982:84; McKnight 1992:414; Hagner 1993:56; Luz 1995:3; Chouinard 2003:231; Harris 2004:112-113; Thom 2007:307), while some contend it was the central purpose altogether (Seebass 1986:360; Kingsbury 1987:136; Hinkle 1998:355-356; Draper 1999:32-34; Harris 2004:112).

5.1.5.1 The View that Righteousness was a Provisional Term in Matthew

Przybylski has argued the term, *dikaiosunē*, was used as a provisional point of contact for the Matthean hearers and did not adequately express what Jesus taught (1980:116-123). By comparing the use of *dikaiosunē* in the Matthean Gospel with the Semitic equivalent in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Tannaitic literature, Przybylski deduced that *dikaiosunē* meant “the meticulous observance of the law” and “conduct according to a norm” (1980:84-87).

Through his study, it was concluded *dikaiosunē* did not describe the conduct desired of Jesus’ followers, and “was employed solely to provide a vehicle by which the teaching of Jesus could be explained” by offering the new way of discipleship as doing the will of God (1980:113-118). Przybylski is to be commended on his work and drawing attention to the concept of righteousness at the time of Jesus’ ministry. Yet, making a hard distinction between the Matthean concept of righteousness from the Old Testament teaching in favor of other Semitic usages alone seems to beg the question (cf. Luomanen 1998b:29).

Why would Matthew have continually alluded to the Old Testament throughout his composition only to avoid referencing it as he discussed one of the most significant theological ideas within his religious milieu? In regards to the Matthean composition, any distinction based solely on outside Semitic literature without regard to the Old Testament usage would be deficient at best (cf. Guelich 1982:86-87). In addition, Przybylski puts himself into an interpretative straightjacket with his insistence that *dikaiosunē* have the same semantic weight in each Matthean passage (Hagner 1993:56). How, then, was righteousness (*dikaiosunē*) understood within the Beatitudes? Was there consistency or differentiation in the Sermon on the Mount with its use?

5.1.5.2 *Tensions in Interpreting dikaiosunē as Conduct or Gift Exclusively*

One should be careful in interpreting Matthew's Gospel through the Pauline theological prism (cf. Strecker 1967:227; Bruner 2004:169-171; Turner 2008:151). The presence of the kingdom of heaven was in its proclamation ("gospel") as God's intervention into the world. Matthew argued that, once the kingdom was realized, the righteousness that accompanied it was recognized as well. The point of Jesus' statement concerning the "fulfilling all righteousness" at his baptism, was not concerned on right conduct as much as God's kingdom purposes being fulfilled in and through the authority of Jesus (Riches 2000:191). This brings equilibrium to the scholarly debate whether Matthew insisted on righteousness as a divine gift or as a human action.

There are scholars who insist Matthew was maintaining *dikaïosunē* as a means of doing the will of God (cf. Strecker 1967:227; 1988:140; duToit 1977:39; McKnight 1992:414; Turner 1992:40; Stanton 1993:299-300; Carson 1999:23; Charles 2002:5; Bruner 2004:168-171; Harris 2004:112; France 2007:167; Luz 2007:195-196). The underlying assumption is that Jesus explained the meaning and scope of *dikaïosunē* in relation to his interpretation of Torah (Betz 1995:131; cf. Draper 2005:226). As applied in life, *dikaïosunē* would have "an anthropological orientation" (Strecker 2000:382). Draper has concluded it was the entrance requirement for the kingdom, since the Christian interpretation of the Torah exceeded that of the Pharisees (1999:36-37). Hellholm understands the *dikaïosunē* to be human conduct, since this would explain the persecution better than the "gift" idea (1998:286-344). What evidence can be examined in viewing *dikaïosunē* as conduct?

By investigating the use of "righteousness" in the Qumran community, it was evident that through Torah obedience, its members were considered in a right relationship with God (Foster 2004:83). This obedience consisted of understanding the interpretations as given by the Teacher of righteousness (Przybylski 1980:35; Yieh 2004:100; cf. CD 1:9-11). Even in the practice of prescribed, daily prayers, the community saw itself as righteous through obedience to the law (Arnold 2005:523; cf. 1QS 3:6-12).

The logic consisted in prayer counting as righteousness, and righteousness as an offering to God (Arnold 2005:529; cf. 1QS 10:6-9). At

times, the texts of the community demonstrate similar phrasing as the Beatitudes: the “doing” and “studying” of righteousness, a “humble and meek” mind, the setting of a man’s heart on righteousness, and “eating and drinking” (cf. 4Q420; 4Q421). One key DSS text confirmed the relationship of prayer with righteousness (1QS 9:3-5).

When united by all these precepts, such men as these come to be a community in Israel; they shall establish eternal truth guided by the instruction of His holy spirit. They shall atone for the guilt of transgressions through the flesh of burnt offerings, the fat of sacrificial portions, and prayer, becoming—as it were—justice itself, a sweet savor of righteousness and blameless behavior, a pleasing freewill offering (WAC 2005:130).

This text demonstrates how the Qumran community equated their prayers to temple sacrifices. In essence, the act of praying was considered to be atoning for the community in the absence of the temple (Arnold 2005:517). Przybylski was correct to conclude, the Dead Sea Scrolls portrayed the understanding of righteousness as “perfect adherence to God’s ordinances” (1980:35; cf. Seebass 1986:359). For Green, Jesus was maintaining that God’s gift of righteousness was given for obedient conduct (2001:231). Newman has concluded *dikaiosunē* was a comprehensive term descriptive of the conduct of those living with the kingdom reality (1975:117).

In contrast, there are scholars who insist *dikaiosunē* in Matthew 5:6 should be understood as the gift of God. However, these same scholars differ on its application, with those viewing it as personal (Guelich 1982:85-87; Seebass 1986:360; Westerholm 2006:89), and others through societal justice (Hagner 1993:93; Hare 1993:40; Gundry 1994:70). Seebass has argued that the Old Testament concept of “righteousness” was grounded in God’s pronouncement of righteousness, not by human action (1986:356). Hagner has concluded it was the will of God in his saving activity through Jesus (1993:56). What, then, was the relationship between God’s gift of righteousness and the corresponding conduct of humanity? Did Matthew

understand the gift and demand of righteousness as inseparable (Hagner 1997:51)?

5.1.5.3 Righteousness as Divine Vindication and Human Demonstration

For the prophet Isaiah, “righteousness” was a descriptive attribute of God rather than humanity (Leske 1991:831). A perusal through Isaiah yields many references in describing God as righteous or his actions as righteous (Isa 41:2; 42:21; 45:8, 13, 21; 46:12-13; 51:8; 56:1; 60:17, 21; 61:3). There were several references to the human pursuit of righteousness (Isa 51:1, 7; 57:1-2). Isaiah continually emphasized that divine justice would be the distinctive mark of the future kingdom (Stassen 2005:103; Gray 2006:19). The righteousness of God was experienced through the restored covenant and substantiated in obedience to his will (Isa 61:10-13; cf. Riches 2000:195-196).

The interaction between the divine and human righteousness was situated in Isaiah through relational terms of covenant faithfulness (Leske 1991:831). Matthew, by alluding to Isaiah, stressed the righteousness that resulted from a relationship of fidelity and commitment (Riches 2000:196). What was clear to Isaiah and, ultimately to Matthew, was the source of righteousness as God providing the consequential justice within society through human acts of righteousness (Beaton 2002:155-156; Chouinard 2003:230-232; cf. Gundry 1994:70). Throughout the prophets, the righteousness one claimed from God was to be proportionate to the demonstration of social justice (Schweizer 1975:55; Turner 1992:40; Bruner 2004:170).

Combined with Isaianic theology, Matthew was probably alluding to Psalm 107:5-9 as the basis for this blessing (Hagner 1993:93). The Psalmist was focusing on the justice needed in an imbalanced world, as emphasized with the repetitive colon, “Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distresses” (Ps 107:6, 13, 19, 28). The hungering and thirsting was satisfied with divine love and actions (Ps 107:8-9). A clear distinction between righteousness and justice cannot be maintained from the biblical texts (McKnight 1992:412).

From the Old Testament, it was clear that the people of God longed for justice in their lifetime. Stassen has pointed to the four dimensions of justice

as derived from the Old Testament and Second Temple literature: deliverance for the poor from deprivation, deliverance from dominating political powers, deliverance from violence, and restoration of the exiled (2005:103). Both the action of God to make things right, along with the accomplishment of making things right, were expressed in the single notion of longing for righteousness (justice).

By coupling righteousness with the actions of love and mercy, Matthew demonstrated the inseparable nature of God's gift of righteousness with the visible display of it (Matt 5:43-48; 7:12; 9:12; 12:7, 15-21; cf. Muller 1992:117; Stanton 1993:304; Hinkle 1998:360-363; Harris 2004:112). Whatever division one wanted to assume between Judaism and Jesus, it was not over the reality that righteousness was central for ethical demonstration (Charles 2002:15).

Jesus chided the religious leaders over the propensity of external displays of righteousness being substitutes for the internal primacy of righteousness and justice (Matt 6:1, 16; 23:3, 25; cf. Combrink 1983:81; Beaton 1999:6). The blessing of this Beatitude was the realization that God was bringing about vindication and justice for those who longed for his intervention (cf. Beare 1962:55; Hagner 1993:93; Hare 1993:40; Gundry 1994:70; Luomanen 1998b:85; Nolland 2005:203; Zamfir 2007:86). The presence of the kingdom would bring the awareness that God was making things "right" (Kingsbury 1987:143; Chouinard 2003:236-237; cf. Isa 61:1-3). The striving for righteousness was a "human God-enabled activity", willed by God in "a historical and human dimension" (Martin 2001:236).

Congruent with the longing for God to make things right, was the desire to be right as well. This was the understanding of covenant faithfulness, involving both the human and divine dimensions (Leske 1991:831). Any view that forces the semantic range of *dikaïosunē* to be limited to one view or the other risks the full expression of its application (Valantasis, Bleyle, and Haugh 2009:135-136; cf. Riches 2000:197). Matthew sometimes referred to righteousness as that which was divinely received (Matt 5:6; 6:33), and other times as the conduct conducive of following Jesus (Matt 5:10, 20; 6:1; cf. Guelich 1982:102).

The conclusion that *dikaïosunē* consisted of a wide range of meanings is far better, not being reduced to one meaning (Carson 1999:23). Matthew

understood there could be no separation of the righteousness Jesus offered from the kingdom he proclaimed (Kingsbury 1987:137; Burridge 2007:209-211). Righteousness was not possible without Jesus (Deines 2008:81). Through a literary analysis of *dikaiosunē* compared to the following verses, it will be demonstrated that Matthew considered righteousness as equivalent to Jesus (Riches 2000:192; Bruner 2004:182).

5.1.6 The Inculcation of the Blessings: Matthew's Case Study (5:11-12)

The obvious grammatical shift between the third person plural of the first eight Beatitudes and the second person plural of the final Beatitude (5:11-12), served to heighten Matthew's summary of blessings (Blomberg 1992:101; Hagner 1993:95; Nolland 2005:208; France 2007:171). The importance of the last Beatitude can be assessed by the judgment of some scholars, who understand it to be the climax of all the Beatitudes (Trites 1992:190; Neyrey 1998:168; Viljoen 2008:211).

Daube has pointed to Isaiah 63:7-19 where there was a shift from second person to third person, followed with another change back to second person at the end of the pericope (1956:199). Sirach also employed the literary feature of beginning with the third person and shifting to the second in his references to Solomon and Elijah (cf. Sir 47:12-25; 48:1-11). These pericopes demonstrate how the literary construct was employed for emphatic purposes.

Matthew demonstrated how the sayings of Jesus were being applied in the life setting of the Christian community in the midst of persecution (cf. Guelich 1982:107-108; Tuttle 1997:230; Dunn 2003:417; Talbert 2006:50). In essence, Matthew was particularizing the Beatitudes to the present circumstances of the new community, seen in his use of *hotan* (Maartens 1991:9; Bruner 2004:181). The temporal particle, *hotan*, was used to express conditional and repetitive actions (Danker 2000:730). Furthermore, Matthew followed the customary composition for blessing texts, which were written in the third person (Puech 1993:356-362; Allison 2005:176; cf. Ps 15; Sir 14:20-27; 1QH 6:13-16; 4Q525).

Both Daube and Puech have brought attention to the third person function noting that the blessing texts ended with a longer, more explanatory beatitude (Daube 1944:21-24; Puech 1993:361-362). Daube further contends that the extended length of the last member served for either a summary statement or the climax to the pericope (1944:23). Daube also contends that this was a frequent literary pattern in Semitic writings (1944:21; 1956:196).

Some scholars advocate the position that Matthew 5:11-12 should be juxtaposed with 5:13-16 and not the preceding Beatitudes because of its grammar and irregularity (France 2007:171; Turner 2008:153-154). However, the evidence points to a final Beatitude that transitions the former section (5:3-10) with the latter section (5:13-16). This paper has determined that there were nine beatitudes, with the first eight forming a single unit, while the ninth was an explanation and summary of the life setting for the Matthean audience (Lioy 2004:121; Allison 2005:177; France 2007:171).

5.1.6.1 *Persecution Protasis: Representative of Jesus (5:11)*

The explanation given for the Matthean community facing hardships was *heneken emou* ("on account of me"), expressing the cause or reason for persecution (Danker 2000:334). There was an obvious parallel notion used in Matthew's composition between *dikaiousunē* (5:10) and *heneken emou* (5:11) (Carson 1999:30). The ninth Beatitude becomes the most Christological of the Beatitudes (Catchpole 1986:300; cf. Garland 2001:59).

For the Matthean community, their allegiance to Jesus was the cause for experiencing hardship (Weren 2005:57). As the community followed Jesus, their suffering was viewed as a paradoxical participation in the ministry of Jesus that was characterized by redemptive suffering (cf. Martin 2001:237). Throughout the Gospels, the constant accusations against Jesus "concerned not revolutionary political ambition but his unacceptable claim to a unique role in the divine economy" (Hare 1967:28). This "otherness" was experienced by early Christianity as it struggled with identity formation (cf. Remus 2002:434-439).

Five times in Matthew the phrase, "*heneken emou*" was used to indicate the danger of persecution or loss due to following Jesus (cf. Matt

5:11; 10:18, 39; 16:25; 19:29; Brooke 1989:38). For Matthew, Jesus' teaching was understood as timeless truths in considering the difficulties faced by his followers. Jesus was not predicting as much as describing the reality of persecution in following him (cf. Betz 1995:147). The new community came to the realization that the blessings pronounced by Jesus did not relieve all hardships, but, in fact, could increase them (Nolland 2005:208)!

The reason for the persecution was, ultimately, an attack on the way of righteousness to which Jesus claimed for those who followed him as the new community (McEleney 1981:11; McKenna 1999:97). For over fifty years, what began as a minority cluster formed into a massive movement, proclaiming the truth as Jesus taught (Luz 2007:201). The persecution experienced by the Matthean community was a test of their relationship to Jesus, and this "tested" relationship guided the first Matthean discourse (Dumbrell 1981:3).

With the insistence by the Matthean community that following Jesus was the "superior righteousness", conflict naturally arose within the synagogue and Jewish family units (Steinhauser 1982:123; Stanton 1987:189; Neyrey 1995:145; 1998:169). Six times in the Gospel of Matthew was the separation noted with the use of "your synagogues" or "your synagogue" (4:23; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54; 23:34). The synagogue originated as places for worship and teaching (cf. Kee 1990:3). Runesson has advocated the position that the Matthean community was initially a Pharisaic one, but became a minority faction due to its Christological emphasis (2008:95-132).

Some scholars have advocated that the Jewish benediction, the *Birkat ha-Minim* ("Benediction against Heretics"), was one way the synagogue persecuted believers (Davies and Allison 1988:136-138; Segal 1991:33-34; Sanders 1993:59; Viljoen 2008:215). In the benediction, a malevolent prayer was made against those ("Nazarenes and heretics") who stood against the Torah and the synagogue, asking God to uproot, humiliate, and destroy them.

Other scholars have rejected this theory, calling it a "red herring", since there are too many uncertainties, and too little evidence, with the conjecture (Stanton 1993:142-145; cf. Sim 1998:150-151). Wright has advocated looking to what Paul said about the historical situation of persecution for a clearer understanding (1996:373-382). Persecution from Jewish sectors concerned the Christological emphasis on Jesus and the conversion of Gentiles. What

seems certain was the eventual rupture between early Jewish Christians and the synagogue. Why did Matthew adapt Jesus words to the new community?

It seeks to secure distance between itself and the synagogue and to articulate its own place as a beleaguered but special group in God's scheme of things. The words of Jesus provide insight, comfort, and direction, reinforcing its identity and guiding its lifestyle. (Carter 2004:73).

Matthew used this Beatitude as a way to encourage the legitimacy and honor of the new community, despite the resistance against its presence (Stanton 1993:157; Neyrey 1998:188; deSilva 2000a:67). What kind of resistance was the Matthean community encountering?

Matthew employed a trio of ideas to express the difficult situation. All three are aorist subjunctives and follow the temporal adverb *hotan*. In this construction, emphasis by the main verb was on the future possibilities that could be experienced at any time (Wallace 1996:479). Matthew was assuring the community that although the precise time was not for certain, the experience of difficult times had come in the past and would continue into the future.

The first term used was *oneidisōsin*, from its parent word *oneidixsō*. Its use was found in the mocking, heavy insults, or shaming of one to the point of demeaning them (Danker 2000:710). The idea of a public, verbal abuse ("face to face") would appropriately describe it (Hare 1967:118; Sim 1998:155; Nolland 2005:208). By using *oneidisōsin* as the leading verb, Matthew was conveying the key thought of public shame in summarizing the persecution (Hare 1967:118). Matthew used it to describe Jesus reprimanding those who did not repent (Matt 11:20) and the mocking of Jesus by the robber on the cross (Matt 27:44).

With the next term, Matthew repeated the idea of the previous Beatitude with *diōxsōsin*, from the root word *diōkō*. By using the equivalent thought, Matthew was bridging the previous Beatitude to this specific experience in the community. Although the general term for persecution was adopted by Matthew, the idea of physical mistreatment should not be ruled

out (Sim 1998:156). Hare goes as far as to suggest physical blows, such as scourging, by the synagogue (1967:119-120). Ultimately, the term was too general to make a precise decision on the word alone (Davies and Allison 1988:462).

The final phrase incorporated by Matthew to describe the harsh situation of the new community was *eipōsin pan ponēron kath hymōn pseudomenoi* (“to speak all evil against you falsely”). The encouragement of this blessing focused on the possession of truth within the new community, juxtaposed to the “falsehood” of their persecutors (Hagner 1993:95). Hare has pointed out the phrase involved specific charges being made against someone (1967:118). The term *pan* described “every type or sort”, while *kath* (“against”) indicated the presence of hostile relations (Rogers and Rogers 1998:9).

Reputation was important to an honor and shame culture, especially in villages (Neyrey 1998:169; Crook 2009:591-611). Public shame could result in loss of wealth, status, and family connections (Neyrey 1998:168-169). Becoming alienated from the synagogue was a social loss that could result in family estrangement (Viljoen 2008:215). The Matthean community was suffering from fabrications directly related to their belief in Jesus as they faced the “Jewish counter-claims about Jesus” (Sim 1998:155). Matthew was linking the experience of persecution to the ideology that such a life lived for Jesus was considered, not only blessed, but meaningful (Strecker 1988:47).

5.1.6.2 *Imperative Condition: Reaction of Joy (5:12a)*

The only two imperatives in the Beatitudes emerged from a context of persecution: *chairete kai agalliaσthe*. The reaction posed by Matthew was remarkable in connection to their persecution (Hagner 1993:95). The same verbs were used in I Peter 4:13, concerning suffering for the cause of Christ, and Revelation 19:7, as the reaction to the kingdom of God reigning over the earth. The first imperative, *chairete*, was an active voice. The second imperative, *agalliaσthe*, was a middle voice, indicating the nature of their corporate response due to the rejoicing commanded of their personal state.

The first imperative, *chairete*, denoted a state of happiness and personal joy (Danker 2000:1074; Viljoen 2008:213). The second imperative, *agalliasthe*, was used as an outward expression of joy and exultation in worship settings (Betz 1995:151; Danker 2000:4). Herodotus described it as being rapturous (Beyreuther 1986a:352). The double call was one command for the new community to react in a positive fashion, much like a “liturgical response, such as Hallelujah” (Viljoen 2008:213; cf. Betz 1995:151).

Such a reaction demanded by Matthew has led Viljoen to mark this as the tenth Beatitude (2008:218). It is better to recognize this as an extension of the ninth Beatitude, demonstrating the motif of “reversal” throughout the Beatitudes (cf. Luz 2007:199). This “reversed sense” derived from both the Old Testament prophets, as well as the early Church leaders, who advocated that “suffering is meaningful” (Strecker 1988:45-47).

However, the meaning was not found in suffering alone, but for suffering “on account of” (*eneken emou*) being a Jesus follower. The focus was not on the persecution as much as the deep joy tantamount to the blessing of participation in the reign of the kingdom through devotion to Jesus (Lioy 2004:120; cf. Beyreuther 1986a:354). Matthew further developed the practical aspect of having joy, despite maltreatment, with the injunctions of turning the other cheek, giving up clothing, going the extra mile, praying for, and loving one’s enemies (cf. Matt 5:38-48; Yieh 2004:271-272).

Kingdom living was the reversal, not only of external conditions, but internal conditions as well. The internal action commanded, served to form as the climatic response of hearing the blessings Jesus declared in the Beatitudes (Viljoen 2008:218). This internal action was not possible without first having a paradigmatic change (cf. “repent”, Matt 4:17). The change was a repudiation of the old way of thinking about life for a paradigm of the Christ experience (cf. Kodjak 1986:72).

5.1.6.3 Promising Apodosis: Recognition of the Past, Present, and Future (5:12b)

It was through the triadic forward, present, and backward observations that served as the cause for positive reactions due to suffering. Despite all the persecution the followers of Jesus faced, recognition of the promised good far

outweighed any bad experience they encountered (France 2007:173). Two reasons were given as the motivation to continue following Jesus despite any suffering encountered in the present.

The first motivating factor was *ho misthos* ("reward"). Originally, the Greeks used *misthos* in commercial contexts for a wage. It was absent in religious thought since Greek religion was not based on future rewards (Bottger 1986:138). During the Roman period, the term became associated with the religious sphere since vows and sacrifices made to the gods brought expectation of divine assistance (Preisker 1985:601; Bottger 1986:138).

Matthew placed great importance on *misthos*, using it on ten occasions, more than any other Gospel writer (Hagner 1993:95; cf. 6:1-16; 10:41-42). On three occasions Matthew addressed a "heavenly reward" (*misthos*) or "treasure" (*thēsauros*) (cf. 5:12; 6:19; 19:21). By qualifying the reward with "in the heavens", some see a future reward given to those who served faithfully on earth (Strecker 1988:46; Morris 1992:103; Betz 1995:152; Nolland 2005:209; Burridge 2007:202; Luz 2007:199; Turner 2008:154; Pennington 2009:142). Other scholars understand it eschatologically, that the kingdom of heaven was an affirmation of God's presence, despite the existence of turmoil (Reicke 1950:199; Guelich 1982:96).

Jesus opened the Sermon on the Mount by pronouncing blessings before commands, since "all rewards lie in God's gift" (Bottger 1986:144). Matthew unfolded the meaning of the Beatitudes by highlighting both the present experience of suffering and the assurance of a future reversal, as a "heavenly reward" (cf. Hagner 1993:96). The understanding of reward as a present experience with a future culmination best suits the Matthean theology and Beatitudes (Viljoen 2008:213).

Within the Matthean context, the reward was the kingdom and its blessings (Preisker 1985:602). The parallel relationship between "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (5:3, 10), the "your reward in heaven" (5:12), and "your Father in heaven" (5:16) demonstrated the importance placed on heavenly language within the entire Sermon on the Mount (Foster 2002:490). Pennington has argued that the heaven and earth motif in Matthew was a

literary and theological construct in contrasting the two realms of God and humanity, that is, invisible and visible (2009:238-240).

In Matthew, heaven is used mainly as a foil for earth, as a means of critiquing what is wrong with the way humans live on the earth, by contrasting the two realms and by looking forward to the eschaton when the tension between the two realms will be resolved (Pennington 2009:333).

By constructing the “reward in heaven” as parallel to the “kingdom of heaven”, Matthew was depicting the relationship of God’s gift (“heavenly”) given to the followers of Jesus, and not a location (Reicke 1950:196-199; France 2007:173). Reicke concluded that the cause for the rejoicing, then, was due to the “connection with God in Christ—which is nothing but the service itself from a specific point of view” (1950:199).

What this meant, for the Matthean community, was despite the persecution, they could rejoice because they were in “communion with God” which would extend to a full communion in the future (Reicke 1950:205). The present suffering was bearable because the numerous (“*polus*”) rewards were an intensity of God’s presence through life in the present, climaxing in the future eschaton (Carter 2000:137). For Matthew, as well as Jesus, the “*misthos...polus*” was nothing less than the intangible, heavenly kingdom and its reign in the lives of Jesus’ followers as evidenced in the blessings.

When Jesus advocated “treasure in heaven”, the thought was the present kingdom blessings, not the exchange of rewards for certain actions (Davies and Allison 1988:632). Ultimately, the reward was a term for the gracious generosity of God (Preisker 1985:605). The present generosity of blessings, experienced as internal joy, was equivalent to the future expectation of the final blessing, an experience of external reversal on the earth.

The second reason for commanding joy in suffering was the example of the Old Testament prophets. The connecting phrase *houtōs gar* was used in referring “to what precedes” or “what follows” in discourse material (Danker 2000:741-742). Nolland contends the phrase was supporting the reward

clause (2005:210). However, by repeating the persecution motif, Matthew was providing another reason for joy in the community.

It was well known within Jewish literature that the Old Testament prophets had been persecuted for their prophetic ministry within Israel (Stanton 1984:267; Matthews 2003:341; cf. II Chron 36:16; Neh 9:26; Jer 2:30; 26:20-24). The theme of persecution pervades the entire Old Testament, along with salvation and deliverance of God's people throughout their history (Leske 1991:834-835). The prophets were usually in the minority as they faithfully followed God in calling Israel back to the covenant. Matthew singled out the theme of minority persecution by using the prophet Jeremiah as an example to encourage the new community in the face of their dilemma (Stanton 1993:269).

Only Matthew refers to Jeremiah in the Gospels (Matt 2:17; 16:14; 27:9). Jeremiah was a prophet known for being reviled and persecuted because of his unpopular message. For Jeremiah, as well as the Matthean community, the future would bring to light the truth being proclaimed (Davies and Allison 1988:467). At times, even death could be the result (cf. II Chron 24:20-21; 36:16). The theme of martyrdom developed in Jewish literature during the intertestamental period, due mainly to the prophetic examples of the past (Davies and Allison 1988:465; Betz 1995:144). Matthew could have possibly been inferring possible martyrdom for those committed to Jesus as well (Day 2005:162).

Matthew was ultimately pointing to faithful obedience, despite the rejection and pain that was possible (Nolland 2005:210). This motif was further developed in the Gospel of Matthew by presupposing persecution as the very nature of discipleship (Balabanski 1997:158). For the Matthean community its role within salvation history was secured in the ministry of Jesus (Steinhauser 1982:123; Boring 1988:30; Schnackenburg 2002:50-51). The Beatitudes were not appeals for moral living, but a rhetorical excursus on the meaning of following after Jesus, even to the point of persecution (Harris 2004:113; Holladay 2008:96). This served the new community as a practical theodicy. By putting their troubles in the historical perspective of the Old Testament prophets and their fidelity to God during persecution, they could

continue to be faithful despite their suffering (Davies and Allison 1988:467; Kopp 2003:52; Viljoen 2008:214).

5.1.7 The Validation of Being Blessed: *halas* and *phōs* (5:13-16)

Matthew transitioned Jesus' kingdom teaching directly to the new community by using the emphatic *hymeis* ("you, yourselves") with both salt and light metaphors. By directly engaging the new community (Matt 5:11-12), the intimate relationship between Matthew and the church was rhetorically affirmed (Combrink 1992:12; Erussard 1997:203). After referencing the prophets of the past, Matthew turned to the new community as a whole, emphasizing its important role in the world (Guelich 1982:120; Nolland 2005:212; France 2007:171). With these two metaphorical descriptions, Matthew was expressing the "visible distinctiveness" of God's presence through the new community in the world (France 2007:172). This presence was not commanded to exist, but described as an ontological reality for those to whom the kingdom belonged (Leske 1991:835; Hagner 1993:98).

Within the Mediterranean culture, character was reflected by actions and habits (Talbert 2004:50). However, Matthew was not simply declaring their state of being; he also stressed their responsibility (Welch 2009:68). This was none other than the life witness of the Christ community, a theme woven throughout the New Testament (duToit 1977:39-40; Nissen 2002:79). The goal of the life witness by the new community was glory ascribed to the Father. How did the new community translate itself into salt and light? What were the good deeds bringing honor to the Father?

5.1.7.1 Salt as Kingdom Influence (5:13)

Numerous suggestions have been offered in explaining the meaning of *halas* in this context: a fertilizer (Deatrick 1962:44-45; Gundry 1994:75), a seasoning for food (Keener 1999:173; Luz 2007:206), a preservative (Carson 1999:31), or a burning element for outdoor ovens (Malina and Rohrbaugh 2003:41). Liroy, in summarizing the many usages of salt, has also added that some would ingest salt to prevent dehydration in the hot climate of the Near East (2004:133). Some scholars have focused on the metaphorical

significance of salt: wisdom of rabbinical teaching (Brooke 1989:38), covenant perpetuity (cf. Ex 30:35; Lev 2:13; Dumbrell 1981:12; Leske 1991:836; Fletcher-Louis 1997:167; Garland 2001:59-61; France 2007:174; Welch 2009:68), or its overall beneficial influence (Talbert 2006:55; Turner 2008:155).

Hagner has emphasized that any one particular suggestion would be less than what was meant in the phrase “salt of the earth” (1993:99). Many have yielded to the position that the salt metaphor was a rich description of many characteristics, all of which could be descriptive of the new community (Wood 1924:170; Davies and Allison 1988:473; Blomberg 2004:5-6; Nolland 2005:212). This is a true assessment of the New Testament usage at large. However, what of the salt metaphor used by Matthew? Should the metaphor mean everything to everyone, to mean nothing in the end? Is the interpreter left to a smorgasbord of ideas, all rolled into one? What might the context yield to this discussion?

If “salt of the earth” and “light of the world” are understood as objective genitives, a different sense is conveyed through the translation “salt for the earth” and “light for the world” (Deatricks 1962:44). The “earth” (*gēs*) was in reference to the “soil” (Gundry 1994:75). Within Jewish cosmological understanding, God was in the holy transcendent realm of heaven, while the earth was a place of corruption (Erussard 1997:204). The chasm between the two realms was emphasized as it related to the kingdom rule in the lives of the new community.

This makes better sense for the context and the influence of the new community in the world. The followers of Jesus were to “be part of the dirt out of which this world is made” (Betz 1995:158). In ancient times, the value of salt was understood as a fertilizer for crops (Deatricks 1962:45; contra Morris 1992:104). Salt was also valuable in the making of sacrifices and would remind the new community of covenant fidelity by God (cf. Lev 2:13).

For the Matthean context, the salt (“new community”) was the “stimulating property” of the kingdom’s existence among humanity (Hillyer 1986:445-446). Just as the salt affected the productivity of the soil, so the followers of Jesus would have similar results with the kingdom message in the world. In the end, the metaphor evoked more of what the community was than

what it did (Keener 1999:172). The new community was the “fertilizer” in spreading the kingdom message to the world through evangelism (Gundry 1994:75). In other words, God would not be without a “witness” to his covenant promises in the world (Garland 2001:61). Matthew was pointing to the universality of the message through the new community (Clarke 2003:67), as well as to the covenant fidelity of God to the new community (Dumbrell 1981:12).

The importance of salt in this context was the potentiality of a negative state of being, as expressed in the phrase, *ean de to halas mōranthē*. The conditional sentence references the potential (“whenever”) state of *mōranthē*. The etymology of the word conveyed “foolishness” (Danker 2000:663). Combined with *halas*, the passive voice suggested, “to be made useless or tasteless”. The passive voice suggests a condition that comes over the subject (Vaught 2001:42).

The understanding of “foolishness” could have been a pun on the useless state of salt after it was contaminated with impurities, thereby losing its effectiveness. This would compare to the lack of productivity among the Christian community (Hagner 1993:99; Gundry 1994:75-76). Consequently, it would convey the thought of “becoming dumb” (Luz 2007:206). The issue for the Matthean community was its effectiveness in representing Jesus (cf. Betz 1995:159). If salt lost its effectiveness, it was “thrown out” (*blēthen exsō*) as waste into the streets or onto the flat rooftops to prevent leaking through the soil into the houses (Hillyer 1986:446; Gundry 1994:76). The term was used frequently by Matthew in judgment contexts (Luz 2007:206; cf. 3:10; 5:29; 7:19; 13:42, 48; 18:8-9; 22:13; 25:30). Yet, even in this state, salt was being put to good use.

Matthew was encouraging the community to remain pure and effective for the kingdom, even with the threat of persecution (Turner 2008:155). If they remained pure, there would be no limit to the kingdom possibilities on earth. However, with the possibility some in the Christian community might become ineffective and foolish, a diminished role would be the result (Blomberg 1992:102). The Matthean rhetoric focused on the intrinsic nature of a Christ follower by stating what was opposite to it (Nolland 2005:213).

Even with a diminished role, they continued to represent Jesus, howbeit not as productive as possible (cf. Vaught 2001:43). Matthew, then, was encouraging the new community to be as effective as possible in representing Jesus and the kingdom as disciples (cf. Nissen 2002:79-80).

5.1.7.2 Light as Kingdom Prominence (5:14-15)

Light has always occupied an important place throughout history. Whether it was a metaphor for Platonic knowledge and truth, a deified description of the sun by the Egyptians, or the salvation of God within Judaism, the concept of light has influenced each worldview development (Conzelmann 1985:1293-1296; Hahn 1986b:490-492).

The Qumran community maintained a dualistic worldview between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness, whereby an eschatological conflict would give victory to the way of light (Conzelmann 1985:1295; Hahn 1986b:492; cf. War Scroll). It was also one of the primary metaphors in the Old Testament, referring to the experience of salvation through God, Israel, the law, temple rituals, and the promised Messiah (Hagner 1993:100; cf. Turner 2008:155).

Matthew introduced the ministry of Jesus as “people sitting in darkness” viewing the light Jesus brought to them (4:16). Again, allusions to Isaiah abound in the Matthean composition. Isaiah spoke of the role of the Messiah in bringing “light to the Gentiles” (Isa 42:6; 49:6). A key characteristic of Isaiah’s prophetic hope was the light of God through the nation of Israel, drawing other nations to that light (Leske 1991:837; cf. Isa 60:1-3, 19-20; 62:2). For Isaiah, the light represented the teaching and righteousness of God (Yieh 2004:16).

Matthew described the followers of Jesus as being the “light” for the world, in contrast to the insistence of the Old Testament that it was Israel. Could this have been a nuanced way of Matthew indicting Israel for its rejection of Jesus (Turner 2008:155)? The new community, like Jesus himself, was portrayed as the hope of the world as it represented the kingdom to humanity (Hagner 1993:100; Luz 2007:207).

Two descriptions were employed by Matthew in expressing the inherent exposure of light: a city on a hill and a lit room. Various observations

have been suggested over the reference to a hill: the city of Jerusalem (Hagner 1993:100; Betz 1995:161-162; Fletcher-Louis 1997:167; Vaught 2001:44), the New Jerusalem inhabitants in messianic glory (Campbell 1978:335-336; Guelich 1982:127; Donaldson 1985:117; Charette 2000:104), “new mountain” of law since Jesus was the “new Moses” (Newman 1975:107), or no particular city at all (Davies and Allison 1988:475; Luz 2007:207; Keener 2009:173).

This study has found no evidence to warrant a definitive opinion over a particular city conveyed by Matthew. There was no definite article used with city to reference a particular place, such as Jerusalem or the New Jerusalem (Gundry 1994:77). Matthew’s argument was that a city on a hill cannot hide the visibility of the light coming from its inhabitants. It would be impossible for someone not to observe light elevated by a mountain (Hagner 1993:100; Lioy 2004:134; Nolland 2005:214; Luz 2007:207). Even more, the imagery of a city expressed the Semitic idea of corporate solidarity, appropriately employed by Matthew describing the new community that was created around the person of Jesus (Campbell 1978:338).

The second description was a lit room. The metaphor was couched in the context of a one-room house. The household lamp would be put on a stand for elevation so the light would permeate the entire dwelling (Gundry 1994:77; Lioy 2004:134). The *luchnos* (“lamp”) could have been the Herodian lamp that was peculiar to the Palestine area (Smith 1966:3-4). Its popularity, according to Smith, was due to the potters’ production of inexpensive, yet attractive, lamps for the home (1966:5).

Another suggestion has been made, due in part to the archaeological findings in Apollonia in 2006, that provide evidence of a common practice by artisans in using molds instead of a potter’s wheel in producing lamps (Gardner 2010:30). These molds were used to make ceramic lamps and display evidence of Jewish and Christian symbols on them. Gardner concludes that after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple the “clay menorah” was domesticated and was significant in synagogues and homes as bearing witness to the light of God (2010:30, 72). Might Matthew have drawn upon the practice of the mass production of these ceramic lamps to suggest that the new community was the light of God throughout society?

The *modios* was a grain measurer of one peck (Danker 2000:656). It would be absurd to put a lamp under a grain measurer to hide the light. Visotzky has argued for the idiomatic understanding of “overturning the lamp” for this text (1987:79). The overturning of the lamp would have meant immediate darkness. This became an idiom for doing wrong or sexual perversion within Judaism (Visotzky 1987:79-80). Draper contends it was a warning to uphold the teachings of the Torah as a light to the Gentiles (1999:38).

However, the text has conveyed more of an impossible, hypothetical state, rather than a warning against wrongdoing or failure. Again, as with the city on a hill, two impossible situations were imagined: the city that cannot be hid and the light that would be hidden (Betz 1995:161; Keener 1999:174; Nolland 2005:214). Jesus was stressing the inherent nature of discipleship in the world as the presence of light dispelling the darkness (Guelich 1982:128). The argument implied that, just as light always shines, so, the disciples of Jesus would always represent him (Morris 1992:105).

5.1.7.3 *Results of Kingdom Presence (5:16)*

The combination of salt and light by Matthew was the clarification of the Beatitudes (contra. the idea of only the first Beatitude; Betz 1985:35). Salt and light described the nature (Matt 5:3-6) and responsibility (Matt 5:7-10) of the community. The second command (imperative) of this pericope served as the climax for the new community’s responsibility: *lampsatō* (Luz 2007:207). The primary sense of *lampō* was in its function of illumination due to sources such as the sun, lightning, or a torch (Hahn 1986a:484).

In the Old Testament (LXX) it referred to the radiant appearances of God (Hahn 1986a:485; cf. Gen 15:17; Ezek 1:13; Dan 10:6). Matthew also used it in describing Jesus’ transfiguration before the disciples (Matt 17:2). In this pericope, Matthew concluded with the major responsibility of the new community. Its response was to “shine”, as reflective lights of the kingdom (Vaught 2001:46). Light cannot be perceived apart from its function to shine (cf. Strecker 1988:49). This meant to live in demonstration of the kingdom presence (cf. Hagner 1993:100).

Just as the blessings were granted by God, resulting in a community of “salt” and “light”, so it was a time to act as that salt and light (Luz 2007:208). Within this text, Matthew used *hymōn* (“your”) three times emphatically expressing the responsibility of the new community in the world: your light, your good works, and your Father. When the new community acted, as it should, two results were accomplished.

The term *hopōs* served as a conjunction, expressing the purpose of the imperative “to shine” (Danker 2000:718). The first result of shining the light of the kingdom was the demonstration of good works (*kala erga*). From the time of Homer, *kalos* referred to “high standards or expectations of appearance, kind, or quality” (Danker 2000:504). By the time of Christ, the understanding and use of *kalos* was on that which was “pleasant, enjoyable, beneficial” (Beyreuther 1986b:103), as well as attractive (Bruner 2004:192). The works (“deeds, actions”) were described as good. In the Matthean composition, *erga* was used in a positive way when referring to Jesus (cf. Matt 11:2, 19: 26:10) and a negative way in reference to the Pharisees (cf. 23:3, 5).

Within the context of the righteousness motif (cf. 5:6, 10, 20), Jesus used this phrase to describe true followers of Jesus (Guelich 1982:124-125). Jesus further articulated the good works in the Sermon on the Mount by pointing to its demonstration as true righteousness, love, “good fruit”, and the doing of the Father’s will (Matt 5:20, 48; 6:33; 7:13-27; cf. Davies and Allison 1988:479; Hagner 1993:100-101; Stanton 1993:300). Matthew could not conceive of the lack of good works by a Jesus follower (Turner 2008:156). The point of describing “saltless” and “hidden light” impossibilities was to emphasize that being “blessed” resulted in an inherent nature of “hearing and doing” good (Strecker 1988:51; cf. Hagner 1993:102).

The second result of a kingdom presence also served as the purpose: the glory of the Father (cf. Bruner 2004:193). Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, the importance of the Father was demonstrated in the lives of Jesus’ followers (5:45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8-9, 14-15, 18, 26, 32; 7:11; cf. Davies and Allison 1988:76-79; Mowery 1997:642-656; Nolland 2005:215;). One cannot overlook the emphasis on “your Father”, in the Gospel of Matthew, as a rhetorical description of the equality and intimacy between the new community and Jesus with God as Father (Foster 2007:3-11).

Earlier in the Matthean composition, “God” was used with the association of power (Mowery 1997:647-648). Within the composition of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus used “father” in contexts where the disciples were present and never when addressing his adversaries (Mowery 1997:655-656). The utilization of “Father” by Matthew was likely due to its liturgical use by the new community in its worship, as evidenced throughout the composition (Luz 2007:43-44; cf. 6:1-18; 18:15-17; 26:26-28). The referential power of “Father” would be reassuring to the new community as they struggled with the powers of the synagogue (cf. Wudel 2000:280).

For the new community, the kingdom reign was understood as a family activity, beginning with God as Father, and not so much as a political power (Moxnes 2003:116). Jesus spoke of God as Father instead of King, alluding to the new community as the family of God. The father concept had clear allusions to the relationship between Israel and God in the prophets (cf. Is 63:16-17; 64:8). With Matthew, this paradigm of “father” served to strengthen the self-awareness of the new community. The family of God was responsible for demonstrating the kingdom rule (cf. Pagola 2009:106-109).

During the Second Temple Period, Jewish literature conveyed three ideas that were prevalent in describing God as Father: as a refuge for the afflicted or persecuted, one who would provide forgiveness, and the providential power in governing the world (D’Angelo 1992:621-622; cf. I Chron 29:10; 1QH 9:35; 4Q372; Sir 23:1-4). Jesus’ hearers would have understood the context of addressing God as Father. Matthew took that understanding as he composed the kingdom of heaven motif around the father concept for the persecuted community (cf. D’Angelo 1992:615-622).

In short, Jesus the teacher uses the language of kinship to construct a new group identity for Matthew’s church. His teaching of God as the Father in heaven is shocking. His inclusion of all believers in one brotherhood is scandalous. His vision of the church as a household of God is subversive. The new familial relationship thus forged means an alternative society is being formed (Yieh 2004:290).

Matthew also connected the “Father” with the concept of heaven, further elucidating the reality that the new community were the people of God (heavenly), who were also living on earth (5:13) to display the kingdom reality (Pennington 2009:238-241). Even though there was “distance” between the Father and the followers of Jesus, the community was assured of the Father’s care by the coming of Jesus (Hagner 1993:101; Turner 2008:186).

The foundational reference for Jesus’ teachings was in God as Father (Schnackenburg 1995:35; Allison 2009:105-106). Just as Jesus the Son (cf. 2:15; 3:17; 17:5) was intimate with God through obedience, so the new community through its obedience would share in that intimacy (cf. van Aarde 1994:71-72; Wierzbicka 2001:230-232). Conceptually, God as Father described the way Jesus spoke about the nearness of God (Bornkamm 1960:128).

The witness of the new community was expressed with the “seeing of good works” combined with the “glorifying of your Father” among humanity. Matthew pointed to the responsibility of what would later be in his composition the Great Commission to disciple the world (cf. 28:18-20). A Jesus disciple could not abandon God’s purpose of penetrating the world with the gospel of the kingdom (Davies and Allison 1988:476). The process was straightforward: transformation as a Jesus follower (“*being*”) provided the good works (“*doing*”) resulting in a reflection of the source, God the Father (“*glorifying*”).

One scholar has suggested “glorify your Father in heaven” was a euphemism for repentance in Jewish literature (Day 2005:163; cf. I Sam 24:20; 26:21). Day’s argument was that in the Old Testament examples, good deeds performed by David resulted in Saul’s repentance (2005:163-164). Even if the euphemism was not cognitively present with Matthew, the understanding that humanity would be transformed certainly was. Consequently, the mission was bringing the reality and recognition of the kingdom of God to the world (Guelich 1982:129). Matthew intended to demonstrate that being a disciple and acting as a disciple of Jesus were inseparable (Strecker 1988:51).

5.1.7.4 *Kingdom Presence in the New Temple Community: Salt, Light, Good Works, and Glory as Summation*

Was Matthew composing a familiar temple motif to describe the new community in the world? After the demise of the physical Jerusalem temple in 70 AD, the religious setting changed gradually for all the sects that had associations to it (Romeny 2005:17). Romeny further advances the idea that it took quite some time for the rabbinical movement to establish its authoritative base (2005:32).

With the Jerusalem temple destroyed, the major focus of religious life was disrupted (Helyer 2002:415-420; Weren 2005:54-55). The temple was the center of Jewish identity (Bauckham 1993:141; France 2008:123). Since some Jewish Christians still considered themselves members of the Jewish community before 70 AD (cf. Klawans 2006:253), the temple destruction brought changes into their religious practice and thought as well (Allison 2005:211-212; Weren 2005:53-55). This study has found that within this religious setting, both a mental and physical separation naturally occurred for the Jewish Christians, with subsequent reactions to the destruction of the temple. For Matthew, the destruction of the temple was not a problem (cf. France 2008:127). The world would become the “space” for the *ekklesia* to shine.

As formative Judaism began to evolve, the Matthean community also became more defined, further separating itself from Judaism as a whole (Stanton 1993:322-323; Helyer 2002:485-486; Sim 2008:27-32). The four imageries at the conclusion of the Beatitudes were the climax of the self-definition Matthew designed for the new community, as evidenced in the entire pericope (Betz 1995:158; cf. 5:3-16). Evocative images of salt, light, good works, and glory, gave a new understanding to the new community of itself as the presence of God in the world.

First, the image of salt spoke of covenant fidelity and the sacrificial offerings in the temple (cf. Ex 30:35; Lev 2:13; Num 18:19; II Chron 13:5; Schweizer 1975:101; Patte 1987:70; Welch 2009:68). Second, the light was important for worship in the temple (Cf. Ex 25:31-40). It provided light for the priests to do the sacrificial work inside the temple. The new community would

have made the mental transfer that their light was not secluded inside a building, but outside to the world (cf. Welch 2009:74).

Third, the good works would remind the community that mercy was greater than sacrifice (cf. Matt 9:12; 12:7). Within Judaism, Simeon the Just had expressed in the Mishnah that “deeds of loving kindness” served as sacrificial offerings in lieu of the destroyed temple (Helyer 2002:460; Skarsaune 2002:95; Allison 2005:208). For Matthew, good works were always associated with the ministry and presence of Jesus. Fourth, the glory would remind Jewish Christians of the essence of the temple, that of God’s presence among his people (cf. Ex 40:34-38). This phrase became synonymous to missionary conversion by the second century (Hvalvik 1996:309).

Throughout the rest of the Matthean Gospel, the temple was highlighted to contrast the ministry of Jesus with the religious setting of his day. For the community Matthew addressed, the literal temple was “transcended by a new Jesus-centered perspective...and the physical temple gives way to a temple not made with hands” (France 2008:127). The promise of Emmanuel, “God with us” (Matt 1:23), as experienced in the life of Jesus, would continue in the experience and life of the new community. As salt and light, the new community was to reflect through its good work the understanding of God’s presence among all humanity as a new “temple” (cf. Skarsaune 2002:162).

5.2 Summary of Exegetical Analysis of the Beatitudes with a Dynamic Translation

Jesus communicated “a new way of seeing life” in the Beatitudes (Talbert 2004:47). The composition of the Beatitudes demonstrated how the pronouncements of Jesus continued to bring encouragement to a suffering community (Gundry 1994:73). The new community had been blessed and was to be a blessing to others in the way they lived (Patte 1987:70). Before Jesus described the doing of righteousness in the Sermon, he delivered the good news of God’s blessing. The Beatitudes affirmed the deepest needs of humanity with the solution being God alone (cf. Davies 1966:155).

One cannot hear the words of the Beatitudes without understanding that God is with us (cf. Matt 1:23). Through the pronounced blessings, Jesus congratulated his followers with the good news of God's grace in their lives (Vaught 2001:13; Liroy 2004:120). The kingdom of heaven, so peculiar to the Matthean composition, was the rationale for the divine blessings. God was the source of the kingdom and Jesus was its presence on earth.

Through the Beatitudes, Jesus made known the reality of the kingdom, with consequences for both living in the present, as well as hope for a future realization (Beasley-Murray 1992:24). The composition of the Beatitudes was none other than the interpretation and explanation of the life and ministry of Jesus (cf. Hauerwas 2006:61; Jeremias 1963:24; Morgan 2000:183). Just as Jesus experienced the frailties of human living, so he displayed the full extent of divine mercy and love.

Matthew depicted those described as blessed by forming an inclusio with the phrase "kingdom of heaven" (5:3, 10). The "poor in spirit" (5:3) afforded direction to the three subsequent Beatitudes, while the "persecuted" (5:10) described the effect of the previous three Beatitudes (Talbert 2006:47; cf. Hannan 2006:49-50). The theme of reversal was the thread woven into this pericope by Matthew (Martin 2001:225; cf. Bloomquist 1997:116).

Through the ministry of Jesus, the reality of the kingdom was witnessed. This message was both counter-cultural and "upside down" to a society ranging from, those who admired the religious elite, to those who boasted of its Roman military strength (Domeris 1990:67-68; Carter 2004:84-85). While some scholars view the Beatitudes as moral demands (Manns 2000:37; Zamfir 2007:99; Kloppenborg 2008:223-224), others observe them more as a "response and consequence" of God's blessings upon followers of Jesus (Viljoen 2008:210; cf. Green 1975:76; Morgan 2000:186; Talbert 2006:47-50).

With the kingdom of heaven as its source, Jesus declared the meaning of a blessed life and its relationship to righteousness. By reducing the Beatitudes to maxims of moral behavior, the Sermon simply becomes positive ideals without the ability for attainment (Lischer 1987:163). Instead, the Beatitudes served as an introduction to kingdom living through the ministry and teaching of Jesus. It began with Jesus' proclamation that the rule of God

had begun in Jesus' presence (Hagner 1997:49-50; cf. Beardslee 1967:239). The Beatitudes, in essence, reflect the reality of God's reign in living (Hagner 1997:48; cf. Jeremias 1963:31-33).

The evidence of the kingdom was demonstrated in the apodosis of the Beatitudes. Using four divine passives, God was acknowledged as the source of all reversal. With the promise of "inheriting the land" and "seeing God", the future culmination of the kingdom was assured. The context of the Beatitudes was framed in the spirit of divine grace and generosity (Green 1975:74; Davies and Allison 1988:440). The Beatitudes were pronounced "as consolation, assurance, and encouragement" rather than ethical requirements (Guelich 1982:65).

The core of the Sermon on the Mount, righteousness, was emphasized in the Beatitudes. Matthew used *dikaiosunē* five times in the Sermon on the Mount, twice in the Beatitudes. Although doing the will of God could fit the context of the Beatitudes, this study found the eclectic understanding of "rightness and well-being" to best reflect the broad understanding of this term. This would include both the personal and social dimensions within a Christological understanding. Righteousness equaled Jesus.

In addition, to argue whether Matthew intended to portray *dikaiosunē* as a gift, or the doing of God's will, can be reconciled with understanding there could be no righteousness without the presence of the kingdom in Jesus (Kingsbury 1987:143). Despite the conclusions of Przybylski, the term was too rich to be narrowly restricted or reduced to one meaning throughout the Matthean composition (1980:116-123). Far better, in the opinion of this study, is to see righteousness in the Beatitudes as both justice (5:3-6) and conduct (5:7-10), demonstrating the kingdom presence (Gundry 1994:73).

With the composition of the ninth Beatitude, the application of Jesus' pronouncements was demonstrated for the Matthean community. Matthew took the general pronouncements of Jesus (5:3-10) and encouraged the suffering community to take action (Luz 2007:190). The imperative to have "joyful celebration" despite suffering must be understood in the context of group identity. They were not to "wallow in inferiority complexes" (Schweizer 1975:103). Instead, the new community had to realize they stood in the history of a sacred past, as well as, in the newness of the present, being

representatives of Jesus. Their reward was the assurance of God's presence for present difficulties and the culmination of the kingdom reversal for the future.

The two metaphors of "salt" and "light" demonstrated the role of the new community to the world: being witnesses to the reality of Jesus (Carson 1999:32-33). It is best to understand both metaphors as objective genitives, emphasizing the importance of the new community to the world. As salt, the influence of the kingdom should be evidenced throughout society. As light, the prominence of the kingdom should be as evident as lights in the sky. Using terminology reminiscent of the temple, Matthew weaved a description of the community presence, as it exists in the world.

The ending of the pericope served as Matthew's crescendo, "the glory of your Father". This demonstrated the paradigmatic shift for the new community in viewing itself as the "temple of God", reflecting both the presence, and ultimate prominence, of that kingdom to the world. Just as the temple was a witness to God's presence ("glory") in Israel, so the new community was to be a witness, not in Israel alone, but the whole world.

The Beatitudes served as an introduction to both the reality of the kingdom of heaven and those people who follow Jesus in that kingdom. Matthew described those followers throughout the Sermon and his Gospel as "doers" of the will of the Father on earth (Hauerwas 2006:63; Palachuvattil 2007:7-14). The reality was expressed in the "blessing" motif. No other message could have been more fitting to begin the ministry of Jesus than the kingdom reality as expressed in the Beatitudes. "The future triumph of God, not the present misery of humanity, determines what true happiness is, however covert its operation in this present age" (Meier 1990:283). For Matthew, the Beatitudes demonstrate how the future continually transforms and challenges the present (Allison 1987:441).

**A Dynamic Translation
(Matthew 5:3-16)**

*Blessed are those spiritually destitute,
for the God-given kingdom is their possession.*

*Blessed are those who experience sorrow,
for God's encouragement will be their realization.*

*Blessed are those who are humbled while on earth,
for they will receive promises beyond the earth itself.*

*Blessed are those longing for and needing what is right,
for God's satisfaction will be their realization.*

*Blessed are those showing mercy,
for God's mercy will be their realization.*

*Blessed are those hearts of devotion,
for they will experience God for themselves.*

*Blessed are those who make peace,
for association in God's family will be their realization.*

*Blessed are those who have been treated badly because of associating
with the right,
for the God-given kingdom is their possession.*

*You, too, are blessed even when others insult you, treat you badly, and
spread lies about you,
due to your association with me.*

*Always be rejoicing while happy in yourselves! One reason is because
you possess numerous rewards in the heavenly presence. Remember,
in the past the prophets were treated badly just like you are in the
present.*

*You are the salt for the earth! Now if salt could become worthless, in
what way could it be made salt-worthy again? It is good for nothing,
except to be tossed outside for people to walk on it.*

*You are the light for the world! A city positioned on a mountain cannot
be hid. Neither does a person light a lamp nor put it under a basket,
instead, it is put on a lampstand providing light to all in the house.*

*You must allow your light to shine in front of humanity, so that they
might see your good deeds and complement your heavenly Father.*

Chapter 6

Literary Analysis of the Beatitudes: Understanding What the Text Is

A literary approach to the Beatitudes is ultimately an aesthetic approach. Texts were not written simply for historians and linguists to consider and debate. A text is the medium between the author and the reader, a combination of both the artistic creation of the author and the aesthetic response by the reader (Iser 1974:125; cf. Schneiders 1999:148). Jauss understands the role of the reader is as much “for aesthetic as for historical appreciation” (1974:12). Culler has pointed to the aesthetic nature of literature in its ability to engage readers with the interactions between form and content (1997:33). Ricoeur has described the text as a dialogue (interpretation) “which connects two events, that of speaking and that of hearing” forming a new event where meaning resides (1976:16).

The Bible should be seen and interpreted as literature (Sternberg 1985:43-48). Stanton has even referred to literary theory as “an attractive dancing partner” for the theologian (1993:55)! However, it is not only a literary work “aimed at satisfying aesthetic instincts”, since it reflects at the most “fundamental level” the theological interests it wants its readers to affirm (Esler 1994:17-18). Literature is ordinary language within a literary context (cf. Pratt 1977:80).

Literary analysis begins with the understanding that there is communication between an addresser and an addressee through the medium of a message. Decker has dismissed literary analysis as being concerned with

the form of the text and not its contents (2000:52). However, normal interpretation understands that literary analysis involves a “historical reconstruction” of the linguistic world and context of the writer, in order to engage in a meaningful communication with the text (Sternberg 1985:11-12). Sternberg has concluded that the aesthetic operation of the Bible is the “alignment of divine with artistic pattern-making against earthbound recording” (1985:46).

With literary analysis on the Matthean Gospel, and more particularly, on the Beatitudes, the composition exhibits an artistic creation appreciated by not only literary critics, but Christ followers as well (cf. Perry 1935:110). The reader who is characterized by *metanoia* (“paradigm change”) and of being a Jesus *akoloutheō* (“follower”) can best appreciate the communication and purpose of this literary pericope. One can speak of a literary form since the Beatitudes were written in a structured series (Betz 1985:22-25). Eco has described a literary work to be a deliberate embedding of a message into a known physical form by the author (1979:90).

The structure and form of the Beatitudes was crafted as both a “window” to the new community of the past, in addition to a “mirror” for the Christian community today (cf. Schneiders 1999:113). The poetic form exhibited in the Beatitudes was not crafted for beauty alone. Its literary expression was no less than the theological understanding of Jesus’ pronouncement of the kingdom and its implications for the world.

Many questions ensue from a literary study of the Beatitudes. First, what role does literary analysis have in hermeneutics? What was the purpose of the composition in its present form? Why the use of repetitive macarisms? Why were there no “woes” as in the Lukan account? Were the Beatitudes formed from a pre-text? How do the salt/light metaphors relate to the Beatitudes? Finally, in what way did the Beatitudes serve as an introduction into the Sermon on the Mount?

6.1 Hermeneutical Concerns in Literary Analysis

The obvious question of literary analysis is how it can be used for hermeneutical value in reading and interpreting Scripture. A central presupposition of Christianity has been that Scripture equates to understanding a communicative God. This foundational conviction emphasizes a key literary assumption: the importance of both the text and the reader. A literary work continues its existence through the receptive reader (cf. Jauss 1974:12). Put simply, the text forms a dialogue. Therefore, a text never stands by itself, since what is offered through the text can be interpreted by readers in various ways and in different periods of time (Jauss 1974:14; cf. Skinner 1972:407-408).

In terms of biblical studies, scriptural understanding commences when there is active participation between reader and text. An experience can never be transferred directly through communication. Yet, something is passed in the realm of communication. What is passed, says Ricoeur, is not an “actual experience” but the meaning behind it and this is the “miracle” of discourse (1976:16). However, from where does the meaning derive?

Within hermeneutical studies, various positions have emphasized the author-centered, text-centered, or reader-centered, as if one had to be chosen over the other. Thiselton has warned that these three areas remain inseparable for the interpreter (2001:108). Meaning is derived as all three work in combination: reading “behind the text” (author), “within the text” (text), and “in front of the text” (reader) (Thiselton 2001:101; cf. Nissen 2002:73-74; Wardlaw 2008:308-310). This study understands the author-text-reader relationship to be a unified dynamic for biblical hermeneutics. Each part is analyzed for its importance to the whole.

6.1.1 What is the Purpose of a Literary Author?

Without the author, there would be no text. Without the reader, there would be no communication or interpretation. What joins the author and reader is the text (cf. Ricoeur 1970:147). The text has the necessary condition of being

composed by a historical author (Gracia 1996:126). Since the historical author is not present, engagement with the text is through an implied author created by the reader (Powell 1990:5). Interaction with the text is not simply observation of an artifact by the reader. It is a “mode of engagement mediated by the artifact” so the reader can interpret what the author wrote (Wolterstorff 2006:36).

Furthermore, Wolterstorff contends the goal for the reader is not the search for the intention of the author, but, instead, what the author said (cf. 1995:132; 2006:37). The author points the interpreter in the direction for which the text was composed (Vanhoozer 2006:11). The implied author “guides” the reader through the textual form and plot construction (Carter 2004:93-95). What this means is that the reader is not left alone in the interpretative process. This being said, the interpreter should be cognizant of certain obscurities that arise in looking to the author as a guide: authorial intention and distancing.

It follows that the author of the text had certain intentions in its composition. Although the reader is not omniscient concerning authorial intention, the assumption is that there was a specific functional purpose by the author in composing the text (Gibbs 2004:24). To deny the role of intention would be ridiculous (cf. Gracia 1996:91-92). Further, Gibbs has concluded that interest in intention is “so deeply a part of how people construct meaningful interpretations” that to abandon the search is not optional (2004:16; cf. Sternberg 1985:8). Skinner has explored the need to understand the relationship between the author and text (1972:393-408).

Yet, Ricoeur has suggested that for the reader to pursue the intentions of the author is “sometimes useless, and sometimes even harmful” to interpretation (1976:76). He states further, “we have to guess the meaning of the text because the author’s intention is beyond our reach” (1976:75). Even more, only when the author is considered dead by the reader can the text become complete in itself (Ricoeur 1970:146-7). Harris has countered Ricoeur and other literary critics (cf. Derrida and Fish) by objecting to their belief of indeterminate meaning, their denial of the authorial intention, and their assumption of reader authority as hermetics (1996:11-12, 90-106). Harris

defines hermetics as the “belief that the world (or reality) is very different from what it appears to be” (1996:11).

It should be clear that knowing the full intention of an author is beyond the human capacity. However, this should not prevent the reader of the necessity to “consider the author’s presence in their reading” (Gibbs 2004:187; cf. Ricoeur 1976:30). The context conveys how the author wrote with the knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions of the anticipated audience (cf. Eco 1979:7; Harris 1996:109).

It is assumed that texts are written by authors who communicate with the assumption that an audience will comprehend their meaning (Gracia 1996:140; cf. Grice 1957:387). For Osborne, authorial intention controls the hermeneutical process altogether (2008:23). There are scholars who contend every text is enacted with authorial intention (Gracia 1998:4; Vanhoozer 1998:252). Although authorial intentions may be evident in a text, the meaning of a text must not become identical to those perceived intentions alone (Wolterstorff 2001:76). However, the authorial discourse can be detected in the content of the text and it is in that observation of the text where meaning can be derived (cf. Skinner 1972:400-403; Wolterstorff 1995:148-149; Ward 2002:199).

The second obscurity is distanciation or “estrangement” (Ricoeur 1976:43-44). Since there is a “distance” between the author and reader, the text is not governed directly by its creator. In addition, the reader is missing the original audience of the text, as well as the original contextual situation (Schneiders 1999:142-144). Does this mean the text has a semantic autonomy since the author cannot answer questions posed by the reader (Ricoeur 1976:30; Smith 1987:211)? Ward counters that texts are speech acts “which exist only as the communicative act of an agent” and the ontological stance must be recognized in the “relation to agent and addressee” (2002:200).

For the interpreter, overcoming this estrangement forms the basis that allows for the possibility of interpretation (Ricoeur 1976:44). What was alien before, now through interpretation belongs to the reader as his own (Smith 1987:214). At this point, the interpreter must realize the author wrote from a particular semantic setting, governed by the author’s own literary community

(Walker-Jones 1989:85-86; Kloppenborg 2001:171; cf Skinner 1972:406-407). Behind the text is the authority of its author (Lanser 1981:122). Each literary text was written by authors who communicated in order to be understood by the readers (cf. Osborne 2008:31).

6.1.2 *What is a Text?*

The text brings the reader into the world of the literary agent, where this interaction creates its own existence (Iser 1974:125; Ricoeur 1976:32; Smith 1987:211-216). A text is made of symbols (words) and grouped together as an entity ("signs") by an author through a specific context for communicating to a particular audience (Gracia 1996:3). A text "denotes the highest meaningful unit of language" (Assmann 2006:74). Ricoeur simply concludes a text "is any discourse fixed in writing" (1970:145).

There is no meaning in words alone. A text has meaning in its arrangement by the author. The goal in interpretation is not to find meaning in sentences; instead, it is to observe the position of sentences in the linguistic structure of the text (Wolterstorff 2006:43-44). Skinner has argued for looking below the surface of a text in finding meaning (1972:394). In reality, a "linguistic code is a theory of the world" (Culler 1997:59), and more particularly, the world of the author. Wolterstorff decries over the idea of one meaning in the text (1995:171-173). Instead, he argues a better position, although not one exclusively, is to view the text as a performance by the author (1995:173-182).

The text does not stand in isolation. Every text is intertwined with its co-text, intertext, and context (Green 1995:183). The co-text is the relationship within the text between sentences, paragraphs, and pericopes. The intertext demonstrates the relationship of the text to the "larger linguistic frame of reference" (cf. Green 1995:183; Luz 2004:119-122). Intertextuality demonstrates how "texts are mirrors or echoes of the world" (Luz 2004:120). It is literature reflecting on literature itself (Culler 1997:34).

Finally, the text is always written within a specific historical milieu or context of meaning. Meaning is about the location of the text (Vanhoozer 1998:112). Context is anything that stands outside the text but affects the

meaning of the text (Gracia 1996:4). Without investigating the historical and linguistic setting, there will be no true understanding of the text as it was written (Osborne 2008:33). As such, interpretation involves the understanding of what the text represents from its cultural past, not what is represented in itself (Donahue 1996:269-272). The text is bound to its social reality (Lanser 1981:61).

The use of language within historical settings can be challenging to the reader. In the field of linguistics, two approaches exhibit this struggle: the diachronic and synchronic (Silva 1983:36). The diachronic approach explores how language has developed over time and in developing patterns. Language has a temporal dimension in that it evolves over time, moving the linguistic boundaries (Paul 2001:394). Yet, one must be guarded in placing meaning on historical word use, what Barr referred to as “illegitimate totality transfer” (Barr 1961:218).

A synchronic approach “stops” time in order to investigate how language was used in a certain period or by a particular group. Distanciation is a reason for approaching the language of a text through a synchronic approach. The synchronic approach is best for the reader since language systems are better understood than changes that occurred (Ricoeur 1976:5).

All language stands in relation to its linguistic code and its contextual world (Paul 2001:393). For the reader this means that a literary work has its own historical place in relationship to general history (Jauss 1974:35). The *langue* of a community or group gives understanding to worldviews, experiences, and relationships governing its existence (referential value). In some sense, then, meaning is in the text, waiting to be uncovered by the reader (Vanhoozer 1995:317). Yet, it can only be uncovered from the perspective of the reader (Luz 2005:273). In regards to literary analysis, it is vital to remember, “the New Testament texts stand at the intersection of experience and expression” (Donahue 1996:274).

6.1.3 What Role is there for the Reader in Interpretation?

A reader comes to the text with the presupposition that the author wrote with the view of an intended audience (Osborne 2006:519; cf. Sternberg 1985:1;

Esler 1994:2). The implied reader is one who enters into the literary world of the text, directed, as it were, by the implied author through the textual construction (cf. Burnett 1985:91-92; Kingsbury 1986:38; Carter 2004:93). Within literary analysis, the primary reader is not a historical construct, nor a modern observer; it is the implied reader at all times (Kingsbury 1988:455; Anderson 1996:235-236). Kingsbury also advances the idea that the implied reader always achieves the intention of the text (1988:456). Scholars differ on the role of the implied reader in biblical literature, from a cautious reader-response approach, to an enthusiastic reader-response approach.

The cautious reader-response approach recognizes the role of the author through the text. The author keeps the reader informed and requires a level of competency from the reader (Carter 2004:92-102). The reader becomes part of the "authorial audience" imagined by the author when composing the text. For the reader, the authorial intention becomes clear through the recognition of the details and constructions within the text (Carter 2004:92-94). This means the reader has the responsibility to understand the historical and cultural setting of the literary composition (Carter 2004:248-249).

Iser has described the reader as one who thinks the thoughts of the author because "his own individuality temporarily recedes into the background since it is supplanted by these alien thoughts" due to his textual focus (1974:144). This is due to the "gaps" in a text, whereby the reader must actively fill in the "blanks" with the result of a reconstructed work of art (Iser 1978:163-231). Pratt referred to this process of reconstruction as "filling in" (1977:153). The reader brings coherence and understanding to the reading and interpretation of the text.

Within the text, multiple readings are possible. Carter stresses "multiple readings" more than multiple meanings, since multiple readings could make previous ideas "no longer tenable because they cannot embrace new aspects of the text" (2004:94). For the cautious reader-response approach, the meaning found is reproduced from the text (Vanhoozer 1995:306-307).

Initially, the text is simply a structural form until the reader self-actualizes meaning in the "here and now" (Ricoeur 1970:157-163). The structural form serves a mediating role by mandating that the reader approach

the text objectively, while also serving to diffuse subjectivity on the reader's part (Ricoeur 1973:114). Even though emphasis is upon the reader in this approach, the text and implied author have key roles to execute in guiding the reader.

With the enthusiastic reader-response approach, less attention is given to the role of the author. For Powell, the reader need not reconstruct the historical setting of the literary composition (1990:85-101), nor should the author's biographical information be imposed on the story (1995:241). Instead, the reader is only expected to know those inner mechanisms within the story itself, knowledge the first readers would have needed in order to understand what was originally written (Powell 2001:87-100). Powell insists the reader must adopt the same values and beliefs that govern the story world (2001:111-116).

The narrative world is the only world the reader must enter. The text gives literary cues to the reader with its built-in expectations promoting potential interpretive discoveries (Powell 1995:242; Anderson 1996:247-250). For the reader, this is the textual "point of view" (Lanser 1981:122; Powell 1995:253). The Gospel of Matthew exemplifies how the implied reader is invited "to enter this world, dwell within it, and at the end to take leave of it, perhaps changed" (Kingsbury 1985:62). This process was reinforced in Matthew's use of redundancy in the Gospel composition (cf. Burnett 1985:91-95). Redundancy develops the story and guides the reader in its narrative world.

Yet, the frame of reference for any reader is conditioned by bias, tradition, and cultural influence (Eco 1979:22; Kodjak 1986:1; Maartens 1991:5; Wolterstorff 2001:77). Even Carter admits the difficulty these conditions pose for a transformation of the reader's worldview in the process of filling the gaps of the biblical text narrative (2004:94). What the reader understands from a text is inseparable from their "horizon of expectations" (Jauss 1974:17-18; Iser 1974:135-136; Culler 1997:63). These expectations are derived from life experiences where political and social agendas are interconnected within culture (Carter 1997:12). However, the horizons of a reader are always changing and moving proportionately to the experiences encountered in life.

Texts have horizons too, in that there are multiple possibilities of interpretation, or polyvalence (Wittig 1977:75-103; Maartens 1991:6; Powell 2001:13; Nissen 2002:74-75). Texts are composed in the worldview of the author. Lanser has pointed to the importance of understanding the author and community from which the text was written (1981:61-76). As such, texts expand with time and with the interpretations of its readers. Over time, one can observe the *Wirkungsgeschichte* (“history of effects” or “history of influence”) a text has had when appropriated by those who have encountered it (cf. Paul 2001:395; cf. Jauss 1974:11-41; Powell 2001:15; Luz 2005:303).

Historical interest in the text and its relationship to the readers of the past is not enough for the reader. More than that, it is searching for new possibilities of the text in the present (cf. Combrink 1992:6). Texts have their own identity in its forms, genres, and structures. Although texts can endure through time, understanding texts differ in time (cf. Smith 1987:207).

Does this mean that interpretation is nothing less than the subjective function of the reader (Gray 2006:4)? The importance of readers is not just their response, but responses that are responsible (Vanhoozer 1995:315). Even so, the text has considerable control over the reader in the process of gap-filling (Sternberg 1985:186-188). Understanding the horizons of the past from what the original audiences understood will assist the reader in understanding his present horizon (Esler 1994:2). With the reader as participant in the text, the horizons meet and distancing is minimized (Smith 1987:207).

Interpretation involves the reader and the text, since relying exclusively on the reader would result in a drastic subjectivity that ignores what the text represents (cf. Thiselton 2001:106). The hermeneutical circle entails, not only the reader in examining the text, but the text in examining the reader (Osborne 2008:32). This reciprocal process is important in approaching scriptural texts. The Bible is literature “steeped in the quirkiness and imperfection of the human that is ultimately oriented toward a horizon beyond the human” (Alter 1992:20-21).

Fee, although primarily opposed to reader-response criticism due to its subjective foundational premises, does recognize that biblical interpreters cannot defend a total objective exegesis (2002:183-184). Readers bring both

their presuppositions and fallibilities to the biblical text. What this demands from the reader is humility in hermeneutical pursuits. If the reader becomes a-historical or anti-historical with a literary analysis of the text, self-autonomy becomes the authority (Decker 2000:53-56; cf. Esler 1994:17).

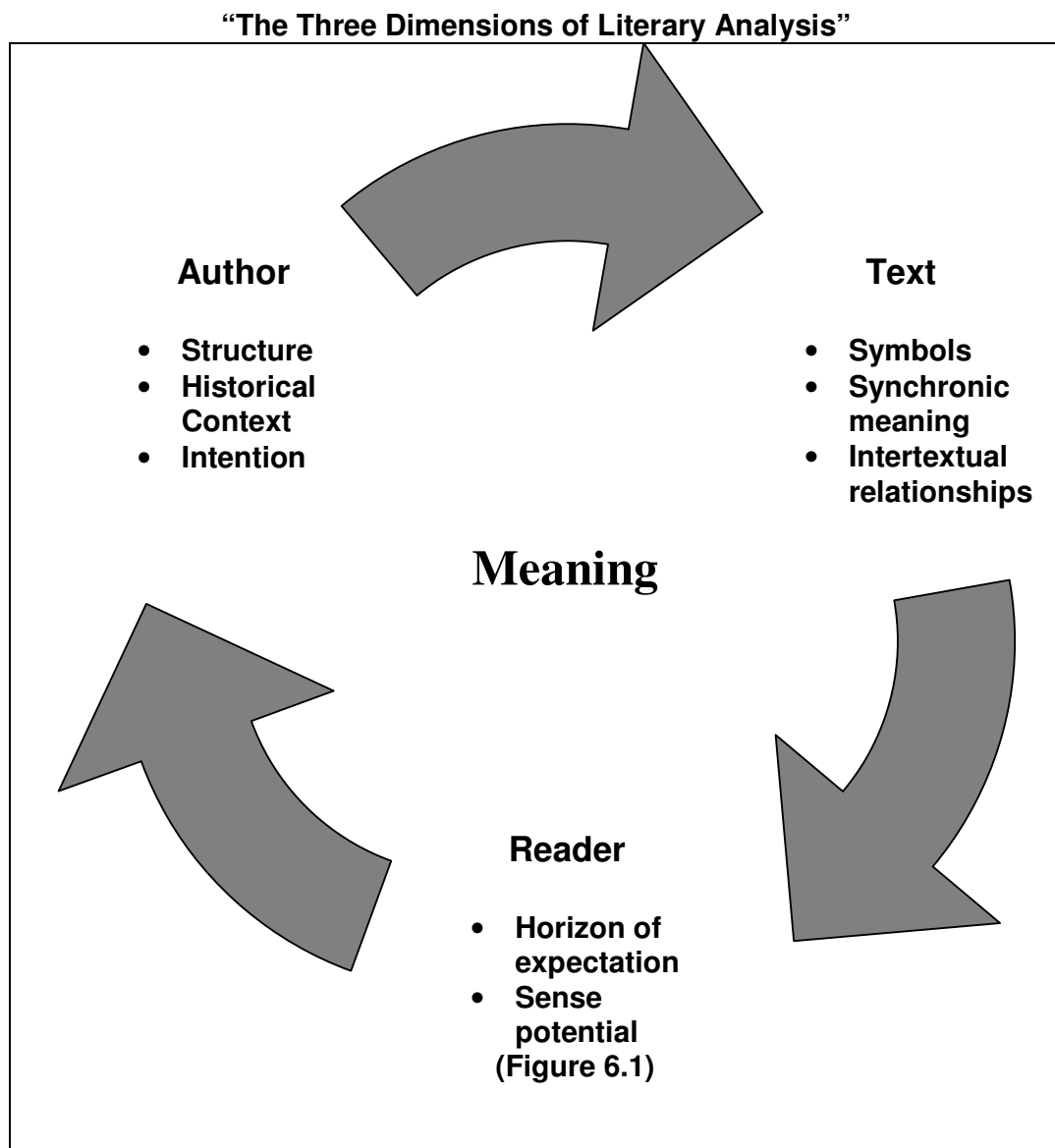
The reader, ultimately, is to make “purposive sense” of the text, “so as to explain the *what’s* and the *how’s* in terms of the *why’s* of communication” (Sternberg 1985:1). Historical understanding of the text does not diminish literary perspective, styles, or aesthetic choices by authors. Indeed, history transmits a greater appreciation for the literary text. Yet, the goal remains for hermeneutical studies to “make one’s own what was primarily foreign” (Ricoeur 1976:91).

6.1.4 The Goal of Literary Analysis on the Biblical Text

Literary analysis understands all three dimensions of author, text, and reader as important. All dimensions of the hermeneutical process are guided by literary theory because the biblical text is literature (Osborne 2008:48). The goal of literary analysis is to find meaning in the text. For this study, meaning is understood as the “authorial intention” as “performed” within a textual structure that carries “sense potential” discovered by the reader (cf. Wolterstorff 1995:173-182; Vanhoozer 1998:252-254). However, the search for meaning only makes sense when it is established through a communication medium (Brown 2007:14, 120-138).

The engagement between author, text, and reader is for finding meaning through these interworking dimensions and not putting excessive emphasis one above the other (Wardlaw 2008:310; cf. Robbins 1985:38). For communication, as well as literary works, language is used to convey meaning and understanding (Thiselton 2001:104). In the opinion of this study, what Ricoeur referred to as the “excess of meaning” in a text (1991:401-402; cf. Schneiders 1999:153-154), is not an excess of meaning, as much as, the engagement between two worlds: that of the author and that of the reader. There is also “surplus reality” since potential experience is larger than actual experience (Brown 1990:191; cf. Combrink 1992:4).

Skinner has pointed out that complex texts will contain more meaning than the author could have imagined it to have (2002:113). Any approach or analysis upon the biblical text must interpret according to the conventional standards within the scope of the literary composition (Sternberg 1985:17). Postulating on what the author meant and what the text is saying are two questions that need not be separated in the interpretive process (cf. Skinner 2002:110-113).



The visual representation of the hermeneutical process demonstrates the dimensions involved in literary analysis (cf. Figure 6.1). Meaning should

not be assigned solely to one dimension over another. Meaning is derived through the process of the three dimensions working in coordination (cf. Brown 2007:57-78).

6.2 The Genre of the Beatitudes

To convey the significance of an experience or event is to succumb to some form of linguistic communication. In reality, all facts are interpretive facts (Decker 2000:60-62). The Beatitudes demonstrate not only a theological construct, but also a literary statement of experience. Brown observes “humans exact truth not by legislating it scientifically, but by performing it rhetorically” (1990:189-190). Rhetorical texts must be differentiated from historical situations in that the purpose was to persuade rather than present facts (cf. Combrink 1992:8).

Each major genre has a way of engaging the reader to an “interactive reality” (Vanhoozer 2001:34). By analyzing the genre of a text, authorial intention can be inferred (Howell 1990:50). Since the Matthean composition was intended to demonstrate the divine presence and authority in the person of Jesus, the first sermon was crafted in order for the reader to respond to that presence. In reading the Sermon on the Mount, one becomes aware that it was composed with a “well-designed, discernable structure” (Lioy 2004:92). How were the Beatitudes crafted for the Sermon? To which genre belong the Beatitudes? In addition, why were they crafted in a way that differs from the Lukan version?

6.2.1 Importance of Genre in Literary Analysis

Throughout the Bible, various genres can be identified: prose, poetry, prophetic, wisdom, and apocalyptic to name a few. By understanding the nature of each genre, the reader can appreciate not only the literary form, but also the profundity of the communication. Genre is a French word meaning “sort, style, or kind” (Engle 2000:86). Genre refers to a literary type or class (Cuddon 1998:342). It is the commonality shared by a group of texts (Brown

2008a:120). Ancient classical literature identified the genre types as epic, tragedy, lyric, comedy and satire (Cuddon 1998:342; Brown 2008a:114). These forms were considered distinct and no variation was to exist outside the boundaries.

Modern literary theory has come to realize that genre distinction was not, and cannot, be sustained in both ancient and modern literature (White 2003:599; Brown 2008a:115-118). It is true that a particular genre originates with clear distinctions, but is less distinctive as other features are added (Cohen 2003:v; cf. White 2003:600-602). Mixed genre is due to the descriptive nature of human experience influencing literature, rather than the prescriptive rules placed upon it (Brown 2008a:115-16). Genres should be interpreted according to those contextual issues influencing its use in literature (cf. van Dijk 2008:148-151).

Genre study observes the diachronic changes of one genre evolving into a new genre (Fowler 1971:208-209; Cohen 2003:vii; Brown 2008a:141). How should genre be defined? However one defines genre, what must be understood is how human actions and purposes contribute toward its defined parameters (Devitt 2000:697-698). Genre is the perception of repetitive circumstances that is utilized to tell the human experience in literary form (cf. Devitt 2000:698). Therefore, the reader understands the various types of texts that lead to corresponding expectations of the text (cf. Gerhart 1988:31).

Throughout history, literature has been a tool in describing and reacting to social change (Bailey 1995a:201-203; Cohen 2003:xiii). Genre is always conceived in the historical setting of shared presuppositions and worldviews. Those worldviews interact in producing change in history even as history changes them (Gerhart 1988:34). Genre should be viewed "as social acts embedded in socio-rhetorical contexts" (Brown 2008a:125; cf. Devitt 2000:698-710). Similarly, Bailey has emphasized the repetitive nature of oral and written patterns of speech in interactive social situations (1995a:200). When defining genre, Brown observes the ability it has to communicate through its social character (2008a:122).

In this study, genre has been defined as the distinct and repetitive pattern of a literary form, employed by an author for communicating specifically to a particular social body or situation. Recognition of genre is

what the reader is expected to know when approaching the text (cf. Pratt 1977:204-206). As Devitt aptly stated, “genres are historical, institutional, cultural, and situated” (2000:701). Genre, in its importance to biblical studies, is the structure of the literary pieces that shape a text and the role of the reader in its recognition (Hartman 1989:330).

6.2.2 Formation of the Beatitude Genre by Matthew

Derrida has insisted that every text has one or more genres since no text could exist without one (1980:65). The New Testament writers used conventional forms and it is imperative to establish the nature and source of those forms by the interpreter (cf. Mullins 1973:194). In approaching the Beatitudes, the decision of its generic quality will influence the interpretive outcome.

However, the value placed upon the Beatitudes by the interpreter will influence the way it is read and how it is read. Through various cultures and different times the Beatitudes were interpreted as to their generic function and application (cf. Devitt 2000:709). Therefore, whatever presuppositions or values one has in approaching the Beatitudes will influence the decision over its generic quality (Brown 2008a:144-145).

Yet, one is not left to subjective decision-making alone. A historical stance must be utilized for the investigation of the formation of the Beatitudes to ensure that the suspected genre was feasible at the time of composition (Fowler 1971:208). What literary genres were available to Matthew at the time of his Gospel composition? Did he use any one genre exclusively or eclectically with other genre?

6.2.2.1 The Form of Ascription as Employed in the LXX

The Beatitude genre could be described as the literary form of ascription (cf. Mullins 1973:194-205). Mullins has defined ascription as a literary form ascribing “a condition to a person or to a people because of a relationship which the person or group exhibits” (1973:195). The LXX had many examples of ascription and they would have been known by Matthew (cf. Ps 1; 2:12; 72:18; 106:3; 119:1ff; Prov 8:34; Hos 7:13). The Psalms would have provided

Matthew and his community a wealth of material similar to the Beatitudes to which he composed. The prophet Isaiah was the only prophet to have used the beatitude genre and his influence upon Matthew was unmistakable (cf. Mullins 1973:201).

The elements of the ascription form were an ascriptive word, the object of ascription, and reasons for ascription (Mullins 1973:195-196). An explanation could be added to the ascription but need not be present in every use of the form. The use of this form could describe both the actions and attitude of a person or people. As a literary form, it exhibited a tendency to place a conditional response upon the hearer or reader (Mullins 1973:204). For the Matthean Beatitudes the form was seen in the characteristic plural form of “blessed” followed by an apodosis (cf. Wardlaw 2008:295-298). The apodosis served as the reason for the ascription (cf. Figure 6.2).

Ascription in the Beatitudes		
<u>Ascriptive Word</u>	<u>Object of Ascription</u>	<u>Reason for Ascription</u>
Blessed	poor in spirit	kingdom of heaven
Blessed	mournful	comforted
Blessed	meek	inherit the earth
Blessed	hunger/thirst	satisfied
Blessed	merciful	shown mercy
Blessed	pure in heart	see God
Blessed	peacemakers	children of God
Blessed	persecuted	kingdom of heaven
Blessed	revile, persecute, etc	reward in heaven
<u>Commentary</u>		
Rejoice/be glad...you are salt/light...let your light shine		
(Figure 6.2)		

The form Matthew employed can be traced to the use of ascription as used by the Old Testament writers. This demonstrates the structural form Matthew adopted. However, what other influences were upon Matthew as he composed the Beatitude genre?

6.2.2.2 Pervasiveness of Wisdom Literature

By the time of Jesus, wisdom as an “understanding of reality” was a central influence upon the Jewish populace (Murphy 1981:28; cf. Collins 1997:266). Scribal schools immersed their students in wisdom texts (Valantasis et al 2009:108). Yet, it was not a single worldview as much as climate of thought, resulting in various schools of wisdom (Collins 1997:281; Bennema 2001:62). A perusal of the Old Testament (cf. Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes), the Dead Sea Scrolls (cf. 4QInstruction, 4Q184, 4Q185, and 4Q525), Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon demonstrate a familiarity of wisdom teaching that cannot be ignored.

Lady Wisdom was personified in Proverbs (cf. chapters 1-9) as one who had a relationship with God and the authority to speak as a divine being (Crawford 1998:355-356). Wisdom amounted to a messenger from God to humanity (Johnson 1974:45-46). As a worldview, Wisdom literature affirmed cause and effect as the operative dynamic in the world of relationships (cf. Collins 1993b:169). Wisdom literature has displayed how broadly wisdom thought was adapted in various worldviews and strands of thought (Collins 1993b:181; Bennema 2001:64-67). Keener has suggested a literary pattern can be detected in the display of beatitude settings in the Old Testament: Ps 1; 2:12; 32:1-2; 40:4; 41:1; 65:4; 84:4-5, 12; 94:12; 112:1; 119:1-2; 128:1; Prov 8:34; Isa 56:2; Jer 17:7; and Dan 12:12 (1999:165).

The Dead Sea Scrolls exhibited certain characteristics of sapiential literature during the Second Temple Period. In the 4QInstruction (1Q26, 4Q415-418, 4Q423), the themes of poverty and contentment as a disciple of the community were repeated throughout the texts (Collins 1997:272; Goff 2005:671; WAC 2005:482). There was the standard teacher-student format, exhibiting a didactic tone (Goff 2005:659; WAC 2005:481). What is remarkable about 4QInstruction was its combination of being both a wisdom text with an apocalyptic worldview (Goff 2005:658-666). A phrase repeated more than twenty times was “the mystery that is to be, or to come” and served as the object of study in the community (Collins 1997:272-273). Again, this demonstrated the eschatological tendency within the scrolls.

What was significant in the scrolls 4Q185 and 4Q525 was the combination of a wisdom text with beatitudes. In 4Q185, the blessed man was

the one given wisdom as well as the one who lived by that wisdom. The 4Q525 text has nine beatitudes, eight short blessings combined with a final extended blessing (Puech 1993:353-368). It was a sapiential text with eschatological terminology (Brooke 1989:37-38; Puech 1993:363-364). The source of blessings came from the attainment of wisdom.

By comparing 4Q525 with 1QH6:13-16, Sirach 14:20-27, and Psalm 15:1-5, Puech has determined that the authors had deliberate intentions with the beatitude form and structure (1993:356-362). This led Puech to conclude that various authors in Palestine, from second century BC to the first century AD, not only knew the compositional rules for creating beatitudes, but “each one applied them in his proper way according to the possibilities of the language he was using and also with a personal touch” (1997:362; Allison 2005:177).

The influence of Ben Sira (Sirach) upon the Jewish populace cannot be overstated, since it “permeated Judea sufficiently to become part of the common cultural heritage” (deSilva 2000b:1123; White 2010:44-47). His writing came at a time of culture wars between the Jewish way of life and Hellenistic influences (cf. 180-175 BC; Helyer 2002:95-96). For Sirach, the only way for a Jew to combat the Hellenistic influence was in obedience to the Torah and their Jewish heritage (deSilva 2000b:1117). The entire corpus of Sirach was centered on the outcome of applying wisdom to every area of life (deSilva 2000b:1119-1122; VanderKam 2001:116-118).

With Sirach, wisdom had several dimensions: wisdom was preexistent, had a role in creation, was a reflection of the character of God, was embodied in God’s people, and was to be accepted if one wanted a good life (Helyer 2002:102). Helyer goes further to demonstrate that the New Testament writers saw Jesus as the personification of this wisdom (2002:102; cf. John 1:1-14; Phil 2:5-10; Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:1-3).

Finally, the Wisdom of Solomon was a sapiential work dedicated to encouraging the pursuit of wisdom for a meaningful life (VanderKam 2001:125; Helyer 2002:287-291). One key passage was Wisdom 7:22-8:1 in which wisdom was personified and celebrated alongside of God. The parallels in the New Testament texts were remarkable, in that Jesus, too, was praised for his preexistence and distinctiveness alongside of God (Helyer 2002:295).

Understanding the wisdom culture at the time the Beatitudes were composed is necessary for its interpretation. The evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibits a sectarian community that began to combine wisdom teaching within an eschatological framework (Kampen 2000:228-230; cf. Collins 1993b:181). Throughout the DSS, cosmological themes were prevalent. Wisdom imagery was combined with the eschatological worldview of the community and became “totally identified with the beliefs and way of life advocated by these sectarians” (Kampen 2000:238).

The key to understanding the wisdom tradition during the intertestamental period was its charismatic exegesis, or divine wisdom in understanding the will of God in the Torah (Bennema 2001:78-81). Did this “sectarian” adaptation influence the Matthean Gospel? In the Gospel of Matthew, wisdom was more a function of Jesus’ teaching than equivalence to Jesus (Byrskog 1994:304-305; Dunn 2003b:703; cf. Matt 11:19; 12:42; 13:54). However, Matthew confirmed throughout the Gospel that Jesus was definitive wisdom in his deeds and teachings (cf. Deutsch 1990:47). What did this suggest for the composition of the Beatitudes?

The word “blessed” indicated the prevalent use of the term as it related to viewing and describing the divine-human relationship (cf. Witherington 2006:120). The term *ptōchoi tō pneumati* (“poor in spirit”) was used by the Essene community of those who were being encouraged before war (1QM 14:6-7), as well as a description of the people God blessed (1QH 6:14). This identical phrase could be a Matthean implementation to guide the Beatitudes as a whole (Brooke 1989:36). Furthermore, in 1QH 6:13-18, themes of peace, mercy, righteousness, inheritance, purification, affliction, and rewarding works were descriptive of the “men of truth and elect.” The promise of reward (*misthos*) referred to a reversal of their present struggles (Goff 2005:672). The comparison to the Matthean Beatitudes is uncanny.

There was a strong possibility that some of the Jewish Christians in the Matthean community had been Essenes, leading Matthew to demonstrate how those values of the Essenes were complete in Jesus (Brooke 1989:39; Kampen 2000:235). In addition, Sirach 24:19-21 spoke of a hungering and thirsting for Wisdom, personifying it as food (Crawford 1998:363). Matthew spoke of hungering and thirsting after righteousness and personified

righteousness to Jesus in the ninth Beatitude (cf. Matt 5:6, 11). Finally, salt was eventually used metaphorically in rabbinic literature for wisdom (Brooke 1989:38). A common metaphor for the Law was light (Sirach 24:23-27; cf. Witherington 2006:124-125).

A major observation from the Beatitudes genre is that Matthew employed and equated wisdom to hearing and following Jesus (cf. Dunn 1975:80; Riches 2000:188-190). This would be an attractive message to a culture immersed in sapiential pursuit. From a literary standpoint, the form in composing the Beatitudes was sapiential (Brooke 1989:38; Tuttle 1997:213-230; Witherington 2006:118-119). For the Matthean community, Jesus was the Torah, as well as the hermeneutical principle in its interpretation (Kampen 2000:238; Valantasis et al 2009:126-127). The message of Matthew was that all of Judaism, along with its sects, must see Jesus as the ultimate wisdom of God or no blessing would be realized.

6.2.2.3 Influence of an Apocalyptic Worldview

Apocalyptic identification can be difficult since it usually involves the tracing of repetitive elements in a text (Collins 1979:2). The distinction between the sapiential worldview and the apocalyptic can be observed in the reliance of transcendental powers over present affairs, with the hope of a world superior to the present (Collins 1993b:170). The key function of apocalyptic genre was the mediation of information from “an otherworldly being” that possessed a superior knowledge to our own (Collins 1979:10). Collins emphasized that the “apocalyptic revelation provides a framework in which humans can decide their commitments” for both the present and future life (1979:12).

A major characteristic of Jewish apocalypticism was its dualistic framework for viewing life (Aune 2000:48). Apocalyptic thought was imaginary in the way it communicated, using “cosmological, mythological, universal, political and symbolical” language (Fiorenza 1989:305). For Fiorenza, its purpose was to invite “imaginative participation” through its literary form (1989:305). Apocalypticism interpreted this world dualistically, in terms of good and bad, light and darkness, as well as God and Satan (Aune 2000:49; cf. White 2010:26-29). It saw the cosmic battle as eventually concluding with God as conqueror.

In contrast, the prophets' eschatological worldview encompassed both this world and the world to come. The prophetic tradition was primarily positive as it relied on God for intervention. However, the prophetic tradition went through various changes over many centuries as it responded to historical events in relation to the foreign subjugation of Israel (Aune 2000:47). Apocalyptic had the same goal as the prophetic movement: restoration of God's people (Hanson 1979:12; Bauckham 2010:57-61). What arose around the third century BC was an apocalyptic eschatology, a merging of the prophetic with the apocalyptic (Collins 1993b:173; Bauckham 2010:44-55). Why did this merge occur?

Apocalyptic thought and language arose during times of social unrest and disenfranchisement (cf. Collins 1996:16). Vorster has pointed to the rise of apocalypticism in a society where a particular group felt a loss and sought to replace it with new paradigms of meaning (1990:43). However, the literary culture consisted in the scribal circle that wrote and fostered the apocalyptic text (cf. Horsley 2010:193-207). The scribal circles, with their commitment to the Torah, wrote apocalyptic as part of their resistance to imperial powers and empires (Horsley 2010:194-202).

Hanson has given three reasons for the emergence of the apocalyptic eschatological worldview in the third century BC (1979:9-10). First, the prophetic tradition was always a metanarrative for the Jewish people and their hope for restoration. Second, the Jewish people appropriated the eschatological promises of Isaiah in understanding their post-exilic plight. Due to the cessation of prophecy, apocalyptic interpretation of Old Testament prophecy expanded (cf. Bauckham 2010:49). Finally, they needed to understand how to adjust to the crisis of losing their national status. The result was the merge of a prophetic tradition into an apocalyptic framework in explaining the bleak conditions in which they found themselves.

Although an apocalyptic worldview appeared pessimistic, apocalypticism did not "succumb to pessimism" but was "sustained by a hope as radical as the apocalyptic pessimism" (Fiorenza 1989:303). Apocalyptic eschatology was the perspective that God would intervene and restore what was good and right for His people. The emergence of apocalypticism was at a time when God's absence was felt through national loss (cf. Bauckham

2010:57-59). It was not that the apocalypticist was looking for the doomsday-end-of-the-world, just the end of foreign domination (cf. Horsley 2010:207).

Through the New Testament writings, apocalyptic patterns were exhibited from the life of Jesus, as well as through expectations of his return to earth for the consummate restoration. It was the insistence to be actively engaged with the message of hope, as understood through the eschatological salvation offered through Jesus that was placed upon early Christians through the dynamics of an apocalyptic worldview (cf. Collins 1979:9; Daley 2009:106-126).

Within the Beatitudes, arguments can be made for a literary genre consisting of apocalyptic and eschatological elements. The same representative genre could be argued for the Dead Sea Scrolls as well. Although Matthew wrote after the demise of the Qumran community, there was evidence that his Gospel and the DSS belonged to a Judaistic stream of apocalyptic thought (Ito 1992:23-42: cf. Cross 1995:143). Two Dead Sea Scrolls that exhibited the literary use of an apocalyptic eschatology were 1QSb ("Priestly Blessings") and 4Q521 ("Messianic Apocalypse").

The eschatological prayer of 1QSb was a liturgical recitation by the teacher on behalf of the *Yahad* at Qumran in the covenant renewal ceremony (Chazon 1999:263; WAC 2005:140-141). The Qumran community believed the "end of days" was upon them and leading to the commencement of the Messianic age. The paradigm for their liturgy was taken from the Old Testament priestly blessing (Num 6:24-26).

Some conceptual and theological elements from 1QSb that compared to the Beatitudes were: "words of blessing" (1:1), "bless you from his holy habitation" (1:3), "blessing of the heavenlies" (1:5), "never withhold water from the thirsty" (1:6), "greatly to rejoice" (2:25), "righteous judgment" (2:26), "eternal peace and kingdom" (3:6), "may the Lord bless you from his holy habitation" (3:25), "and your inheritance" (3:28).

The text of 4Q521 displayed a close affinity to the Gospel of Matthew. It described an eschatological worldview of divine blessings appropriate to the coming Messiah (cf. Chazon 1999:252). During the intertestamental period, the Jewish tendency moved toward messianism, as opposed to nationalism, by viewing the coming Messiah as a king who would bring restoration (Aune

2000:49). The answer to John the Baptist's question concerning Jesus as Messiah (Matt 11:2-5) was almost verbatim to 4Q521 2:7-13 and its hope of a Messiah.

The text (4Q521) exhibited the following conceptual characteristics that compared to the Beatitudes: addressed to "those who hoped in the Lord" (2:4), "those called righteous by the Lord" (2:5), "the humble" (2:6), "eternal kingdom" (2:7), "satisfy the poor" (2:13a), "the hungry made rich" (2:13b), "do good before the Lord" (7:4), "heavens advance" (7:14), "and the blessings of Jacob" (8:7).

In comparing the scrolls (1QSb and 4Q521) with the Beatitudes, a literary genre of wisdom and apocalyptic motifs merge within the imaginative framework of priestly and messianic concepts. The Matthean composition was not composed outside the normal literary parameters of Second Temple Judaism. Instead, the Beatitudes formed an introduction to the first teaching of Jesus for the Gospel. Genre studies have demonstrated that social contexts and relationships have a great influence on the combination of genre forms (Bailey 1995a:201-203).

In light of the social and religious context of Matthew, his composition demanded a genre representative of the change Jesus brought. Jesus was, for the new community, the Wisdom of God. Through Jesus, the kingdom was realized for the present, as well as the future (eschatological). Jesus was God's divine intervention (apocalyptic) so that humanity might know "God is with us" (Matt 1:23). Horsley has noted that each apocalyptic text has the themes of opposition to imperial powers and the sovereignty of God in controlling history (2010:3-4).

As Jesus pronounced the blessings of the kingdom, purity of heart, and mercy, priestly imagery arose within the minds of Jewish Christians. The use of *makarioi* signaled that Jesus was the culmination of all the blessings that had been pronounced for centuries upon Israel (cf. Wardlaw 2008:299). More importantly, Jesus was the promised Messiah, long anticipated by the Jewish nation. The new community, in claiming Jesus as Messiah, was pointing to all the sacred traditions of Israel being culminated in Jesus, thereby serving as the link between the "story of the church and the story of Israel (Bird 2009:167). In this way, Matthew structured the literary text by combining the

wisdom/apocalyptic Jewish worldview within the priestly/messianic ministry of Jesus (cf. Luz 2007:187-188).

Matthew gave the new community a “symbolic reality” in the message of Jesus, providing meaningful living through the kingdom message (cf. Vorster 1999a:317). The strength of apocalyptic eschatology was its ability to communicate to the present situation (cf. Bauckham 2010:61). Cohen explains how “genre members increase or decrease, are in competition or conflict. Genres arise and decline, are embedded in one another, derive from or are absorbed in one another” (Cohen 2003:xvi). This is exemplified by Matthew and his composition: a literary genre uniting both the wisdom of the past with the hope for divine action, to communicate in the most effective way that Jesus was the blessing of God for humanity.

6.2.2.4 The Adaptation of Jesus’ Aphoristic Sayings

The aphoristic content of the Beatitudes most clearly identified the type of genre Matthew created and the message he wanted to convey with the composition (cf. Brown 2008a:143). An aphorism (*chriea*) was an expression by a particular individual with “insight and vision” (Aune 1991:216). They were characterized by being brief, attributed to a specific person, and practical (Robbins 1988:2-3).

The aphorisms attributed to Jesus by the early Christian community indicated what was important in his ministry and teachings (Aune 1991:211-214). Along with the cultural immersion of wisdom and apocalyptic worldviews, Matthew interjected the sayings of Jesus to advance understanding within the new community of its continued mission in the world.

Since the Matthean Gospel was not written for at least forty years after the death of Jesus, the sayings of Jesus were remembered through repetition and oral transmission. In some cases, it was possible that the original context was forgotten, but through oral repetition, a new context of meaning was created and adapted by the new community (Beare 1962:20; Hollander 2000:355). Aphorisms were adopted in the communal stories through the dynamics of oral performances (cf. Horsley 2008:127-140).

Within the Hellenistic culture, there was a debate over the role of rhetoric for the writing of history (Byrskog 2008:161). Byrskog has

emphasized that the disciplined way to communicate in the first century was through rhetoric (2008:165; cf. Stanton 1993:77-84). The point of rhetoric was to persuade. From the Gospels, the purpose of persuasion was evident in the portrait of Jesus (cf. Rohrbaugh 2000:198). What the Gospels present in their literary milieu, in essence, was a “picture of the rhetorical Jesus” more than a “picture of the historical Jesus” (Bloomquist 1997:99).

No doubt, Jesus spoke the Beatitudes on many occasions and in various ways, as with all his teachings (Aune 1991:225; France 2007:163). Every social setting to which Jesus addressed would have encountered an “original event” with the proclamation (Kelber 2006:18-19). The Jesus tradition embraced by early Christians did not commence from historical archives but from remembrance (cf. Kelber 2006:18; Allison 2010:1-30). The remembering was promoted through communal stories.

Bauckham has suggested that the Gospel accounts were reliable based on the strength of eyewitness testimony and control by the Jerusalem leaders (2006:93, 290-299). Yet, even eyewitness accounts do not assure historical accuracy since “investigative procedure cannot be separated from interpretative procedures” (Redman 2010:190). For Byrskog, a key difference that must be clarified is the viewpoint that the eyewitnesses were a source of interpretation as opposed to the view of Bauckham that the eyewitnesses were a source of history (2006:158). Further, a salient point can be made that eyewitness testimony, as soon as it was communicated, became tradition (Byrskog 2008:159).

Memory studies have shown how recall utilization was employed by an oral culture for the transmission of experiences and tradition from one generation to the next (Boring 1983:108-110; Dunn 2003a:139-175; Kelber 2006:16). Redman has summarized the many variables found within memory acquisition: expectation of witness, the factual details, the event significance, personality and interests of witness, and the observation point (2010:180-185). One weakness with relying solely on the accuracy of eyewitness testimony is that “inaccuracies can, and almost inevitably will, arise” before “it becomes valuable community tradition that is seen to be in need of preservation” (Redman 2010:192).

The teachings of Jesus that were recalled came primarily from the praxis of early Christians in their mission (Bailey 1995b:10; Hollander 2000:353-354; Bird 2005:164-171). Through the adoption of memorable stories and sayings of the resurrected Jesus by early Christianity, its self-understanding for mission could be understood and adapted to various social contexts and situations (Bird 2005:166-167). Historical studies have demonstrated that not only community formation, but also community maintenance was involved in the recall and performance of Jesus tradition (Barton 1992:407-425; cf. Wittig 1973:123-136; Scott and Dean 1996:316).

Riesner has concluded that up to eighty percent of the Gospels' accounts of Jesus exhibit mnemonic patterns of memory, such as parallelism and chiasmus (1991:202). However, it was not "verbatim memorization" as much as memory selection adopted by the interests of the new community (Hollander 2000:353; Allison 2010:29). This would account for differences in comparing the Gospels to each other. Yet, the Jesus tradition should not be thought of as subjectively erratic or very relaxed.

The study by Bailey on oral transmission in the Middle East has led him to conclude that an "informal controlled tradition" existed within the early Christian communities (1995b:4-11). This would mean that the stories and sayings of Jesus were told and retold in various informal settings and through social networks, with the new community "controlling" the tradition to some extent (Bailey 1995b:7-9; Hearon 2008:107). Yet, the range of control can and should be debated. Was the control centralized (cf. Jerusalem or Antioch) or decentralized (cf. rural villages). Stories were told and retold, not for historical accuracy, but for "immediate relevancy" within the community (Kelber 1983:71).

However, for Dunn, it was multiple performances rather than multiple editions that resulted (2003b:248-249). Therefore, in the opinion of this study, an informal controlled tradition provides the best explanation of how a particular Christian community transmitted, within its own cluster, the Jesus tradition, with the intention of validating and understanding its existence and mission as followers of Jesus. The Gospels demonstrate the theologies that existed and shaped early Christianity, generally, and the various communities, specifically. What were the sayings of Jesus that were transmitted?

In the opinion of Morson, an aphorism is the best literary short form in transmitting a particular worldview (2003:411). Aphorisms differ from riddles and dictums within the field of interpretation. Riddles and dictums have closed-ended answers, in contrast to aphorisms, which are open to interpretative mystery (Morson 2003:412-419). Aphorisms can take many forms, but what they all share is “a sense that what is most valuable to grasp lies beyond our reach” like “a voice from a mysterious other” (2003:421). What one encounters, then, is a paradox. Therefore, to read an aphorism is not like reading a riddle or dictum, since what one wants “to find isn’t in it, but beyond it” (Morson 2003:428). Should we interpret the Beatitudes as aphorisms or dictums? In what way did the new community understand the sayings of Jesus: paradoxical or prescriptive?

Freeman has proposed the way to understand the sayings and teachings of Jesus begins with a simple formula: “What appears to be X is really Y, and what appears to be Y is really X” (2007:¶85). Jesus spoke “obliquely or indirectly” concerning the kingdom, effectively employing paradox in his teaching (Freeman 2007:¶10).

Within the Mediterranean world, people would speak through metaphorical or mythological language when explaining ideas that were “unobservable” (Vorster 1990:34). Jesus employed metaphor to encourage a paradoxical inquiry by his followers concerning his teachings. It must be remembered how metaphor communicates concerning its subject: both what “it is like” and what “it is not” (Paul 2001:392). Furthermore, Paul understands the role of interpretation as the analysis of the metaphorical “vehicle” in observing its communicative value as used by the author (Paul 2001:397). What did this mean for Matthew as he communicated the Beatitudes in his Gospel?

There was a certain ambiguity in the aphorisms of Jesus, demonstrated in the flexible use by Christians through the centuries (Aune 1991:241). In comparing the Matthean Beatitudes to the Lukan version, the differences demonstrate the flexible use by both authors for their theological and literary purposes. The purpose of Matthew was not to simply transmit tradition accurately, but to compose a narrative capable of stimulating the new community in their mission for Jesus (cf. Betz 1995:83; Horsley 2008:224-

228). By combining different traditions with the sayings of Jesus, Matthew formed a new compositional genre for his social context and community (Luz 2005:7).

The Beatitudes composed by Matthew exhibited “inwardness” not evident in the Lukan version (Riches 2000:286). The blessings pronounced by Jesus were communicated through the paradigm of wisdom and apocalyptic eschatology to a community suffering because of their identity with him. In one way, Matthew was encouraging the new community to continue in their operation. In another way, Matthew was pointing to a divine reversal promised to those who followed Jesus. The rhetoric was persuasive, since it was attributed to Jesus who pronounced the blessings upon his followers.

The paradoxical message served as exhortation and encouragement. To a community feeling deprived, the kingdom was theirs. To the discouraged, God was present in their grief. To those desiring right, God would make things right. To those seeking God, His presence would be realized. To those wanting harmonious relations, God knew his family members. Finally, to those who suffered in their representation for Jesus, a transcendental joy from God was promised.

6.3 The Poetic Pattern of the Beatitudes

Whether one hears or reads the Beatitudes pericope, it is almost impossible to mistake its poetic features. The entire Bible is full of poetic sections. Poetry is reminiscent of vivid imagery, emotion, and literary freedom. It is “beauty without explanation” (Gluck 1971:69). Despite its characteristic distinction from prose, it communicates as effective, if not better, than its opposite. Prose is sequence; poetry is equivalence (Berlin 1985:7).

With a poetic text, the mechanical form as well as the content communicates the message of the author in repetitious fashion. However, Talstra has aptly cautioned that the interpreter remember that the “literary system comes before the literary device” (1999:105). This means, despite evaluating prose or poetry, linguistic analysis takes precedence.

In observing the mechanical form and content of the Beatitudes, it becomes evident that Matthew was a poet, with the Beatitudes demonstrating his poetic proclivity (Green 2001:21-27; DiLella 1989:239). The poetic characteristics can be observed in the juxtaposition of each word or phrase, resulting in linguistic depth (Maartens 1991:10-11). The poetic ambiguity Matthew demonstrated was unparalleled in the New Testament (Green 2001:177). Matthew chose a poetic composition to introduce the theology surrounding Jesus and his teaching (Songer 1992:166-170).

This study confirms that through aesthetics Matthew was able to compose both a literary as well as theological work of art. For the ancients, the literary discipline was not viewed as a separate type of communication, but, instead, as another facet within the sociological and philosophical milieu of communication (Sternberg 1985:35-36). What characteristics define the sayings of Jesus as poetic? What was the mechanical form Matthew used in framing the Beatitudes?

6.3.1 Parallelism and its Poetic Effects in the Beatitudes

The key characteristic of Hebrew poetry was parallelism (Berlin 1985:4; Green 2001:40; Grant 2008:188). Berlin goes further, by adding that it was parallelism “combined with terseness” (1985:5-6). In the ancient Mediterranean culture, poetic parallelism was used as a form of rhetoric (cf. Bailey 2008:13-14).

Alter has pointed to the broad use of parallelism on many levels such as “semantic, syntactic, prosodic, morphological, phonetic, and so on” (1985:8). A poetic effect was the “result of an interaction between verbal form and meaning” (Berlin 1985:10). Parallelism was the literary dynamic of “heightening” and intensifying one literary unit with another (Alter 1985:11). This served both the “aesthetic and semantic purposes” of an author (Grant 2008:220). It was through the parallel relationships that meaning could be found.

The two basic modes of verbal arrangement by an author were selection and combination (Berlin 1985:7). What this means for the interpreter is the linguistic selection and how it was combined linguistically dominates the

interpretative process. Furthermore, the words of a text may change but the same thought remain throughout the pericope (cf. Green 2001:24). It is through the observation of parallels between stanzas that important information can be discovered by the interpreter (cf. Bailey 2008:17).

Matthew had an affinity toward using parallelism throughout his Gospel (Luz 2007:23). With parallelism, Matthew adopted a common literary and verbal technique understood by the readers/hearers of the first century (Berlin 1985:140). In studying the poetic elements exhibited by the Beatitudes, delineation of both the theological and sociological dynamics of the Matthean community emerge, providing clarification of the compositional intent of the Beatitude pericope. The poetic nature of the Beatitudes illustrates the use of mnemonic practices adopted by the early Christian communities in communicating the essence of Jesus' message, as well as a depiction of the self-understanding by the community for its existence (cf. Riches 2000:188-190; Scaer 2002:16-25; Byrskog 2006:324; Loubser 2006:79).

Those literary elements utilized by Matthew convey how the poetic function had "dominance" over other literary expressions (Berlin 1985:9; Sternberg 1985:40). The very ambiguities produced through poetic texts were another way of communicating concepts and ideas too rich for a literal portrayal through prose (cf. Schneiders 1999:28-33; Westerholm 2006:13-14). Even more, Alter has suggested all literature "thrives on parallelism" (1985:10). However, it would be a mistake to deduce that a single formula could define parallelism, since it is too complex and varied in its application (Berlin 1985:129).

In this study, the following terms will be used in reference to the poetic structure of a text: hemistich (half the length of a colon), colon (single line of poetry), bicolon (two lines or cola), strophe (verse-unit of cola), and stanza (one or more strophes) (cf. Watson 2005:12-13). This study has found that the Beatitude pericope consists of two stanzas (Matt 5:3-12 and 5:13-16) and five strophes (Matt 5:3-6, 7-10, 11-12, 13, 14-16).

Essentially, parallelism was the relationship between cola or strophe in a literary unit, either resulting in a comparison or contrasting between the two (Grant 2008:212-213). Through the employment of parallelism, broader units were formed (stanzas), which, when combined, formed a poem (Grant

2008:222). What are those elements involved in parallelism that can be identified in the Beatitudes?

6.3.1.1 *Word Pairs and Word Association*

In Semitic parallelism, word pairs and word association was an important device for the author (Segert 1983:303-304). A word can be associated with its opposite (cf. black-white) or its likeness (cf. man-boy). In a poetic text, the task of an interpreter is to reconcile how an author used word pairs for his linguistic purposes (cf. Berlin 1985:79). Repetition and redundancy were used, sometimes in incremental stages, to reinforce or expand concepts introduced in the poetic text (Alter 1985:64; Bauer 1988:14). Just as a musical composition relies on repetitive sound and form, key thoughts were emphasized by repetition (Niditch 1996:13).

Even more, Matthew loved to use repetition and redundancy throughout his Gospel (Lohr 1961:407; Combrink 1983:70; von Dobschutz 1983:20-22; Burnett 1985:91-109; Anderson 1996:236). Yet, it was not word pairs that created parallelism, but parallelism that “activated” word pairs (Berlin 1985:79). There were various ways a word pair could be identified in Semitic parallelism (Segert 1983:303-304).

- (a) *Identitical word pairs:* Within a text, the identical word will be repeated to show the parallel thought. In the Beatitudes, the word “*makarioi*” was used nine times; “*basileia tōn ouranōn*” was used twice (5:3 and 10); “*ouranōn/ouranois*” was used three times (5:3, 10, and 12); “*dikaiousunē*” was used twice (5:6 and 10); and “*theon/theou*” was used twice (5:8 and 9). In the second stanza (5:13-16), “*Ymeis este*” was used twice (5:13 and 14), and “*anthrōpōn*” was used twice (5:13b and 16a). The term “*ouranois*” appears a fourth time in the stanza (5:16 and three times in 5:3-12).
- (b) *Synonymous words pairs:* The word pairs demonstrated a general semantic relationship, like an A-B relationship (cf. “A is this and B is like this too”). Some interpreters have concluded that “*ptōchoi tō*

pneumati” and *“praeis”* were from the same Hebrew root word and had synonymous meaning (Guelich 1982:81-82; Hagner 1993:92; Witherington 2006:121). In addition, *“eleēmones”* and *“eleēthēsontai”* would be considered synonymous (5:7). In the second stanza (5:13-16), *“gēs”* (5:13) and *“kosmou”* (5:14) were synonymous.

- (c) *Complementary word pairs*: The words of a text were seen to complement the semantic thought or meaning. The additional grammatical information complements the range of meaning so that the parallelism becomes metaphorical (cf. Berlin 1985:100). In the Matthean composition, the Beatitudes demonstrate a complementary parallelism between the cola, strophe, and stanzas (cf. Figure 6.3).

Complementary Word Pairs in the Matthean Pericope

Colon

Poor in spirit = mournful, meek, and hunger & thirst (1st - 4th)
Persecuted = merciful, pure in heart, and peacemakers (5th-7th)
Righteousness (twice) = on account of me (3rd, 8th, 9th)

Strophe

Kingdom of heaven = comforted, inherit, and satisfied (1st)
Kingdom of heaven = mercy, see God, called sons of God (2nd)

Stanza

Blessed (they) = **Blessed** (you) = you are **salt/light**
Rejoice and be **glad** (you) = **Let your light** shine
Kingdom of heaven = reward in **heaven** = Father in **heaven**
(Figure 6.3)

- (d) *Antithetic word pairs*: This type of parallelism conveyed the opposite meaning of its word association (cf. black-white; life-death). This was used in the Lukan version of the Beatitudes (cf. Luke 6:20-26; Figure 6.4).

Antithetic Word Pairs by Luke

Blessed	Woe
Poor	Rich
Hunger now	Full now
Satisfied	Hunger
Weep now	Laugh now
Laugh	Mourn and weep
Men hate you...	Men speak well of you...
Son of Man	False prophets

(Figure 6.4)

Matthew employed complementary word pair association, as compared to Luke who clearly adopted antithetical word pairs. What this means for a literary analysis of the Matthean Beatitudes is that although there may be an absence of an obvious word pairing, a “potential” word pair is always present in the communication process (cf. Berlin 1985:68-79). In these instances, the interpreter observes the different modifiers employed by the author, and searches for an appropriate word association.

Of course, a word can elicit many associations (Berlin 1985:71). Segert has referred to the “non-parallelistic relationships” in poetic structure (1984:1438). Although it can be hard to trace, the clause in question (hemistich or colon) should be observed as extensions, descriptions, or subordinations of previous colon or cola.

It was common to compose a poetic text with a “deliberate obscurity” so the author could imply that the meaning of the text was “beyond the human mind to verbalize or define” (Kennedy 1984:52). This technique was used as a rhetorical device (cf. Culler 1997:69-70). Finding a “potential” word association means to ask questions of the text. What association might this word usually convey? Does the parallel structure demand an association by the author? Does it have a “common opposite” that is elicited in its usage (Berlin 1985:72)?

6.3.1.2 *Alliteration*

Alliteration was a chief characteristic of Semitic parallelism (Berlin 1985:103). The use of alliteration served both mnemonic and aesthetic purposes in an oral culture. Its significance was strictly functional in bringing cohesion to the text and the performance of it (Watson 2005:227). It involved the repetition of consonants both orally and textually (Berlin 1985:103-111; Watson 2005:225-226).

In the Beatitudes, first there was the p-alliteration was: *ptōchoi tō pneumati* (“poor in spirit”), *penthountes* (“mourning”), *paraklēthēsontai* (“comforted”), *praeis* (“meek”), and *peinōntes* (“hungry”). Second, there was the d-alliteration: *dipsōntes* (“thirst”), *dediōgmenoi* (“persecuted”), and *dikaiousunē* (“righteousness”). Finally, there was the k-alliteration: *klēronomnsousin* (“inherit”), *katharoi tē kardia* (“pure in heart”), and *klēthēsontai* (“called”). The word *chortasthēsontai* (“satisfied”) could also be considered a k-alliteration because of the similar sound. Watson assessed that a primary function of alliteration was to bring focus and attention to the text (2005:228).

In the second stanza (5:13-16), there was the triple use of *halas* (5:13), the use of *kosmou*, *krubēnai*, *keimenē*, and *kaiousin* (5:14-15) in close proximity to each other, as was *luchnon*, *luchnian*, *lampei*, and *lampsatō* (5:15-16). It was clearly Matthew’s intention to use alliteration as a vivid tool in introducing the Sermon on the Mount: practically, as a mnemonic function and rhetorically, for theological understanding (cf. Green 2001:41).

6.3.1.3 Assonance

Since the ancient world relied on oral communication, assonance was a natural function in literary composition. Gluck claimed that assonance was a principal figure of rhetoric for the ancients (1971:84). Assonance involved the similar sound of words (vowels and diphthongs) in repetitive patterns as found in a stanza. The similar sounds contributed “to the musical sensation which accompanies the meaning” of the words employed by the author (Gluck 1971:71). The function of assonance was to demonstrate the corresponding meaning between cola and strophe (Berlin 1985:111).

To convey the importance of assonance in the biblical text, Scott and Dean have developed a “sound map” of the Sermon on the Mount (1996:311-

378). Dunn has also emphasized the challenge to step outside literary predispositions into a non-literary culture for a proper understanding of the text (2003a:142). Since the earliest communication of the Jesus tradition was oral, observing the sounds of a text is paramount for the interpreter (Longenecker 2005:49-53).

The oral performers, as well as audience, had to rely on the sounds in a text “because it provided their initial and primary clues as to its organization and meaning” (Scott and Dean 1996:314). For the first century audience, the Beatitudes had to be heard before they were understood (Hearon 2006:11-13). For the interpreter, Berlin has warned that identifying assonance correspondence involves the “risk of subjectivity” (1985:125). However, the more discernible the linguistic effects of parallelism are in a text, the greater assurance of its poetic function in that text (cf. Berlin 1985:130-138).

The nature of a society dependent upon oral communication contributes to understanding differences between the Matthean and Lukan versions of the Beatitudes. Different audiences with their specific social challenges made up the early Christian communities (Hearon 2006:19). Matthew composed the Beatitudes to meet those challenges of the Matthean community. By recognizing assonance in the Beatitudes, a greater sensitivity toward the position of the early listeners will ensue within the interpreter. Loubser is convinced that by observing the smoothness of sound in the Beatitudes, it demonstrated “a long sequence of performances behind it” (2006:71). What “sounds” in the Beatitudes exhibited the literary clues that Matthew intended for his audience?

- (a) *Identical Sound*: The repetition of *makarioi...hoti* provided the primary distinction of the Beatitudes (Scott and Dean 1996:323; Allison 2005:174-178). The *hoti autōn estin hē basileia tōn ouranōn* (“for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”) in 5:3 and 5:10 naturally formed an inclusio and alerted the hearers that both strophes combined formed an understandable unit (Bowman 1947:168; Green 2001:176; Longenecker 2005:22). Within the inclusio, *dikaioisunēs-dikaisunēs* (“righteousness”; cf. 5:6, 10), *eleē--* (“merciful-mercy”; cf. 5:7), and *theon-theou* (“god”; cf. 5:8,

9) were dominant sounds in the second strophe. It was interesting that the second strophe was more abstract than the first (Scott and Dean 1996:323).

- (b) *Similar Sound*: With Matthew, the similar sound occurred with the *-thēsontai* endings in Matthew 5:4, 6, 7, and 9. In Matthew 5:8, the word *opsontai* also sounds similar to the *-thēsontai* endings and should be considered parallel. The *-thēsontai* endings were divine passives, while *opsontai* also referenced the divine experience. For Matthew, the sounds of the passive voice would signify divine intervention, repetitiously building into a poetic crescendo! In the second stanza (5:13-16), particles and prepositions were used frequently: *ean*, *en*, *eis*, *ei* (5:13), and *ou*, *oude*, *outōs*, and *hopōs* (5:14-16). This could have been by authorial design or simply the normal preference of the linguistic system adopted (Talstra 1999:106-107).

6.3.1.4 Allusion (Intertextuality)

Although the ancient world did not refer to allusion, prolific evidence demonstrates that it was realistically applied to their literature (Pucci 1998:83-85). In reality, all literature utilizes allusion and intertextuality for “conveying a connection in difference or a difference in connection” to antecedent literary works (Alter 1992:111). The essence of intertextuality is the relation of a text to other texts (cf. Alkier 2005:1-6). No text is read without the experience of the reader influencing it (cf. Eco 1979:21). Meaning is to be found by finding the “involvement” of other texts (cf. Alkier 2005:5). For the modern interpreter, Luz has pointed to the difficulty inherent with allusion in the biblical text (2004:130). Does not the reader need to be an informed reader to understand the allusions?

The Gospel of Matthew was thoroughly written from a Jewish metanarrative. Matthew used Old Testament structures, from the Pentateuch to the Elijah/Elisha stories, to encase the story of Jesus (cf. Brawley 2003:599-600; Davies 2005:174-179; Luz 2005:22-36). Luz goes further by insisting the life of Jesus provided the frame of reference to the Old

Testament, not vice versa (2005:33). Did the Jewish Christian audience addressed by Matthew understand the allusions in the Gospel, say, better than the Gentile Christians? Luz insists that the readers/hearers of the Matthean Gospel knew of the practice of allusion and even expected the use of it in the composition of the Gospel (2004:130).

If Pucci is correct in his assessment that allusions within a text creates a “full knowing reader”, the implications would mean the readers/hearers of Matthew’s Gospel were expected to be familiar with the author’s frame of reference (1998:28-30). Matthew quoted and alluded to the Old Testament more than any other Synoptic Gospel, as seen with interspersed Old Testament references (Stanton 1988:205-208). Stanton does not concede that Matthew has adopted *peshar* exegesis, but, instead, understands him to have relied on memory conducive for application to the situation of the Matthean community (1988:210).

Allusion was an intertextual referentiality employing word order, syntactical construction, images, or themes (Luz 2004:131). The strength of allusion was its visibility in being understood by the reader/hearer of the text. With allusion, no set of rules govern its function, only that it is “specific and verifiable” in and through the text (Pucci 1998:32). Pucci has explained that, for the reader, an “allusive space” is created allowing an interpretive dialogue between the reader and the text, whereby the reader makes meaning (1998:43). The assumption is that intertextuality affirms that textual meaning is never static (cf. Alkier 2005:11). What this meant for Matthew, then, was that allusions to the Old Testament text combined with the story of Jesus, and formed a new intertextual reality that extended meaning further when combined rather than separated (Brawley 2003:604; cf. Alkier 2005:6-10).

Allusion in the Beatitudes began with the blessing formula. Abraham received the promise of blessing from YHWH, with assurance of his role in creating the people of God (cf. Gen 12:1-3). Blessing was also reminiscent of the priests and their regular function in the temple for the people of God (cf. Num 6:22-27). They alone had the “right” to pronounce the blessing (benediction) upon the people and in so doing, provided the recipient with assurance (cf. Mitchell 1987:98).

With the “kingdom of heaven”, Matthew appealed to a foundational Jewish metanarrative. What Jewish person needed to be coaxed in kingdom understanding? The Davidic Covenant was Israel’s guarantee of a kingdom created by God (cf. II Sam 7:12-16). The third Beatitude promised, to the meek, an inheritance of the land (cf. Matt 5:5). Would there be any other understanding than the land of Israel for a Jewish person? Surely the Abrahamic Covenant, along with Psalm 37:11 would be remembered as a land promise to Israel (cf. Brawley 2003:608-616). By the time of Jesus, the understanding of the land promise extended to a kingdom encompassing the entire world.

The fourth Beatitude, hungering and thirsting, was qualified with “after righteousness” (cf. Matt 5:6). Here, Matthew was alluding to the prophet Isaiah and his promise of eschatological justice on earth for the people of God (cf. Riches 2000:195-199). With the “pure of heart”, Matthew addressed a constant theme within Judaism: purity (cf. Klawans 2006:49-73; Haber 2008:161-179). Finally, the salt and light metaphors were allusions to Israel’s theological understanding. Salt spoke of the sacrifices and covenant fidelity (cf. Lev 2:13; Num 18:19) and light spoke of God’s presence among his people (cf. Num 6:24-27; Isa 60:19-20).

Allusion was an influential characteristic of parallelism. In using allusions through intertextual freedom, Matthew composed a text that would become foundational in forming the identity of the new community. Through his allusions to the Old Testament, Matthew made theological comments that were adopted by the new community (cf. Stanton 1988:205-206). In essence, allusion was the transference of meaning from author to reader and continuing with no end in sight (cf. Pucci 1998:256; Alkier 2005:17).

6.3.1.5 Metaphor and Metonymy

Without metaphor, language would be lifelessly literal. The use of metaphor is essential if meaning is to be conveyed, since “we know something by seeing it as something” (Culler 1997:71). Metaphor is a figure of speech by which one thing is described in terms of another. Metonymy links ideas together. It is the use of corresponding ideas in relation to what is being described (cf. White House for the President; the throne for sovereignty; or the bottle for liquor).

Matthew used metaphorical and metonymical concepts to describe the new community: blessed, kingdom of heaven, righteousness, reward, city on a hill, salt, and light. Maartens has suggested the necessity of understanding the Beatitudes through a metaphoric reading (1991:7-11). For the Jewish Christian, the “blessed” were those associated with the temple and priests. For the new community, following Jesus meant to be blessed by Jesus (cf. Matt 11:6; 13:16; 16:17; 19:13-15; 21:9; 23:39; 24:46; and 25:34). The “kingdom of heaven” was the divine promise to Israel in being a distinct nation in the world. The kingdom concept may have referred to the subjects of the kingdom, extending to the new community (cf. Allison 2010:202-203).

The prophets continually promised a time of righteousness and restoration for the people of God. For the new community, representing Jesus was righteousness displayed. The reward, so often thought of in futuristic terms, was framed into the present association with Jesus, resulting in deep joy and gladness. The city on the hill would be reminiscent of Jerusalem. The new community was to be visible for the world! Finally, salt and light were concepts of covenant fidelity and divine holiness. By using these metaphors, Matthew emphasized the role of the new community for the world: a divine presence and preeminence in bringing attention to God as Father.

6.3.2 *The Poetical Arrangement of the Beatitudes*

By studying the mechanical arrangement of the Beatitudes, it reinforces the proposal that Matthew had a premeditated purpose in its constitution (DiLella 1989:239). As mentioned by Loubser, “smoothness” to the Beatitudes exhibits oral performance and transmission over a period of time (2006:71). By observing the physical structure of the Beatitudes, it becomes evident that Matthew adopted known rhetorical and poetical devices in communicating his message to the new community (Combrink 1992:8-9).

6.3.2.1 *Various Positions on the Poetic Arrangement*

There have been various positions on the arrangement of the Beatitudes. McEleney considers the chiasmic nature of the Beatitudes by focusing on the verb tense (1981:1-13). Chiasm was a common tool employed by the scribal

community (cf. Lohr 1961:403-435). Throughout the Matthean Gospel there were chiastic patterns providing evidence of authorial intent (cf. VanderWeele 2008:669-673). Furthermore, rhetoric was interested in stylistic arrangement (Paul 2001:389; cf. Stanton 1993:77).

Chiastic Arrangement
(McEleney)

5:3 = inclusory formula
 5:4 = divine passive
 5:5 = future active with object
 5:6 = divine passive
 5:7 = divine passive
 5:8 = future middle with object
 5:9 = divine passive
 5:10 = inclusory formula

Davies and Allison suggest viewing the Beatitudes in a triadic formula as groups of three, leading to nine Beatitudes (1988:431; Allison 2005:174-177). For some scholars, triads were the blatantly obvious in the Sermon on the Mount (Allison 1987:438; Thom 2007:291-292). Therefore, the Beatitudes would also display such an arrangement.

Triadic Formula of Beatitudes
(Davies and Allison)

(poor in spirit, mournful, meek)
 +
 (hunger/thirst, merciful, pure in heart)
 +
 (peacemakers, persecuted, reviled)

Robbins analyzes the Beatitudes from the perspective of rhetoric and the use of syllogism (1985:35-63; cf. Combrink 1992:7-13). Each Beatitude, in turn, was a proposition with a rationale following it (Robbins 1985:39). The syllogism would consist of an unstated premise, a stated premise, and a conclusion. Kennedy has explained the entire Sermon on the Mount from a rhetorical and syllogistic arrangement (1984:49-63). Two examples are given to demonstrate this proposal (Robbins 1985:47).

Syllogistic Form of the Beatitudes
(Robbins)

Unstated Premise: Blessed are those to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs.

Stated Premise: The kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit.

Conclusion: Therefore, blessed are the poor in spirit.

Unstated Premise: Blessed are those who shall be comforted.

Stated Premise: Those who mourn shall be comforted.

Conclusion: Therefore, blessed are those who mourn.

Each proposal has merit on its own terms: McEleney from a grammatical perspective, Davies and Allison from a triadic paradigm, and Robbins from rhetorical theory. This study has concluded that the approach needed in understanding the Beatitudes must satisfy two criteria: the mnemonic purpose conducive to an oral culture and Matthew's deliberative and balanced formation of the strophes. DiLella has demonstrated, through word count, how the two strophes were balanced (1989:237-242).

Word Count in the Beatitudes
(DiLella)

Strophe I

5:3 = 12 words

5:4 = 6 words

5:5 = 8 words

5:6 = 10 words

Total = 36 words

Strophe II

5:7 = 6 words

5:8 = 10 words

5:9 = 8 words

5:10 = 12 words

Total = 36 words

DiLella has also pointed to the symmetrical nature of each hemistich (half colon). Matthew employed words totaling three, five, or seven in each hemistich. The total word count was seventy-two. The extended Beatitude

(5:11-12) contained thirty-five words. Could this have been a mnemonic practice of remembering sections for textual performance (cf. Person 1998:601-609)? By bridging the sections together with chain-link transitions, the flow of material would be achieved (cf. Longenecker 2005:23-50). The chain-link consisted of key words or phrases connecting paragraphs or strophes together.

In the first two strophes of the Beatitudes, the inclusio “kingdom of heaven” was joined. The term “righteousness”, “on account of me” and “good works” served as chain-links joining the units of 5:3-6, 5:7-10, 5:11-12, and 5:13-16 together. The word “persecution” joined 5:10, with the subsequent 5:11-12, to demonstrate the relationship of all three strophes together.

Many interpreters have relied more on plot, yet could this be a more objective approach to the text by understanding how an oral culture understood and transmitted it among the community (Longenecker 2005:49-51; cf. Smith 1997:541). Interestingly, this study has also found the Lord’s Prayer to contain seventy-two words with the inclusion of the extended ending of “for yours is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen” (cf. Matt 6:9-13). Could this suggest oral patterns of repetition (“ritual”) incorporated by the Matthean community?

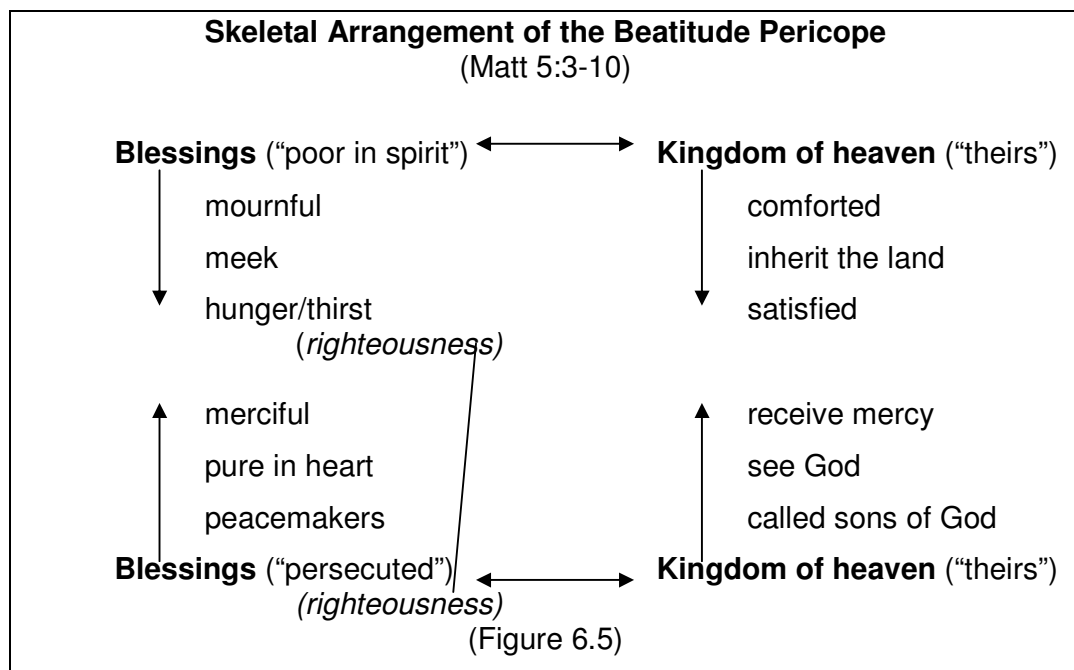
6.3.2.2 A Matthean Paradigm for the New Community

By observing the poetic arrangement demonstrated by Matthew in the extended Beatitude pericope (5:3-16), it becomes clear that the composition served a parenetic function for the new community (Luz 2007:190). More precisely, this study has determined that the original pericope was addressed to the leaders and teachers (“disciples”; cf. 4:12-25) within the Matthean community (cf. Lincoln 1990:103-125; Draper 1999:28-32). These teachers were responsible in leading and shaping the new community in the teachings and mission of Jesus. The pericope would serve to accomplish that goal.

As such, the Matthean Gospel was the story of Jesus, composed to demonstrate the foundation and mission for the existence of the “new people” (Stanton 1993:378-383). The Sermon on the Mount served as a description of this new community. The Beatitudes served to introduce the fundamental

nature of the new community: a blessed community able to experience and extend the righteousness God demanded.

The backdrop to the Beatitudes was the message of Jesus “repent, the kingdom of heaven is near” and the calling of the disciples (4:17, 18-25). Theologically, Matthew was describing the paradigm shift of a follower of Jesus. This shift (*metanoia*) was the basis for understanding the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes were descriptive of “*metanoia*” and its implications for Jesus followers (cf. Luz 1995:42-43; 2007:160). The “shocking effects” of the Beatitudes demonstrated the radical paradigm shift within the new community, especially among the Jewish Christians (Kodjak 1986:42). How did Matthew demonstrate this paradigm shift in the arrangement of the Beatitude pericope (cf. Figure 6.5)?



First, the skeletal frame of the pericope centered on the motif of blessing and the kingdom of heaven. The structure of the Beatitudes was balanced with a clear mnemonic pattern (5:3-10). Green has understood the Beatitudes through Matthew’s use of pairings: poor and meek, mercy and peace, mourn and hunger/thirst (2001:182-234).

This study has found it better to understand Matthew using “poor in spirit” and “persecuted” as synecdochic expressions of the blessed (cf. Draper

1999:36). Poor in spirit described the inward condition (mournful, meek, hunger/thirst) of longing for righteousness (5:3-6). The persecuted was descriptive of the outward expression (merciful, purity, peacemakers) of righteousness (5:7-10). Maartens has also understood the structure as suggestive of a “humiliation-exaltation” motif (1991:7-10). Each strophe had semantic equivalence with each metaphor.

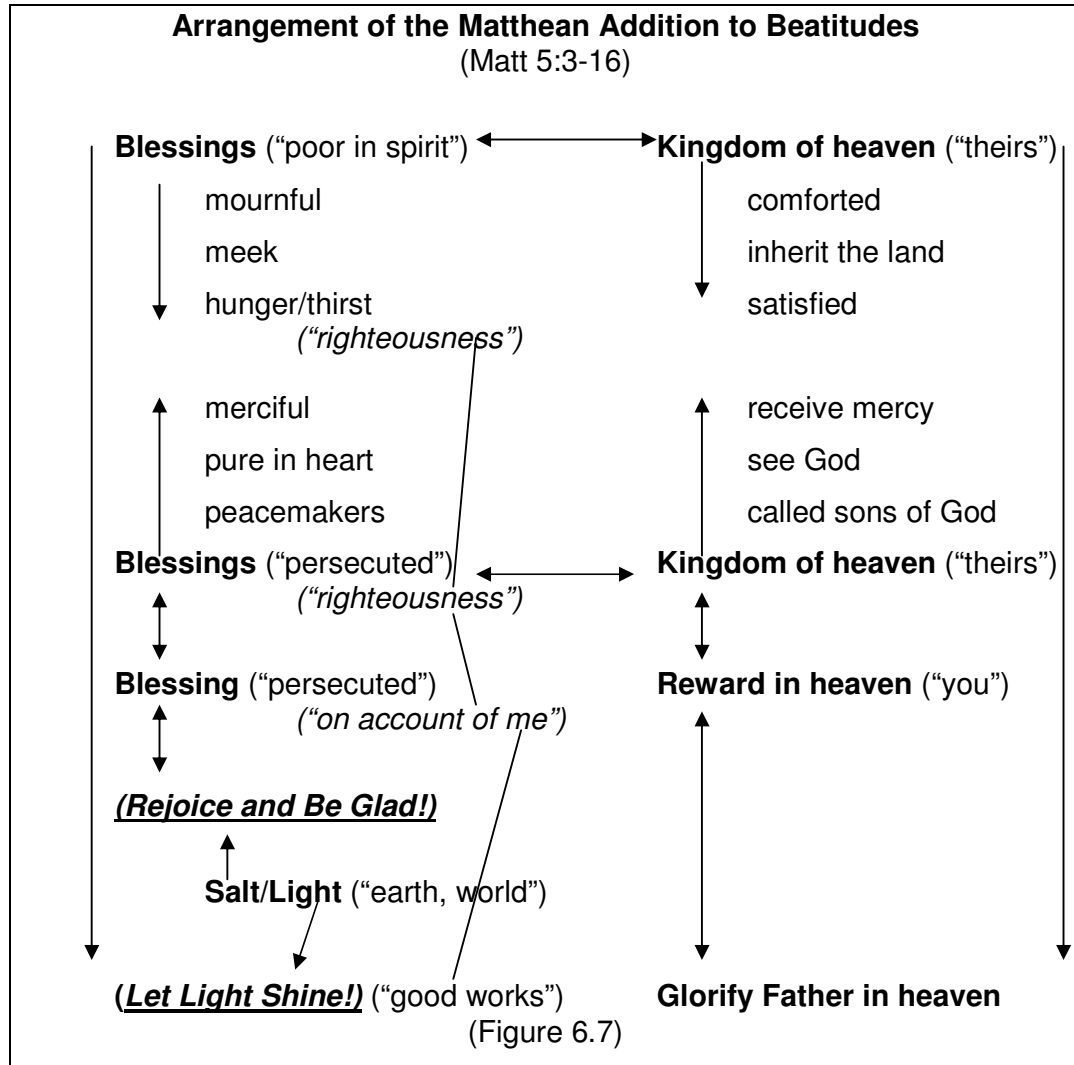
It was within this structural framework that Matthew added his application for the new community, thereby enhancing the skeletal framework (cf. Figure 6.6). By addressing the new community in Matthew 5:11 (second person plural), Matthew interprets the blessings for the new community (Luz 2007:185-190). Matthew took the general blessings of the Beatitudes (5:3-10) and adopted them for the new community during their time of persecution (cf. Stanton 1993:299-300). The blessings were hyperbolic as an emphasis on the nature of reversal the messianic kingdom symbolized in the midst of persecution (Allison 2005:178; cf. Combrink 1983:81). The heavenly kingdom was the source of all blessings.

**Chiastic Arrangement of Beatitudes to Present Situation
(Matt 5:3-11)**

- A. Blessed (they): poor in spirit (Kingdom of heaven)
 - B. Satisfaction of ***righteousness***
 - A. Blessed (they): persecuted (Kingdom of heaven)
 - B. ***Righteousness*** as Cause
 - A. Blessed (you): persecuted
 - B. “***On my account***” as Cause
- (Figure 6.6)

Green has insisted that “poor in spirit” (5:3) and “pure in heart” (5:8) were keynotes to the parallelism of the Beatitudes (2001:253). However, as figure 6.7 demonstrates, it was more probable that Matthew intended to balance “poor in spirit” (5:3) with the “persecuted for righteousness” (5:10). The central thought of “righteousness” was present in all three strophes and was progressively presented: the hungering for righteousness, the existence

of righteousness that led to persecution, the persecution due to representing Jesus, and the good works that bring attention to God's presence in the world (cf. Matt 5:6, 10, 11, and 16; Stanton 1989:71).



The theme of righteousness, that was central to the Sermon on the Mount, was used as a parenetic for the followers of Jesus to continue in their new "Christian" paradigm, despite the difficulties faced in representing Jesus (cf. 5:11-12). As a central theme, Matthew extends the Beatitude pericope by using "righteousness", "on account of me", and "good works" as chain-links in demonstrating the parallel thought (cf. Figure 6.8).

**Righteousness as a Literary Motif in the Pericope
(Matt 5:3-16)**

The Pursuit of Christ Righteousness (v.6)

“hunger and thirst”

The Presence of Christ Righteousness (v.10, 11)

“eneken” (on account of)

The Parameters of Christ Righteousness (v.12, 16)

**temporal transcendence (“prophets before you”) and
spatial transcendence (“reward in heaven...Father in heaven”)**

The Purpose of Christ Righteousness (v.16)

“glorify your Father”

(Figure 6.8)

For Draper, this righteousness was the correct role of the Torah for the new community as instructed by Jesus (1999:32-47). However, contrary to Draper, Matthean righteousness was Jesus righteousness, righteousness the Torah could not achieve on its own (Deines 2008:80-83). To those who hungered for righteousness, Jesus was the satisfaction. The Sermon on the Mount was Jesus’ teaching on the characteristics of kingdom righteousness as equivalent to Jesus righteousness (cf. 5:20; 6:33).

The practical result for the new community was twofold: continue to rejoice as the Christ community and remember the mission objective in representing Jesus to the world. Matthew wanted this literary climax with the Beatitudes pericope (Matthew 5:11-16). The eight Beatitudes were foundational in understanding the kingdom reality through the presence of Jesus. Matthew shifted to the Matthean community (cf. Matt 5:11) and explained how the Beatitudes were relevant to their situation.

By focusing on the oral nature of the pericope, this study has found that there are aural clues to how it was to be understood and presented (cf. Scott and Dean 1996:312-320). The four key phrases dominating the application of the Beatitudes to the Matthean community all contained nine syllables as orally presented. The imperatives enclosed the two central declaratives serving a chiastic function. The dominance of “you” and “your” was clearly

understood as demonstrating the relevance of the Beatitudes to the present situation (cf. Figure 6.9).

**Chiastic Climax of Beatitudes Pericope
(Matt 5:11-16)**

- A. **Imperative:** *chairete kai agalliasthe (You)*
 - B. *Your great reward in heaven*
 - B. *Prophets before you*

 - C. **Declarative:** *Hymeis (You) este to halas tēs gēs*
 - C. **Declarative:** *Hymeis (You) este to phōs tou kosmou*

 - A. **Imperative:** *houtōs lampsatō to phōs hymōn (your)*
 - B. *See your good works*
 - B. *Glorify your Father in heaven*
- (Figure 6.9)

Matthew encouraged the new community and its leaders to “rejoice” for the “insults” in response to their representation of Jesus. Why would there be encouragement to rejoice in the suffering experience? By following the flow of the text, Matthew recalls how the ministry of Jesus was attacked in similar fashion (cf. 5:17-20). Again, the theme of righteousness was prominent.

Matthew pointed to a righteousness that transcended both time and spatial concerns. The new community was being persecuted for abolishing the law and prophets. It was the Law that “defined the identity of the Jewish people” (Nolland 2005:218). With the paradigm shift initiated by Jesus and incorporated by the new community in the Beatitudes, a natural tension evolved with the “fictive” family of Jesus and the old “family” from which they separated (Riches 2000:209-211).

Evidently, the new community was accused of enervating the law with its teachings (cf. Matt 5:19). Sim has argued that the Christian Jewish community “accepted without question the validity of the Torah and attempted to observe it in its entirety” (1998:123). The persecution, then, would amount

to differences of opinion on how to observe the Law. However, Matthew was arguing against this very proposal (cf. Hagner 2003:193-209). Jesus' relation to the Law was one of "sovereignty", so that the validity of the Law was retained "only as interpreted by Jesus" (Hagner 1998:366).

Matthew used hyperbolic rhetoric in encouraging the new community against the antinomian charges of Jewish persecutors (Keener 2009:178). Jesus fulfilled the Law, not only in his teaching, but in his obedience as well (Bruner 2004:199-200). For Matthew, Jesus was the fulfillment of the Law as demonstrated through his command to love one's enemies (cf. Matt 5:43-48).

The relationship of Matthew 5:17-20 to the Beatitudes was its emphasis on discipleship to Jesus within the new community (Foster 2004:182). The blessings Jesus pronounced were given without reference to obedience to the Law (Deines 2008:73). Participation in kingdom righteousness was a blessing recognized through Jesus' presence and pronouncement. "The law is no longer the center of gravity; Jesus is" (Snodgrass 1996:126).

The new community represented the new paradigm, as emphasized at the close of the Gospel with the command to go throughout the world as representatives (cf. Matt 28:18-20; Combrink 1983:87-90). By referencing those blessed with the metaphors of salt and light, Jesus was directly identifying the new community as the witness of God's presence in the world, not the Torah.

Matthew understood the nature and implications of accusing Jesus and the new community of Torah abandonment (cf. Matt 5:17-20). The inner attitude of love and its demonstration toward others characterized the "greater" righteousness (cf. Bauer 1988:60). The new community in its mission would represent the teachings of Jesus with love and mercy (cf. 5:19-20; 28:20; Stanton 1989:72-75).

Matthew's theological understanding of the law and its relationship to the new community was based on his Christological understanding of Jesus more than the law which Jesus interpreted (Morgan 2000:167; cf. Blomberg 2004:6-7). Jesus was Lord of the new community and that meant the community was involved in the practice of discipleship. Ultimately, the

theological understanding of Jesus as Lord is demonstrated in the practice of discipleship to him (cf. Morgan 2000:169-170).

With the salt and light metaphors, Matthew accentuated the nature of the new community's operation in the world. Despite hatred and verbal attack, the new community was the kingdom presence God positioned in the world to demonstrate Jesus righteousness. Matthew intended to demonstrate the impossibility of being a follower of Jesus and not demonstrating a kingdom presence (cf. Combrink 1992:11-13). Through antithetical parallelism, Matthew described "worthless" salt being trampled upon by humanity and juxtaposed with humanity who witnessed the "good works" demonstrated through the light (Matt 5:13-16).

Matthew was encouraging the new community to understand its role in the world as representatives of Jesus and his kingdom, demonstrated with the imperatival injunctions ("rejoice" and "let light shine"). Matthew came full circle with his reasoning. The new community was blessed through the kingdom presence of Jesus. As blessed ones, the community was the salt and light to the world. The result was recognition of the Father and his divine presence in the world (cf. glory as a temple motif; Welch 2009:72-76; Liroy 2010:64-66).

6.4 Summary of the Literary Analysis of the Beatitudes

Literary analysis involves three key dimensions: author, text, and reader. Many variables contribute to the concept of meaning in literary analysis. First, the historical context of the author must be considered. If evidence exists of authorial intention, it, too, should be examined. Second, the objective text should be analyzed by focusing on its symbols, arrangement, and intertextual relationships. Textual meaning always includes understanding the contextual and cultural influences that contributed to the text's creation. Finally, the reader should realize the important role he or she has in the hermeneutical process. The intersection of expectations, both from the text and with the reader, collides, serving to create meaning for the present. The goal throughout literary analysis is finding meaning.

Genre studies are vital for the interpretation of the biblical text. Knowing the “style” of the Beatitudes is the first step in understanding its meaning and function. Matthew composed the Beatitudes as an introduction to the Sermon on the Mount. Knowing the rules of literary composition during the first century is necessary if the genre is to be understood by the modern reader (cf. Engle 2000:88-89, 96-97). However, there will always be “gains and losses” when applying genre analysis to the text (Gerhart 1988:41). One should not contend that knowing a particular genre is equivalent to understanding the text. Yet, it certainly provides more interpretative options leading to greater confidence in the overall analysis of the text.

Because a genre is created in the interaction of a writer, reader, and context, it is imperative to focus on the influence of wisdom tradition and apocalyptic worldviews that formed the literary milieu for Matthew (cf. Devitt 2000:699). At the time of Matthew’s composition, sapiential works were abundant within Second Temple Judaism, from Ben Sira to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Wisdom tradition had developed many strands of thought during the intertestamental period (cf. Collins 1993b:168; Bennema 2001:61-82). Coinciding with these traditions was the apocalyptic worldview, shaping the thought of first century religion and literature (Collins 1993b:165; Engle 2000:92-95). This worldview saw the world as moving toward a divine purpose and goal.

As Matthew composed his Gospel in this literary milieu, the person of Jesus was the eschatological reality to which history pointed. The Beatitudes served as an introduction in bringing assurance of the kingdom presence and blessings offered through Jesus. The beauty of the Beatitudes was the poetic arrangement by Matthew.

By employing parallelism, Matthew composed a poetic piece that served both mnemonic and theological purposes. Imaginative worlds are created with poetry (cf. Ricoeur 1976:67). The Beatitudes demonstrate how “poetry is essentially a social activity” (Green 2001:23). Matthew envisioned the eschatological reality of God’s presence. Mnemonic use of the Beatitudes served to strengthen the philosophical core of the new community. As the community involved itself with the proclamation of Jesus’ kingdom message,

the reactions demonstrated against it resulted in negative tensions (cf. Matt 5:11-16).

Matthew, through poetic expression, reminded the community that the “persecution” came upon the “poor in spirit” because of the “righteousness” they desired and displayed. However, this was no ordinary righteousness (cf. Matt 5:20). This righteousness was epitomized in the person of Jesus and to which the community proclaimed and witnessed in their new lives (cf. Matt 5:10-12). Through the Matthean form created in the Beatitudes pericope, meaning could be applied through the oral repetition of the themes of righteousness and the kingdom of heaven (cf. Figure 6.5; Alter 1992:45).

Theologically, the pericope was an encouragement for the new community to continue in their influence and presence as the kingdom reality experienced in the truth of Jesus. Just as the scribal circles used apocalyptic writings during their crisis of faith (cf. Horsley 2010:3-16), Matthew, the Christian scribe, writes from the perspective that the kingdom *has arrived* in the person of Jesus. For this reason, the new community could rejoice, even when persecution was experienced.

Three fundamental theological ideas were presented in the Beatitudes pericope. First, righteousness was to be equated with Jesus. If one pursued righteousness, they, in essence, pursued Jesus. If one practiced righteousness, they, in essence, practiced the teaching of Jesus.

Second, the kingdom of heaven inaugurated by Jesus involved a paradigm shift, both by and for the people of God. Divine blessing was involved with a new mediation, not in the temple, Torah, or covenants, but in the person of Jesus. The Matthean community understood that if the kingdom presence was here, they were the subjects of that kingdom.

Third, the Beatitudes served to delineate the salt/light metaphors as the presence of Jesus within the world. Through redundancy, Matthew reinforced the core idea that Jesus was “God with us” and would continue as that presence through the new community (cf. Burnett 1985:91).

With Jesus, a new chapter had begun in the eschatological drama (cf. Luz 2004:134). The Old Testament narrative and its relationship to Israel was the reference point that “subordinated” itself to “the story of Jesus” (Luz 2004:137). The Matthean composition was the “re-imaging”, or point of view,

Matthew had for the new community (cf. Lotman 1975:339-342; Betz 1985:15). The Beatitudes depicted a formulaic style that correlated to the new community's representational experience of Jesus.

Formulaic narratives, highly stylized, carefully ordered and regulated by cultural agreement, constitute a defense of the status quo; they reflect the culture's ideal world—imbalances ideally balanced, riddles resolved, perfection attained through prescribed language and prescribed action (Wittig 1973:133).

Matthew took what was being experienced by the new community as what should have been expected. The pericope was a well-crafted rhetoric with the semantic expansion that became a literary standard for the new community in understanding both the gospel message of Jesus, as well as the basis for its own existence (Schroter 2006:111; cf. Howell 1990:93-94; Powell 1996:461). In following Jesus, a new narrative was created whereby those who were blessed were the "salt" and "light", conveying "glory" that was external to the temple, expressed among people with actions that could only be described as good and divinely complimentary.

Chapter 7

Speech Act Theory and the Beatitudes

The Beatitudes were formed in a context of utterance. In his 1955 William James Lectures at Harvard University, James Austin called attention to how a speaker does something in an utterance. The foundation of speech act theory is the presupposition that in speaking there is the act of doing something (cf. Austin 1975:6-7; Patte 1988:88-90; White 1988:2; Briggs 2001a:229-230; Botha 2007:275; Poythress 2008:337-338). Searle has argued, “all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts” (1969:16). Austin described utterances as “performative” because “it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action” (1975:6-7; cf. Searle 1969:16; Esterhammer 1993:285-304; McDonald 2003:57-63).

Meaning is not to be found simply in words but, instead, in the contextual “language game” of utterance (Wittgenstein 1958:§7; cf. Skinner 2002:103-106). Before Austin, Wittgenstein claimed “the speaking of language is part of an activity, or a form of life” best described as a language game (1958:§23). With Austin, the activity Wittgenstein propagated was formalized by focusing on what we do with words.

By looking past the linguistic symbols of words and sentences, meaning will be discovered within the performance of speech acts for which those symbols were employed (cf. Searle 1969:16-17). Searle affirms that a suitable “study of speech acts is a study of langue” (1969:17). For Searle, the importance of studying speech act theory is because all language is a “rule-governed intentional behavior” (1969:16-25). Speech act theory is vital to

biblical hermeneutics in order to see the text as “words in action”, doing something within and beyond the text (cf. Briggs 2001b).

In utilizing speech act theory, the biblical text is recognized as more than the consequence of information. The text becomes the call to action whereby the reader/hearer responds (cf. Vanhoozer 2001:46). As Ricoeur aptly stated, we want to understand the meaning of the text, not just the historical event (1976:10-12). Language does not simply transmit information. Language has the potential to bring about transformation through the communication event (Vanhoozer 2001:6). In regards to speech act theory, it is foundational to determine how one views language and its inherent abilities (cf. Thiselton 1974:285-287).

The presupposition that God has communicated to humanity necessitates that speech acts be properly understood (cf. Webster 1998:323-333). Through human agency, the text of Scripture attests that the utterances of the faith community demonstrate “the many and various things that can be done with words” (Briggs 2008:75). Since language is “a species of human action” (Vanhoozer 2001:3), the understanding of God is through that medium (cf. Wolterstorff 2001:73-90). Ward maintains the best way to approach Scripture is “through a theological appropriation of a speech-act account of language” (2002:130). Further, the biblical texts clearly display “a clear speech-act view of language in general and of God’s speech in particular” (Ward 2002:304).

However, BeDuhn decries over the use of speech act theory relative to transcendent truths or divine revelation (2002:109). Petrey has also concluded, “where God is, speech-act theory has nothing to say” (1990:100). What should not be lost to the interpreter is the social context of speech act theory and the conventions recognized by the community (Esterhammer 1993:285-286). Briggs has affirmed that the introduction to Scripture is a speech act (Briggs 2008:76). In the Genesis creation narrative (cf. Gen 1-3), God created, commanded, blessed, questioned, and affirmed through speech acts. As Webster has explained, the very notion of the “Word of God” is an axiom that “God is and speaks” (1998:324). Even Petrey has admitted, “realism addresses what a collectivity accepts as real” (1990:124). For the faith community, the reality is God has spoken.

While true that God as *prima facie* cannot be reduced to speech act theory (cf. Poythress 2008:351-354), the understanding of God must accommodate itself to human communication and language within a social construct, and to that medium speech act theory is necessary. From this study, it is concluded that when approaching the text of Scripture, one must acknowledge the historical and social construct alongside the functional act of divine discourse, which can be affirmed and experienced as the presence of God to the faith community (cf. Wolterstorff 1995:183-222; Webster 1998:330-341; Vanhoozer 2002:150-151; Ward 2002:75).

Speech act theory is not simply a description of language use; it is the observation of the action itself. Patte has suggested that speech act theory has not offered new information as much as a new conceptual framework in understanding language (1988:89). The strength of speech act theory is its focus on utterances within the context of human interaction (cf. Poythress 2008:354). What has been said about speech act theory that can be incorporated within biblical hermeneutics?

7.1 The Development and Themes of Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory actually received its due attention after the early death of its founder, JL Austin. The lectures Austin gave in 1955 at Harvard University were published in 1962, catapulting speech act theory to philosophical stature. His student, John Searle, can be credited with the expansion of speech act methodology as a tool for research in communication and philosophy (cf. Searle 1969, 1979). Other disciplines soon followed in employing speech act theory, such as literary theory (cf. Skinner 1970:118-138; Pratt 1977; Petrey 1990), linguistics (cf. Barr 1961), and theology (cf. Patte 1988:85-102; White 1988:1-24; Briggs 2001b; Vanhoozer 2001:1-49; Wolterstorff 2001:73-90; Childs 2005:375-392).

7.1.1 The Founder of Speech Act Theory: Austin

Austin gave notice in his lectures of the central thesis that would later become known as speech act, that “to say something is to do something; or in which by saying or in saying something we are doing something” (1975:12). The examples Austin used to convey how one can “do” something in language are infamous: sayings such as “I do” in a marriage ceremony, “I name this ship Queen Elizabeth” before the breaking of the bottle on the bow, “I give and bequeath my watch to my brother” at the reading of a will, and “I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow” (1975:5). All of these confirm the utterance as an action or performance of doing something (cf. Skinner 2002:106).

7.1.1.1 Austin and the Three Levels of Utterances

Austin introduced the three levels of understanding utterances (1975:98-103). It should be remembered that Austin’s lecture simply introduced the concepts. There have been various adjustments and modifications by speech act scholars as they have examined and dissected them. Cohen has offered a summary of the Austinian three level distinctions as “*of saying*” (locution), “*in saying*” (illocution), and “*by saying*” (perlocution) (1973:493).

(a) *The Locutionary Act:* The locutionary act is the act of saying something. With speech or words, the utterance is transmitted. As Austin elaborated, it is “the utterance of certain noises...the utterance of certain words...the utterance of them with a ‘certain meaning’...” (1975:92-93). Content and context are involved in the linguistic act (cf. BeDuhn 2002:86). Austin clarified the locutionary act with three additional components: the phonetic (uttering certain noises), the phatic (uttering certain words in certain constructions), and rhetic (uttering with referential meaning) (cf. 1975:92-93).

(b) *The Illocutionary Act:* This is the “performance of an act in saying something as opposed to performance of an act of saying something” (Austin 1975:99-100). This act involves the significance or force of the utterance (BeDuhn 2002:86). Examples would include promising, blessing, declaring,

warning, and the like. These words convey the functionality of the illocutionary act (cf. Wolterstorff 1995:37).

(c) *The Perlocutionary Act*: A perlocutionary act is the “consequential effect” of an utterance (Austin 1975:101). This is the response or result of a speech act upon the speaker, hearer, or others. This characteristic of speech act theory has not been as prominent in the discussion of the methodology. However, Holdcroft has pointed to its importance as demonstrating the validity of an utterance, since the utterance would be useless if no possible purpose could result from it being said (1978:100).

7.1.1.2 *Austin and Performative Utterance*

Austin further explained that linguists saw two types of utterances: constatives and performatives. A constative is a descriptive utterance, the conveying of information, much like a saying. Austin explained that a performative is “the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action” (1975:6-7). It is action-based speech. However, Austin concluded in his lecture that the distinction between the two types of utterances, constative and performative, could not be maintained (1975:133). He would further contend that by focusing exclusively on the sentence instead of the utterance a false dichotomy would result. For Austin, “there can hardly be any longer a possibility of not seeing that stating is performing an act” (1975:139).

Instead, utterances should be thought of as successful (“felicitous”) or unsuccessful (“infelicitous”).

Speaking generally, it is always necessary that the circumstances in which the words are uttered should be in some way, or ways, appropriate, and it is very commonly necessary that either the speaker himself or other persons should also perform certain other actions, whether “physical” or “mental” actions or even acts of uttering further words (Austin 1975:8).

Austin classified infelicities as misfires and abuses. Misfires were those utterances not accepted or achieved in the speech act due to “misinvocation”,

“misexecution”, or “misapplication” (1975:18). An example would be of someone saying, “I pronounce you husband and wife” but not having the authority to do so. Abuses were those utterances executed or achieved but insincere (1975:20-23). An example of abuse would be the saying, “I promise” but not intending to keep it.

The scheme for a “happy” or felicitous utterance was central to Austin’s thesis. He stated, “there must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect” among participants in a circumstance “appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure” and executed by all “correctly and completely” (1975:14-15). The conventional concept derived from his definition would have implications for speech act theory, especially with the methodology of Searle.

7.1.1.3 Contribution of Austin to This Study

Austin brought attention to “what we do with words” and the performatives of speech. For this study, seeing the performative nature of the Beatitudes is the first step in understanding them. The concept of “conventional procedures and effects” demonstrate how the blessings were pronounced and to what extent the blessings were accepted by the new community. Austin’s insistence that a successful utterance is due to appropriate authority provides the basis for the Matthean depiction of Jesus in pronouncing the Beatitudes

7.1.2 The Advancement of Speech Act Theory: Searle

Searle has been regarded as the catalyst in the development of speech act theory. He was a student of Austin and modified the study of performative utterance toward the study of speech acts (cf. Briggs 2001a:232). Searle described the speech situation as a speaker, a hearer, a speech act, and mutual knowledge of the rules governing the speech act (1979:167). The thesis of Searle was that “speaking a language is engaging in a (highly complex) rule-governed form of behavior. To learn and master a language is (*inter alia*) to learn and to have mastered these rules” (Searle 1969:12).

Searle stressed that meaning was not bound to intention alone, but was also “a matter of convention” (1969:45). According to Searle, the context

(convention) of utterances must be examined to understand the scope of an illocutionary act (1969:24-25). The formula Searle used to describe the illocutionary act was “x counts as y in context c” (1969:36). The necessity of speech act theory rested on the fact that “all linguistic communication involves linguistic acts” (Searle 1969:16). Searle understood the total speech act as utterance act, propositional act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act (1969:22-26). In speech act theory, the illocutionary force is the “component of meaning” (Searle and Vanderveken 1985:7).

7.1.2.1 Classification of Illocutionary Points

Searle and Vanderveken saw five things one could do with language, which he referred to as illocutionary points (1985:37-38).

- (a) *Assertive point* = to say how things are
- (b) *Commissive point* = commit the speaker to doing something
- (c) *Directive point* = to try to get other people to do things
- (d) *Declarative point* = to change state of affairs by saying so
- (e) *Expressive point* = to express feelings and attitudes

Each of these points has different conditions based on the context and the rules governing the utterance. Searle and Vanderveken readily admit there is overlap among the points so that other dimensions could be represented, such as assertive declarative (1985:52). Briggs has noted that the overlapping nature of the points should be expected producing a “multiple illocutionary act” (2001b:68).

Searle clarified the understanding of an illocutionary act by distinguishing between the propositional content and illocutionary force (1996:113-114). Propositional content refers to the sounds, words, and sentences but should not be thought of as an illocutionary act, only as part of the equation (Searle 1996:113). The “force” gives meaning to an utterance or proposition.

7.1.2.2 *Performative Speech*

Searle's clarification of performatives has advanced speech act theory from Austin's introduction of its concept. The key question by Searle is "how does the saying constitute the doing" (2002:88)? His theory rests on the thesis that the type of speech act performed can sometimes be stated in the illocutionary act itself (Searle 2002:86). For instance, the making of a promise would be uttered as "I promise you..." Searle further elaborates, "the utterance constitutes the performance of the act named by the performative expression in the sentence" (2002:87). Expressions such as, "I bet you", "I warn you", or "I command you", would be performative examples.

Although Searle once held this position, he has argued that an utterance in itself cannot "guarantee the presence of a performative intention" (2002:97). The self-referential argument within an utterance in proving its performative nature is flawed. Instead, he begins with the foundation that "all performative utterances are declarations" but not all declarations are performative (Searle 2002:100). What makes a declaration a performative?

The central idea surrounding how declarations can be determined as performative is the social context of rules, regulations, and institutions (Searle 1996:111-112; 2002:104-105). The rules within society operate in such a way as to dictate if the speech act is performative between speaker and hearer. If the chairperson of the board states that, "The meeting is adjourned", everyone understands the terminal nature of the meeting. However, should someone state, "The meeting is adjourned" without the position or power to do so, the meeting is still in session. In this case, the convention of parliamentary procedure and the capacity of the performer determine if the speech act is performative (cf. Briggs 2008:89).

A performative, according to Searle, can be described as a declaration that is spoken in a recognized linguistic setting ("institution") by someone with the position to perform the utterance (cf. Searle 1969:21; 2002:98-101). It is also recognizable performative language with the intention to speak such language to the hearer. Furthermore, the performative intention will be evident to the hearer within the speech act itself (Searle 2002:103). How does performative language work in society?

7.1.2.3 *"Direction of Fit" in Language*

Searle emphasized that "direction of fit" is one condition guiding every linguistic act (1979:1-29). The direction of fit is the "world of the utterance", that is, the way propositional content is construed in reality (Searle and Vanderveken 1985:52). Searle demonstrated how each illocutionary point had to apply to its appropriate direction of fit (cf. Searle 1979:1-29; Searle and Vanderveken 1985:53).

(a) *The word-to-world direction of fit* = (assertives), the illocutionary act fits into the independent state of affairs

(b) *The world-to-word direction of fit* = (commissives and directives), the world is altered to fit the illocutionary act

(c) *The double direction of fit* = (declaratives), the world is altered to fit the illocutionary act by representing the world as so altered

(d) *The null or empty direction of fit* = (expressives), no question of achieving a successful fit of illocutionary act to the world

An illocutionary act is determined as successful in its relationship to the direction of fit. How does the success of illocutionary action manifest itself?

7.1.2.4 *Construction of Reality*

Searle has argued that when it comes to language, one must distinguish between "institutional facts" and "brute facts" (1995:27-29). Institutional facts are those that require human institutions for their existence, while brute facts do not require any human institution or involvement (Searle 1995:27). The distinction is important to speech act theory because it demonstrates there is the possibility of constructing and maintaining social realities through the illocutionary act (cf. Briggs 2008:91-93). The construction of social reality is for us in serving our purposes (Searle 1995:4). The foundation for understanding institutional facts as social constructs rests on three arguments (Searle 1995:29).

(a) The imposition of function on entities that did not have the function prior to the imposition.

(b) The concept of collective intentionality

(c) The distinction between constitutive and regulative rules

Speech act theory demonstrates how illocutionary acts and intentionality combine within a social context fostering either social constructions or stronger cohesive existing ones (“state of affairs”). Intentionality is collective in the sense that there is a shared understanding between speaker and hearer. Petrey has argued that “performative speech can never be the unilateral act of a single individual” (1990:5). The illocutionary act, within the context of beliefs, desires, and practices, contributes toward the social reality of what is or what will be (Searle and Vanderveken 1985:27-38).

This demonstrates how language can be classified as performative as it participates in “the reality it represents” (McDonald 2003:58). Ward contends that viewing texts as speech acts will never diminish the reality they represent “because it is never possible to talk or conceive of them apart from talking or conceiving of intersubjective relationships in the world” (2002:199). Searle also states those objects of social reality are confirmed through social acts and described in the language we use (1995:36).

7.1.2.5 Contribution of Searle to This Study

The foundational concepts of speech act theory as currently practiced are due in large part to Searle. This study has incorporated five central ideas expressed by Searle having a significant impact upon the Beatitudes: language is rule-governed, illocutionary force carries the meaning of speech, linguistics is guided by a direction-of-fit paradigm, speech is a matter of convention, and language constructs reality. The blessings of the Beatitudes were in the “pronouncement” of them. Matthew used a common literary structure to encourage the new community in its self-identity as representatives of Jesus. The “reality” of the new community rested on Jesus’ pronounced blessings, demonstrating a “double direction of fit” in altering the world of their experience.

7.1.3 The Incorporation of Speech Act Theory in Biblical Hermeneutics: Wolterstorff and Briggs

Speech act theory was conceived as a theory of language. However, due to the nature of the biblical text with its emphasis on words, speech act theory has also become a tool within hermeneutics. Although Scripture demonstrates literary qualities and is a literary product, the essence of its ontological stance is its authority as the spoken word within the community of faith. The combination of speech act theory with biblical hermeneutics was inevitable due to the performative nature of both (cf. Buss 1988:128-129; Patte 1988:85-92; Botha 2007:276). Patte argues that speech act theory encourages the understanding that biblical discourse functions as a religious act in its own right (1988:93).

Is religious discourse a different kind of speech act, setting it apart because of its illocutionary force (Patte 1988:100) or a divine voice in an elevated illocutionary mode (White 1979:171)? If religious discourse is dissimilar to human discourse, the need for speech act theory diminishes. Buss correctly contends it is the connection between religious discourse and human discourse, which is the strength of using speech act theory in biblical hermeneutics (1988:126-127). There have been great contributions toward speech act theory in the field of biblical hermeneutics (e.g. Botha, Thiselton, and Vanhoozer). However, two have made contributions worthy of mention, Wolterstorff, from a philosophical perspective, and Briggs, from a more pragmatic position.

7.1.3.1 Wolterstorff and Divine Discourse

The notion of God speaking and communicating to humanity is referred to by Wolterstorff as “divine discourse” (1995:37-57). In addition, the God who speaks is the God who acts and “must causally bring about events generative of divine discourse” (Wolterstorff 1995:117). However, Wolterstorff readily admits that the worldviews and convictions about what God would say or not say continue to influence the interpretation of divine discourse (1995:221-222). The interpreter, then, understands the discourse as guided by belief in the intention of the discourse.

Wolterstorff builds his argument of divine discourse on the model of double-discourse appropriation, which is the speech of someone else appropriated by another (1995:52). It compares to a “me, too” approach in speaking (cf. Gutenson 1998:142-143). In terms of the biblical text, God was the author in the sense that human discourse was appropriated by God as a medium to express the divine discourse (Wolterstorff 1995:54-56, 187-197). The result is that two hermeneutics are involved in understanding the biblical text: interpreting the *mediating* human discourse and interpreting the *mediated* divine discourse (Wolterstorff 1995:183-222).

Speaking is more than disclosing knowledge; it is the “taking up a certain normative stance” in regards to the hearer (Wolterstorff 1995:35). For Wolterstorff, before one can understand divine discourse, it is imperative to discern the illocutionary force of the human discourse (*mediating*), evidenced in its authorial intent and language use (1995:187-201). After which, one can determine the divine discourse (*mediated*) due to the presupposition that “the probabilities and improbabilities of what God would have been intending to say by appropriating” this human discourse is guiding the hermeneutical stance (Wolterstorff 1995:204).

Levine has argued against Wolterstorff that the interpreter continues to have authority with the text, howbeit, with God’s voice too (1998:1-16). It appears that Wolterstorff succumbs to circular reasoning. The logic amounts to; first, one can know the voice of God (divine discourse) through human speech acts in the text. Second, one knows what God might or might not say based on personal presuppositions. So, the interpreter evaluates whether there is divine discourse after interpreting and drawing conclusions from the text. However, Wolterstorff admits to this dilemma toward the end of *Divine Discourse*.

I conclude that there is no way to avoid employing our convictions as to what is true and loving in the process of interpreting for divine discourse--no way to circumvent doing that which evokes the wax-nose anxiety, the anxiety, namely, that the convictions with which we approach the process of interpretation may lead us to miss discerning what

God said and to conclude that God said what God did not say (1995:236).

What can be appreciated with the model of Wolterstorff is the determination to connect human discourse with divine communication. However, with the model Wolterstorff proposes, God appears at times as one who gives “passive approval” to the medium of human discourse, thereby making it divine (cf. Marshall 1997:51). The task of speech act theory in biblical hermeneutics is best served in developing greater understanding of the illocutionary acts attributed to God throughout Scripture, and to that end, Wolterstorff has given prominence in his model (1995:240-260).

The model of divine discourse can be demonstrated as a practical approach Christians have assumed with the biblical text for millennia (cf. Thiselton 1997:99). When one “hears” the promises or commands of God through the biblical text and responds with commitment to the speech act, the validity of the divine discourse model is confirmed. Although Levine understands the interpreter to have the authoritative position on the speech acts of God, Wolterstorff readily admits that interpretation can be faulty (1995:229). Greater knowledge of us, the world, and of God minimizes this risk, especially in light of the voice of the Christian community (Wolterstorff 1995:238-239).

7.1.3.2 Briggs and Self-Involvement within the Text

Speech act theory is a hermeneutical tool for “self-involvement” within the text, argues Briggs (2001b:5-17). He suggests that this self-involvement with the text is more a matter of function than logic since it operates on the posture taken by the interpreter as influenced by the text (2001b:8; 2008:98-106). Self-involvement is described as “the speaking subject invests him or herself in a state of affairs by adopting a stance towards that state of affairs” (Briggs 2001b:148).

Speech act theory should not be viewed as a comprehensive criticism for all scriptural texts, but, instead, as a paradigmatic theory in searching for illocutionary acts in various texts (Briggs 2008:94-98). Briggs argues for distinguishing “weak” illocutions from “strong” illocutions within the text

(2001b:86-103). Through speech act theory, those texts that demonstrate “the transformative effects of illocutionary acts” can best be understood through the “hermeneutic of self-involvement” whereby the interpreter “can rightly construe the illocutionary act performed” (Briggs 2008:102-103). Texts that exhibit notions of commitment or participation, such as praying, forgiving, praising, repenting, preaching, or blessing, can best be understood through speech act theory (Briggs 2001b:151-152).

It is important to notice how the construal of a text determines its illocutionary act (Briggs 2001b:105-106). The “communicative dynamics” of the text encourages the use of speech act theory (Briggs 2008:98). For Briggs, the role of imagination is vital in the interpretive process (2001b:131-137). Being able to see “x as y” has a place in hermeneutical pursuits (Briggs 2001b:121-125). Strong construal is the ability to adopt creative imagination with the text (Briggs 2001b:132). The result, notes Briggs, is that social reality is created through the illocutionary strength of a social body and its corporate experience of the world, beyond what an individual could create on their own (2001b:143).

As an advocate for the hermeneutic of self-involvement, Briggs admits the core issue when approaching Scripture is transformation (2008:101). Texts are more than descriptions of concepts; they are the “acts” (cf. Briggs 2001b:181). If this were the case, then Briggs is calling attention to the performing aspect of the illocutionary act. Successful illocutions are “due to certain states of affairs and the status of the one performing the act, and the nature of the reader who can rightly construe the illocutionary act performed” (Briggs 2008:103). As Briggs sees it, the necessity of speech act theory in biblical hermeneutics mandates that readers be transformed by the text due to their discovery of the illocutionary force (cf. Briggs 2008:105-106).

7.1.3.3 Contributions of Wolterstorff and Briggs to This Study

Wolterstorff has provided speech act theory the philosophical basis for understanding God as one who speaks, while Briggs employs speech act theory in understanding how biblical language draws the reader into a self-involvement with the text “hearing” the word of God. The appropriation model of Wolterstorff assures that in the pronouncement of blessing through the

Beatitudes the divine discourse can be experienced. Furthermore, the notion of self-involvement brings recognition that knowing the semantics of a text is not enough. Commitment to the divine utterance communicates the essence of the speech act.

7.2 A Proposed Paradigmatic Model of Speech Act Theory

Through the development of speech act theory the one obvious fact is no definite model has been adopted by its proponents. In fact, what speech act theorists have done is to gravitate toward discussions that bring more division than coherence: examples include the Derrida-Searle controversy and Gorman (1999) vs. Petrey (2000). The present study has incorporated key concepts from speech act theorists in forming a paradigmatic model of speech act theory. The model derives from principles considered foundational to speech act theory. This model serves as a pragmatic tool used in understanding the text from a speech act perspective.

7.2.1 Principles That Govern the Speech Act Model in the Beatitudes

This study has found that through the maze of speech act dialogue, certain principles should be considered as foundational in forming a speech act model. Speech act theory should not be considered as a tool for discovering the meaning or force of sentences alone (cf. Poythress 2008:344-345). What must be considered is the big picture within the speech act, or the total meaning of an utterance (Patte 1988:91). From this study, there are important principles deemed necessary for speech act theory to accommodate itself to biblical hermeneutics.

7.2.1.1 Intentionality must be considered when examining speech acts within text creation.

There would be no text creation without the intention of an author. The very notion of an “intention-less” text is absurd. What is an intentional act? It is an act done on purpose (Kearns 1984:12). All discourse and literary theory has

the premise that an author began with a subject he or she wanted an audience to understand (cf. Harris 1988:60). Without the understanding of intentionality on the part of the author, the linguistic unit makes no ultimate sense (cf. Patte 1988:98). A natural question of any text should be why the author creates the text this way. This does not imply the text means only what the author intended, since an utterance may signify several meanings (cf. Graham 1980:141). However, no text is an “autonomous linguistic object” (Vanhoozer 2001:12).

One could loudly proclaim, “The dog is in the house!” The sentence meaning could be that the hearer needed to shut the door before the dog exited out, or that the dog had run into the house where it was not welcomed, or simply answering a question of the dog’s whereabouts. However, what must be understood is that there was an intention with the utterance, “the dog is in the house!” Meaning and intention should not be confused. Meaning is derived from interpreting the intention within the text, based on language and shared assumptions (cf. Harris 1988:72). The verbal context surrounding “the dog is in the house” would be an interpretive signifier to the hearer, thus understanding the intention of the utterance.

What does intentionality mean when distance separates the author and the reader? What if the verbal context is unknown or in doubt? How can one avoid the “intentionalist fallacy” and still maintain the notion of intention? The contribution of Skinner is valuable in this regard (1972:406-408). First, one must look at the conventional means of communication at the time of the author. Second, what was the mental world of the author (Skinner 1972:407; Graham 1980:144-145)? In considering intentionality from a distance, the interpreter must observe other factors surrounding the text. The point is not to prove an intention, but, instead, to see the possible range of intentions, that is, the “intentional descriptions of action” presented within historical contexts (Skinner 1988:263). Historical data cannot verify intentions. The utterance affirms intention.

For this study, importance is placed on the role of intention in an utterance guiding biblical interpretation. The texts of Scripture were not written as mere literary pieces. Instead, they were written in contexts of persuasion with the purpose “to get people to do things and to act in a specific way”

(Botha 2007:276). It is the intention that makes the act. Vanhoozer has aptly concluded, “a speech act, then, is the result of an enacted communicative intention” (2001:13). Speakers communicate with intention and they want their intentions to be recognized (Patte 1988:95; cf. Adams 2006:7). The same is true of the text: written with intention in order to be understood.

The Beatitudes demonstrate intentionality in both its structure and content. The structure exhibits a tool for mnemonic practice. The carefully balanced strophes combined with alliteration and assonance conveys a text pragmatically and paradigmatically created. The speeches of Jesus were orally transmitted as they were heard and seen among his followers. The reported speech acts were “as much shaped by agents’ and reporters’ intentions, perceptions and (re)-interpretations as any speeches and accounts of speech are” (Downing 2000:16). Matthew intended to design a text to be adopted as a definitive paradigm for the existence of the Matthean community.

7.2.1.2 The understanding of any speech act originates with contextual considerations.

The context of an utterance provides the basis for meaning. Austin alluded to this as “the total speech act in the total speech situation” (1975:148). Context can be defined as “the totality of conditions that influence the understanding and generation of linguistic behaviour” (Bunt 2000:81-82) or the “concentric circles of influence or effect of some state of affairs” (van Dijk 2008:4). Searle referred to the rules governing speech acts as constitutive (1969:12; 1996:111-112). Bunt has clarified the five dimensions of context that occur within communication, both locally and globally (2000:100).

- (a) Linguistic context: the raw material or record of dialogue event
- (b) Semantic context: state of the underlying task; facts in the task domain
- (c) Cognitive context: participants’ state of processing and models of each other’s states
- (d) Physical and perceptual context: availability of communicative and perceptual channels

(e) Social context: communicative rights, obligations and constraints of each participant

Within the communicative process, the reader must have the understanding that all contextual dimensions influence the speech act. Although a text may not yield suitable information of a particular dimension, one should always be mindful of the totality of dimensions in the overall speech act (cf. Harris 1988:78). What begins to emerge out of such contextual considerations is a point of view by the reader of the text. The reader's point of view is essential for text interpretation.

Pratt refers to this process as a "context-dependent theory" of literature (1977:88-89). From the reader's point of view, a generic quality is assigned to the text based on contextual awareness (cf. Harris 1988:95). Without recognizing the contextual parameters, the speech act cannot be interpreted appropriately (Harris 1988:157; Sbisà 2002:422). Speech acts do not exist in vacuums. They occur in various conditions, at special times, and within diverse settings.

One benefit of speech act theory is the evaluation of an utterance that has been embedded "in a larger context of human purposeful action" (Poythress 2008:354). The focus of a speech act is not only in the locution, but also in the subjective situation surrounding the speech acts (Vanhoozer 2001:16; cf. Briggs 2001b:7). Fish referred to the contextual basis as the "mutually shared background information" (1980:291). Searle referred to the *Background* as the assumptions of consciousness, language, experience, and perceptions that influence the speaker and speech act (1995:129-137; cf. Hepple 2003:9).

The success of communication rests on a reciprocal understanding between speaker and hearer. This understanding involves the speaker placing the utterance in a recognizable context and the hearer recognizing its referential nature (van Dijk 1977:198; cf. Skinner 2002:115). Communication concerns "mutual contextual beliefs" which expose two presumptions both speaker and hearer share (Bach and Harnish 1979:5-7). First, the linguistic presumption is the mutual belief shared by the linguistic community (cf. *langue*). Second, the communicative presumption is the mutual belief that what is said is recognized as intended (cf. Pratt 1977:145). Pratt calls this the

“appropriateness condition” which is essential for linguistic communication and understanding to be achieved (1977:83).

In the following example, three possible ways of understanding the locution are provided in reference to the particular context (cf. Figure 7.1).

“Examples of Contextual Possibilities”

Speaker: “Do you know how cold it is?”

#1 Hearer Response: S wants to know the temperature outside.

(Assertive)

#2 Hearer Response: S is suggesting more clothing for the H.

(Directive)

#3 Hearer Response: S is belittling H for not appropriately recognizing how to dress for the cold. *(Expressive)*

Speaker: “The dog is outside.”

#1 Hearer Response: S wants H to bring the dog into the house.

(Directive)

#2 Hearer Response: S is expressing that dog is in the cold and hopes H will allow the dog into the house. *(Expressive)*

#3 Hearer Response: S is answering the question of H over the whereabouts of the dog. *(Assertive)*

Figure 7.1

For biblical hermeneutics, the context must be recognized before the locution is deciphered. Studying locutions divorced from their contextual base will be self-defeating since the illocutionary force cannot be analyzed without a frame of reference. Context is particularly important when applying speech act theory to literary works (cf. Petrey 2000:423-433; Sbisà 2002:424-429).

The primary task is therefore that of trying to recover a particular context of presuppositions and other beliefs, a context that serves to exhibit the utterance in which we are interested as one that it was rational for that particular agent, in those particular circumstances, to have held to be true (Skinner 1988:247).

The interpreter must recognize that literature is a context and simply not assume that distance makes it invalid (cf. Pratt 1977:99). How can literature embrace speech act theory? Pratt has given the definitive answer

that “any utterance is subject to rules governing the use of language in the context in question” (1977:10). Context is essential, for without recognizing it, meaning is lost (cf. Masaki 2004:38; Botha 2007:281).

The literary context for the Beatitudes was twofold: a description of the repentant community and the righteousness that characterized the community of Christ followers. The first four Beatitudes depicted repentance from the literary viewpoint of a paradigm shift (cf. Matt 5:3-6). By using “poor in spirit” as a metonym for the needy, Matthew described the change brought to them by Jesus. The last four Beatitudes described the characteristic righteousness of Jesus in those referred to as “the persecuted”, a metonym for Christ followers (cf. Matt 5:7-10). Matthew followed with a specific application to the Matthean community and its crisis of persecution (cf. Matt 5:11-16).

7.2.1.3 Speech acts are worldview snapshots.

Although the context is vital in comprehending a speech act, the utterance is framed within a worldview. Skinner has pointed to the need of the historian to demonstrate that speaking agents of the past were “rational as possible” within the framework of their beliefs and worldviews (1988:239-246). Vanderveken contends that one of the most important principles of language is the “rationality of the speaker” (1990:141, 222). How can the role of worldviews be scrutinized with the communicative object? Skinner claims the need for searching the “concepts they possessed, the distinctions they drew and chain of reasoning they followed” (1988:252).

Speech act theory can assist the literary model from the concept of point of view (cf. Lotman 1975:339). Austin alluded to worldview thinking with his example that the statement “France is hexagonal” could be considered true or false (1975:142-145). If you were a general marching against France, it would be true. If you were a geographer, it would be false. What this implies is that each speech act (text) is a “type of worldview” or “cultural model” that communicates an image of reality (Lotman 1975:341; cf. Eco 1979:222). For the reader, the question is how does the text refer to reality? It is not enough to decipher the linguistic units of discourse.

Examination of discourse may yield an awareness of several thoughts, attitudes and presuppositions, functioning through the text (Thiselton

1970:447). This requires the reader, or interpreter, to stand “within a ‘world’ which is not simply his to manipulate” (Thiselton 1970:443). What does it mean to stand in the textual world? How does the world of the text intersect with the world of the reader?

Perry has used the image of “frames” to describe the dynamics of a text (1979:35-64, 355-361). Each textual frame builds upon the previous frames in forming meaning, by developing, extending, adding, explaining, or repeating the material (Perry 1979:50). The reader interprets the frames and makes the connections. It is in continual frame constructions that meaning is understood, not in frame isolation (Lotman 1979:44). The inference is that “words are responsible not to what is real, but to what has been laid down as real” operating on “constitutive rules” (Fish 1976:1021). The observation of the frames tells the reader, not so much about the author, as the use of language for that time (Skinner 2002:118).

Within speech act theory, meaning originates not in the utterance but prior to utterance (Fish 1980:222). The framing of the text conveys the subjective worldview of the speaker (cf. Patte 1988:96-97). Language is a logical structure that “fixes limits to what can be thought and experienced by us in the world” (Vanderveken 1990:227). What can be explained through the concept of worldview is that speech act theory is “itself an interpretation” and not an “all purpose interpretive key” (Fish 1976:1023). The implication for biblical interpreters is that speech acts can be seen as derivative from the language employed throughout Scripture (cf. Ward 2002:304-305).

As has been elaborated, Matthew embraced a worldview characteristic of the Jewish metanarrative. Within the Beatitudes, conceptions found within the Jewish metanarrative were present. Examples would include the blessing motif as practiced by the Jewish patriarchs. Blessing was also pronounced upon Israel by the temple priests. Another example would be the kingdom of heaven concept that originated with Abraham and elucidated through the Davidic promise and visions of Daniel. Furthermore, the theme of righteousness was depicted as the continuous need of Israel in its relationship to God. Finally, salt and light were metaphoric of God and sacrifice throughout the Jewish writings.

7.2.1.4 Speech acts are socially constructed and complementary.

Fish has fittingly stated that the strength of speech act theory is in its ability to explore language as “the power to make the world rather than mirror it, to bring about states of affairs rather than report them, to constitute institutions rather than (or as well as) serve them” (1980:244). A text is written through meaning associated with its social constitution. Speech acts are “constituents of social practice” and “are sustained by the practices of which they are themselves a part” (Hornsby 1994:194; cf. Downing 1995:134). Social conditions are like thermostats, which make speech acts possible (cf. Briggs 2001b:63-67).

(a) Speech acts have the power to create social constructions

As Kearns has noted, linguistic reality is exhibited by a language-using community performing linguistic acts by its members (1994:50; cf. Esterhammer 1993:285-286). Petrey has emphasized how social custom influences speech acts (1990:11). Further, Petrey has elaborated that the foundation of speech act theory is based on the social context in both production and reception of the utterance (1990:3). There is always a danger of using speech act theory with a restriction to evaluating individual speech acts, losing sight of the community from which the individual is speaking (cf. Poythress 2008:339-341).

There are two ways to understand how language has the social power to constitute reality (Fish 1976:996). The first is “word to world”, with the use of words in matching the state of affairs. The second is “world to words”, which, by means of language, a “world” is created (cf. Patrick 1999:40). This underscores the importance of understanding the rules governing linguistics and communication in the social dimension (cf. Hepple 2003:3). Without the community of linguistic understanding, performative language need not exist (cf. Hepple 2003:2). A major component of speech act theory is the consideration of the role of language by societal entities, including literature, to describe reality (cf. Petrey 1990:165). Lanser (1981:289-291) describes the illocutionary act as “hypothetical” and able to build a world of reality with it.

(b) Speech acts are complementary to the social constructs

What does speech act theory demonstrate about language use within a particular community or social group? If it is assumed that language creates institutional facts, how is language employed and sustained by that institution? Petrey has argued that to understand the nature of speech acts, the social environment cannot be divorced from the language it employs (1990:49). To say, “I do” in a marriage ceremony, is to make a legal promise in front of witnesses who recognize it as such. Austin affirmed as much, since an “illocutionary act is constituted not by intention or by fact, essentially but by convention” (1975:128).

Speech act theory demonstrates the knowledge that a community is an interpretive one, of both itself and the world in which it operates. The community is strengthened through its language (speech acts), both in addressing its existence in the world and in the world of its own existence (cf. Verhey 2007:22-23). By examining the speech acts of a particular social body, various patterns emerge demonstrating explanation, correction or confirmation among its members. What matters are the utterances a community employs in describing shared reality, not simply the reality itself (cf. Petrey 1990:40-41; Esterhammer 1993:288).

Adolphs has suggested that there is a distinction between speech situations, speech events, and speech acts (2008:31). A speech situation is an activity in a community that is recognizable. A speech event is the description of a situation in which the rules of speech are engaged by the community. A speech act is the encoding of the social milieu into linguistic form. Rolf also refers to the speech act and speech event, but not with the distinction of Adolphs, since Rolf understands the act as an event consisting of the utterance of certain sentences (1990:153). The one complementary thread joining these concepts is the community or social dimension.

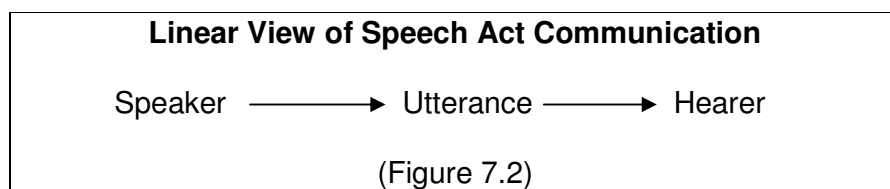
The implication for biblical interpretation is that the speech acts of Scripture have an authoritative foundation recognized by the Christian community (cf. Vanhoozer 2001:17). By responding to the speech acts of Scripture, the Christian community continues to exist as a distinct body with a defined purpose for its existence. The “word to world” employs language to

describe the world of experience and reality for the community. The “world to words” exhibits the understanding of the world through the language utilized by the community (cf. Pratt 1988:89-90). The social body continues to experience and define the world through the language it adopts, which in turn, also provides direction and meaning for its existence (cf. Pratt 1986:64; Sbisá 2002:434).

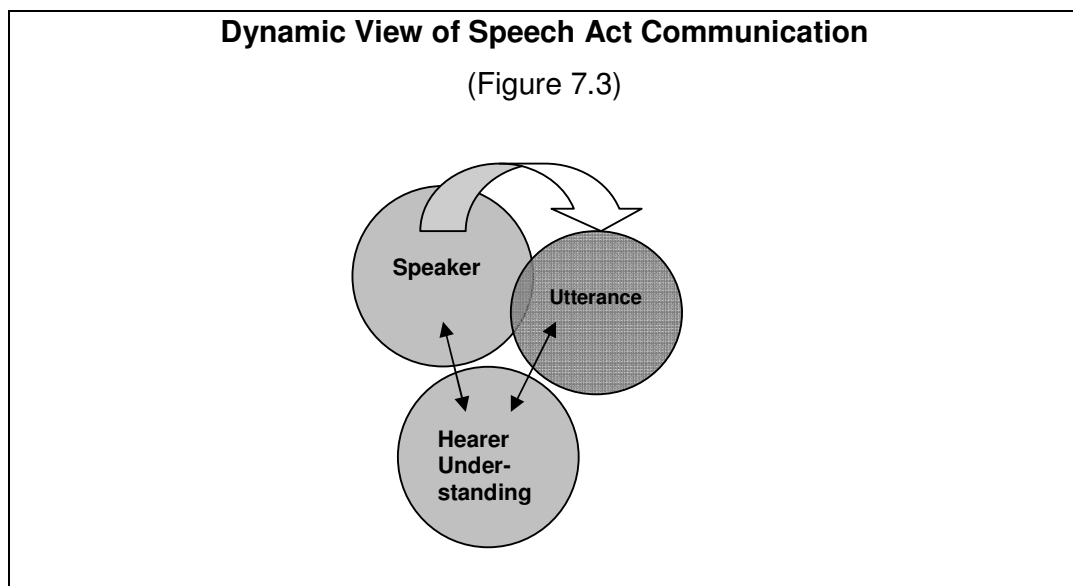
Throughout the Beatitudes, the focus was on the social body of the Matthean community. The grammatical movement from third person to second person demonstrates how Matthew utilized fixed tradition for practical purposes. Matthew created a literary construct from the social interaction of the community. Many times social interaction became ritualized for the maintenance of a community (cf. Patrick 1999:11). The Beatitudes functioned as ritualistic blessings for the Matthean community to remain faithful as representatives of Christ, even when persecuted for doing so. To the social body, he gives the imperatives to “rejoice, be glad, and let your light shine” (cf. Matt 5:12, 16). The world would benefit from the salt and light present in the social body, demonstrating God’s goodness.

7.2.1.5 The role of the hearer in the speech act cannot be diminished.

The primary reason for saying something is to communicate an understandable intention (cf. Bach and Harnish 1979:3). This implies that every speech act has a speaker and a hearer. The same can be said for the literary dimension, each text has an author and an audience. Within speech act studies, the primary emphasis has been on the speaker. This is unfortunate since the role of the hearer has been diminished to a reactionary object (Masaki 2004:34-36; cf. Gorman 1999:102-103). By viewing communication from a linear position, emphasis is placed on the speaker controlling the utterance, while the hearer is an object (cf. Figure 7.2).



One cannot dispute the speaker as the source of an utterance. However, the hearer has responsibility to the utterance and to the speaker in a speech act situation. The hearer becomes the source for interpreting both the speaker and the utterance by sharing common ground if an illocutionary force is recognized (cf. Kissine 2009:128-134). Both have a bilateral responsibility to the utterance: the speaker in creating and the hearer in understanding. Intentionality can be assumed in both the speaker's utterance as well as the hearer's understanding. Speakers and authors employ language with "audience design", imagining to whom they speak (Clark and Carlson 1982:342; Carter 1993:56). A dynamic view of a speech act involves mutual responsibilities and emphasizes the utterance as the object (cf. Figure 7.3).



A successful illocutionary act always involves reciprocity (cf. Hornsby 1994:198-207). Austin, in conveying this concept, claimed it was "essential to secure uptake" in the communicative act (cf. 1975:139). The "uptake" is the "invitation to respond" by the hearer as the speaker brings meaning through locutionary usage (Austin 1975:117-121). A speech act is the action of "something illocutionary" being "done in using the words of some language" (Hornsby 1994:188). However, the speech act is a portion of the total speech situation whereby the hearer becomes actively involved because of language

and contextual recognition in the network of relationships (Petrey 1990:89; cf. Vanhoozer 2001:23; Skinner 2002:109-115; Hepple 2003:4). One should never lose sight of the purpose of an utterance in its “act”: to be interpreted and acted upon accordingly by the hearer (Holdcroft 1978:70-71; Bach and Harnish 1979:17; Landa 1992:98-99; Gu 1993:422; Masaki 2004:35).

The dynamic view of speech act communication is vital in recognizing the context of the Beatitudes. The intention of the literary composition by Matthew was to perpetuate the divine utterance on behalf of the hearers within the Matthean community. Matthew portrayed Jesus as the authoritative voice of the blessings, a “language which authorizes and assigns a role” to the hearer (Thiselton 1992:288). Throughout Matthew’s Gospel, the messiahship of Jesus was emphasized in order to confirm his authority (cf. Figure 4.1). The speech act was the actual state of blessings upon the hearers. Matthew further elaborated on the blessings with the declaratives “you are the salt of the earth” and “you are the light of the world” (cf. Matt 5:14-16).

7.2.1.6 Perlocutions are open-ended

Speech act theorists have not given as much attention to perlocutions as illocutions. Austin admitted in his 1955 lecture that perlocutions would be the hardest to distinguish from illocutions within his system of thought (1975:110). Campbell has even accused Austin of losing interest in perlocutions (1973:286). For Campbell, the distinctions between illocution and perlocution are empty (1973:296). Gu claims the confusion among theorists regarding perlocution is due to viewing it as a single act instead of a “transaction” in the speech situation (1993:428). That being said, the definition Austin gave of a perlocution is important in understanding its distinction.

Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention of purpose of producing them;...We shall call the performance of an act of this kind the performance of a perlocutionary act or perlocution (1975:101).

There are four characteristics of perlocutions inferred from this definition by Austin.

(a) Speaking is a consequential act

The understanding that speaking is consequential does not suggest the intention of the speaker predetermines the response or effect to the speech act (cf. BeDuhn 2002:103). If I want you to shut the window and state, "It is really noisy outside," you may go and retrieve earplugs for me to wear. My intention was for the window to be shut, but the consequence of my speech act is earplugs! However, utterance is made with the intention of securing perlocutionary effect (cf. Bach and Harnish 1979:17).

Human discourse involves goals, implying speech acts have consequential value (Buss 1988:126). Every speech act involves the consequence of interpretation by the audience (cf. Landa 1992:99-100). The performative nature of a speech act necessitates awareness that language represents human action in itself. States has pointed to the similarity of performative speech to a play performance (1983:359-375). The genius of the play resides in recognizing the "you-ness" on stage as the "me-ness" in the audience (States 1983:368). The orientation a speech act provides through the performance of speaking leads to a response to that action (cf. White 1979:163-166).

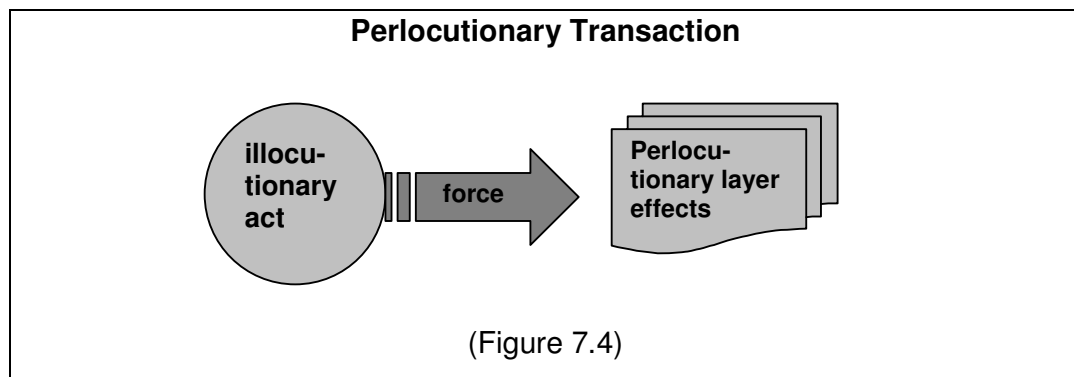
(b) Speech acts generate change

A perlocutionary effect cannot be predetermined in a speech act (cf. Marcu 2000:1721-1722). In addition, Marcu has argued that speech act theory cannot explain reasons why change occurs in a speech situation because too many variables are operating outside the act itself (2000:1722-1726). In similar fashion, Gu has expressed concern over the assumption that language can define or describe acts of response (1993:425). Instead, he prefers speaking of perlocutions as a transaction between the speaker's speech act and the hearer's response (1993:427-428).

The potential for change due to a speech act, then, is based on the level of involvement by the hearer (Marcu 2000:1726-1727). Perlocutionary

effects cannot be managed or manipulated by the speaker (cf. van Dijk 1977:198). What the speaker controls is the illocutionary force which fosters the commencement of a perlocutionary act. Gu refers to the reflexive intention of the illocutionary act whereby the hearer responds to the speaker (1993:427).

Although recognition is important by the hearer, it is only the beginning of the full perlocutionary effect. It is possible that perlocutionary effects could continue *ad infinitum*. The history of exegesis provides examples of changing interpretive communities (perlocutions), which Maartens has referred to as “growth rings” (1991:21). Speech act theory brings recognition to the first layer of perlocutionary action, with an understanding that subsequent layers could result (cf. Figure 7.4).



(c) Observing speech act effects clarifies the illocutionary force

Austin argued that all speech acts involve illocutionary force, also termed performatives (1975:146). Vanderveken has attempted to explain illocutionary force by focusing on the performative verbs in a speech act (1990:19-22). However, Leech has contended that trying to decipher illocutionary force through the study of verbs is an “error of grammaticizing” (1983:174-175). In addition, Fish has pointed to the response of the hearer as indicator of the illocutionary force (1980:221-222; cf. Masaki 2004:40).

For instance, if a father yells to his son, “The lake water is really cold,” his son may understand it as a warning that swimming would be dangerous, or as a suggestion that he should be adjusted to the water slowly. Other contextual factors would also indicate the force of the illocution: is it summer or winter? On the other hand, is the son recovering from an illness? What

must be understood is that the action in an illocutionary utterance constitutes the meaning itself, absent from the perlocutionary consequences (cf. Ray 1973:18).

Gu contends the use of speech act theory is vital for the comprehension of the illocutionary act, but is not a viable tool for understanding perlocutionary effects (1993:427-428). Marcu goes even further with the argument that once speech act theorists admit that perlocutionary effects are not directly associated with illocutionary force, the concept of perlocution is not essential for speech act studies (2000:1719-1741; cf. Kissine 2009:128). However, Marcu assumes that since perlocutionary effects differ, the perlocution may or may not be present in a speech act (cf. 2000:1731-1732). Opposite of both Gu and Marcu is Masaki, who makes a case for identifying the perlocutionary act first, then utilizing it in recognizing the illocutionary act (2004:27-43). This clarifies the dynamic role of both speaker and hearer by reversing the speech act sequence: the response leads to the force.

Marcu is right in demonstrating the lack of a clear distinction between illocutionary force and perlocutionary acts. However, dismissing perlocutions within the speech act is unfortunate. A far better assessment is recognizing that the speech utterance and the hearer's response is a relationship "constantly being negotiated" in the "play of illocution and perlocution" (Landa 1992:99). A significant reason for dissent over perlocutions is due to the rhetorical nature of the concept (cf. Landa 1992:99; Gu 1993:428). What can be assumed is that speech act theory recognizes the perlocutionary act in the speech situation, whereby rhetorical criticism explains its greater significance outside the linguistic construction.

(d) Speech act effects strengthen with communal adaptation

The perlocutionary act is usually described from the hearer's perspective. However, Austin mentioned the audience, speaker, and "other persons" in his definition. As discussed, perlocutionary effects can extend beyond the speech act itself. The linguistic distinction Saussure advocated between *langue* and *parole* are well known. The *langue* is the social construction of the total language used by a community, including thoughts

and concepts. *Parole* is the pragmatic use of language by an individual, both in writing and speaking (cf. Cuddon 1998:449). Perlocutionary effects contribute toward the *langue* of society as adapted and maintained by a communal consciousness.

As perlocutionary effects become embedded within a linguistic community, retrieval through interpretation and ritualism merge as dominant communicative traits (cf. Schaller 1988:415-417; Landa 1992:100-102). By viewing perlocutionary effects diachronically, layers of interpretation, what Landa refers to as “contention and accumulation”, can be demonstrated to exist in those speech acts a community deems significant (1992:102). However, what should remain through the layers of perlocutionary effects is a thread of illocutionary force that provided the commencement for the original perlocutionary act. Understanding both the illocutionary and rhetorical force of an utterance provides the interpretive community the pragmatic rationale for its adaptation of the perlocutionary act (cf. Du Plessis 1991:134-135).

When approaching the Beatitudes, the open-ended nature of perlocutionary effects is significant for succeeding Christian communities. With the illocutionary force being maintained, the Beatitudes serve the Christian community as it did for the Matthean community. The ability for a text to survive outside of its original domain with its continued communicative ability is known as a “display text” (cf. Pratt 1977:133-151; Lanser 1981:284-286). Display texts are important as speech acts with continuing perlocutionary effects. As linguistic constructions, the text is “closed”, but as performative speech, it is “open” (cf. White 1979:172). For the community, “the display text is its message; to contemplate the message is to receive it” (Lanser 1981:286). In receiving the text, the community adopts not only the meaning, but also the frame itself, allowing for perlocutionary effects.

7.2.2 A Speech Act Model

Speech act theory provides a hermeneutical stance to evaluate what illocutionary forces are operating in a text (cf. Hancher 1975:639; Briggs 2008:97). However, speech act theory is not simply a tool for the classification of utterances (texts) by the interpreter (cf. Poythress 2008:344-347). Instead,

it is a hermeneutic recognizing the strength of an utterance measured through self-involvement with that utterance (cf. Briggs 2001b:294-297). For Patte, the religious discourse of Scripture is unique through its own illocutionary force and intentionality (1988:100). This implies the necessity for a model that can be utilized in analyzing the illocutionary force in an utterance with current perlocutionary effects. Stated differently, a speech act model should ascertain how transformative effects are achieved through utterance (cf. Briggs 2008:102). In relation to the emerging Christian movement, how did the Matthean community utilize the Beatitudes as speech acts?

The model utilized in this study is represented with the four dimensional acronym: **SP-EE-CH-ACT**. The application of the model is through the formula: **SP+(EE)CH = ACT**. The four dimensions are represented and explained as follows:

- (a) **SP - *Situated Performativity*** = participants, event, encoding
- (b) **EE - *Existential Engagement*** = current perlocutionary effect
- (c) **CH - *Critical Horizon*** = meaning utterance and worldview influence
- (d) **ACT- *Acquired Communal Translation*** = utterance repetition

7.2.2.1 ***Situated Performativity***

The genius of speech act theory is that utterance “counts as something” (Lyne 1981:202). Lyne has proposed that speech acts should be interpreted within a semiotic frame (1981:203). Within the semiotic frame are three variables that must be considered in the speech act interpretation (Lyne 1981:204).

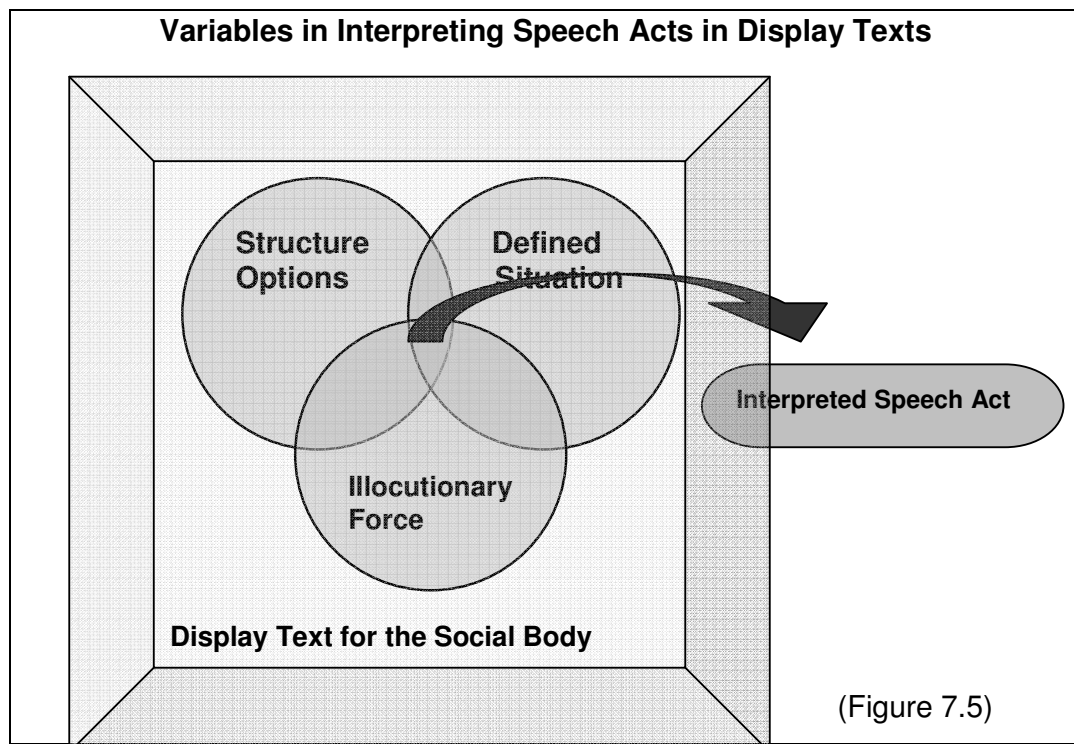
(a) *The options permitted or suggested by the structure*: what does the structure communicate? In what ways does the structure make allowance for or discourage particular speech acts? What does the structure suggest of its properties?

(b) *The degree to which illocutionary force is made explicit*: what is the nature (genre) of the utterance? Are there declarative, imperative, or rhetorical clues in the text? What is the impact of the utterance? Interpretation begins with the pursuit for the illocutionary act (cf. Vanhoozer 2001:25).

(c) *The definition of the situation*: what context did the utterance originate? Could the same words be used differently in another situation?

What contextual factors regulate the speech act? Illocutionary force is created through social contexts (cf. Pratt 1986:60; Hepple 2003:4).

For a text to be interpreted as a speech act, the juxtaposition of these three variables must be recognized. Since speech acts are rule-governed, exposing the historical milieu of a text is essential (BeDuhn 2002:91; cf. Botha 2007:274-275). What did the utterance mean in that context? Ohmann contends literature cannot have illocutionary force, only the imitation of it (1971:13-14). However, texts can also be viewed as display texts since they are “world-describing” for a social body (cf. Pratt 1977:143). Pratt has maintained the strength of a display text is in its ability to be isolated from the original context, so a new audience can elaborate and interact with it from a new context (1977:143-145). Through the observation of these variables, interpretive meaning through illocutionary force will emerge (cf. Figures 7.5).



7.2.2.2 *Existential Engagement*

Within biblical hermeneutics, the theories of self-involvement by Briggs and the transforming text by Thiselton parallel the idea of perlocutions as transactions (Briggs 2001b:147-182; Thiselton 1992:288-298). Briggs surmises how speech act can serve as understanding divine discourse in the biblical examples of confession, forgiveness, and teaching (2001b:183-292). For Thiselton, participatory language is evident throughout Scripture and invites the reader to be engaged, especially through its promises and assertions (1992:31-47, 298-303). This implies that the speech acts of Scripture have continual communicative consequences among its participants.

Even though a speech act has been interpreted, the force of the utterance is measured by the perlocutionary effect (contra Ohmann 1971). The perlocutionary result depends on the action taken by the interpretive audience. Once the interpretive audience commences the process, it must engage with the force of the utterance as a speech act. It is in the realm of engagement that speech acts continue to produce perlocutionary effects since “different audiences will supply different elements” to the utterances (cf. Lyne 1981:207-208; cf. Vanhoozer 2001:38). What does engagement imply for the interpreter?

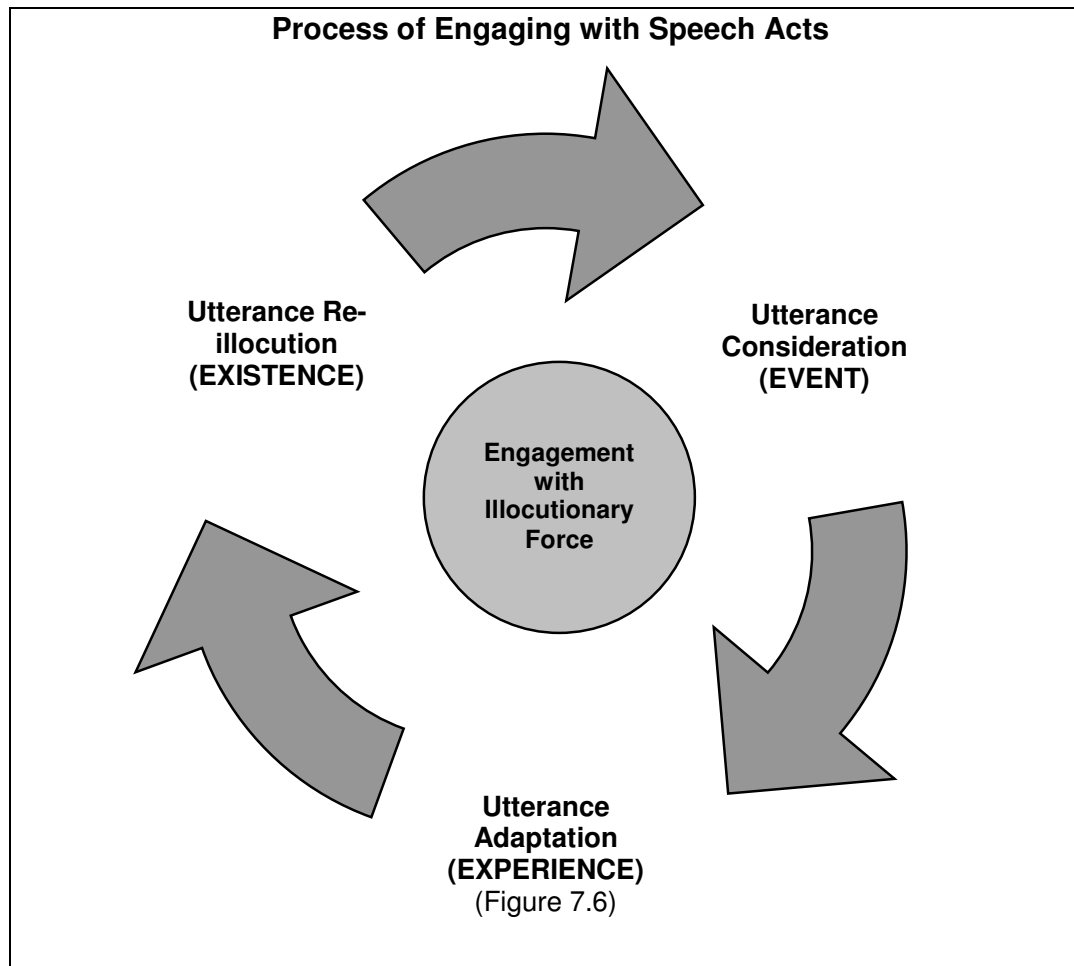
Human beings seek to attribute meaning in personal experience. Existentialism is a system of thought explaining how meaning is achieved through human agency. The essence of existentialism is its “direct engagement” with the present moment, not being tied to “action-at-a distance” (cf. Bering 2003:101-107). The ontological search for meaning is founded not in a historical past event itself, but, instead, on the “subjective construal” of the agent beyond the event (Bering 2003:107). The historical event becomes referentially important to the present experience of the agent, allowing for a “language-event” (cf. Ricoeur 1973:92). Meaning, then, is more than intellectual analysis; it is the committed involvement by the agent (cf. Evans 1980:251).

However, though an existential concept contributes toward the subjective search for meaning, it does not provide an objective foundation from which to commence. Theistically speaking, humanity has not been left to

themselves in “creating and ascribing independent meaning to the universe” (Naugle 2002:261). Instead, the subjective search of an individual is grounded in the objective truth of God’s existence. A theistic existential approach provides the catalyst for that subjective search, but not in a world void of objective meaning.

Bering has proposed a three-tier explanation for existential reality based on the assumption that humanity has a “proto-theistic” attribute (2003:101-120). This attribute presupposes that experiences in life happen for teleological purposes. The three-tiers Bering employs are *event*, *experience*, and *existence* (cf. Bering 2003:110-120). Events are interpretations of human intentions. Experience refers to the self as a participant (willing or non-willing) in finding meaning through a purposeful or unexpected event. Existence is the “progressive product of those experiences imbued with meaning” (Bering 2003:115).

By combining the three-tiered approach of Bering to speech act theory, the text of the past becomes a medium to engage the illocutionary force of the speech act as described in the event. It has a multiplying effect throughout the social body as it bridges the situated performative text (“**SP**”) to the present “**SP+(EE)**”. The existential role advocated in this model is more pragmatic than philosophical. The strength of engagement is relative to how a social body measures or values the illocutionary force (cf. Brown 2007:234). As a process, it begins with the utterance consideration (Event), leading to an utterance adaptation (Experience), and, finally, a re-illocution by the interpretive community (Existence; cf. Figure 7.6).



7.2.2.3 *Critical Horizon*

Speech act theory discovers the presuppositions governing linguistic usage (cf. Briggs 2001b:151). It uncovers the emerging point of view found in the interactions within the text (cf. Lotman 1975:345). Speech act theory emphasizes that words do not merely describe reality; instead, words convey reality as well (Thiselton 1974:284). The “onlook” (worldview) of an interpretive audience allows it to “look on x as y ” (cf. Evans 1980:10-12). Without understanding the worldview stance of an illocutionary act, no “uptake” can be achieved (cf. BeDuhn 2002:96).

Establishing the point of view is important in discovering the illocutionary force of an utterance. Speech acts are uttered with a point of view (“intention”) with the goal of being understood by the hearer (cf. Searle 1998:145). To understand the full significance of an utterance, the worldviews

that surround the particular communicative context need to be discovered and explored. In the communicative act, semiotic activities allow for one to “parse the cosmos and to create maps of reality” (Naugle 2002:292). In the process of analysis, Naugle has emphasized the horizon of an interpreter as providing the point of view (“worldview”) by which a text is understood (2002:330).

7.2.2.4 Acquired Communal Translation

In an oral culture, stories and rituals were essential in communicating what was important, becoming “cultural texts” (cf. Assmann 2006:76-77). Zamfir has utilized the concept of “relecture” in explaining the gradual process of how the Beatitudes were read (2007:75-100). Through ritual, the Christian community attempted to adopt the story in relation to their situation, reflecting the values they cherished (cf. Botha 2007:287-290; White 2010:102-103). The speech act could compare to a theatrical performance: “I” (actor) as self-expressive mode, “You” (audience) as collaborative mode, and “He/She” (character) as representational mode (cf. States 1983:359-375).

Understanding the dynamics of ritual is imperative in studying the early Christian movement (cf. DeMaris 2008). Ritual life was so central and definitive of early Christian communities that DeMaris insists it was “not text, not belief, not experience, but ritual” guiding the movement (DeMaris 2008:9-11). Within speech act theory, ritual has a prominent role due to its performative nature. Within ritual observance there is the “act” (doing) that transcends the mundane and ordinary. Speech act and ritual studies work in conjunction to demonstrate the facilitation of language by a social body (cf. Grimes 1988), with speech act theory exploring the “what” and ritualistic studies exploring the “how” and, if possible, “why.”

Since language is relational, transactional, and performative, the social milieu that fosters the communication demonstrates what it considers important in the process (cf. Schaller 1988:419). Ritual language and rites bring “social equilibrium” to community life (DeMaris 2008:27). DeMaris contends that rituals are formed within communities during times of crisis or social transition (2008:20-22). The rituals provide the strength to encounter and contend with crises (DeMaris 2008:22). Smith has compared ritual to focusing lens, with the need for clarification in the community of possibilities

that go beyond the normal course of things (1982:53-65). Through ritual, the social body demonstrates what it considers sacred and chooses the means to face “such possibilities” that “cannot be realized or compelled” but only performed in tension (Smith 1982:63-65).

The potential for speech acts to develop into ritual does not imply that all speech acts are ritualistic (cf. Grimes 1988:105). The impact of ritual is its paradigmatic function to articulate interpretive meaning through word and deed within a social body (cf. Ray 1973:22; Grimes 1988:120). Austin, too, hinted at the potential impact of speech acts on ritual in his discussions on successful and unsuccessful performatives (1975:17, 20, 24, 33, 36, 69, 76, 84-85). The success of ritual is not measured empirically, but socially: the effect of words on a community (Grimes 1988:105).

In his studies of the Dinka and Dogon rituals, Ray has concluded that the performative basis of words demonstrates the meaning of ritual (1973:16-35). Furthermore, the efficacy of spoken words was “based on the sociolinguistic fact that when authorities speak, things usually happen” (Ray 1973:28-29). Ray concluded through his observations that ritual words and deeds are identical (1973:34-35). Therefore, as a social body values a particular linguistic text, there will be an increased tendency to perform and re-create the illocutionary acts by adopting it in worship or mission (cf. Holdcroft 1978:170).

Smith has used the sport of bear hunting to exemplify rituals (cf. 1982:57-63). Smith identifies four elements involved in the sport of bear hunting that illustrate how ordinary events of life could be considered ritualistic (cf. Figure 7.7).

Bear-hunting Motif as Ritual

“Preparation” = focus on area, weapons, and strategy

“Leaving camp” = going from social order to the woods

“The kill” = killing of bear, respect for corpse

“Return to camp” = bearing corpse, celebration, recall

(Figure 7.7)

This is an important corrective to what Poythress understands as a weakness of speech act theory, a focus on the individual (2008:340). Ritual permits the illocutionary force of utterances to be understood through the existential action of the community (cf. Schaller 1988:416-417). The results of ritual performance are the descriptive voice by the social body of its identification, and the prescriptive voice to the constituents of the social body for commitment to the utterance (cf. Hellholm 1998:297-298).

7.2.3 Applying the Speech Act Model to the Beatitudes

When approaching the Beatitudes with this speech act model, the interpreter examines the context for the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts. Understanding the original socio-historical and literary context is necessary before a competent analysis can be performed. However, the biblical text is more than an object for exegetical inquiry. The true speech act is a transaction between both God and humanity. Human reciprocity seeks the transcendent communication so immanently experienced.

Important as the original context may be, the true focus and value for the interpreter is the utterance and the worldview influence on the utterance. The formula “(EE)CH” exhibits the dynamic of the interpreter experiencing the speech act as the “authorial audience” by entering into the worldview of that event. For the Christ community, what is acquired is a translation of the message (“utterance”) of Jesus, demonstrated in various social contexts.

7.2.3.1 Situated Performativity: The Variables in the Speech Act Context of the Beatitudes

What cannot be dismissed are the two major principles directing speech act theory in its approach toward the Beatitudes: the socio-historical and literary dimensions. The Beatitudes elevated utterance to a position of authority within a social community and for a literary purpose.

(a) *Structure of Beatitudes*: It is clear that Matthew composed the Beatitudes from a literary structure (repetition, parallelism, alliteration,

allusion). The Beatitudes became a display text for the Christ community affirming its presence and importance in the world as spoken by Jesus. The structure itself communicated how Jesus' words could help a present crisis. The eight Beatitudes Matthew composed were in the third person. To bring the relevance of the Beatitudes to the Matthean community, Matthew employed the second person beginning in Matthew 5:11.

(b) *Illocutionary Force in Beatitudes*: Through the Beatitudes, one could conclude that Jesus took a divine illocutionary stance (cf. Ward 2002:309). The blessings of the Beatitudes were not meant to be informative, but, instead, as performative language upon the believing community (cf. Wudel 2000:277). The declarative utterances could be considered as "double direction of fit", whereby the world altered in the illocutionary act speaks of the world as altered (cf. Searle 1979:1-29). The variables surrounding the Beatitudes demonstrated how the words of Jesus became a compelling force in the Matthean community. One must understand the influence of Isaiah on Matthew to appreciate the illocutionary force in the Beatitudes.

In the Isaianic passages to which Matthew clearly alluded (cf. Is 61 & 62), the restoration of Israel and covenant renewal was described (cf. Dumbrell 1981:8-9). The theme of "good news" had been introduced earlier by Isaiah (chapter 40) as descriptive of the realization of liberty. The year of Jubilee was significant for those oppressed in the nation of Israel due to debts and obligations to the powerful (cf. Lev 25). Three characters were introduced by Isaiah: the speaker, the mediator, and Yahweh (cf. Watts 1987:301-305). The importance of this passage to Matthew rested on what the speaker was able to accomplish with his words of blessing (cf. Watts 1987:305; Figure 7.8).

Illocutionary Force of Utterances in the Beatitudes

(Matthew 5:3-16 compared to Isaiah 61 & 62)

"You are Blessed"

(Declarative)

[A time will come when there will be an acknowledgement of the people
God has blessed ("state of affairs")= 61:9]

Having possession of kingdom is a blessing (verse 3, 10)

[Isaiah speaks of a time when God will favor his people among the nations because of the everlasting covenant= 61:2, 8, and 11]

Being divinely comforted is a blessing (verse 4)

[Metaphorical description of divine comfort is expressed in the phrases, “crown of beauty”, “oil of gladness” and garment of praise”= 61:3]

Receiving what is promised is a blessing (verse 5)

[God’s people will experience a time of receiving double in the land for their time of shame and loss= 61:7]

Being divinely satisfied is a blessing (verse 6)

[Satisfaction in all God will provide= 62:8]

Receiving divine mercy is a blessing (verse 7)

[Experienced in the “preaching, binding, proclaiming, releasing, and providing”= 61:1-3]

Experiencing the presence of God is a blessing (verse 8)

[No longer deserted or desolate but redeemed and “married” to God= 62:4-5, and 12]

Being recognized as God’s child is a blessing (verse 9)

[Called by a new name by the nations= 62:2]

Being divinely rewarded is a blessing (verse 12)

[God rewards his people with the presence of the Sent One= 61:8; 62:11]

“You are Salt”

(Rhetorical)

[The emphasis was on the planting of righteousness among God’s people. Could salt be a reference to the fertilizing effect? = 61:3]

No restoration possible for worthless salt (verse 13a)

Worthless salt used for secondary purpose (verse 13b)

“You are Light”

(Rhetorical)

[Righteousness of God’s people must shine like a torch among the nations = 62:1]

Light cannot be hid on a hill (verse 14)

People don’t light lamps to hide the light (verse 15)

“Rejoice with Gladness”

(Imperative)

[The righteousness God provides stimulates rejoicing = 61:10]

Because of me (verse 11)
[The Servant is sent by YHWH to announce blessing upon God's people = 61:1; 62:11]

“Let your Light Shine”
(Imperative)

Shine before humanity (verse 16a)
Shining demonstrated in good works (verse 16b)
Shining complements the source of the Christ community (verse 16c)

(Figure 7.8)

(c) *Situation Surrounding the Beatitudes*: The Matthean community was facing a crisis of identity along with social and religious legitimacy. The religious milieu was exacerbated after the events of 70 AD and the destruction of the Jerusalem temple. The question facing the Christ community centered on the juxtaposition of their identity to Judaism. The Beatitudes exhibit the use of authoritative utterance resulting in an identity confirmation of the social body. Judaism continually appropriated the prophetic promises as encouragement for their followers during crisis events (cf. Bauckham 2010:55-64). The Matthean community would have been familiar with the Isaianic promises to which Matthew alluded (cf. Figure 7.9).

Isaianic Themes Describing the Matthean Community
(Isaiah 61 & 62)

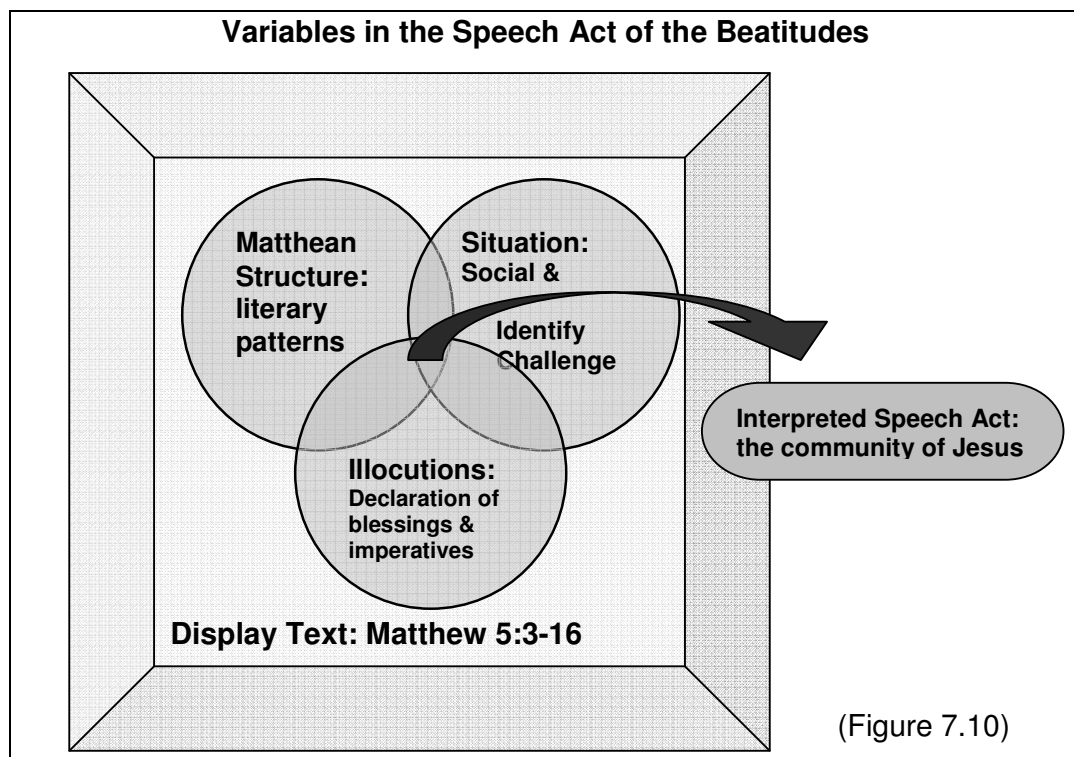
Poor in spirit: Good news will be given to poor (61:1)
Mournful: Brokenhearted will be comforted (61:1-2)
Meek: Shame & disgrace replaced with land promise (61:7)
Righteousness cravings: Planted like oaks of righteousness (61:3)

Merciful: Nations will see righteousness and seek for it (62:1-2, 12)
Purity of heart: Preparation to see Savior come to his people (62:11)
Peacemakers: Desire for Jerusalem's prosperity means peace (62:1-9)
Persecuted: Rebuilding, restoring, and renewing (61:4)

Rejoice: God has provided the desired righteousness (61:10)
Give Glory: Acknowledge divine blessing on God's people (61:9)

(Figure 7.9)

The legitimacy of the Matthean community began with Jesus' affirmation of blessing (speaker). Jesus blessed those who were disenfranchised within society (audience). His pronouncement was to all who would repent and follow him (implied audience). Matthew describes the Matthean community (authorial audience) with the language of marginality (cf. Duling 1995a:358-387). Jesus' words created a blessed community (cf. Thiselton 1970:440-441). It is vital to understand Jesus' pronouncement as creating the state of affairs for the blessed, not a description of the psychological effect of his audience (cf. Powell 1996:469). Despite the social unrest surrounding the Christ community, Matthew assured the social body that even the conflict was proof of their identity to Jesus (cf. Figure 7.10).



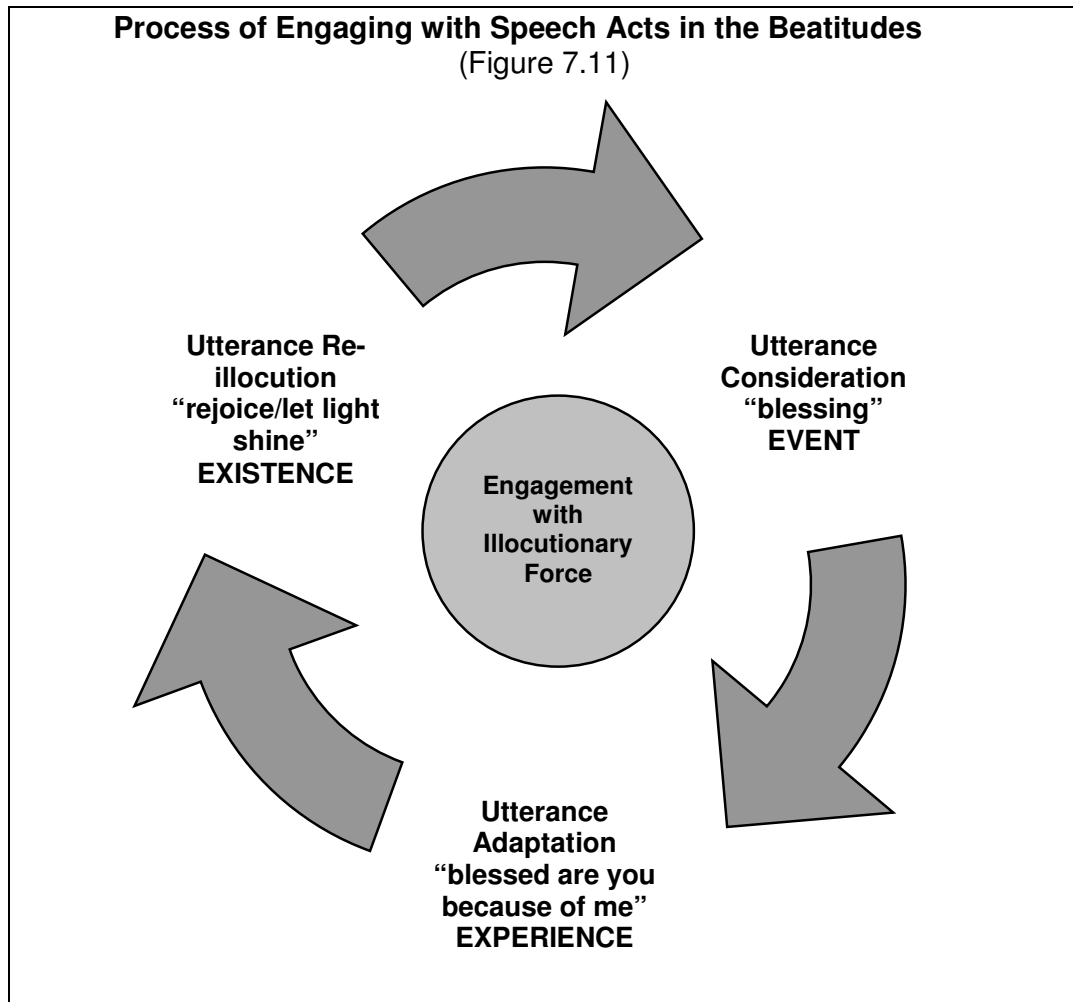
Ultimately, the experience of the Beatitudes by the Christian community throughout the centuries demonstrates the strength of its perlocutionary effects (cf. Patte 1988:98). Are there indications that the Matthean community saw the Beatitudes from a performative posture? Could

the Beatitudes have been employed for ritualistic purposes by the Christian community?

7.2.3.2 *Existential Engagement: The Process of Experiencing the Speech Acts of the Beatitudes*

The act of blessing governs the interpretive engagement. The literary movement from third person (cf. Matt 5:3-10) to second person (cf. Matt 5:11-12) was an important illocutionary act by Matthew. The experience of the Matthean community was equated to the experience of Jesus. By alluding to the Isaianic promises and assimilating them into the Matthean community (“you”), a new perlocutionary effect was achieved, providing identification as those who were recipients of Jesus’ pronounced blessings (cf. Matt 5:13-16). Matthew referenced the “blessed” community as “salt and light”, strong metaphors for the constitution of the social body. It is in these capacities that Matthew could use the imperatival “rejoice” as the proper response to the force of the previous illocutions (cf. Maartens 1991:15).

Ultimately, the authority and meaning of the Beatitudes exists in the recognition of the speaker (Jesus) and the situation (kingdom announcement). This recognition cannot simply be interpreted. The nature of the utterance demands a hearing that is repeatedly conveyed through a transformational experience (Evans 1980:262; cf. Blount 1997:276-277; Beavis 2006:77). Just as looking at notes on a sheet of music does not produce the sound of an instrument; likewise, describing the illocution of an utterance does not bring the utterance to life. The essence of the blessing is in the experience of the hearer to the utterance (cf. Brawley 2004:147; cf. Figure 7.11).



7.2.3.3 *Critical Horizon: The Worldviews Surrounding the Beatitudes*

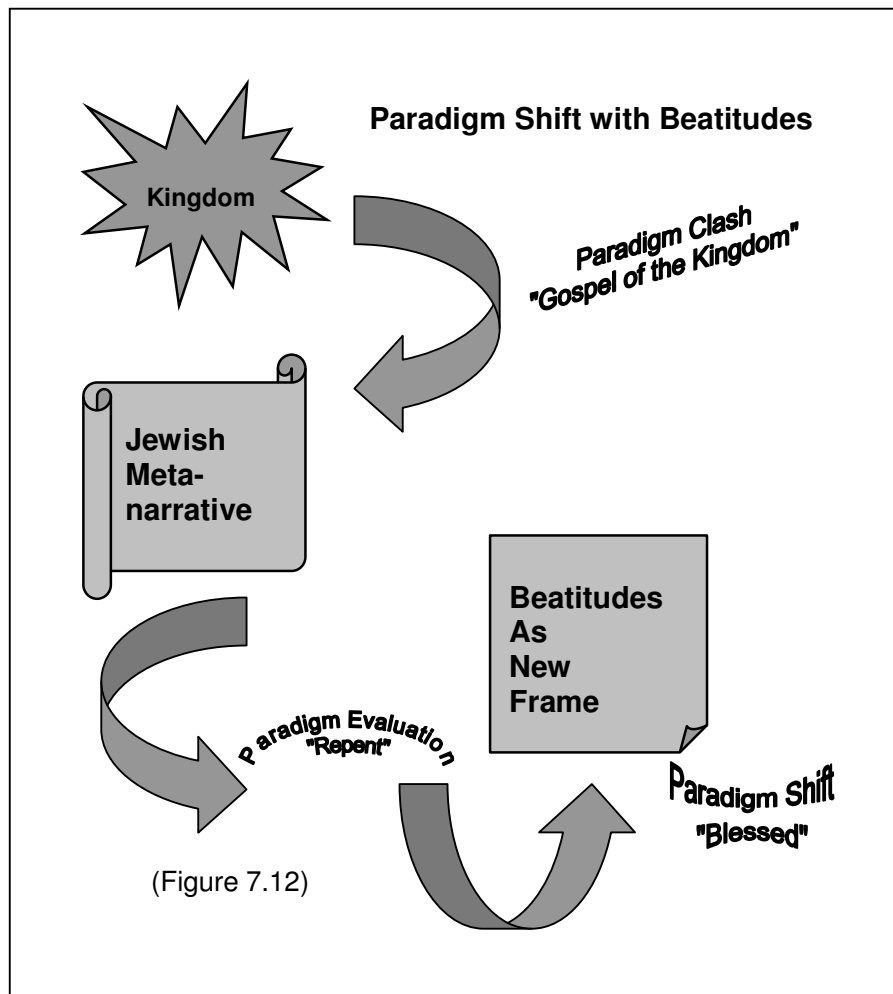
The Beatitudes were spoken in relation to Jesus’ imperative to repent (cf. Matt 4:17). The notion of repentance was demanding of a paradigm shift. The reality Jesus described could only be realized with repentance preceding the acceptance of blessing. This paradigm shift guided Matthew in composing the Gospel. The basis for repentance was the announced presence of the kingdom in Jesus.

A clash of worldviews emerged due to the kingdom message as presented by Jesus against deeply, long held religious beliefs. The kingdom announcement was not antagonistic to first century religious beliefs as much as agonistic. The message of Jesus was construed as an attack on the sacred symbols rooted in Second Temple Judaism: temple, Torah, and covenants (Naugle 2002:299). The kingdom was not about territory or political

power. The significance of the message of Jesus and the Matthean literary composition was its promotion of the new orientation to the kingdom as a transcendent experience (cf. Briggs 2001b:276-278). Blessings announced by Jesus were no less than an invitation to enter into a new vista of experience with God.

Matthew used literary means to persuade the Christ community of its accurate understanding of Jesus' message and the need to continue with the kingdom message in the world. The force of the Beatitudes is derived from the repetitive "blessing" upon the hearer. The spoken act of blessing had a rich Old Testament background. The blessing was not in the magic of the utterance, but in the institution established and practiced throughout Israel's history (cf. Thiselton 1974:294-295; Mitchell 1987). The formula, as described by Thiselton, was the appropriate person in the appropriate situation (1974:294). Ultimately, it was the status of the speaker that gave authority and meaning to the blessing.

The eight Beatitudes were placed as the introduction to the first of five discourses in the Matthean composition. The significant placement of the Beatitudes can be explained as the paradigm shift Matthew advocated for the new community. As a paradigm, the Beatitudes provided the Matthean community the point of view (cf. Lotman 1975:352) for their present identity and hope for future vindication (Maartens 1991:14). The Matthean community could rejoice and continue its mission because it was a community *recognizing* and *responding* to the blessings uttered by Jesus as "an accomplished act" (cf. Mitchell 1987:174; Zamfir 2007:82; Figure 7.12).



7.2.3.4 *Acquired Communal Translation: The Reiteration of the Speech Acts with the Beatitudes*

The evidence of the Beatitudes suggests they were performative as ritual, whether liturgical, catechistic or ceremonial (cf. Brooke 1989:40; Betz 1995:59-60; Scaer 2002:16-25; Viljoen 2008:214-218). Some scholars have suggested that the declarative nature of *makarios* was reminiscent of known rituals surrounding the theme (Betz 1995:93; Viljoen 2008:208-209). The Gospels as a whole demonstrate that expressions of the Christian faith were used in liturgical and ritual contexts, such as baptism, the Lord's supper, and the Lord's prayer (cf. Horrell 2002:328).

As a social body, the illocutionary force of the Beatitudes was realized in communal fashion. The religious utterances become the religious acts themselves (Patte 1988:92-93). Even a reading performance could resemble

a ceremonial ritual (cf. Horsley 2008:61). The performative nature was an engaging means whereby confirmation was provided to the Matthean community of its identity and mission in representing Jesus to the world. Literary mediums were employed, not for individual satisfaction, but for social contribution (cf. Botha 1992:210-212). Lanser has called for more exploration in how a social body utilizes hypothetical speech acts to form an alternative world with the exhibition of transformative results (cf. 1981:293-294).

Matthew prepared the reader for the Beatitudes by emphasizing repentance, the authority of Christ, and the importance of following him. The eight Beatitudes Matthew crafted was a literary medium to touch the imagination of the Christian community as they “heard” Jesus pronounce his blessing upon them. For the Matthean community, the “impact” was the ability to transcend the crisis of persecution with their alignment to Jesus. The ramifications were a communal joy and understanding of mission in the world.

As ritual, the Beatitudes could be expressed orally, literarily, or communally (cf. Betz 1985:28). Redundancy is an essential component to ritual. Redundancy is the “high predictability of certain phrases” (Wittig 1973:126). It functions to both conserve and communicate information a social body considers important to its well-being (cf. Suleiman 1980:120-121). It was the incorporation of ordinary life events in demonstrating “profound religious principles” (Welch 2009:197-205). Matthew used redundancy throughout his Gospel, emphasizing the themes so fundamental to the Christ community (Burnett 1985:92-93). Through redundancy, the “noise” (distraction) of competing communication is mitigated so that repetition assists in the recognition of the core message (cf. Wittig 1973:127-129; Burnett 1985:120).

If the Beatitudes demonstrate a perlocutionary effect that could be categorized as ritual, similar comparison could be made using the motif of a bear hunting ritual supplied by Smith (cf. Figure 7.7). The four elements Smith utilized have been changed to express a more general idea of ritual as it applies to the situation the Matthean community was facing (cf. Figure 7.13).

Beatitudes as Ritual

“Preparation” = repentance, follower of Christ

“Sociological imagination” = illocutionary force of Beatitudes

“Impact” = perlocutionary force of Beatitudes to situation

“Sociological ramifications” = imperatives to rejoice and shine

(Figure 7.13)

Performative utterances provide a situation for the speaker and audience to engage in their roles of communication within the world of reality to which the language speaks. It is through the imagination and compliance of the hearer whereby the illocutionary force has successful results (cf. Patrick 1999:193).

7.3 Summary of Speech Act Theory on the Beatitudes

When it comes to the biblical text, “what we do with words” is of supreme importance. The attention Austin brought to the act of speaking was central to what would become known as speech act theory. To this day, linguists and philosophers return to his 1955 lectures and quote him extensively in both agreement and divergence. The total speech act, identified by Austin, was the acts of locution, illocution, and perlocution. However, it was his thesis that words perform acts that sounded the alarm to linguists that knowing grammar was not enough. Austin pushed us to find, behind the grammar and linguistic structures, the force of an utterance.

Searle brought the well-deserved attention to speech act theory. He served as its catalyst in organizing and describing the inner workings of the new discipline offered through Austin. The equation, “x counts as y in context c” provided Searle the vital formula in understanding that rules govern speech in a given context (1969:36). He went further in using a five-fold classification of all speech acts. However, the prominence he placed on speech acts within social construction has been the measure of what language can do in society. For Searle, language both creates and sustains the social entities we take for granted.

It did not take long for biblical hermeneutics to incorporate speech act theory into the field of exegesis. From a philosophical standpoint, Wolterstorff can be credited with focusing on understanding divine discourse from a speech act perspective. The concept of double-discourse in Scripture is foundational to his proposition that God speaks. The speaking of God is “deputized” so that when one reads the biblical text, one can affirm they are hearing from God. Wolterstorff readily admits that the presuppositions bearing upon the interpreter determine what guides the assessment of divine utterance. However, in the final analysis, the validity that God has spoken is evidenced in the illocutionary force of the text.

Briggs has become a key influence for speech act theory in biblical interpretation. He understands that speech act theory is just another tool in the work of exegesis. The usefulness of speech act theory for biblical exegesis is primarily upon those passages portraying strong illocutionary acts. This leads Briggs to assert that considering the nature of speech acts in the biblical text is primarily to induce upon the hearer a commitment to the illocutionary act. For Briggs, this is the essence of using speech act theory as an exegetical tool: having searched for the illocutionary force, having responded with commitment, and being transformed as a hearer (2008:101-102).

Before a speech act model can be applied to the Beatitudes, the principles guiding the process must be understood. This study has found six principles that direct the speech act process when interpreting the biblical text. First, to approach the text is to approach an intentional compositional intention. Authorial intention is present despite the distance encountered between reader and text. Second, contextual considerations bring clarity to the meaning of an illocutionary act. Third, a speech act is a worldview snapshot captured in the text. Fourth, speech acts not only construct social identities, but maintain them as well. Fifth, if the role of the hearer is diminished, the speech act is invalid. Finally, perlocutionary effects are multi-layered and demonstrate illocutionary force within social bodies.

The speech act model created from this study of the Beatitudes can be described as a formula (**SP+(EE)CH=ACT**): analyze the **S**ituated **P**erformativity of a text, add it to the multiplying nature of **E**xistential

Engagement by the interpreter with the illocutionary force found through the **Critical Horizon** of guiding worldviews, and the result is an **Acquired Communal Translation** for the social body. The Beatitudes, though aesthetically beautiful, are speech acts grounded in the event of Jesus' pronouncement, and making genuine happiness possible in those who hear the utterance for themselves within the Christ community (cf. Schweizer 1975:98; Maartens 1991:12).

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Since “words are also deeds” (Wittgenstein 1958:§546), then the Beatitudes serve to exemplify the validity of Jesus’ sayings and doings through the Christ community. God’s Word affirms the actuality of divine-human communication. A viable tool for assessing the force of divine utterance with the potential response by the hearer is speech act theory. Matthew, in addressing the new community, understood the force of Jesus’ sayings as he composed a literary piece to engage those capable of responding to the divine speech act. Matthew constructed his Gospel around the sermons Jesus told (cf. White 2010:303-310).

By adopting speech act theory on the Beatitudes, the sayings of Jesus in the Matthean composition were investigated to demonstrate the force of the performative utterances with its potential effects on the hearers. The exegetical, theological, and literary findings of this study will be evaluated in relation to speech act theory and the model advanced in this study.

8.1 Questions Posed by the Study of the Beatitudes

Simply stated, any speech act situation contains the speaker, audience, context, speech, and response. This study developed and explored the elements of a speech act situation. The direct audience was examined in chapter two with discussion of the Matthean community. The focus of chapter three was upon the cultural milieu and worldview to which the Beatitudes were framed. Central to speech act theory is the speaker, so, chapter four explored

who Jesus was congruent to his sayings. The composition of the Beatitudes as a speech and literary creation was explored through chapters five and six. Through the assessment of the literary qualities of the Beatitudes, there was a greater understanding of the oral climate to which they were spoken. Finally, chapter seven focused on speech act theory and the principles derived from research on the Beatitudes. A speech act model was presented as a resource in examining a speech act situation. The speech act model, **SP+(EE)CH = ACT**, is a paradigm useful in viewing a text.

The central and guiding question of this study was *how do the Beatitudes demonstrate that Matthew intended for the utilization of Jewish concepts be adopted as a paradigmatic utterance by the new community in understanding its existence and purpose in representing Jesus as the presence of God in the world?* The answer can be found by viewing how this study examined the speech situation of the Beatitudes.

8.1.1 Question Regarding the Audience of the Beatitudes

Who were those to whom Matthew addressed with the potential to respond? Through this study, it was concluded that the Matthean community was a network of Christians bound through ethnic, sociological, and theological dimensions. These three dimensions provide the dynamic model in explaining the early Christian movement and its relationship to Judaism. There have been other models proposed to explain the Jewish-Christian community, but they differ in the emphasis of one particular dimension over another. A dynamic model best explains how early Christian groups varied in their response to Judaism with surrounding cultural issues, in the initial growth of Christianity. The central core of the Christ communities was the belief that Jesus was the Messiah.

However, the Matthean community was not the only audience to which the Beatitudes were addressed. Two significant aspects of Matthew's Gospel point to how the Beatitudes continue to speak. First, the message of repentance was explored with the conclusion that Jesus was pointing to the need for a paradigm change, a new perspective on the issues he was addressing (cf. Matt 3:2; 4:17). Humanity has potential in hearing Jesus'

words, but it begins by adopting a framework by which his message is paramount to the competing voices within society. Second, a follower of Jesus can be understood as one who “hears” and responds with commitment to the message (speech act) of Jesus. Ultimately, the message of the Beatitudes is for those who live in the reality of being identified with the ministry and person of Jesus.

8.1.2 Question Regarding the Context of the Beatitudes

How does the context surrounding the Beatitudes advance appreciation for its message? There is no question that the Gospel of Matthew was the most Jewish of the Gospels. The Jewish metanarrative was the foundation for Matthew’s composition. He saw the ministry of Jesus through the lens of a Jewish worldview (cf. Wright 1996:137-144; Wilson 2005:46-47). What resulted was the modification of Matthew’s worldview into a paradigm considered as a “new” perspective compared to the old paradigm guiding Judaism (cf. Matt 13:52). The new perspective was shaped by the story of Jesus in Matthew’s composition. Matthew wrote to assure the Christian community that Jesus was the culmination of all the Jewish promises resulting in the true Judaism to be followed (cf. Weren 2005:62; Wilson 2005:55-56).

Three major ideas from the Jewish metanarrative guided the Matthean composition of the teaching and ministry of Jesus: the covenants, temple, and Torah. Jesus was introduced through a covenant understanding in the birth narrative (cf. Matt 1:1-17). The covenants brought assurance of divine blessing upon God’s people. For Matthew, Jesus was the blessing of God for humanity. The temple was Israel’s visible assurance of God’s presence among an elect people. Matthew conveyed Jesus as the presence of God among humanity (cf. Matt 1:23). The Torah was the will of God requiring obedience from his people. Matthew portrayed Jesus as the savior for his people (cf. Matt 1:21), who also taught with the true intention of Torah (cf. Matt 5:17-48). How did Matthew provide a new worldview through the Jewish metanarrative?

Matthew condensed the worldview that guided the new community in its understanding of Jesus and its operation in the world through the phrase

“gospel of the kingdom” (Matt 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; cf. also 26:13). In announcing the kingdom, Jesus adjusted the kingdom concept as found within Jewish piety to one that appealed to the disenfranchised. The message Jesus offered cannot be divorced from the context to which it was spoken (cf. Horsley 2008:42-55). Those who followed the “gospel” message of Jesus were eager for social and political renewal in their lives and communities, thereby understanding Jesus’ ministry as providing the solution. Matthew placed the Beatitudes as the introduction to Jesus’ teaching regarding the solution.

The kingdom motif performed a fundamental role in the Matthean composition by demonstrating the message and presence of Jesus as kingdom reality. By utilizing the phrase, “kingdom of heaven” throughout the Gospel, Matthew combined the prophetic understanding (cf. Daniel 2:44; 4:26; and 7:27) with the present perception of Jesus as kingdom mediator. Jesus, in announcing the kingdom gospel, was affirming that his kingdom was not of earthly origin or consequence (cf. Pennington 2009:321-330). The kingdom originated with God (“heaven”) as divine promise and realized in the presence of Jesus on earth. Consequently, Matthew constructed the Beatitudes to demonstrate that the constituents of this kingdom were those who attained and understood this kingdom exclusively through Jesus. The Beatitudes provided the metanarrative for the new community to live in the reality of kingdom prominence, despite opposition on earth (cf. Moore 2009:285-286; Pennington 2009:334-336).

8.1.3 Question Regarding the Speaker of the Beatitudes

How does the authority of Jesus parallel the energy of the Beatitudes? One cannot help but take notice of the way Matthew developed his story around the authority of Jesus (cf. Matt 8:5-13, 23-27; 9:1-8; 17:1-8; 21:23-27; 28:18-20). Without divine authority, Jesus’ teachings would have been moralistic aphorisms at best. The significance of the Beatitudes lies in the authoritative utterance of Jesus. One approach Matthew adopted to demonstrate the authority of Jesus was the mountain motif (cf. Matt 4:8-11; 5:1-2; 15:29-31; 17:1-8; 24:3; 28:16-20). The literary prominence of the mountain motif signified the transformative results contained in the message and ministry of

Jesus (cf. Donaldson 1985:202; Hanson 1994a:148-153). Matthew placed the Beatitudes within the mountain motif as Jesus taught with authority (“opened his mouth”).

The blessings Jesus uttered brought encouragement to the Christian community because it recognized the unique position of the speaker. The Sermon on the Mount was presented with an authority beyond human equivalence. The Beatitudes pericope (cf. Matt 5:3-16) served not only to introduce the Sermon, but demonstrate why the Matthean community affirmed the teachings of Jesus over a rabbinical understanding of the Torah in their social milieu (cf. Matt 5:17-20). The Matthean community did not avow the negation of Torah, but, instead, affirmed the true understanding of Torah through the authority of Jesus. In fulfilling Torah (cf. Matt 5:17-20), Jesus affirmed his messianic role as the completion of all that had been promised to and demanded of Israel from its inception.

This study has concluded that Matthew portrayed Jesus as the Messiah (“Christ”) with the intention of confirming Jesus’ role as the Son of David within Jewish thought. As Messiah, Jesus was responsible for accomplishing what was assured by Isaiah to be evidence of the kingdom presence (cf. Isaiah 61:1-11; Bird 2009:100-101). The messianic literary thread can be traced through the Matthean narrative, demonstrating that Matthew intended for the reader to affirm Jesus as the “Christ” by the time of his death (cf. Figure 4.1). Through the Beatitudes, Jesus was alluding to the messianic blessings he authoritatively pronounced as evidence of his ministry among the people.

8.1.4 Question Regarding the Speech of the Beatitudes

What does the language of the Beatitudes communicate to the hearers? When the Beatitudes were spoken by Jesus, assurance was provided that God was with his people (cf. Matt 1:23). Jesus offered the assurance of God’s presence through the blessings he pronounced as reality. On one occasion, Jesus insisted that the mercy he offered was superior to the temple (Matt 12:6; cf. Luz 2001:181-182). Matthew made use of this claim in demonstrating

the role of Jesus and his kingdom as the reality of God's presence on earth. The announcement of blessings can be viewed as the speech act of Jesus.

8.1.4.1 The locution of Jesus' blessings: exegesis

Through an exegetical study of the Beatitudes pericope (Matt 5:3-16), this study demonstrated how the Matthean community was encouraged in their mission and strengthened as a social body despite the oppression it faced. The eight-fold blessing served as a reminder to those who were associated with Jesus of the kingdom reality he proclaimed. The Christ community consisted of those who were in need of divine attention (Matt 5:3-6) and those who displayed the divine presence (Matt 5:7-10).

Through a ninth Beatitude (Matt 5:11-12), Matthew expressed the relevancy of Jesus' speech to the Matthean community during its time of crisis. The community was encouraged to rejoice as it remembered its sacred past ("prophets") as well as its beginning ("on account of me"). The imperative (active) to "rejoice" and subsequent "be joyful" (middle voice) suggests that the social body was commanded to maintain its corporate expression of gratitude for being associated with Jesus (cf. liturgical, ritual; Betz 1995:151).

The blessed life was introduced in the Beatitudes and further portrayed in the Sermon on the Mount as a life of righteousness, or metonymically speaking, a life lived in the reality of God's will. Righteousness (*dikaiosunē*) was employed seven times in the Gospel, with five occurrences in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:6, 10, 20; 6:1, and 33). The ideas of *dikaiosunē* can express obedient conduct or justice, depending on contextual direction. This study found that in the Beatitudes, the idea of "rightness" with Christological overtones best expressed the Matthean intention for the community to adopt. For Matthew, the greater righteousness was equated to the person of Jesus.

The exegetical flow of the Beatitudes was joined to the Sermon through the salt/light motif (Matt 5:13-16). As those associated with Jesus, the Matthean community understood its mission in terms of salt and light in the world. The metaphors expressed how the new community was both a kingdom influence and a kingdom display in the world. The imperative that followed the metaphorical descriptions reminded the new community of its

responsibility to be a kingdom witness in bringing the world to the reality of God's presence ("glorify your Father in heaven").

8.1.4.2 *The illocution of Jesus' blessings: performing utterance*

Matthew utilized the term *makarioi* in explaining what Jesus "did" in his saying. The central point of the Beatitudes can only be understood in what Jesus did with the "blessed" utterance (cf. Hancher 1975:639). The priests employed *eulogeō* in expressing praise to God and divine blessing upon the people in the temple (cf. Becker 1986:216). Jesus, instead of using a term from priestly performance, adopted *makarioi* to convey the "state of being" or condition of those in his kingdom. This study has found that *makarioi* was prominent in both wisdom and apocalyptic literature, indicating the positive condition of those who realized divine favor existed in their lives. Kissine has argued that illocutionary force is recognized when there is common ground between speaker and audience (2009:128-134). What did "blessed" demonstrate as an illocutionary force?

(a) It was *descriptive* of the life of Jesus and the Christ community. Jesus did not prescribe a blessing, as did the priests in the temple. Instead, he described the state of those already blessed by the kingdom reality appropriate to his presence. The eight Beatitudes were identification markers of the Christ community and the various ways the kingdom reign was demonstrated (Hannan 2000:52; cf. Guelich 1976:433). Matthew particularized the Beatitudes by shifting from third person to second person in the ninth Beatitude, demonstrating how the Matthean community participated in the "life" of Jesus (cf. Maarten 1991:12-13).

(b) It was *declarative* of the shared reality to which the new community experienced. Contextual change emerges with illocutionary force (Bunt 2000:81). As declarative utterances, Matthew utilized the Beatitudes to advance a rhetorical paradigm associated with Jesus. The rhetorical logic had a threefold implication: the words Jesus spoke ("blessed") through the Beatitudes brought the new community (*ekklesia*) into existence; the existence of the new community (*ekklesia*) was contingent on the existence of Jesus ("on my account"); the presence of Jesus continued in the world through the presence ("you are salt/light") of the new community (*ekklesia*).

Declarative utterances not only reflect the state of affairs, they are the affairs (cf. Fish 1980:216).

(c) It was *definitive* of the purpose and existence of the new community ("let your light shine"). The experience of divine utterance brings assurance of divine presence (cf. Esterhammer 1993:291-292). The Matthean community could continue to be joyful as long as the presence of Jesus was experienced through the spoken words of the Beatitudes. In understanding its existence through the metaphorical images of salt and light, the Matthean community withstood the insults and rejection it faced as a social body. The ultimate benefit was the acknowledgement by those outside the community that the actions of the community were commensurate to a transcendent God whose immanent presence was made known through those actions (Matt 5:16).

8.1.4.3 The perlocution of Jesus' blessings: a literary magnum opus

Matthew adopted the Beatitudes from the oral performances and social memory of the Christ community. In constructing a literary composition, it served as a vivid reminder of the origin of the community with a mission to the world. This study observed the three dimensions of author, text, and reader involved in the literary analysis and interpretation of a text. From the engagement of the three dimensions, the possibility of meaning emerges for the interpreter. An overemphasis on one dimension above the others results in a myopic understanding of the literary piece (cf. Devitt 2000:699).

It has been concluded from this study that the Beatitudes were formed in a blended genre of wisdom tradition and apocalyptic eschatology. The communication from this Matthean composition consisted in a literary milieu recognizable within Second Temple Judaism. The otherworldly nature of the kingdom was combined with the insistence of living a life conducive to the present reception of divine blessings. The Matthean genre reflected the kingdom announcement of Jesus through its quality of divine utterance and human empowerment.

Matthew created this genre using parallelism. Through the poetic use of alliteration, allusion, and metaphor, Matthew composed the Beatitudes to serve both mnemonic and theological purposes. The balance of each strophe,

in word count and rhythm, served to aid the social memory of the Matthean body for oral performance. The poetic arrangement was not only for aesthetic reasons, but theological as well in that a narrative was created to form a dialogue between Jesus and the reader (cf. Maartens 1991:10-11). The literary dialogue became a rhetorical communiqué between Jesus and the community he created. This line of communication would be the source for experiencing and sharing the presence of Jesus through the new community.

8.2 The Beatitudes as Paradigmatic Utterance

The hypothesis of this study was *Matthew intended for the Jewish concepts interwoven through the literary and theological construct of the Beatitudes, to be adopted by the new community, serving as a paradigmatic utterance for understanding its existence and purpose in representing Jesus as the presence of God in the world.* Through this study, the hypothesis demonstrated and explained how the Beatitudes are vital to the Christ community. The speech act model can illustrate how this study progressed in light of the hypothesis:

SP = speaker, audience, speech, time/space

EE = response of audience to illocutionary force

CH = context (social and literary) and worldviews as foundational to speech event

ACT = communal experience in ritual, performance, and meaning.

Through speech act theory, the Beatitudes exemplify how the presence of Jesus was affirmed to the Matthean community. The Matthean community developed during a difficult period. Matthew took advantage of the situation and composed the story of Jesus in reassuring the community of its identity and mission despite its struggles. The words Jesus spoke became paradigmatic for the community and served as mimesis of his continual presence with them (cf. Hanson 1994a:167-170).

The Bering model was demonstrated to have value in the discovery of meaning (cf. Bering 2003:101-120). By adapting the concepts of “Event-Experience-Existence” to the aspect of application in the hermeneutical

process, the relevance of speech act theory can be demonstrated for the Christ community. What effect do the Beatitudes have within the Christ community?

8.2.1 A Commemorative Event

In the final appearance of Jesus before the disciples, Matthew brought his Gospel composition to a climax with the promise of Jesus' presence as a continual experience by the new community (cf. Matt 28:20). Jesus pointed to his inherent authority as the foundation for affirming his presence (cf. Matt 28:18). Matthew alluded to the doubt (*edistasan*) demonstrated by the disciples in order to make a rhetorical emphasis to the Matthean community (cf. Hagner 1995:895). The term conveyed ideas of "hesitation" or "uncertainty" (cf. Danker 2000:252; Matt 14:31; 28:17). The hesitation of the disciples came about after the events of the resurrection. Matthew referenced their doubt to emphasize the assurance of Jesus' promise to the new community and the central thesis of the Matthean Gospel: God is with us in the person of Jesus (cf. Matt 1:23; Kupp 1996:234-244; Blount 1997:263).

The Beatitudes introduced the authority and presence of Jesus to his followers. The event that Matthew portrayed was derived from a historical occurrence. However, for the new community, historical data is not enough. The event is to be commemorated through repetitious recall of the significant utterances of Jesus. Through recall, the new community uses ritual, performance, or readings to bring attention to the authority by which Jesus spoke. The event is created, not simply through exegetical findings, but through the commitment and attitude of the community to Jesus as the authoritative voice of the text (cf. Evans 1980:251; cf. Moxnes 2003:115; Holland 2007:335). The new community continues to tell the story in its present mission to the world (cf. Powell 1992:196).

8.2.2 A Communal Experience

Those who hear and respond to the Beatitudes have a shared experience of the presence of Jesus that can be identified as kingdom blessing (cf. Lioy 2004:120). Searle has argued that in the illocutionary act, the speaker intends to produce certain effects in the hearers (cf. 1969:45). The Beatitudes pericope was a literary composition serving the ritualistic purpose of experiencing the words of Jesus repeatedly, with the goal of encouraging the new community in its mission to the world (cf. Viljoen 2008:209). The comprehension of the Beatitudes is ultimately experiencing reality on another transcendent plane of existence (Kodjak 1986:70, 212).

The impact of the Beatitudes can best be experienced in the same medium they were created, an oral environment (cf. Achtemeier 1990:19; Botha 1990:39). With performance repetition, the new community adapts the Beatitudes to its contextual need and expectations (cf. Holland 2007:333-338). The Israelite culture of the Old Testament provides a clear example of how meaning was found through collective memory and oral repetitions of sacred stories and important events (cf. Horsley 2008:146-151). Symbols were subjectively employed for experiencing meaning (cf. Deutsch 1990:15). The kingdom announcement by Jesus demands that his followers experience the reality of the utterance (cf. Beavis 2006:77).

The same was true of first century society. No oral presentation was exhaustive in itself. Instead, each social context adapted the memory tradition to its situation, discovering new meanings applicable to the present. The Beatitudes can appear paradoxical, since its truth is in the reality of the experience by the Christ community (cf. Sicari 1991:590-591; Martin 2001:225-226; cf. Holland 2007:334). With each new response comes another layer of experience pointing to the reality of God's presence (cf. Figure 7.4; Steinhauser 1982:128).

8.2.3 A Confirmed Existence

A direct literary and rhetorical move accentuating the fundamental nature of the Matthean community can be shown in the shift from third person to

second person in Matthew 5:11-16 (cf. Kennedy 1984:41). The emphasis on “you” and “your” illustrated the force of the Beatitudes in the life of the new community (cf. Figure 6.9). Two prominent imperatives, “rejoice/be glad” and “let your light shine”, enclosed the two declaratives, “you are salt” and “you are light”, guiding both the nature and mission of the Matthean community.

The purpose of ritual or repetitive performances by the new community is to declare and confirm what is considered as true (cf. Ray 1973:22-24). Ritual serves not to prove what is true, but to articulate what is true for the social body (cf. Grimes 1988:120). Speech acts are performed for intentional purposes. For the new community, adopting the Beatitudes as paradigmatic utterances yields the result of reaffirmation of both its nature and mission in the world. The Beatitudes are to be experienced as the “yes” of God through Jesus’ utterances (Schweizer 1975:96; cf. Kodjak 1986:211). Reaffirmation is a necessity in light of the all-important existence of the Christ community as the continued presence of Jesus to the world.

8.3 Areas for Further Research

Three areas require further research beyond the scope of this study. The first is a comparison of the Lukan account of the Beatitudes (cf. Lk 6:20-26) with the Matthean composition. Of vital interest would be the examination of the schema by Luke with his listing of four blessings and four woes compared to the eight blessings of Matthew. Was the stated woes part of the theological purpose of Luke in reaching out to the social outcasts? Why were they absent from the Matthean account and only employed later against the Pharisees (cf. Matt 23)?

A second area needing further investigating is the ritualistic nature of the Sermon on the Mount. If the Beatitudes served the Matthean community as a paradigmatic utterance, what does the remaining Sermon mean in the oral context of its constitution? Special emphasis should be placed upon the Lord’s Prayer (cf. Matt 6:9-13) and its strategic role as centerpiece to the Sermon. Do the imperatives have a strategic ritualistic role after the pericope? In addition, could the hearing and doing of the will of the Father (cf. Matt 7:13-

27) be specifically related to the mnemonic structure of the Sermon on the Mount?

Finally, a sociological study would demonstrate the hypothesis of this study with statistical data from various Christian communities. Through the work of fieldwork data, investigation into the various methods employed in Christian communities to enhance the Beatitudes paradigm as a speech act could be measured. Instruments could be created to measure the impact of a ritualistic utterance of the Beatitudes on the congregation. Would the research find a greater awareness of purpose and mission in the Christian community through the organized performance of the Beatitudes?

8.4 Final Remarks

The literary nature of the Beatitudes demands an analysis that demonstrates a composition worthy of the acclaim “masterpiece”. Its poetic beauty and parallel structure created for the arena of sound can also be imagined as a symphony that touches the purest of emotion. It can be viewed as an “intertextual wonderland” in the way it has touched and challenged the Christian community through the centuries in experiencing the divine dialogue on its own (Allison 2005:63). Two conclusions reveal the ongoing interaction with the Beatitudes.

First, the Beatitudes were composed as speech acts with potential illocutionary force. If they are not heard, they are simply a literary composition. To hear them is to commit to the authority and intention of the speaker. The theological worth of the Beatitudes is found in the person of Jesus who spoke with authority and purposeful intention. It is to those who respond to the illocutionary force of the Beatitudes that experience it as a divine speech act event. Jesus intended for the hearers of the Beatitudes to live in the reality of kingdom blessing by accepting his utterances as truth. The authority of Jesus creates the state of affairs within the Christian community.

Second, meaning is found in the speech act event of the Beatitudes. The oral environment cannot be forgotten in the context of its creation. It is imperative that the Christian community experience the text and sounds of the

Beatitudes. Through creative performances and rituals, the expectations and beliefs of the community confirm the presence of Jesus with his kingdom assurance. The community stands on those declarations as it experiences and demonstrates both a kingdom presence and kingdom prominence in the world. As representative of Jesus, the Christian community must initiate ways to experience the paradigmatic utterance so that the voice of Jesus is always heard.

*"Thus language grew. By the few sounds we possessed we
were enabled to think a short distance beyond those sounds;
then came the need for new sounds wherewith to express the new thought."
-Jack London, Before Adam (chapter 4)*

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