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The Nature of Jesus' Obedience: A Narrative-Critical Reading of Matthew's Gethsemane
(26:36-46)

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DECLARATION

I, Timothy Mejida, confirm that I composed the thesis, that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree, that the work is my own, and that all quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks and sources of information specifically acknowledged.

Timothy Mejida, March 23, 2021

ABSTRACT

This study, using the Gethsemane passage as central, investigates Matthew's portrayal of the textual Jesus' obedience amidst various claims implicitly clamouring for supremacy. There are the conflicts with the religious authorities of Israel who label him as an impostor, his disciples who find his standard unattainable, and even God whose seeming inactivity throughout Jesus' suffering may bring into question Jesus' genuineness. In setting the stage for the investigation, this thesis first reviews briefly the interpretations of some key scholars on Gethsemane (Matt 26:36-46) (chapter two).

Using narrative criticism, this key text is analysed with attention on the episodic characterisation of Jesus, especially the decipherable obedience features (chapter three). Jesus is shown to be authentically submissive to God's will. Intratextual links between Gethsemane and the rest of the Gospel reveal that the Gethsemane obedience is consonant with the Matthean obedience theology (chapter four). The conviction that Gethsemane is a synopsis of the whole Gospel proves that Jesus' portrayed obedience therein epitomises his lifelong obedience to God. Associations between Gethsemane and a few exemplary characters from the Hebrew Scripture demonstrate that Jesus' obedience is rooted in the Old Testament tradition and even advances that of all genuinely obedient people of God since he perfectly fulfils all the law and prophets (chapter five). This study, therefore, fits into the debate regarding Matthean obedience theology and specifically the nature of obedience exhibited by Jesus.

Jesus' obedience was evaluated according to Herbert McCabe OP's definition of obedience. On its own, Jesus' submission to God's will, as apparently implied in the Gethsemane text, would not pass McCabe's test of perfect obedience. His notion of obedience would score Jesus' obedience as perfect ultimately and only because the obedience resulted from a sharing of 'one mind' between God (superior) and Jesus (subject) geared toward an objective goal—in this case the world's salvation. Accordingly, we conclude that Jesus' lifelong obedience is the model and salvific obedience which every disciple is called to appropriate.

Keywords: sonship, cup, prayer, watch, obedience, submission, doing the will of God, temptation, destiny, Son of God, Son of Man, θέλημα (will).

To Sr Ann McElroy, HRS, whom I call my Irish mother 1930-2020

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This year will be remembered in history for the eerie worldwide coronavirus pandemic that for months has left every street and community centre desolate for a while with the lockdown and collective sense of vulnerability. Thus, I tag this year 'the worldwide Gethsemane year.' May the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic be translated into good by God and may the dead rest in the eternal peace of God.

Timothy

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ATJ* – *Ashland Theological Journal*
- CBQ* – *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
- GNBCE – Good News Bible Catholic Edition
- HBT* – *Horizons in Biblical Theology*
- Hermeneia – Hermeneia Commentary
- HTS* – *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*
- ICC – International Critical Commentary
- IRM* – *International Review of Mission*
- ITQ* – *Irish Theological Quarterly*
- JBL* – *Journal of Biblical Literature*
- JB – The Jerusalem Bible
- JEH* – *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
- JJS* – *Journal of Jewish Studies*
- JRF* – *Journal of Religion and Film*
- JSHJ* – *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*
- JSNT* – *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
- JTS* – *Journal of Theological Studies*
- LNTS – Library of New Testament Studies
- NCBCE – The New Community Bible Catholic Edition
- NIV – New International Version
- NovT* – *Novum Testamentum*
- NRSVCE - New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition
- NRSV – New Revised Standard Version
- NTS* – *New Testament Studies*
- RB* – *Revue biblique*
- RSV – Revised Standard Version

SP – Sacra Pagina

TBT – The Bible Today

ThTo – Theology Today

TJT – Toronto Journal of Theology

TS – Theological Studies

WTJ – Westminster Theological Journal

Apocrypha, Septuagint, Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumran Texts), and Other Texts

⌘ A D K Γ Δ Θ – seven of extant manuscript texts (textual witnesses)

1 Esd – 1 Esdras

2 Esd – 2 Esdras

1 Macc – 1 Maccabees

2 Macc – 2 Maccabees

1QM – Milhamah or War Scroll

1QS – Serek Hayahad or Rule of the Community

4Q246 – 4QapocrDan ar – Apocryphon of Daniel

Ant. – Josephus' *Antiquities*

Jub – Jubilees

LXX – Septuagint

Jdt – Judith

P37 – Papyrus 37

Tob – Tobit

Wis – Wisdom of Solomon

Biblical Books

Old Testament:

Gen - Genesis

Job - Job

New Testament:

Matt - Matthew

Exod - Exodus	Ps - Psalms	Mark - Mark
Lev - Leviticus	Prov - Proverbs	Luke - Luke
Num - Numbers	Eccl (or Qoh) – Ecclesiastes	John - John
Deut - Deuteronomy	(or Qoheleth)	Acts - Acts
Josh - Joshua	Isa - Isaiah	Rom - Romans
Judg - Judges	Jer - Jeremiah	Eph - Ephesians
Ruth - Ruth	Lam - Lamentations	Phil - Philippians
1 Sam - 1Samuel	Ezek - Ezekiel	Col - Colossians
2 Sam - 2Samuel	Dan - Daniel	1 Thess - 1Thessalonians
1 Kgs - 1Kings	Hos - Hosea	Heb - Hebrews
2 Kgs - 2Kings	Amos - Amos	Jas - James
1 Chr - 1Chronicles	Jonah - Jonah	1 Pet - 1Peter
2 Chr - 2Chronicles	Mic - Micah	Jude - Jude
Ezra – Ezra	Nah - Nahum	Rev - Revelation
Neh – Nehemiah	Hab - Habakkuk	
	Zech – Zechariah	

Abbreviations for primary literature follow the *Society of Biblical Literature Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999).

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 RATIONALE

Matthew's Gospel is widely regarded as the most Jewish of the four canonical Gospels.¹ It is steeped in Jewish traditions and practices (Matt 15:1-20) and is strongly rooted in their Scriptures as demonstrated by the many formula quotations (e.g., 1:22-23; 2:5-6, 15; 12:17-20). It is threaded with Jewish laws which the Gospel attributes to Moses and ultimately to God (15:1-9; 12:1-8; 12:9-14; 19:1-12). This rootedness functions not only to inform the reader about Christian sources and origins in Judaism but also to give direction for proper obedience to God's will.² Obedience to God by keeping the laws is basic to this Gospel which records that whoever disobeys even the least important of the commandments will be least in the kingdom of heaven (5:19).³ An initial reading of the Gospel highlights that, on the one hand, divine guidance and, on the other hand, obedience of all those committed to God's will, come together in bringing about God's purpose in the world (e.g., 1:18-24; 2:13-15; 3:15).⁴ Besides, the Gospel is bracketed by the motif of obedience (3:13-4:11 and 27:38-54).⁵

¹ See Richard A. Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 11. He views Matthew's typically Jewish patriarchal genealogy as documenting Jesus' rooted Jewish heritage since he is both son of Abraham and David. It is to be noted that, unlike Luke's genealogy, Matthew's does not clearly point to son of 'God' but rootedness in Jewish patriarchy. See also Barbara E. Reid, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 5-6; David R. Bauer and Mark Allan Powell, eds., *Treasures New and Old: Recent Contributions to Matthean Studies* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 29, 30; Martin C. Spadaro, *Reading Matthew as the Climactic Fulfillment of the Hebrew Story* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2015), 14-20, 283; Robert R. Beck, *Jesus and His Enemies: Narrative Conflict in the Four Gospels* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017), 28.

² Donald Senior, "Directions in Matthean Studies," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in Memory of William G. Thompson, S.J.*, ed. David E. Aune (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 11; Wendy Cotter, "Greco-Roman Apotheosis Traditions and the Resurrection Appearances in Matthew," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in Memory of William G. Thompson, S.J.*, ed. David E. Aune (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 151; Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 10.

³ See Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 4; Günter Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (London: SCM Press, 1982), 35, 80; Roland Deines, "Not the Law but the Messiah: Law and Righteousness in the Gospel of Matthew—An Ongoing Debate," in *Built Upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew*, eds. Daniel M. Gurtner and John Nolland (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 56-63 points to Matt 8:4; 23:2 and also 9:20; 14:36 (cf. Num 15:38-39; Deut 22:12; Zech 8:23) as reminders of the law.

⁴ This coming together is first shown in the infancy narrative where Joseph is guided in dreams and he obeys (1:18-24; 2:13-15, 19-23). See Donald Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 80; Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus*, 11-15; John P. Meier, *Matthew* (Dublin: Veritas, 1980), 3, 12-13; Brian M. Nolan, *The Royal Son of God: The Christology of Matthew 1-2 in the Setting of the Gospel* (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 1979), 33, 71-73.

It presents the protagonist, Jesus himself, as one completely immersed in doing God's will to achieve God's purposes. It does this by, *inter alia*, portraying a conservative Jesus who makes the case for the eternal validity of the law (5:17-20).⁶ Matthew's narrative clearly presents him as the fulfilment of the Scriptures—the law and prophets (1:22-23; 2:23; 21:42; 26:24; 26:54-56).⁷ Yet, the narration of the mounting opposition against Jesus from the Jewish authorities who interpret these laws (e.g., 12:1-14; 15:1-6) might make the reader question the text's presentation of Jesus' mode of obedience that differentiated him from the opponents.⁸ In the light of this ambiguity, this research studies the Gospel of Matthew's portrayal of Jesus' obedience.

1.2 THE TERM, 'OBEDIENCE,' AND ITS UNDERSTANDING IN JESUS' AND MATTHEW'S WORLDS

In the English language, it is often taken for granted that obedience is the act of doing what one is bidden. It is performing or executing a command as an act of submission to another's rule, a lawful superior.⁹ The English word, 'obedience,' comes from the Latin root *oboedire*,¹⁰ *obedire*, broken into *ob-* ("to, for") and *audire* ("to hear") simply meaning to 'hear' or 'listen' *to* or *for*. The hearing is directed from the 'self' to the 'other.' Etymologically, *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* breaks the Greek word for obedience, *ὕπακοή*, into *ὑπο* ('under') and *ἀκούω* ('I hear'), meaning to listen

⁵ Ulrich Luz, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 4-5; Senior, "Directions in Matthean Studies," 13; Jong-Ki Park, "Obedience and Prophecy in Matthew: Rhetorical Function of Matthew 7:15-23 in Matthew's Narrative" (PhD diss., Graduate Theological Union, 2001), 1, accessed October 20, 2016, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

⁶ See Mark Allan Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star: Adventures in Biblical Reader-response Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 94; Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 32. Dale C. Allison, *Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 150 cites 5:17-20; 8:4.

⁷ See also Meier, *Matthew*, xii, 5; Reid, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 5.

⁸ In Jesus there are elements of continuity and discontinuity or 'difference-within-continuity,' see John P. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church, and Morality in the First Gospel* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 30-31.

⁹ Barbara Ann Kipfer, ed., *Roget's 21st Century Thesaurus in Dictionary Form* (London: Robert Hale, 1993), 581; Philip Babcock Gove, ed., *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged* (Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, 1993), 1555.

¹⁰ See Ernest Weekley, *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English* (London: John Murray, 1921), 999.

attentively or to hear under, as a subordinate. Literally, it defines obedience as “under-hearing,” implying heeding a command or authority.¹¹ Thus, basically, the English, Latin, and Greek have a similar semantic range.

In the Old Testament, hearing is central and is ultimately directed to God in order to know God’s will.¹² The core of Judaism is expressed in the Jewish prayer centrepiece, the *Shema*: “Hear, O Israel” (Deut 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num 15:37-41). The Deuteronomic hearing, for instance, is a hearing that is to be indelibly engraved on the recipient’s heart and surroundings with the obligation of immortalising the command, as a legacy through posterity, to perfectly love God exclusively.¹³ Thus, Judaism is a religion of the Word, and ἀκούω significantly points to the Word spoken and heard in the “relationship between God and man” (Exod 5:2 [εἰσακούσομαι]; Deut 9:23 [εἰσηκούσατε]).¹⁴ It is important that the written Word of Scripture that reveals God’s will is primarily received through ‘hearing’¹⁵ which anticipates a fruitful action on the Word heard¹⁶ and the vital “religious statement is: ‘Hear the Word of the Lord’” (e.g., Isa 1:2, 10; Jer 2:4; Amos 7:16).¹⁷ Essentially, this hearing facilitated through Torah study is dynamic, leading to a righteous action of keeping God’s commandments.¹⁸ Contextually, the religious obedience as taught by the Hebrew Scripture demands complete trust and submission to the Word, and hearing underlies this obedience

¹¹ James Strong, *The New Strong’s Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 256. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1990), 1:52 have ἀκούω as ‘hear’ or ‘come to know.’

¹² Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 1:217-218.

¹³ Deuteronomic obedience anticipates blessings or rewards (Deut 6-9; 28).

¹⁴ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 216.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 217-218.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 218-220; Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. James D. Ernest (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1:446-447.

¹⁷ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 217-218.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 218-219.

which is tantamount to a positive response with the notion of trust and submission to the authority of God.¹⁹

The noun, ὑπακοή (obedience), is unknown in classical Greek but its concept is preserved from ἀκούω understood as ‘hear,’ ‘understand,’ ‘listen,’ ‘heed,’ and ‘submit.’²⁰ According to Ceslas Spicq, the shades of meaning of ὑπακοή could range from a strict, even constrained, conformity to authority’s command to a voluntary and loving submission (see also Josephus, *Ant.* 13.275).²¹ The Septuagint (LXX) attaches a pedagogical meaning to hearing, implying “having a positive moral disposition, paying heed, and being teachable” (cf. Exod 3:18; 4:8-9; 5:2; 23:21; Deut 9:23; 13:9; 34:9; Judg 2:17; Prov 12:15; Jer 37:14).²² As a noun, ὑπακοή appears in the Septuagint (cf. LXX 2 Sam 22:36) translating or interpreting the Hebrew ‘humility’ to mean ‘response’ (e.g., LXX Ps 18:36; Prov 15:23).²³

Within the first century Roman-Palestinian world of Jesus and the Greco-Roman environment in the evangelist’s world half a century afterwards, both voluntary and involuntary conformity to constituted authority was considered as obedience. This view was strengthened by the dyadic communitarian cultures in which honour and shame were conferred by the group and hierarchy.²⁴

Matthew’s Jesus, set forth as perfectly obedient (3:15-4:11), is antagonised by the religious leaders who consider his lifestyle and views of the Scripture to be completely outside Jewish

¹⁹ See Strong, *Concordance of the Bible*, 256; also Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 217-218; Spicq, *Theological Lexicon*, 440-441, 449. Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary*, 52; Peter M. J. Stravinskias, *Catholic Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 2002), 550.

²⁰ Spicq, *Theological Lexicon*, 439-446.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 439-448.

²² *Ibid.*, 440.

²³ *Ibid.*, 450.

²⁴ Bruce J. Malina, *The Social World of Jesus and the Gospels* (London: Routledge, 1996), 35-37, 75-82; Jerome H. Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 29-30, 35-68; John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 1, *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (London: Doubleday, 1991), 8.

acceptability (4:23; 9:35-36; 13:54-58; 21:23-27).²⁵ They even attribute his doing God's will to Satan's influence (9:32-34; 12:22-24) and finally collude with the political leaders to crucify him (26:57-66; cf. 2:1-16).²⁶ The life of his disciples is not different. The majority of scholars locate Matthew's community in Antioch of Syria.²⁷ In tension with the Roman imperial system and the Jewish synagogal community (12:9-14; 20:18-19; 26:2-4), Matthew puts forward Jesus to his community as one whose life speaks to current issues (23:38; 24:2; 26:59-61).²⁸ Following Jesus' life which involves conflict and resilience, Matthew's church community is challenged to see and accept God's point of view through the life and ministry of Jesus (5:44; 9:13; 12:7; 13:10-17; 18:35) rejected by the Synagogue and crucified by Rome.²⁹ A counter-narrative to the wider cultural status quo, the Gospel teaches about proper obedience and knowing God's will, and that a life centred on God suffers in this sinful world but shares in God's salvation (1:21; 20:28; cf. 10:16-25; 23:34).³⁰

In both Jesus' and Matthew's worlds, the Pax Romana (Peace of Rome) enforced civil obedience which was sought and maintained through conquests.³¹ Apparently, this notion of complacency with external conformity played out among the religious authorities of the day (15:1-2; 17:24-27; 22:15-22). Notwithstanding, the pure religious obedience is consistent with the Old Testament understanding of receiving and submitting to God's Word.³² Matthew's Gospel implies that it is Jesus who perfectly listens to God and fulfils God's will

²⁵ Senior, "Directions in Matthean Studies," 11-12.

²⁶ Jeremy Gabrielson, *Paul's Non-violent Gospel: The Theological Politics of Peace in Paul's Life and Letters* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2013), 22; Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), 35-36.

²⁷ David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 53-62.

²⁸ Warren Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 66-91; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 33-45; Beck, *Jesus and His Enemies*, 112.

²⁹ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 30-46; Francis Wright Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Commentary* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 7-9.

³⁰ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 1, 6-9, 41-46.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

³² Spicq, *Theological Lexicon*, 440-441; Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 224-225; Meier, *Matthew*, 190-191; cf. Deut 11:13; 18:5; 1 Sam 12:15; Jer 17:27; and Ezek 20:8.

and not the Jewish leaders (3:15-17; 5:21ff; 17:5; 28:19-20).³³ The New Testament revelation also pertains to hearing the Word and deeds of Jesus (5:21ff; 11:4; 13:1ff, 16). In the apostolic era the ‘proclaimed Jesus’ is the message to be heard. The distinguishing mark between purely physical hearing and true hearing is faith (Matt 8:10; 9:2; 17:20) that leads to action (7:16, 24, 26) such that true hearing can stem from external hearing or be lacking despite external hearing.³⁴ Thus, this New Testament hearing reaches its peak in “the obedience which consists in faith and the faith which consists in obedience” (cf. Rom 1:5; 16:26) and becomes synonymous with trust and corresponding submission to the divine Word received in faith.³⁵

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus is presented as one who came in obedience to fulfil all the law and the prophets (e.g., 5:17). A first-time reading of the Gospel suggests that in some cases he stands for a formal observance of the letter of the law (5:18) while in others he emphasises following ‘the love-commandment’ as the ‘canon for the interpretation’ of the whole law (5:21-48; 22:34-40).³⁶ The question arises; to what extent are these two poles of obedience reconcilable in Matthew’s textual Jesus? Secondly, any option chosen toward obeying necessarily attracts opposition from a disgruntled faction. Consequently, how is Jesus’ obedience constructed through these controversies? Could these two poles be brought under a common denominator in Matthew’s Jesus? How did Matthew’s Jesus navigate the poles in the midst of factions who were also convinced that they were being obedient to God by wanting to destroy the ‘impostor,’ Jesus (Matt 12:2, 14, 24)? And thirdly, it appears that after all these tensions perceivable in Matthew, at the Passion God abandons Jesus

³³ Meier, *Matthew*, 191; Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 7; Spicq, *Theological Lexicon*, 449-452.

³⁴ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 219.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 216, 224; Spicq, *Theological Lexicon*, 440-441; Stravinskias, *Catholic Dictionary*, 550-551.

³⁶ Deines, “Righteousness in Matthew,” 53-70 discusses this puzzle citing 5:21-48; 7:12; 8:3, 22; 9:10ff; 11:11-15, 28-30; 12:1-14, etc. as the better righteousness proposed by Jesus; See also Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 66-67 and 78. In this treatment, the two poles are mutually inclusive.

completely into the power of his enemies (cf. 16:21; 26:45b-50; 27:46). Therefore, what is the textual justification that Jesus is the one doing God's will? Warren Carter captures this conundrum when he says: "Jesus is located among the righteous sufferers who cry out to God whose inactivity is, ironically, as much the cause of Jesus' suffering as the opponents."³⁷ All these questions boil down to the basic question of the nature of obedience exhibited by the Jesus of Matthew's Gospel and it is my initial hypothesis that these questions will find answers imbedded in Matthew's Gethsemane text (Matt 26:36-46).

1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Although the characterisation of Jesus as completely obedient to God finds its climax in the pivotal event of his crucifixion,³⁸ my hypothesis is that it is in the Gethsemane text that all constituents of true obedience converge.³⁹ It is the crescendo of his resolution to faithfully remain absolutely obedient to God, his Father, in the face of death.⁴⁰ I hope to show, from a careful narrative reading of the passage itself and in its broader context within the Gospel, that in the Gethsemane text there are literary markers which indicate that Jesus' relationship with the Jewish law and the God who is the source of the law (e.g., Matt 19:8; cf. Gen 1:27) is tested and proved. In the process of showing this relationship, the study aims to prove that the obedience exhibited by the Matthean Jesus is not just strictly a formal observance of the law nor is it just loosely a matter of 'love-command.' Rather, I will demonstrate that it

³⁷ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510.

³⁸ Mathias Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels: A Theological Exegesis of the Ideal Prayerer* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 58, 62, 64.

³⁹ Sarah Covington, "The Garden of Anguish: Gethsemane in Early Modern England," *JEH* 65, no. 2 (January 2014): 291 agrees with Hugh Latimer that in Gethsemane we encounter the epitome of all of Jesus' doings and sayings.

⁴⁰ Also James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson, eds. *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1057.

depends upon the quality of his hearing (ἀκούω) and ‘under-hearing’ (ὑπακούω) the voice or command of God.⁴¹

Herbert McCabe, in a talk given to the Dominican Sisters at Rosary Priory, Bushey, makes a case that obedience should not be misconstrued in the negative view of subjecting someone under the superior’s will either to forestall or stop a conflict of wills between two parties. For him, the Latin root etymology of obedience (*ob-audire*) conveys the same notion as the English phrase, ‘doing what you are *told*,’ portraying obedience primarily as learning and sharing in another’s practical wisdom.⁴² He differentiates the modern understanding of temporarily abandoning and submitting one’s will to that of a superior from his adopted Dominican medieval understanding of obedience as an act of learning a practical truth from or with a superior.⁴³ Thus, obedience is perfect when the one who commands and the one who obeys come to share one mind. Real obedience, he concludes, is not a last-resort-necessary evil of doing as you are told but it is entering into community of common mind where no one is *compelled* to do anything because everyone shares the common purpose in love.⁴⁴ It is my hypothesis that in the end the obedience projected by the text under consideration will agree with McCabe’s idea of obedience as connoting listening and an act of learning a practical truth or sharing in another’s wisdom.⁴⁵ This reaches perfection when the learner and the teacher come to share one mind geared toward an objective goal.

⁴¹ The Psalmist demonstrates a deep understanding when he says, “One thing God has spoken, two things I have heard: ‘Power belongs to you, God, and with you, Lord, is unfailing love;’ and, ‘you reward everyone according to what they have done’” (Ps 62:11-12 NIV). Note that God says one thing but in that one thing the Psalmist deciphers two things, and in enumerating them the reader discovers that they are actually three things. This, I think, prefigures Jesus’ superlative and representative depth and quality of hearing for he hears even that which has not been plainly stated.

⁴² Herbert McCabe, “Obedience,” *New Blackfriars* 65 (1984): 282; also John Sinclair, ed., *Cobuild Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 2014), 1070.

⁴³ McCabe, “Obedience,” 280.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 280-287.

I choose Matthew's Gethsemane episode (26:36-46) as a key text for this study because it stands at a focal point within the Gospel which starts with the idea of obedience (e.g., 1:18-24) and ends with commissioning the disciples to teach Jesus' model of obedience universally (τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν, Matt 28:20).⁴⁶ From an initial reading of the entire Gospel, Matthew's Gethsemane text which stands at the beginning of the Passion narrative appears as the crucial time when true obedience to God could be portrayed in the narrative. This is because Jesus faces the critical moment of decision and ultimately chooses submission to the will of God. In fact, at certain times in history, Gethsemane has been placed at the threshold, in the forefront and climactic position, of the Passion and even held to be of more central concern than the crucifixion itself.⁴⁷ With this in mind, I intend to show how this Gethsemane text constructs Jesus' model of obedience and submission to God.

Nevertheless, because of the near dearth of the word, 'obedience,' in Matthew, we will pay attention to a broader range of words and phrases with overlapping semantic range which the Gospel employs related to the idea of obedience, such as: ὑπακούω, obey (8:27);⁴⁸ ἀκούω, hear (7:24); τηρέω, keep (28:20);⁴⁹ and ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα, doing the will (7:21). Let me briefly expand on this discussion.

(a) ὑπακοή (obedience): Obedience appears only in its verb form and is used only once (8:27) in the entire Gospel. Except for its mention in this episode in connection with having little faith, we can only infer the theme of obedience from all the other passages in Matthew. This

⁴⁶ Peter F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1974), 25 paraphrases 28:18-20: Jesus authorises his Apostles to make God's will known and "done on earth as it is in heaven."

⁴⁷ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 58, 62, 64; See Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 290; Henry F. Knight, "Wrestling with Two Texts: A Post-Shoah Encounter: A Midrash on Genesis 32:22-33 and Matthew 26:36-46," *JJS* 15, no. 1 (Fall 1996): 78.

⁴⁸ 'Obedience' is used only here and about the elements/nature (but never human beings) obeying Jesus or God.

⁴⁹ Barbara Aland et al., eds., *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 101; Glenn W. Giles, "An Investigation of the Contribution of Matthew 7:21-23 to the Obedience Theology of Matthew's Gospel" (PhD diss., Trinity College of the Bible and Trinity Theological Seminary, 2013), 195, accessed July 8, 2019, <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/b84509ac/files/uploaded/GlennGilesPhDThesis.pdf> use τηρεῖν ('keep') of Matt 28:20 as 'obey' or 'observe.'

usage pertains to the elements obeying Jesus to the astonishment of his disciples who do not yet understand the sort of person he is. The winds and the sea are thus personified in their response to Jesus' rebuke. Their conforming action ordinarily belongs in the sphere of rational human beings. Therefore, the obedience of these irrational forces of nature to Jesus who possesses great faith should be understood as being indicative of the inherent authority in Jesus to be obeyed more so by humans.

(b) ἀκούω (hear or listen): To hear or listen is a very important component of obedience (cf. ἀκούω and ὑπακοή in 1.2 above) and it is used several times in the Gospel (e.g., 7:24; 13:18, 43b).⁵⁰ As hearing is directed to God in the Old Testament, hearing is directed to Jesus in the New Testament. This hearing pertains to the "reception of the declared will of God" that is followed by acting on what is heard.⁵¹ When this is done the Jesus way, then one achieves the greater righteousness required for entry into God's kingdom. Thus, Jesus prefixes and appends his teachings especially the parables with "listen to [this]..." (13:9, 18; 15:10; 21:33) and "let anyone with ears listen" (13:9, 43) respectively. In the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount, it is clear that the Matthean Jesus implies that the people's old hearing or what they heard before was imperfect but that now he invites them to the better hearing that will admit them into the kingdom of heaven: 'You have heard that it was said...but I say to you' (cf. Matt 5:17-6:18; 13:13-15). The more authentic listening is required for true obedience and blessedness (cf. Matt 13:16-17).⁵² As a confirmation of his authenticity, God himself orders his disciples to "listen to him" (cf. ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ in 17:5). This may indicate that God is satisfied with Jesus' mode of listening and relating to God. Therefore, ultimately in

⁵⁰ Balz and Schneider, *Dictionary of New Testament*, 52-54 assert that ἀκούω occurs about 63 times in Matthew, a number reflecting something of its significance.

⁵¹ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 220, 223-224.

⁵² ἀκούω mostly in the active indicative (e.g., 7:24-26; 10:14; 13:14-23; 21:33) may draw attention to an active deep hearing that leads to a proper understanding.

Matthew what is required is for people to listen to God and to do so by listening to his Son, Jesus, who epitomises the correct listening.

(c) τήρω (keep): Keeping the commandments, as a synonym of obedience in Matthew, seems to be the clearest practical directive that most people can relate with. The rich young man who desires to enter into life is told to observe or “keep”⁵³ the commandments (19:16-20).⁵⁴ Jesus enjoins the crowds and his disciples to keep (τηρεῖτε, 23:3) what the Pharisees and scribes who occupy Moses’ seat tell them although they are not to follow their practice.⁵⁵ At the Great Commission Jesus orders his disciples to teach all nations to “keep” all his commandments as a co-requisite for initiation into his fold (28:19-20).

(d) ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα (doing the will): The expression, ‘doing the will of the (or Jesus’) Father,’ in its various forms is the most pervasive use of the synonym of obedience. It is presented as ‘doing as commanded’ (1:24) or ‘doing the commandments’ (5:19). Doing the words of Jesus (cf. 7:21-24)⁵⁶ attains the same status as doing God’s will. Thus, it is an important expression in the Sermon on the Mount and it is used mostly in connection with the desire to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven (7:21; cf. 21:28-32) or for a familial relationship with Jesus who determines the people who enter it (12:50; cf. 7:22-23). As ‘doing good’ timelessly is permitted by the law (cf. ἔξεστιν τοῖς σάββασιν καλῶς ποιεῖν, 12:12), doing evil becomes the antithesis of obedience (cf. ποιῶντας τὴν ἀνομίαν, 13:41). Also, implicit in the synonymous expression, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου—the most striking

⁵³ See Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, 2nd ed., vol. 1, *Introduction and Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 13.32 may suggest that τήρω can mean to cause the adherence to the commandments to continue, be sustained or retained unchanged.

⁵⁴ It is as though Jesus tells him to keep the commandments of love of neighbour if he wants to enter into life and to subsume all these commandments into complete love of God if he wants to be perfect.

⁵⁵ In addition, Aland et al, *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece*, 75 also use both τήρω and ποιεω in 23:3 as ‘follow’ while in 27:36, 54 and 28:4 τήρω is used with regard to ‘guarding’ or ‘keeping watch over’ something or someone.

⁵⁶ D. B. Garlington, “The Obedience of Faith in the Letter to the Romans,” *WTJ* 53 (1991): 59 states in agreement with Dunn that “[t]he combination of ‘hearing’ and ‘doing’... was characteristic of Judaism.”

phrasal similarity between the Lord's Prayer (6:10) and Jesus' Gethsemane threefold prayer (26:42; cf. 26:39, 44)—is the consent to do the will of God. Kittel explains ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα as expressing a basic attitude of “consent to a comprehensive fulfilment of God's will” whereupon in Gethsemane it particularly expresses this attitude as a “willing submission in suffering” resulting from being rooted and living in the divine will.⁵⁷

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

I intend to approach the research through literary criticism of Matthew's Gospel. Literary criticism is a broad field of methodologies that focuses on the text to bring out its rhetorical and literary elements. It is mainly interested in seeking to provide insight “into the literary meaning and impact”⁵⁸ of a given text as communication between the implied author and the implied reader. It concerns itself with what readers see and experience in the text standing as a finished work, and strives to know what the work will mean to the ideal reader, why it will elicit *this* meaning and not another and what features are there to determine particular effects on its reader.⁵⁹

Narrative method is an aspect of literary criticism that pays attention to the genre of the Gospel as a narrative. It explores the Gospel from the standpoint of an ‘implied reader’ presupposed by the text itself.⁶⁰ According to Jack Dean Kingsbury, “the implied reader is that imaginary person in whom the intention of the text is to be thought of as always reaching

⁵⁷ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 55.

⁵⁸ Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism? A New Approach to the Bible* (London: SPCK, 1993), 1-2; Sandra M. Schneiders, “The Gospels and the Reader,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels*, ed. Stephen C. Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 98; Mark Allan Powell, “Toward a Narrative-Critical Understanding of Matthew,” in *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical & Social-Scientific Approaches*, ed. Jack Dean Kingsbury (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 10.

⁵⁹ Mark Allan Powell, ed., *Methods for Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 45.

⁶⁰ Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 7, 60.

its fulfilment.”⁶¹ Conversely, the implied author is the imaginary person responsible for, and discernible from, the narrative strategy.

Hence, it is within the framework of narrative criticism with particular focus on the implied reader that I will investigate Jesus’ obedient character and submission to God’s will in the Gethsemane text. It will help me to determine the literary function of the Gethsemane pericope and act as guide to understanding the theology of the text.⁶² I will draw attention to both a first-time (sequential linear narrative) reading of Matthew 26:36-46 and what becomes clearer from a re-reading in light of the entire Gospel. Thus, I will be journeying with the implied reader who is *assumed to read* the entire Gospel in the normative (beginning-to-end) way, and to *know* and *believe* only what is expected of him or her by Matthew’s Gospel world.⁶³

1.5.1 Techniques of Narrative Analysis

Basically, every narrative is a story and discourse intertwined. The story elements include the events, the characters, and the setting. The way the story is told, that is, the narrative rhetoric, is the discourse. The discourse depends on a combination of a number of factors such as the creativity, social, environmental, and cultural conventions of the implied author and, most importantly in biblical studies, the tradition of theology to which he belongs.⁶⁴ These factors and elements are a *sine qua non* in any narrative investigation. Therefore, in this research I will be using a narrative tool box containing techniques among which are the following:

(i) Plot—The central and unifying structure of actions in the narrative is its plot.⁶⁵ It is comprised of the ordered arrangement of the events interacting in the story.⁶⁶ Techniques that

⁶¹ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 38.

⁶² See Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 11 for interrelation between literary function and theology.

⁶³ Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star*, 76; Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 60-61.

⁶⁴ Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999), 21-23. The author is referred to as a ‘he’ for convenience.

⁶⁵ Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 40.

will be used include paying attention to the order, frequency, duration, and causal connections which each event or element has in relation to the other events in the narrative.⁶⁷

This ordering, for example, enhances the unity, causality, and the affective power of the story. The order in which Matthew's Gethsemane narrative is reported is an important part of how the story is told to determine its conflict and tragic plot and where it stands in relation to the plot of the whole Gospel. The overall broad plot of the Gospel touches on two basic conflicts; that between Jesus and the religious leaders which led to his rejection by Israel and that with the disciples which led to their deserting him.⁶⁸

(ii) Characters—The characters are the people created or constructed by the implied author to accomplish a specific role in the story.⁶⁹ The traits, focalization, and points of view of a character and whether the narrator *tells* about or *shows* them are the tools by which the implied reader can reconstruct a character from the narrative.⁷⁰ Jesus is the main character (protagonist) in the Gethsemane tale as in the entire Gospel. Thus, I will study how he is characterised in the model of obedience projected most especially in this pericope to draw the sympathy of the reader.

(iii) Settings—Settings of the narrative, with their descriptive qualities, provide contexts within which the actions of characters take place, and events transpire, in a narrative.⁷¹ There are chiefly three of these contexts: (a) spatial setting describes the physical environment of characters and events. (b) Temporal setting pertains to the broad and narrow chronological

⁶⁶ Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 40; Martin McQuillan, ed., *The Narrative Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000), 23, 40, 68.

⁶⁷ Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 35-44.

⁶⁸ See Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 48-49; Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 124, asserts for a literature's formal excellence regarding its coherence and unity.

⁶⁹ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 51; Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 48.

⁷⁰ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 52-58; Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 48-51; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 146; Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 43-86.

⁷¹ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 69.

(with its locative and durative references) and typological (kind of time) concepts of time as used in the narrative. For example, some things are done at night rather than during the day with a different reason and/or effect. (c) Social setting gives the social circumstances such as political institutions, class structures, and cultural and social customs operative in the narrative and regarded as the social background.⁷² The evaluation of the settings will add to the knowledge about the state of conflict between the various characters and about the nature and model of Jesus' obedience in the midst of oppositions.

All of the aforementioned techniques interact at several stages to produce significant effects on the nature of the narrative itself. Finally, I note that the study will take into account philological arguments on the secondary level. This will help me to make sense of the text from the perspective of the competent implied reader.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

In chapter two (Survey of Research) I will discuss briefly the views of key scholars on Matthew's Gospel. In matters of obedience it will be shown that only a few scholars still recognise and address Matthew as a document on obedience. In any case, the Gethsemane episode (26:36-46) stands out as a unit that the majority of scholars treat, albeit summarily, with a focus on the obedience of Jesus to God. Again, I will show that most scholars find a connection to other pericopes within the Gospel: the Temptation of Jesus (4:1-11), the Lord's Prayer (6:3-10), the Transfiguration (17:1-13), etc., while some, by extension, relate the passage to the Old Testament Adam, Abrahamic sacrifice, Jacob, David, and a few other personalities. By and large, I will follow their line of thought but I will also demonstrate that the passage has not been given much attention in relation to the topic of obedience and the narrative-critical approach.

⁷² Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 70-83; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 82.

In chapter three, which is the central chapter, I will undertake a critical examination of the key passage, Matthew 26:36-46, doing a sequential linear⁷³ narrative analysis with close attention to the character of Jesus following the narrative rhetorical dynamics of the text. Thus, the main pre-occupation is with the world of the text with an eye on the obedient character of Jesus. I will also note some of its effects on the reader. I will show how the obedience of Jesus, though not directly stated in words, is implied and *shown* in action and through his prayers and that it is un-coerced but rather free and stemming from the fusion of minds of ‘Father’ and ‘Son.’ The Greek text I will work with is the 28th revised edition of the *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece*.⁷⁴ The study undertaken here looks at the passage in its final form as a text that communicates from the implied author to the implied reader. We will focus on Jesus’ obedience and look at other character-traits and other characters within the narrative only in relation to this.

In chapter four I will observe some intratextual links between Matthew’s Gethsemane and other parts of the Gospel. The textual Jesus’ obedience, portrayed in Gethsemane, should not and cannot be severed from all his life and ministry that preceded it and the cross and exaltation that followed it. This will help to clarify the fact that Jesus’ life was rooted in complete obedience to God’s will and that Matthew 26:36-46 contains both the logical and teleological connections of obedience. Gethsemane could serve as a convergent point where all his teachings on obedience are put to the test and proved. The Temptation (4:1-11), the Lord’s Prayer (6:9-13), the Transfiguration (17:1-8), the Passion Predictions (16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19), and the Crucifixion (27:35-54) episodes are examples of such links. These and other passages will illuminate the Gethsemane passage and demonstrate the harmony between Gethsemane and the corpus of Matthew’s Gospel regarding Jesus’ obedience. The

⁷³ Beare, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 511 agrees that from the beginning of the Gospel ‘no step-by-step description of events...is comparable to’ Gethsemane.

⁷⁴ Aland et al., *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece*.

obedient character of Jesus, the main protagonist, will thereby be amplified in the light of other characters that the implied author of Matthew's Gospel surrounds Jesus with, such as Satan, the scribes and Pharisees, and Jesus' disciples. It will also be shown briefly that although the law is not 'visible' in the Gethsemane pericope, Jesus' obedience in the broad context is related to the law.

In chapter five I will observe intertextual connections between the Gethsemane episode and the Old Testament because the reader is expected to come to this text with the implied reader's repertoire of knowledge which includes familiarity with the Old Testament. A very few exemplary characters from the Hebrew Scripture (e.g., Adam, Abraham, and David) will be used to highlight Jesus' obedience with its soteriological significance as the standard that perfectly fulfils the Scripture. It will eventually be shown that the Jesus-obedience, far from 'disrupting' the law, is a call to return to the original intention of God at the beginning of creation (e.g., Matt 19:4, cf. Gen 1:27; Matt 19:5, cf. Gen 2:24).

In the final (sixth) chapter I will provide the conclusion which gives the summary of the literary-critical study with its theological implications. In other words, the literary characterisation of the Matthean Jesus will underpin the Gospel's theology on obedience especially with regard to where Jesus himself stands in relation to law vis-à-vis his obedience to God. It will have been demonstrated that one of Matthew's major concerns is doing God's will and that Jesus' disciples are called to the same obedience to God.⁷⁵ This will have been shown to correspond with McCabe's notion of perfect obedience described above. With the transformative understanding gained from the text, I hope to make some concluding observations about Matthew's narrative persuasion to convince the contemporary reader about the relevance of obedience in a world which, like Matthew's narrative world, is

⁷⁵ See also C. Clifton Black, *The Rhetoric of the Gospel: Theological Artistry in the Gospels and Acts*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013), 23-25.

governed by God. Thus, I will draw on the fusion of horizons between the world the text projects and the world of the real reader and offer remarks and recommendations in the form of the implication of the Jesus-obedience in Matthew's Gospel for a Christian.

2. SURVEY OF RESEARCH (STATUS QUAESTIONIS)

We now take a look at the field of literature in which discussions of Matthew's Gethsemane feature comprised of both briefer exploration of the pericope and works focusing on Gethsemane. We shall also draw from treatments of the Matthean obedience theme which will help to locate and highlight where Jesus stands in relation to obedience as perceivable in Gethsemane. Consequently, we start with a brief overview of how Matthew's Gospel is understood and approached by scholars.

The review of literature reveals that the early interest in Matthew's Gospel arose from its being looked upon as the first Gospel to have been written and attributed to the apostle, Matthew, as its name signifies. Furthermore, its primary chronological placement among the other Gospels and its use by early Christians and church Fathers as a liturgical resource and for catechetical or apologetic purposes meant that it was reckoned as the most important of the Gospels and New Testament writings.¹ A later and more scientific study of the Synoptic Gospels, however, made interesting findings based on internal evidence that Matthew depended on Mark² and, in common with Luke, a hypothetical source (a collection of sayings attributed to Jesus) called Q, and a Matthew-tradition (M), to develop the Gospel's theme and theology.³ This relatively relegated and rooted it only to the study of historical (form, source, tradition, redaction, or composition) criticism with the objective of finding the facts that

¹ See Graham Stanton, "Matthew's Gospel in Recent Scholarship," in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, 2nd ed., ed. Graham N. Stanton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 1; Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 159; David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Sheffield: Almond, 1996), 7; Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 33.

² Frans Neirynck, "Synoptic Problem," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (London: Burns and Oates, 1995), 587 says that Mark's priority has held sway since the end of the 18th century and this became the predominant scholarly opinion from the decisive debate in the 1830s-1860s. This replaced the "Augustinian" or traditional hypothesis which assumed Matthew to have been the first composed of the synoptic Gospels. Also see Ernst von Dobschütz, "Matthew as Rabi and Catechist," in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, 2nd ed., ed. Graham N. Stanton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 27 dates the opinion to 1786 (Storr) and 1838 (Wilke and Weisse).

³ Stanton, "Matthew in Recent Scholarship," 3-5; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 7.

stood behind the text. This became the method employed on Matthew between the mid-1800s and 1980s and has been traditionally dominant in the study of the canonical Gospels.

Around 1980, with the advent of literary criticism, many historical-critical scholars shifted focus toward a more text-centred approach. Given this scenario, interest in Matthew's scholarship which had begun to wane, was reawakened.⁴ Many Matthew scholars find the literary-critical method suitable because Matthew's Gospel remains 'anonymous' with no certainty about its provenance,⁵ and also because focus on literary characteristics will reduce guesswork.⁶ Mark Allan Powell specifically writes that the most popular literary approach to Matthew is 'narrative criticism.'⁷

2.1 THE STRUCTURE OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

To begin, the structure of a work is important for narrative criticism. However, Matthew's Gospel does not seem to have an easily discernible structure; thus the many debates around it. Prominent in the early twentieth century is the study of Matthew's structure which David R. Bauer has broadly categorised into three structure types:⁸

(i) *The Geographical-Chronological Structures*: Most of the earlier scholars before 1930 structured the Gospel according to perceived geographical and chronological references within it. They see Jesus' movement from Galilee to Jerusalem as a story moving toward its climax in his death, resurrection, and the Great Commission (Matt 26-28). Thus, they emphasise Jesus' fulfilment of "Old Testament messianic

⁴ Stanton, "Matthew in Recent Scholarship," 1-3, attests that many major historical critical books appeared between 1945 and 1965 with several scholarly agreements but keener debates have been on the rise since.

⁵ Graham N. Stanton, "The Communities of Matthew," in *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical & Social-Scientific Approaches*, ed. Jack Dean Kingsbury (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 49-52. Although 'anonymous' I will be using 'he' for the author for convenience.

⁶ Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 7; Powell, "Narrative-Critical Understanding of Matthew," 9.

⁷ Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 7; Park, "Obedience in Matthew," 4; Brandon D. Crowe, *The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 15.

⁸ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 18-40 (I follow Bauer's categorisation); Gary Yamasaki, "Structure," in *John the Baptist in Life and Death: Audience-Oriented Criticism of Matthew's Narrative*, LNTS (England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 64.

prophecies” and his ironic rejection by the Jews. This resulted in Jesus turning his attention exclusively to his disciples, hence, the establishment of the church encompassing the Gentiles as well. However, their firm emphasis on Jesus’ messianic role and the church’s role has strong theological implications. Salvation history could be divided into three epochs: the prophetic time of Israel, the fulfilment time of Jesus, and the church’s time, with Jesus remaining as the centre of reference for their rootedness in Christology over ecclesiology and future eschatology.⁹ Bauer asserts that in these readings Jesus is primarily understood in terms of the title, ‘Christ,’ and the related titles such as ‘king,’ ‘son of David,’ and ‘Son of God.’¹⁰

(ii) *Topical Structures*: In many ways, the methodology and approach of structuring with basis on the geography and chronology proved unsatisfactory and was soon abandoned by many in favour of ‘Topical Structures’ which divide the text according to perceived topics treated. The majority of the proponents of topical structure since the 1930s have followed Benjamin W. Bacon’s *Studies in Matthew*. His point was that Matthew’s Gospel is structured into five divisions each of which is composed of a narrative followed by a discourse touching on obedience and judgment. The five blocks mirror the Mosaic Pentateuch each of which also contains a narrative of God’s mighty deeds to Israel and followed by a discourse of legal instructions.¹¹ Therefore,

⁹ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 22-26. He adds that the geographical-chronological shifts in the Gospel narrative are not very well defined. Therefore, such structural outline does not comprehensively communicate the Gospel’s “dynamic theological force.” Nevertheless, I perceive the build-up journey to the crucifixion as a hint at Jesus’ obedient response to his mission.

¹⁰ Bauer (*Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 24, 151) lists some of the scholars for each of these titles, e.g., Allen and Grensted (1929:33), Harrison (1964:161-62), and Hunter (1972:56) for ‘Christ;’ McNeile (1938:xvi-xvii), Allen and Grensted (1929:33), Harrison (1964:161-62), and Meinertz (1950:168-69) for ‘king;’ Kerr, 1892:23), Wilkenhauser, 1958:186) for ‘Son of David;’ and Box (1922:7), Conzelmann and Lindermann (1975:251-52), and Wilkerhauser (1958:189) for ‘Son of God.’ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (London: SPCK, 1976), 40-167; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: A Commentary for Preachers and Others* (London: SPCK, 1978), 30-57 highlight where and how Matthew uses the various minor and major titles and how they relate with each other.

¹¹ Benjamin W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York: Henry Holt, 1930), 81-82; B. W. Bacon, “Jesus and the Law: A Study of the First ‘Book’ of Matthew (Mt. 3-7),” *JBL* 47 (1928): 205; Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 2-3; see also Powell, “Narrative-Critical Understanding of Matthew,” 12.

they regard Jesus as the “New Moses” who gives the law and interprets it—for obedience.¹² This emphasises continuity in the discontinuity between the old Moses/Torah and the new Moses/law which, according to Günter Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz Joachim Held, as B. W. Bacon holds as well, finds culmination on apocalyptic judgment day when everybody will be judged based on their obedience to this new Torah.¹³ Each discourse is concluded by a stereotyped formula, “And it happened when Jesus had finished these words,” or a similar expression (7:28-29; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1).¹⁴ Many scholars, however, have expressed dissatisfaction with the Baconian Theory and have abandoned it as a major consideration for Matthew’s Gospel’s broad structure for reasons among which is that the Matthean discourses are not all purely legislative but kerygmatic. Again, the fivefold repeated formula is regarded as more usefully transitional rather than terminative of discourses.¹⁵

Belonging in this category also are topical outlines based upon a chiasmic structure whereby scholars discern the arrangement of materials in a pair of carefully balanced blocks such that the focal material is marked and forms the pivot. Studies in Matthew’s Gospel mark as focal the point where Jesus’ rejection by Israel causes him to turn his attention permanently and exclusively to his disciples. Some scholars, represented by H. B. Green, see this in chapter 11 while the majority of scholars,

¹² Bacon, *Studies in Matthew*, 80-89; see Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993).

¹³ Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 61-62; Bacon, “Jesus and the Law,” 205-230; Georg Strecker, “The Concept of History in Matthew,” in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, 2nd ed., ed. Graham N. Stanton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 91. Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 29-30 infers that according to Bacon’s scheme, “salvation history must be understood in light of Matthew’s presentation of the law.”

¹⁴ Bacon, *Studies in Matthew*, 81.

¹⁵ See Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 132-133; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 32-35; Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 5-7, criticise Bacon’s (redactional) view for its failure to see Matthew as a coherent unit. They observe that the formula is significant literarily, theologically, and as historical-transitional indicator but fault its lack of narrative structural coherence in treating the ‘integral’ birth/infancy (Matt 1-2) and Passion-death-resurrection (Matt 26-28) stories as “preamble” and “epilogue” respectively.

represented by Peter F. Ellis, locate this turning point at Matthew 13:35-36 with implications for the understanding of salvation history.¹⁶ Jesus rejects the old and false Israel and establishes the elect, that is, the church. Notwithstanding, there are noted weaknesses.¹⁷ For one, Bauer objects that there is a clear shift at 13:35-36 to suggest a main division of the Gospel. However, the movement of the narrative toward a Christological climax in 28:18-20 alluding to Jesus fulfilling the ‘Danielic Son of Man’ (Dan 7:13-14) and Yahweh’s commissioning of the Old Testament prophets,¹⁸ could serve to relate 13:35-36 with 28:18-20 in terms of authentic hearing or obedience to God’s commands.

Also, Jack Dean Kingsbury (mid-1970s) and later Bauer (1980s),¹⁹ even as literary critics using the final form of the text, object to Bacon’s fivefold division and the other proposed structures in favour of a threefold division. By this, Matthew’s Gospel is structured according to the ‘superscriptions’ of ‘a new beginning’ in relation to Jesus at Matt 1:1; 4:17; and 16:21.²⁰ Each of the three divisions climaxes in projecting the Christology of Jesus as Son of God (e.g., 3:17; 16:16; 27:45-54).²¹ On the whole, they depict that Matthew’s interest is in the salvation-history of two epochs with

¹⁶ See Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 36-40; Ellis, *Matthew: Mind and Message*, 10-13.

¹⁷ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 37-38, also insists that some of the ‘block’ correspondences are forced and that the climax of the Gospel located at 28:18-20 relegates 13:35-36 to a secondary importance.

¹⁸ Ellis, *Matthew: Mind and Message*, 22.

¹⁹ See Kingsbury (*Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*), most prominent proponent of the tripartite structure both as redaction critic and later literary critic, and Bauer (*Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*).

²⁰ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 10-11 holds 1:1 as the superscription of 1:1-4:16. Yamasaki, “Structure,” 71-76 posits more expansively that while Matt 1:1 may triple as the heading of the genealogy, superscription of 1:1-4:16 and the entire Gospel, 4:17 and 16:21 clearly qualify as stereotyped formula (Ἀπὸ τότε ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς...), 16:21 marking Jesus as revealing to his disciples God’s will for him (δεῖ) in Jerusalem.

²¹ See Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 40-83; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 73-108.

reference to Jesus—the time before Jesus and the time of the abiding Jesus (1:23; 28:20).²²

(iii) *Conceptual Structures*: Scholars in this third group define Matthew’s structure according to a perceived central idea or theme around which Matthew arranges his materials. John P. Meier, for example, suggests that with the full arrival of God’s Kingdom following the death and resurrection of Jesus, obedience to the Mosaic Law has been replaced with baptism and Jesus’ commandments.²³ Many of them emphasise ecclesiology over Christology. They divide salvation history into three epochs—time of Israel, the past ideal time of Jesus as the time of revelation, and the present time of the church moving toward eschatology as “it obeys the commands of Jesus and follows his example.”²⁴

In this research, I adopt the topical tripartite structure based on the superscriptions of new beginnings. This approach ensures that the Gethsemane passage is part of the structural relationships in the one dynamic narrative of Jesus as Son of God;²⁵ a title always expressed in the context of his obedience (3:15-17; 16:16-21; 17:5-9; 28:18-20a).²⁶ The ‘Son of God’ title is relevant and cannot be dispensed with in any study attempting to look into Jesus’ obedience in Gethsemane as we shall see in the following chapters.

²² Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 31-39; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 40-45; Yamasaki, “Structure,” 64-76 on the different structures.

²³ Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 31.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 41-51; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 45-48; Strecker, “History in Matthew,” 88. However, Strecker (page 92) maintains that “the Gospel must be explained primarily in terms of Christology, not in terms of ecclesiology.”

²⁵ E.g., Bacon, using redaction criticism, relegates chapters 26-28 to an epilogue. However, Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 29-33 and Ian Boxall, *Discovering Matthew: Content, Interpretation, Reception* (London: SPCK, 2014), 149, contrary to Bacon’s opinion of Matthew 26-28, admit that this section is not merely an epilogue but “an integral and climactic part” of the Gospel. For the narrative coherence of Matthew’s Gospel see also Warren Carter, “Narrative Readings, Contextualized Readers, and Matthew’s Gospel,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 308.

²⁶ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 70-71, 75.

2.2 IS MATTHEW'S GOSPEL CONSIDERED A DOCUMENT ON OBEDIENCE?

Regarding the theme, only a few writers explicitly address Matthew as a document particularly on obedience while many study a passage relating to obedience or merely mention obedience. Nevertheless, the fact that obedience occupies a significant place in Matthew cannot be denied as is discernible in some scholars' works.

2.2.1 Brandon D. Crowe and Martin C. Spadaro

Brandon D. Crowe and Martin C. Spadaro study the entire Gospel in terms of Jesus' covenantal obedience to God.²⁷ Crowe considers in depth Jesus' vicarious obedience as Son. For him, Matthew equates Jesus' sonship with Adam's and Israel's sonship in order to highlight Jesus' filial obedience to God.²⁸ In either case, God's fatherhood over the Son requires the obedience of the latter. The temptation narrative is the most explicit representation by which Jesus is shown to outdo corporate Israel and Adam in obedience (4:1-11; cf. Deut 8:32; Gen 3:1-24).²⁹ Crowe, as do Ulrich Luz³⁰ and William L. Kynes,³¹ posits that Jesus is Son of God not only because of his origin but also because of his unswerving obedience, in weakness and strength, to the Father.³²

Spadaro, like N. T. Wright, considers Matthew's Gospel as a crowning conclusion to the entire Hebrew Scripture.³³ He offers that Jesus, in fulfilment of the law and the prophets, is the exemplary obedient priest-judge over Israel.³⁴ The Matthean Jesus' perfect obedience is

²⁷ Brandon D. Crowe, *The Obedient Son: Deuteronomy and Christology in the Gospel of Matthew* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012); Crowe, *The Last Adam*. And in fact, Spadaro (*Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 1-3) dares to propose that Matthew's particular agenda or *priority* was not to *highlight* God's salvific intention but to conclusively enact judgment based on the covenantal law and obedience. Jesus, Israel's judge comes to terminate the existing Mosaic administration as Israel/priestly cult has failed.

²⁸ Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 5, 158-224; Crowe, *The Last Adam*.

²⁹ Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 3, 158-159; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 55-81.

³⁰ Luz, *The Theology of Matthew*, 4-5, 22-41.

³¹ William L. Kynes, *A Christology of Solidarity: Jesus as the Representative of His People in Matthew* (New York: University of America Press, 1991), 194-195.

³² Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 3.

³³ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 2, 10 cites N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*.

³⁴ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 1, 4, 29.

demonstrated in his complete law-keeping and teaching (5:19).³⁵ God's will entails Jesus' higher standard of righteousness required by heaven (Matt 5-7; cf. 13), and it contrasts with the lower standard of the Jerusalem (Levitical) community which seems to be based more on *formal observance* of the Torah.³⁶

Spadaro also stresses that, in fulfilment of the prophets, the conflict motif in the Gospel results from Israel's unwitting rejection of God's offer of peace in Jesus (cf. 1:23). This brings God's judgment on Israel as ironically played out in Jesus' crucifixion who is Israel-in-person. Matthew's Jesus becomes a recapitulation, a recast, and illumination of Israel's covenant history. Thus, paradoxically, Israel is condemned for having been unfaithful to the covenant, or Torah, and to God's love and faithfulness embodied in Jesus. Due to Israel's unfaithfulness, God concludes the exclusive covenant with Israel as a nation (cf. 10:5-15; 12:41-42; 19:28; 23:31, 35)³⁷ and establishes the universal covenant (Matt 28:16-20 cf. Gen 12:1) ratified in anyone who becomes obedient to God in and through Jesus. Similarly, Bauer and also Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, in their nuances, point to obedience as central in Matthew and link Jesus' obedience to the law as fulfilment of the Old Testament. However, Bauer only treats it within the structure of ethics in Matthew's overall structure.³⁸

2.2.2 Thomas R. Blanton IV, Jong-Ki Park, and Glenn W. Giles

Thomas R. Blanton IV selects 1:21 for discussion on the Matthean Jesus' obedience and posits that one of the most important and enduring Matthean themes is Jesus as a proponent of strict obedience to the law (e.g., 5:17-20; 23:1-3; 28:19-20).³⁹ Understanding 'sin' as the

³⁵ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 79.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7-10.

³⁸ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 60-61; Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*.

³⁹ Thomas R. Blanton IV, "Saved by Obedience: Matthew 1:21 in Light of Jesus' Teaching on the Torah," *JBL* 132, no. 2 (2013): 393-394.

“transgression of the stipulations of the Torah,”⁴⁰ and focusing on Matthew’s literary and theological presentation, he avers that Jesus does primarily ‘save his people from their sins’ not by forgiving sins or by his death but by his advocacy for perfect obedience, exhorting people to a strict Torah observance. Using narrative criticism, Jong-Ki Park chooses Matt 7:15-23 and Glenn W. Giles picks Matt 7:21-23 in conjunction with the whole Gospel to demonstrate that the proper obedience to the law is doing God’s will wholeheartedly which is the condition for the ‘better righteousness.’ This obedience is centred upon Jesus, the perfectly obedient one, who is the eschatological fulfiller of the Old Testament law and the sufficient means to enter into the kingdom of heaven.⁴¹

Noticeable from them all is that the centrality of the Torah is inseparable from the obedience theme.⁴² In light of the Torah, all the scholars discussed above advance the lifelong obedience of Jesus which is vicariously salvific because of its uniqueness. Into this discussion on the nature and role of Jesus’ obedience, I will bring an understanding of this obedience gleaned from a narrative reading of the Gethsemane pericope within its broader Matthean context.

2.3 SURVEY OF PREVIOUS LITERATURE ON GETHSEMANE

The works of many scholars make it evident that, from ancient times, Christianity has found the Gethsemane event puzzling but central to the life of Jesus and key to the faith of his followers. Sarah Covington’s article⁴³ and Ulrich Luz’s commentary⁴⁴ reveal that in the

⁴⁰ Blanton, “Saved by Obedience,” 393; Emily Fero-Kovassy, “‘Doing the Will of the Father in Heaven’ in the Gospel of Matthew: The Confluence of Law Observance and Moral Behaviour” (master’s thesis, Monash University, 2020), 60-61, accessed September 20, 2020, https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/thesis/_Doing_the_Will_of_the_Father_in_Heaven_in_the_Gospel_of_Matthew_The_Confluence_of_Law_Observance_and_Moral_Behaviour/12847652/1. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 76 asserts that “sin encompasses not only unlawful acts but also the failure to do positively what God requires.”

⁴¹ Park, “Obedience in Matthew;” Giles, “Obedience Theology of Matthew;” Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 58-62 all see the expectation of judgment (eschatology) as the reason Matthew emphasises obedience to the law.

⁴² The majority of them, however, concentrate on Jesus’ verbal teaching on obedience and not on Jesus’ application of obedience in his own case.

⁴³ Covington, “The Garden of Anguish.”

⁴⁴ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21-28: A Commentary*, ed. Helmut Koester; trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 394-408.

history of interpretation and reception some eras have been concerned about Gethsemane's historicity,⁴⁵ others its spirituality, and some others yet its psychological and theological import. It has raised issues regarding Jesus' divinity and humanity since the early centuries. But most relevantly, those who have written a commentary on Gethsemane unanimously agree that it is a prayer episode strategically located at the threshold of the Passion narrative and rooted deeply in doing God's will (obedience).⁴⁶

2.3.1 Sources and Redactional Activity

Following discussions on this passage, the majority of scholars unanimously accept that it originates solely from Mark as 'betrayed' by the numerous close parallels.⁴⁷ With the absence of Q source, it is chiefly regarded as the combination of Mark and 'M'⁴⁸ in editorial modification.⁴⁹ Matthew rewrites Mark both by omission and addition⁵⁰ without distorting Matthew's adherence to, and harmony with, Mark's narrative in significant details and order especially regarding the narrative settings and frames.⁵¹ Gethsemane's basic meaning and strategic position at the threshold of the Passion and in the entire narrative framework is

⁴⁵ See also David M. Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane: The Early Church Reflects on the Suffering of Jesus* (New York: Paulist, 1980), 7; Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 1:234; James S. Tedford, "The Agony of Indeterminacy: Sotah Tradition and the Surplus Meaning of the 'Cup' Metaphor in Matthew's Gethsemane Narrative" (PhD Diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2013), iv, accessed February 3, 2020, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 56-166 names disinterested secular historian Flavius Josephus (*The Antiquities*) among Tacitus, Pliny the younger, Lucian of Samosata, and *the Apocryphal Gospels* as giving testimonies of Jesus' arrest, trial, and condemnation by Pilate.

⁴⁶ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 393-400; Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 282-290, 304; Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, SP, vol. 1 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2007), 375-378; Anna Maria Aagaard, "Doing God's Will," *IRM* 77, no. 306 (1988): 221-228; Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 185-191; David L. Turner, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 631; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 213. See also Donald P. Senior, *The Passion Narrative According to Matthew: A Redactional Study* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1982), 101; Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, eds., *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: Burns and Oates, 1995), 670.

⁴⁷ James N. Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done: Jesus's Passion in the Lord's Prayer," *JBL* 138, no. 1 (2019): 176.

⁴⁸ See Carter, "Narrative and Matthew's Gospel," 308; Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 42; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 393-394; Maarten J.J. Menken, *Matthew's Bible: The Old Testament Text of the Evangelist* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 225; Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 297.

⁴⁹ See Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 79.

⁵⁰ Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 206.

⁵¹ Cedric E. W. Vine, *The Audience of Matthew: An Appraisal of the Local Audience Thesis* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 154-155, 157; Donald Senior, *Matthew* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 302. See Anne M. O'Leary, *Matthew's Judaization of Mark: Examined in the Context of the Use of Sources in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2006), 91-117, 123 on Matthew's general redaction of Mark.

maintained. However, the redactional activity highlights the peculiar interests and theological perspectives of Matthew's Gethsemane.⁵² For one, it reveals that as early as the first century there was already a substantial uneasiness with certain earlier Gethsemane portraits of Jesus.⁵³

Matthew changes Mark's 'They came' (Mark 14:32) to 'Then *Jesus* came *with* them' (Matt 26:36) and continues to insert 'with' (26:38, 40) for a more Christocentric focus (cf. 1:23; 18:20; 28:20), a shift away from Mark's attentiveness on the weakness of the disciples. Cedric E. W. Vine and Donald Senior maintain that the most significant changes lie in the Matthean Jesus' repetition of prayers, the Christocentric *μετα*, and the questioning of his disciples.⁵⁴ Many commentators point out that in Jesus' prayer Matthew changes Mark's *Abba Father* to 'my Father' (26:39; cf. Mark 14:36)⁵⁵ and clearly tones down Jesus' distress and first prayer request.⁵⁶ This may uncover a deeper layer of obedience. The more clearly expanded threefold prayer and its identified stronger allusions to the Lord's Prayer (26:39, cf. 6:9; 26:41, cf. 6:13; 26:42, cf. 6:10) emphasise the theme of Jesus' obedience to God's will that may already have been present in Mark.⁵⁷

⁵² Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 393; Nils Alstrup Dahl, "The Passion Narrative in Matthew," in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, 2nd ed., ed. Graham N. Stanton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 53-60; Roger Mohrlang, *Matthew and Paul: A Comparison of Ethical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 2-3; Senior, "Directions in Matthean Studies," 13; see also Donald Senior, *What Are They Saying About Matthew?* (New York: Paulist, 1996), 21-37; Meier, *Matthew*, xi. O'Leary (*Matthew's Judaization of Mark*) extensively discusses that. Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 97-100 considers redaction necessary for the historian's viewpoint or perspective.

⁵³ See Kevin Madigan, *The Passions of Christ in High-Medieval Thought: An Essay on Christological Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 6.

⁵⁴ Vine, *The Audience of Matthew*, 156-157; Senior, *Matthew*, 302; also Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 392-394; Pierre Benoit, *The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, trans. Benet Weatherhead (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1969), 13-15; Benedict T. Viviano, "The Gospel According to Matthew" in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (London: Burns and Oates, 1995), 670.

⁵⁵ H. Benedict Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew in the Revised Standard Version* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 89-90; Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 185-191.

⁵⁶ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 175-181.

⁵⁷ Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 241.

Nevertheless, since this research engages not in historical or redaction but in narrative criticism, this Gethsemane passage will be approached not as a rewriting of Mark's episode but as a unified rhetoric in its final form coherent with the one implied authorship of Matthew's entire narrative.⁵⁸

2.3.2 Unity of 26:36-46

The unity of a passage is a consideration of the realisation of formal excellence regarding its wholeness and coherence.⁵⁹ Almost all scholars acknowledge that this Gethsemane passage (26:36-46) is integrally the beginning, and part, of the Passion narrative proper⁶⁰ and recognise it to be a single episode. However, its delimitation is not so simple and straightforward as the disparity among scholars has shown. Scholars are divided in their chosen enclosures depending on their thematic thrust and focus in addition to the regular delimitation markers.⁶¹

Many Bible versions clearly delineate Matt 26:36-46 as 'Gethsemane'⁶² and most biblical scholars, like R. T. France, Daniel Patte, William Yeomans, Sung Uk Lim, Frederick Dale Bruner, and Carter also mark off this segment as one unit considering Jesus' main prayer event in Gethsemane.⁶³ They reckon that the end of 'Gethsemane' comes with the entrance of

⁵⁸ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 34; see Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 7-8, 13; Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 140. Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 25-28; Stanton, "Matthew in Recent Scholarship," 5-7. James D. G. Dunn, ed., *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 100-101 view various reading strategies as complementary and Dunn sadly regrets that some narrative critics, e.g., Kingsbury (*Matthew as Story*) and Patte (*Gospel According to Matthew*), ignore redaction criticism in their literary critical studies.

⁵⁹ Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 124.

⁶⁰ See also Senior, *Narrative According to Matthew*, 101.

⁶¹ See 3.2 below for the four regular delimitation markers (place, characters, event, and time).

⁶² E.g., GNBCE ("Jesus Prays in Gethsemane"), JB ("Gethsemane"), NCBCE ("Gethsemane").

⁶³ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1000-1008; Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 367-369 ("Jesus and the Disciples at Gethsemane"); William Yeomans, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Spiritual Commentary* (Dublin 1: Dominican Publications, 1993), 185-186 ("Your will be done"); Sung Uk Lim, "The Emotive Semantics of Asian Context: What Does Jesus' Sorrow in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46) Signify for a Korean Pastor's Kid?" in *Matthew*, eds. Nicole Wilkinson Duran and James P. Grimshaw (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013), 113-129 ("Jesus' Sorrow in Gethsemane"); Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, vol. 2, *The Churchbook Matthew 13-28* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 646-664 ("Prayer: Gethsemane"); Carter,

Judas (cf. 26:47).⁶⁴ Some scholars, however, have a broader range (26:36-56) in order to bring together all the events in Gethsemane which Daniel J. Harrington themes as Jesus' arrest.⁶⁵ Others like Senior⁶⁶ and Meier⁶⁷ more clearly further subdivide it, noting 26:36-46 as Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane. Yet, for scholars like H. Benedict Green,⁶⁸ Meier elsewhere,⁶⁹ and Joseph Ratzinger,⁷⁰ Matthew 26:30-50, 26:31-56, and 26:30-56 respectively become a unit with 26:36-46 being marked as a subunit centrally to do with Jesus' Gethsemane prayer or agony. Some probably mark off 26:30(31)-56 so as to match Jesus' entry into and his exit out of Mount Olivet or his prediction about the disciples' abandonment and its fulfilment. In any event, even verse 56 does not indicate the actual going out of Gethsemane nor does the enclosure do justice to the Christocentric focus of Gethsemane's obedience if attention is so placed to highlight the disciples' failure. Moreover, 26:47 clearly introduces new characters and this is a good marker of delimitation.

As can be observed, although the delineations vary,⁷¹ the vast majority of scholars regard 26:36-46 as a unit and this is the delimitation I am using. Hence, we now turn to previous discussions based on the Gethsemane unit. Some subheadings will be according to topics and others according to authors and their Gethsemane treatment so as to accommodate both shorter Gethsemane treatments and works focused on specific themes.

Matthew and the Margins, 509 ("Agony in Gethsemane"); also Brown, Fitzmyer and Murphy, *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 670 ("The Prayer in Gethsemane").

⁶⁴ Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 307.

⁶⁵ Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 372-378.

⁶⁶ Senior, *Matthew*, 302-309.

⁶⁷ Meier, *Matthew*, 322-329.

⁶⁸ Green, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 214-215.

⁶⁹ Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 185.

⁷⁰ Joseph Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2011), 145-166.

⁷¹ See Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 292 as one example of an author with an eye for minor details and multiple subdivisions of the Gethsemane scene.

2.3.3 The Church Fathers (1st - 4th century) to the Middle Ages (5th – 15th century)

In ancient patristic⁷² and medieval orthodox thought, Gethsemane was an embarrassment because it upturned all the divine qualities attributed to Jesus. The reader who basked in the euphoria of the exclusive divinity of Jesus as omnipotent, omniscient, and impassible is confronted with a Jesus-figure that manifests full human powerlessness, ignorance, fear, doubt, hesitation, and inner conflict in obedience, affective-ness, and a separation from God.⁷³ The Gethsemane puzzle forced some interested parties into a strict divine-human Christological dichotomy whereby some either totally denied Jesus' humanity or divinity or allocated Jesus' fear and sorrow only to his humanity. He either feels no real fear and sorrow or what he exhibits is as concern for the disciples and the world and not for himself.⁷⁴ While Ambrose, against the Arians who taught that the logos suffered and so "was an inferior deity," overemphasised Jesus' passions as due to his concern for perishing humanity, Hilary of Poitiers denies that Jesus feels fear, reckoning Jesus as more divine than human. Jerome and Augustine experience a shift in perspective from denying that Jesus truly fears to accepting that he feels (the beginning of) fear only in his assumed humanity.⁷⁵ This patristic thought becomes the preoccupation of the High Middle Ages when Gethsemane turns into a basic text on Christian faith and piety.⁷⁶ The high-scholastic commentators (Peter Lombard,

⁷² The patristic period was dominated by Hilary of Poitiers, Ambrose of Milan, Jerome, Augustine of Hippo, among others (Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 7.). They engaged in polemics against Arianism and pagan taunts.

⁷³ Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 63-68.

⁷⁴ For some modern scholars, e.g., Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 172, 178, Jesus is agonised because his unflinching commitment will soon result in him being the cause of his disciples' loss of faith (26:31; cf. 11:6; cf. 18:6, 10, 14). Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 399-401 says the ancient Orthodox Church thought that Jesus grieved for Judas' and Israel's loss of salvation. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 154 and Allison, *Studies in Matthew*, 85 insist that the eschatological context of Gethsemane (e.g., γρηγορεῖτε [26:38, 40-41; cf. 24:42; 25:13] and ὄρα [26:45; cf. 24:36, 44, 50; 25:13]) can equally cause 'eschatological' distress.

⁷⁵ Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 66-71; St Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 81 and note 136. He equally posits that Jesus' soul is sorrowful on account of the perishing lot and he drinks 'this cup' belonging to the Jews (300-301).

⁷⁶ Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 66-71; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 398, 400.

Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventure) are convinced that in Gethsemane Jesus experiences real sorrow though controlled by reason.⁷⁷

Clearly, the literature of the first fifteen centuries was concerned about Jesus' Christological status, defending either his divinity or humanity or both⁷⁸ against the opposing and deriding positions of heretics and pagans.⁷⁹ Jesus' holistic obedient character was thus lost to the divine-human Christological debates.⁸⁰ However, in their various ways, Cyril of Alexandria, Irenaeus, and Augustine had acknowledged and stressed Jesus' true humanity and John Chrysostom had even seen Jesus' heroism in suffering as a welcome lesson for all human beings.⁸¹ Luz paraphrases a fourteenth century tract for which "Gethsemane becomes the inner passion" that foreshadows completely the coming paschal mystery.⁸² Regardless of particular differing details, the enduring lesson is that Jesus is fully human and fully divine, both aspects completely embraced in hypostatic union and it is through his 'scandalising' humanity that we can see his divinity.⁸³

⁷⁷ St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation*, ed. Timothy McDermott (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1989), 525; Peter Lombard, *The Sentences*, bk 3, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, trans. Guilio Silano (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2008), 67-72; St Bonaventure, *The Works of Bonaventure: Cardinal, Seraphic Doctor, and Saint*, vol. 2, *The Breviloquium*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson NJ: St. Anthony Guild, 1963), 172. Also Michael Pope, "Emotions, Pre-emotions, and Jesus' Comportment in Luke 22:39-42," *NovT* 62 (2020): 30-42 implies an incipient un-progressive grief in Jesus.

⁷⁸ Origen, Jerome, Ambrose of Milan, Bonaventure, and Aquinas are representatives of the period's literature. Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 65-66; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 153, 199-203 note, however, that from the 1st century, Luke's and John's agony events (Luke 22:45; John 12:27) eliminate signs of embarrassing weakness on the part of Jesus, and Meier, *Matthew*, 323 points out Matthew's *rewriting* of Mark's Jesus' great fear and sorrow.

⁷⁹ Such as Celsus, Porphyry, Emperor Julian the apostate, the Arians, the Monophysites, *inter alia*. See Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 394, 399; Karl Olav Sandnes, *Early Christian Discourses on Jesus at Gethsemane: Courageous, Committed, Cowardly?* (Boston: Brill, 2016), 63-97.

⁸⁰ Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, 43-45; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 394-395; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 157-158; Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 299; also Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 649.

⁸¹ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 399; Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 286; Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 647.

⁸² Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 401.

⁸³ See also Tom Wright, *Matthew for Everyone*, Part 2: Chapters 16-28 (London: SPCK, 2002), 14. He claims that, for both the ancients and moderns, to see Jesus' divinity one must look at Jesus' suffering and disgraceful death.

2.3.4 Post Medieval Era (1498-1901) – 21st Century

In the post-Medieval era, the episode became branded as a piety-enhancing ‘spiritual Passion’ or even the climax of the Passion itself, Gethsemane being the only place in the Gospel where Jesus is revealed inside and out in his human vulnerability.⁸⁴ Covington relates that a subtle shift took place between the late medieval understanding of Jesus’ ordeal which involved an inner struggle (of Jesus) to relate to another (the Father) and the depiction of Jesus’ interior psychological struggle on its own in the Reformation period (16th century).⁸⁵ As championed by Martin Luther, it was not only the human Christ but God in Christ who suffered on behalf of humanity (*pro nobis*).⁸⁶ Then, in the Enlightenment age (18th century) Jesus is reclaimed as the Eternal One, God, who freely chooses to suffer horribly in order to redeem humanity.⁸⁷ Thus, Gethsemane is no longer embarrassing but a touching human model scene.⁸⁸ Twentieth and twenty-first centuries writings follow a similar trajectory and continue to show interest in Jesus but now make bold to understand Jesus in Gethsemane as a prototype, a model human being, suffering, praying, and ‘abandoned’ by God.⁸⁹ Henry F. Knight, for example, using Gethsemane as a springboard, challenges those who claim to be obedient to God’s will to revisit the Scripture from God’s own viewpoint rather than simply from various strands of interpretations given to texts through the ages.⁹⁰ It is only then, he asserts, will they encounter themselves and their true identity which needs reformulating.⁹¹

⁸⁴ Covington, “The Garden of Anguish,” 283.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 287-288.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 289; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 404.

⁸⁷ See Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 405. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 524 states that “No force compelled Christ to suffer.”

⁸⁸ Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 65.

⁸⁹ See Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 405-406; Covington, “Garden of Anguish,” 291; Knight, “Wrestling with Two Texts,” 69-75, 77-78; Leroy Andrew Huizenga, “Obedience Unto Death: The Matthean Gethsemane and Arrest Sequence and the Aqedah,” *CBQ* 73, no. 3 (July 2009): 507-526. Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 155 avers that Jesus is truly the standard human person whose decision in such horrifying hour makes possible the human decision for God in similar situations.

⁹⁰ David Rhoads and Kari Syreeni, eds., *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 265 avows that many writers now deal with the text ‘in its final form’ without having to sort “out tradition and redaction or engaging in historical reconstruction.”

⁹¹ Knight, “Wrestling with Two Texts,” 69-75, 77-78.

Nevertheless, it is acknowledgeable that the majority of modern scholars including Luz,⁹² Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri,⁹³ Charles Talbert,⁹⁴ Bruner,⁹⁵ and France⁹⁶ treat this passage as ‘prayer’ and/or ‘agony,’ and only refer briefly or in passing to obedience.⁹⁷ Therefore, although modern interpreters understand Gethsemane chiefly in terms of Jesus’ humanity contra ancient interpretation in terms of his divinity,⁹⁸ obedience has not been considered as a major topic for Gethsemane as such. In fact, some like Warren Carter mention Gethsemane in relation to Jesus complying with God’s will to die but focus more on the significance and benefits of Jesus’ death.⁹⁹ In any event, Luz’s conclusion that what ultimately should be drawn from the text is the parenthesis concerning “the reality of living ‘with’ God,”¹⁰⁰ could be advanced toward a major reflection on the obedient relationship between Jesus and God.¹⁰¹ In such a relationship, James S. Tedford is conscious of the ‘cup’ metaphor as symbolising *trial* whereby God’s intent with its outcome is uncertain from the human perspective (cf. Num 15:11-31), and that authentic obedience requires unreserved, unconditional submission to God’s will.¹⁰²

2.3.5 Gethsemane Links with other Parts of the Gospel

The Gethsemane passage is not discussed in isolation but as integral to the whole life of Jesus. As such, links have been observed between Gethsemane and other parts of Matthew. Here we look chiefly at some scholars’ discoveries regarding Gethsemane’s links *within* Matthew’s Gospel that resonate especially with obedience.

⁹² Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 392-398.

⁹³ Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 339-342.

⁹⁴ Talbert, *Matthew*, 292-293.

⁹⁵ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 646-664.

⁹⁶ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1000-1008.

⁹⁷ See also Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 372-378; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 175, 192. Nevertheless, Bauer (*Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 61) highlights Jesus in Gethsemane as the epitome of submission to God’s will.

⁹⁸ See Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 394-395.

⁹⁹ Carter, *Mathew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 186-201.

¹⁰⁰ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 409.

¹⁰¹ The detailed history of interpretation is beyond the scope of this research.

¹⁰² Tedford, “The Agony of Indeterminacy,” 3-4, 122, 189-197, 231-235.

2.3.5.1 *Jesus' Relationship with His Disciples*

Even though Jesus comes into Gethsemane with the body of disciples, the choice of the three disciples accompanying Jesus further into the Gethsemane grounds (26:37) reminds scholars of the call of the first disciples (4:18-22).¹⁰³ They are special in a way and have constituted an inner caucus closest to Jesus (cf. 17:1-9). Jesus' true identity is revealed to Peter, the disciples' representative (16:16; 26:31-35). Zebedee's two sons are promised to drink Jesus' cup (20:20-24).¹⁰⁴ These three witnessed Jesus' Transfiguration and some scholars reckon that they are hereby chosen to witness his weakness to counterbalance their experience and correct their mistaken perspectives regarding suffering and glory, to help them comprehend and accept Jesus' painful obedient mission.¹⁰⁵ In any case, the attention paid to the disciples in sustaining this interconnectivity is not directly relevant to the focus of this research on Jesus' obedience.

2.3.5.2 *Transfiguration*

For many commentators,¹⁰⁶ Gethsemane specially evokes memories of the Transfiguration (17:1-13). Both settings: (i) have a mountain with the three disciples separated from the body of the disciples; (ii) involve a revelation of Jesus of some sort—glory at the Transfiguration and weakness in Gethsemane;¹⁰⁷ and (iii) display language resonance such as 'mountain,' 'taking' (17:1; 26:30, 37), 'falling upon...face' (17:6; 26:39), and speech interruption (17:5; 26:47).¹⁰⁸ Also, there appears to be a connection between 'Son of God' and 'Son of Man' in both (17:5, 9; cf. 26:39, 42, 45) underlined by obedient suffering (17:9; 26:39). In the

¹⁰³ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 373.

¹⁰⁴ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 392-396; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 529-536.

¹⁰⁵ Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 373; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, ed. Dale C. Allison (London: T. & T. Clark International, 2004), 480.

¹⁰⁶ Meier, *Matthew*, 323; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 395; Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 648; Craig A. Evans, *Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 434; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480.

¹⁰⁷ Alexander Jones, *The Gospel According to St Matthew: A Text and Commentary for Students* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965), 299; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1004; Mitch and Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 340.

¹⁰⁸ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 393, 395.

Transfiguration passage after the reference to Jesus being God's Son, Jesus warns the disciples to say nothing of the vision until after his Passion while in Gethsemane, after characterising himself as God's obedient Son he further refers to himself as 'Son of Man' ready for the Passion. Therefore, this link will be further explored in chapter 4 of this study.

2.3.5.3 *Temptation*

Almost all the scholars recognise the Gethsemane temptation motif and accept that just as Jesus was tempted before he launched into his public ministry (4:1-11) so is he tempted at the end of his public ministry, toward the end of his life. Gethsemane is foreshadowed by the first temptation. Robert E. Obach and Albert Kirk suggest relating Jesus' threefold rejection of Satan's temptation (4:3, 5, 9) to Jesus' triple avowal of obedience to God in Gethsemane (26:39, 42, 44).¹⁰⁹ In this way, Matthew's Jesus will be confirming his original assertion to always do God's will. Even scholars who do not make the explicit connection may implicitly support it. For instance, Bauer does not discuss Gethsemane in *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, but what could be readily said of Gethsemane he says of 4:1-11: that by not yielding to the temptations of Satan Jesus shows he is Son who perfectly obeys his Father's will.¹¹⁰ Viviano views Gethsemane like 4:1-11 positing that the sonship is tested and Jesus is proved to be unreservedly faithful to God.¹¹¹

Thus, many scholars see in Gethsemane the re-enactment of Jesus' first temptation (4:1-11) or even the manifestation of the underlying lifelong temptation.¹¹² Matthias Nygaard implicitly links the two 'temptations' as having the same theme of power over the world

¹⁰⁹ See Robert E. Obach and Albert Kirk, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Toronto: Paulist, 1978), 269.

¹¹⁰ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 143.

¹¹¹ Viviano, "Gospel According to Matthew," 670; James L. Mays, "'Now I Know': An Exposition of Genesis 22:1-19 and Matthew 26:36-46," *ThTo* 58, no. 4 (2002): 523.

¹¹² Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 307. Jeffrey B. Gibson, *The Temptations of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 52, 212-213, 238, 256, 288, 319 discusses the various manifestations of the underlying lifelong temptation, e.g., in 4:1-11; 12:38-42; 16:13-23; 19:1-9; 22:17-18; 26:36-46.

demonstrated when it is to God that Jesus bows at last (Matt 4:9-10; 26:39; cf. 28:18).¹¹³ Therefore, Jesus' resolution of the temptations in deferring to God (4:10; 26:39) establishes the theocentric basis of the two episodes and the entire narrative of Jesus' life.¹¹⁴ Bauer, Lim, and Anna Maria Aagaard even give Gethsemane an expanded and mythical interpretation by visualising therein a cosmological battle between God and Satan, universal good and evil, power of love and powers of darkness, in which Jesus becomes the battleground.¹¹⁵ These scholars draw attention to the centrality of the temptation motif in Gethsemane.

2.3.5.4 'Our Father'

The Gethsemane prayer has always been studied from many perspectives but most especially in the light of the Lord's Prayer petitions.¹¹⁶ Viviano simply notes Gethsemane (26:36-46) and the Our Father (6:5-15) as the two great prayer texts of the Gospel.¹¹⁷ Many scholars are apt to point out that Gethsemane recalls the Lord's Prayer which reverberates throughout the episode, making comparison between them a priority concern.¹¹⁸ The obvious similarities in phrases include 'my Father'/'our Father' (26:39; 6:9), 'thy will be done'/'thy will be done' (26:42; 6:10), and 'not to enter into temptation'/'lead us not into temptation' (26:41; 6:13).¹¹⁹

¹¹³ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 61-64, 69. He explicitly parallels the temptation scene (4:1-11) with the exalted and resurrected Jesus' appearance on the Galilee Mountain but his argument especially in chapter two of his book allows for direct link to Gethsemane as well.

¹¹⁴ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 69.

¹¹⁵ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 83; Lim, "The Emotive Semantics," 122-125; Aagaard, "Doing God's Will," 222; see Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 98.

¹¹⁶ Angela Kim Harkins, "Ritualizing Jesus' Grief at Gethsemane," *JSNT* 41, no. 2 (2018): 188.

¹¹⁷ Viviano, "Gospel According to Matthew," 670; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 393-394.

¹¹⁸ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 393; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480; Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 187; also Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 58.

¹¹⁹ Obach and Kirk, *A Commentary on Matthew*, 269; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 394-397; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480-482; Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 646; Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, 301-302.

Most scholars are centrally interested in the verbatim repetition, “thy will be done,” in both prayers.¹²⁰ For Nygaard and Aagaard, the correspondence occurs respectively at a literal and symbolic climax of 26:36-46 establishing the phrase as the Matthean major prayer.¹²¹ Aagaard finds this correlation to manifest at the decisive point in the confrontation between the powers of darkness and the power of love,¹²² and Yeomans draws upon 6:10 to conclude that Jesus’ eventual resignation (26:42) is a breakthrough to do God’s will on earth as it is done in heaven.¹²³ Some interpreters even include the contexts of praying in secret and Luz specifically sees in the clause, ‘if possible,’ a reminder of the Lord’s Prayer, meaning that it is God’s will and not Jesus’ will that should be done.¹²⁴ Additionally, for Carter, ‘deliver us from evil’ resonates with ‘take this cup away’ (6:13; 26:39).¹²⁵

Most of them aver that the ‘Our Father,’ which Jesus lives throughout his life and teaches his disciples, is the prayer he enacts within his heart in Gethsemane due to the many similarities between the two texts.¹²⁶ James N. Neumann and Francis P. Donnelly, observing intertextuality between Gethsemane and the Our Father, posit that Jesus telling the disciples to pray as he taught them is not as striking as Jesus praying exactly in the same way he had taught them to pray for themselves.¹²⁷ Apart from the commonly agreed parallels noted above, this duo links almost the entire Our Father and the Gethsemane prayer in context and content. Donnelly especially finds links in almost every phrase. In addition to the foregoing

¹²⁰ Obach and Kirk, *A Commentary on Matthew*, 269; Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 188; Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 215.

¹²¹ Aagaard, “Doing God’s Will,” 222; Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 60-69. Nygaard contends that ‘your will be done’ (26:42) is an explicit utterance of submission that progresses from the antithetical parallel of 26:39 while its agreement with 6:10 arguably underscores its importance in the overall Matthean prayer ideal.

¹²² Aagaard, “Doing God’s Will,” 222.

¹²³ Yeomans, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 186.

¹²⁴ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 482.

¹²⁵ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510. For Stanley (*Jesus in Gethsemane*, 178), ‘not as I wish but as you wish’ (26:39) may echo ‘as in heaven so on the earth’ (6:10).

¹²⁶ Francis P. Donnelly, *The Our Father in Gethsemane: Thoughts for the Holy Hour* (Charlotte: TAN Books, 2010), 17; Neumann, “Thy Will Be Done,” 172, 176; Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 187-188; Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 58; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396; Donald Senior, ed., *The Gospel of Matthew at the Crossroads of Early Christianity* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2011), 662; Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew*, 368; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 280-282.

¹²⁷ Neumann, “Thy Will Be Done,” 161-162; Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 17.

parallels, he sees the greatest hallowing of God's name (6:9) in Jesus' total submission and self-sacrifice in doing God's will.¹²⁸ Jesus forgives his debtors (6:12) and submits to them through nonviolence and non-retaliation (26:51-54).¹²⁹ 'Lead us not into temptation' (6:13a) explains Jesus' need for both inward and outward watchfulness against temptation to sin due to human weakness (26:41).¹³⁰ Deliverance from specific evils in Gethsemane (26:39, 41) extends to all forms of evil in life (6:13b).¹³¹ Finally, Jesus' Gethsemane 'Amen' is pronounced in his "Thy will be done" which ratifies and seals the resolve of his heart with his signature of earnest and heartfelt agreement with the Father's desire.¹³² Neumann, for his part, concedes that each instance of the correspondence between the two prayers echoes submission to the divine will.¹³³ Likewise, Donald Senior pertinently, but summarily, regards both the Our Father and the Gethsemane prayers as prayers of obedience.¹³⁴ Overall, however, although this study does not involve redaction (like Neumann) or spiritualising (like Donnelly), it approaches the final form of the text like many of the scholars to also glean the theme of obedience from such significant intratextuality.

2.3.5.5 *Catechesis on Vigilance and Prayer*

Yet, reiteratively, Gethsemane has many prongs of scholarly interest. For example, while the primitive focus was on the theological interest in the historical Jesus' character, a contemporaneous or later concern was didactic: for the Christian to imitate Jesus in his prayer vigil.¹³⁵ Many scholars, among whom are M.D. Goulder, Krister Stendahl, Meier, and Obach and Kirk, agree that Matthew, variously thought to have been a teacher or converted rabbi

¹²⁸ Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 25-26, 51-57; also Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 180.

¹²⁹ Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 92-95.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 101-108.

¹³¹ Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 111; also Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 187-188; Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 58; Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 79 all see Jesus as praying to be delivered from evil as he had taught his disciples in 6:13.

¹³² Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 122-128 (God's 'Amen' being made manifest to all by Easter). For Nygaard (*Prayer in the Gospels*, 69), Jesus' 'Amen' is seen in his whole life's embrace of the *Shema* (4:10; 26:39a).

¹³³ Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 172-174.

¹³⁴ Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 79.

¹³⁵ Benoit, *The Passion and Resurrection*, 21-22.

and catechist, wrote to guide, exhort and most especially to catechise his Christian community.¹³⁶

Most commentators concur but differ in where they identify this catechetical emphasis in Gethsemane. Luz, Meier, and Obach and Kirk focus on the paired terms, “watch and pray” (26:41), as showing forth basic Christian piety in light of eschatology and Parousia (cf. 24:36-25:30).¹³⁷ Luz, David L. Turner, Patte, Robert H. Gundry, W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, and Craig A. Evans give both “watch” and “sleep” a literal and figurative meaning that applies to present Christian attitude which respectively obeys and disobeys the Lord.¹³⁸ Meier pairs Christology with moral exhortation as the twin themes of the pericope with a stronger emphasis on the alert ecclesiological leadership (cf. 25:1-13).¹³⁹ All, nonetheless, eventually submit that in Gethsemane, disciples are taught to be prayerful and vigilant always, Jesus serving as the church’s faithful model for all time (cf. Heb 5:7-14; 1 Cor 16:13; Eph 5:14; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:6-8; 1 Pet 5:8).¹⁴⁰ Covington rightly observes and agrees that Gethsemane directs the mind to the heart of all Christ’s doings and sayings for Christian learning, edification, and consolation.¹⁴¹ Having given some early Christian, patristic interpretations of Gethsemane, David M. Stanley refers repeatedly to the Gethsemane story as catechesis directed to Christians for persevering prayer (7:7-11) and appropriate relationship

¹³⁶ See M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 5; Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew* (Ramsey: Sigler, 1991), 11; Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 187-188; Obach and Kirk, *A Commentary on Matthew*, 268; Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 6; O’Leary, *Matthew’s Judaization of Mark*, 130. However, Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, ed. Helmut Koester; trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 14 considers it as a continuous narrative.

¹³⁷ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 397; Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 186; Obach and Kirk, *A Commentary on Matthew*, 268.

¹³⁸ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 397; Turner, *Matthew*, 632-633; Patte, *Matthew*, 368-369, 403; Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 535; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480; Evans, *Matthew*, 435-436.

¹³⁹ Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 186-187; see also Stendahl, *School of St. Matthew*, 11.

¹⁴⁰ Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 188; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480-483; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 178; Turner, *Matthew*, 631-633; Patte, *Matthew*, 369; Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 535.

¹⁴¹ Covington, “The Garden of Anguish,” 291.

with God.¹⁴² In the same vein but more self-challenging, Knight faults hitherto previous interpretations given to this text if Gethsemane does not call Christians to a self-critical penetration of their underlying thoughts and motives in their relationship with God and neighbour.¹⁴³

The focus and methodology of each scholar may be different¹⁴⁴ but they often converge on the catechetical note of the pericope. In doing this, they, doubtlessly, project Jesus as a model of obedience.¹⁴⁵ At any rate, catechetical hermeneutics on any Gethsemane topic, to the best of my knowledge so far, are mainly marginal and derivative from reflections on Jesus' portrayal, and they better remain as such, since the episode is not chiefly a discourse. Lessons first derived from the characterisation of Jesus in Gethsemane may more qualitatively be appropriated to further hermeneutical catechesis.¹⁴⁶

2.3.6 Gethsemane Allusions with the Old Testament

Some scholars also identify some connections between Jesus in Gethsemane and certain Old Testament passages. Typological allusions, dealing with associations between characters, have been suggested with Abraham, Isaac,¹⁴⁷ Jacob,¹⁴⁸ Moses,¹⁴⁹ Aaron, Daniel, Jonah,¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 90-118, 170-185.

¹⁴³ Knight, "Wrestling with Two Texts," 69-75, 77-78.

¹⁴⁴ E.g., Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 481-483 (commentary) and Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist*, 55, 63 (redaction criticism).

¹⁴⁵ Turner, *Matthew*, 632.

¹⁴⁶ This is more beneficial than perhaps, as Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 178 opines, an early Christian direct short-cut adoption of Jesus' habit in the bid to appropriate his obedience (cf. Acts 21:14).

¹⁴⁷ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396-397, 408; Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 173-175; Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death."

¹⁴⁸ Knight, "Wrestling with Two Texts," 54-79.

¹⁴⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 482.

¹⁵⁰ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262-263; Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, 300.

David,¹⁵¹ and even Adam,¹⁵² mostly in passing and depending on an author's theme or viewing lens.¹⁵³ Let us consider some of them briefly.

2.3.6.1 Spadaro and Matthew's Gethsemane as a Priestly Transaction with Heaven.

Spadaro treats Matthew's Gospel as the climactic fulfilment of Israel's story. He does a narrative subtext reading, understanding Jesus in Gethsemane with reference to the Epistle to the Hebrews as the new priest in a mediatory role.¹⁵⁴ For him, the Gethsemane incident is a transaction directly with heaven wherein the priestly ministry of Jesus expressed in 26:36-46 shows him to be an atoning priest in a solitary mediatory role like Aaron and his successors on the Day of Atonement.¹⁵⁵ Jesus separating himself from the disciples in order to pray alludes to the private and sacred high priests' duty of entering the holy of holies alone (Heb 5:7; 8:1-2 cf. Lev 16:17) on the holiest day of the year (Yom Kippur) on behalf of the people.¹⁵⁶ And as he understands Gethsemane to be a 'garden,' a place of priestly duty, Adam the "first failed priest," excluded from the garden, is now replaced by the obedient priest, Jesus, whose temporal adversaries are the failed priests of Israel with their delegation (26:45-47). Having determined to do God's will, Jesus will give his life to ransom many through his blood of the new covenant which is more binding because Jesus himself, unlike his antagonists, is a worthy participant by being obedient to the terms of the covenantal law.¹⁵⁷ However, Jesus' Gethsemane obedience also echoes the incredible test of Abraham and Isaac

¹⁵¹ Nathan C. Johnson, "The Passion according to David: Matthew's Arrest Narrative, the Absalom Revolt, and Militant Messianism," *CBQ* 80, no. 2 (April 2018); see Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 146-147.

¹⁵² Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 302. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, has a whole thesis on Adam but virtually little or almost nothing to allude in Gethsemane.

¹⁵³ E.g., Boxall, *Discovering Matthew*, 154-155 observes Gethsemane intertextual possibilities with the Isaianic Servant (Isa 53:7; Matt 27:12), the righteous sufferer (Ps 22:69) and Son of God (Matt 27:42-43; Ps 2:7-8; Wis 2:18).

¹⁵⁴ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262-263; so also Musculus cf. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 404.

¹⁵⁵ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262-263.

¹⁵⁶ Medieval Bonaventure had likewise explained Jesus' prayer in priestly role (see Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 82).

¹⁵⁷ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262-263.

while his earnest prayers are reminiscent of Hebrew Scripture's heroes such as Abraham, Moses, Daniel, and Jonah, among others.¹⁵⁸

2.3.6.2 Leroy Andrew Huizenga with other Scholars on Abraham or Isaac Typology in Gethsemane

Evidently, many intertextual links have been found in the Gethsemane episode. Nonetheless, with regard to obedience Abraham's sacrifice (*Akedah*) seems to be the most prominent and popular. Most scholars readily see a connection between the Matthean Jesus in Gethsemane and Abraham in his costly obedience and willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac, at God's command (Gen 22).

By wide scholarly agreement it is noted that Abraham tradition is embedded in Matthew's Gospel which begins with Jesus, 'son of Abraham.' Abraham is the originator of Israel's history and Jesus is the culminator and transmitter of blessings promised to Abraham (Matt 1:1-17).¹⁵⁹ For Gethsemane, Leroy Andrew Huizenga, Luz, and Gundry with a vast number of scholars see in Matthew 26:36 an allusion to Genesis 22:5. Jesus tells his disciples to sit near the entrance of Gethsemane while he goes farther to pray as Abraham tells his servants to sit 'here' (αὐτοῦ) so that he and Isaac will go 'yonder' to worship God.¹⁶⁰ Both Abraham and Jesus take along three people and separate themselves from others for agonising prayer. This point is usually used to match the ideas of prayer, sacrifice, and obedience in the two texts. The scholars all seem to agree on the suitability of comparison between the two episodes. Jesus and Abraham come to the crossroads of their lives where their decision is of utmost importance in their relationship with God and other human beings henceforth. Jesus is

¹⁵⁸ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262-279; so also Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 392-394; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 509-512; Gundry, *Matthew*, 529-536; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 482.

¹⁵⁹ Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1992), 4.

¹⁶⁰ Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death;" Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 395; Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 531-532; also Turner, *Matthew*, 631.

either likened to Abraham or to Isaac who is to be sacrificed or to both. For Nygaard, and Davies and Allison, although there are some verbal parallels, it is difficult to infer from Matthew's language if he suggests a parallel between Abraham's faith and Jesus' faith or between Isaac's sacrifice and Jesus' sacrifice. The main comparison though will have the two episodes set on a mountain and each involving an obedience trial.¹⁶¹

In any case, only a very few scholars like Huizenga have extensively taken the matter of obedience so forcefully and so centrally to Gethsemane where many writers have only been touching on the theme of obedience. In many of his writings he views Gethsemane as a fitting and focal point for the study of obedience. For him, there are verbal and syntactical parallels between 26:36-56 and Genesis 22 in the Septuagint such as 'sit' (26:36; Gen 22:5), testing (26:41; Gen 22:1), and others that encourage comparison. Nevertheless, after noting many strong scriptural Isaac allusions and echoes of the *Akedah* in Gethsemane and other parts of the Gospel, he concludes that Jesus in Gethsemane is an antitype of Isaac.¹⁶² In his opinion, Abraham is to be matched with God the Father and Jesus the Son is to be compared with Isaac in the *Akedah*. Both are beloved sons in the context of sacrificial deaths at Passover season.¹⁶³ They, in obedience to and at the hands of their respective fathers, are willing to undergo their sacrificial salvific deaths.¹⁶⁴ The two fathers are in control of events regarding the giving up of their sons sacrificially. And since in the *Akedah* Isaac is similar to Abraham, Jesus' similar language with Abraham's (26:36; cf. Gen 22:5) is still sufficient to make him the new Isaac. Gethsemane is Jesus' test (Matt 26:41) as the *Akedah* is for Isaac in the tradition although Genesis 22 reports it as Abraham's test. In the matter of obedience, Huizenga points to the most constant element in Jesus' prayer—God's will being done.

¹⁶¹ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 59; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480.

¹⁶² Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death," 508, 515-516; Leroy A. Huizenga, *The New Isaac: Tradition and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 255; Leroy Andrew Huizenga, "The Akedah in Matthew" (PhD diss., Graduate School of Duke University, 2006), 312-313, accessed March 10, 2020, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

¹⁶³ Huizenga, "The Akedah in Matthew," 294-322.

¹⁶⁴ Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 255.

Furthermore, Jesus' use of the verb, ἄγωμεν ('Let us go'), in 26:46 connotes an active, courageous submission. He fearlessly submits himself thus fulfilling the Isaac-typology of the *Akedah*.¹⁶⁵ Nygaard and Huizenga seem more impressed by parallels to the Jewish traditional *Akedah*¹⁶⁶ than with Genesis itself since the *Akedah* records more expressively and centrally Isaac's obedience.¹⁶⁷ It is Isaac and Jesus who are to be sacrificed. Spurred by an increasing number of contemporary Christians who manifested interest in Gethsemane, Stanley wrote a monograph in the 1980s.¹⁶⁸ Working mainly with redaction criticism, he also observes intertextuality between Matthew's Gethsemane and Abraham's sacrifice (Gen 22:1-14), Jesus being compared to Isaac as two loving, self-sacrificing, and obedient sons of their fathers (1:1).¹⁶⁹ For Stanley, Matthew appears to highlight more the father-son relationship thus depicting Jesus as accepting God's will which he understands as an expression of God's love for him as Isaac understood Abraham's unceasing love for him (cf. Gen 22).

However, not all scholars accept this exclusive Isaac-typological connection. For Lim and Senior, although there is a strong Isaac-Jesus typology, Jesus embodies both Abraham's 'blind' faith and Isaac's sacrificial spirit in the binding of Isaac in which both Abraham and Isaac strike the reader as divinely obedient.¹⁷⁰ This position, that both Abraham and Isaac are divinely obedient, is held also in the rabbinic tradition of the popular 'Akedah Isaac,' and these New Testament scholars agree that Abraham, Isaac, and Jesus all display filial obedience in the face of death. So, plausible as his arguments may sound, Huizenga is mostly opposed because his view relies significantly on the *Akedah*, extra-biblical tradition, and yet is concerned about proving Jesus, actively and willingly involved in a soteriological

¹⁶⁵ Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death," 525; Huizenga, "The Akedah in Matthew," 318-325; so Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 174.

¹⁶⁶ The 'traditional *Akedah*' refers to the other extra-biblical non-Christian Jewish stories and writings developed from the 'binding of Isaac.'

¹⁶⁷ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 59.

¹⁶⁸ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 2.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 174-175 with a hint that, moreover, both Isaac and Jesus are sons of Abraham (1:1; John 19:17; cf. Gen 22:6).

¹⁷⁰ Senior, *Narrative According to Matthew*, 102; Lim, "The Emotive Semantics," 124.

sacrifice,¹⁷¹ to be like the Genesis 22 Isaac. In saying that, with the supporters of Isaac-typology Huizenga's argument is very convincing. Moreover, both Isaac and Jesus are similar in many respects as sons of Abraham.

Nevertheless, this research concerns itself with only the Abraham typology and will follow scholars who advocate for an Abraham allusion. We will concentrate on what we can retrieve about Abraham in relation to the Gethsemane obedience. The Gospel opens with a reference to Abraham (1:1) whose son Jesus is. Someone who has come close to direct Abraham typology is Hunter B. Dukes. He agrees that Isaac's sacrifice prefigures Jesus' sacrifice so that just as Jesus died in ransom, Isaac was 'sacrificed' that Israel be blessed.¹⁷² Yet, in following Kierkegaard's reading (*Fear and Trembling*), Dukes sees Isaac as more or less a foil to Abraham, "the authentic tragic hero," who mortifies himself greatly in an "inverted Akedah" and so is a victim of silent self-sacrifice, obediently sacrificing that which he loves uppermost.¹⁷³ Even Huizenga who is anti-Abraham typology and pro-Isaac typology cannot deny this as he agrees that the verbal and thematic correspondences between Genesis 22 and Gethsemane, means that Jesus speaks Abraham's words here.¹⁷⁴ Lim still ventures to go beyond the intertextual exegesis to add an emotional approach to it to help the modern person to appreciate the psychological, spiritual and mental odyssey in the agony in obedience undergone by Abraham and Jesus.¹⁷⁵ Also, James L. Mays, Davies and Allison, and R. W. L. Moberly support Abraham typology,¹⁷⁶ strengthened by Jesus' Gethsemane prayer posture

¹⁷¹ See Cregan, "Garden of Eden," 250-251; Tedford, "The Agony of Indeterminacy," 222-232.

¹⁷² Hunter B. Dukes, "The Binding of Abraham: Inverting the Akedah in Fail-Safe and Wargames," *JRF* 19, no. 1, Article 37 (April 2015): 5, 21, accessed October 15, 2019, <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol19/iss1/37/>

¹⁷³ Dukes, "Inverting the Akedah," 2-5, 12.

¹⁷⁴ Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 255.

¹⁷⁵ Lim, "The Emotive Semantics," 118-119.

¹⁷⁶ Mays, "Now I Know," 524-525; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 481; R. W. L. Moberly, *The Bible, Theology, and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 134.

(cf. Gen 17:3). Regardless, Luz influentially maintains that based on Genesis 22 Jesus assumes, not Isaac's but, Abraham's role.¹⁷⁷

2.3.6.3 Nathan C. Johnson and David Typology

With regard to links with David, most scholars agree with Kingsbury who maintained that although David traditions pervade Matthew's Gospel, the Passion narrative is bereft of Davidic references. The last explicit mention of David is at 22:41-46 where Jesus makes it definitively clear to the Pharisees that he is indeed 'son of David' (cf. 21:15-16). From then on there is no reference to 'son of David.' Therefore, they claim that this confirms that Matthew's main Christology is of Jesus as 'Son of God' to which all other titles, whether Davidic or otherwise, eventually give way.¹⁷⁸

A recent writing on David typology in Gethsemane is an article by Nathan C. Johnson. In an intertextual reading using a detailed comparative narrative setting, Johnson brings out striking resemblance between Gethsemane and David's sojourn on this same mountain when he fled during Absalom's revolt (2 Sam 15-17).¹⁷⁹ In response to key arguments of Kingsbury, Johnson counters the opinion of non-David tradition in Gethsemane and Jesus' arrest (26:36-56).¹⁸⁰ He explains that in the Hebrew Scripture and Second Temple Judaism the two titles (Son of God and son of David) are not antithetical but complementary in that David's son is most often God's son (cf. 2 Sam 7:11, 14; Ps 2:7; 89:27-28).¹⁸¹ He stresses that Davidic traditions inform Matthew's Passion narrative.¹⁸² He begins his argument thus aiming to

¹⁷⁷ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 395-396.

¹⁷⁸ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 84-127 esp. 102.

¹⁷⁹ Johnson, "Passion according to David," 262.

¹⁸⁰ See *Ibid.*, 247-249. Other scholars he notes with Kingsbury are Young S. Chae, Joel Willitts, G. R. Loader, de Jonge, Dale C. Allison, Jr., and Ulrich Luz; cf. Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 102.

¹⁸¹ Johnson, "Passion according to David," 249.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 247-250; Hermann Daniel Zacharias, "Matthew's Presentation of the Son of David: Davidic Tradition and Typology in the Gospel of Matthew" (PhD Diss., Highland Theological College and the University of Aberdeen, 2015), accessed October 10, 2019, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. He sees Davidic typology from Matt 1:1-27:50 (i.e., from the beginning of the Gospel to the "Davidic lament on the cross").

show that Matthew's preoccupation was to prove Jesus as the Davidic Messiah (1:1) and this can be strengthened in the Passion narrative. After giving an overview of Jesus' stint on Mount Olivet (Matt 26:30-46)¹⁸³ where parallels are tight, Johnson concentrates on Matthew's arrest episode and Judas' demise (Matt 26:47-27:5) with close attention to the correspondences between this passage and the Absalom revolt (2 Sam 15-19). Although he admits that extant texts of Second Temple Judaism never employ the irenic David of the Absalom revolt to depict the Messiah, Johnson concludes through a narrative-critical approach that Matthew's text nevertheless appeals to Absalom's uprising in portraying the crucified Jesus as Davidic Messiah.¹⁸⁴ He notices significant verbal links between Gethsemane and David of the Absalom insurrection and other events surrounding David in 2 Samuel and the Psalms while he concentrates on the details of parallels between Jesus' betrayal and arrest and David's betrayal and non-retaliation.

Expressing the same attitude, David thus becomes Jesus' ancestor found on this same mountain. They each have a betrayer (Ahitophel and Judas respectively) among their followers. Each has a follower who pledges loyalty unto death supported by the rest (2 Sam 15:21; Matt 26:35) even though Peter fails Jesus in the end.¹⁸⁵ Their loyal followers are weary coming with them to the mountain (Matt 26:40-45; 2 Sam 16:2, 14; 17:2). Both of them experience and express distress here (Matt 26:37-38; 2 Sam 15:23, 30) and Jesus' expression with the words of Psalm 42:5 LXX ('my soul is sorrowful,' Matt 26:38), a 'Psalm of David,' depicts him as the 'Messiah the son of David' and the later rabbinic tradition refers to that Psalm as such.¹⁸⁶ They both pray (Matt 26:39; 2 Sam 15:25-32), are weary, and give similar commands to their followers to 'arise' (Matt 26:46//2 Sam 15:14-15). When

¹⁸³ Brown, Fitzmyer and Murphy, *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* 670 only recall David's flight from Absalom's revolt in 26:30 with the mention of 'Mount of Olives.'

¹⁸⁴ Johnson, "Passion according to David," 247.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 250-251.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 251.

compared in the broader contexts of their relationships with their followers, betrayers, and opponents (2 Sam 15-19; Matt 26:30-27:56), they are shown to be ultimately obedient to God. David's forgiving attitude toward Absalom, Ahitophel, Shimei and all who wrong him foreshadows Jesus' treatment of Judas, Jesus' arresters, and all who oppose him. Jesus exhibits nonviolent surrender (26:30, 47-54) and this finds a link with David's submissiveness to God's will and self-sacrificial spirit (cf. 2 Sam 16:1-10; 24:17; 1 Chr 21:17).¹⁸⁷

In Second Temple Judaism there are chiefly two types of Davidic messiah. They are: (i) the militant messiah who acts as a violent agent of Israel's deliverance (Isa 10:33-11:4; 4 Ezra 13:11) and (ii) the beneficiary of divine violence who, without terrestrial militia (Deut 17:16; 2 Sam 24:1-13; 1 QM 11.1-2; 4Q246), however, relies on heavenly assistance for victory in battle. But Johnson concludes that Matthew is enthralled by 'Davidic messianism' (1:1) different than the other messianists of the era.¹⁸⁸ As the article shows, Matthew's Davidic messiah denounces human and angelic violence against enemies unlike claimants to messiahs who love militant revolution or violent heavenly help (Matt 26:51-52; 1 Chr 21:16, 27; 2 Sam 16:10; 24:17; Ps 17). David and Jesus prefer to suffer according to God's will rather than be relieved contrary to God's will.

Johnson's presentation is insightful and reminds scholars that explicit references are not the only ones that direct attention to intertextuality but that implicit ones could often be more determining. In sum, he does not consider the position of Kingsbury to be tenable. Johnson's article contributes to the ever broadening understanding of the Gethsemane pericope and the Matthean context at large in matters of obedience and David typology. It is an addition to *subtle* allusions to the Old Testament. However, his concentration on the elements outside

¹⁸⁷ Johnson, "Passion according to David," 257-260.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 263-272.

26:36-46, makes it less useful for the present research. He is most concerned about Jesus' arrest narrative thus he has little on the exposition of the Gethsemane prayer pericope (Matt 26:36-46) and its theme of obedience. Overall, though, I agree with Johnson that Matthew's Gethsemane is replete with echoes of the David of the Absalom insurrection whose posture is likewise 'Thy will be done.'¹⁸⁹ He proves the two figures as obedient to God beyond the realm of expectations of Israel as he extrapolates the idea of obedience from the texts in the forgiving spirits, nonviolence, and final submission of Jesus and David.

Nevertheless, Johnson is not the first to discern a hint of 'David' present in Gethsemane. Stanley (Kingsbury's contemporary), and later, Dunn and Rogerson agree that in the Passion, Jesus alludes to himself as the Davidic-shepherd to be struck which will occasion the flock scattering (Matt 26:31; cf. Zech 13:7). It is important for them that this imagery forms the framework of the Gethsemane narrative.¹⁹⁰ In the Old Testament, David and 'shepherd' have become synonyms (2 Sam 24:17), and Jesus-shepherd is an allusion to David, a symbol of the shepherd-king concerned about gathering and safeguarding his sheep-community (26:31; cf. 2:6; 9:36; 25:32; cf. 1 Sam 17:34-37). However, the closest some interpreters come to David typology in Gethsemane consciously or unconsciously is by noting the 'distant' link between Jesus' expression of distress and the Psalms of David (26:38; cf. Ps 42:6; 43:5).¹⁹¹ Raymond E. Brown, although not very expansive, had even observed *definite* parallels between the Gethsemane episode and David's action at the Kidron during Absalom's revolt (2 Sam 15:25-26). The fleeing David, he says, after crossing the Kidron sends Zadok back to Jerusalem with the implicit prayer demonstrating his submissiveness to God like Jesus (2 Sam 15:25-26; cf. Matt 26:39, 42).¹⁹² Robert H. Gundry furthers the link by describing the Gethsemane

¹⁸⁹ Johnson, "Passion according to David," 258.

¹⁹⁰ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 172, 178; Dunn and Rogerson, *Commentary on the Bible*, 1057.

¹⁹¹ E.g., Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 395; Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 146, 152-153; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 373; Mitch and Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 340.

¹⁹² Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 167.

prayer scenario of Jesus in terms of David's Psalm 23 whereupon it is Jesus who sits at table with the Father who hands him the *cup* to drink.¹⁹³ Modern scholars, like Lidija Novakovic and H. Daniel Zacharias, tend to understand and interpret Christological titles, and apropos David typology, in light of the entire narrative such that the pervasive David-Jesus link goes beyond the confines of explicit references or stereotyped Davidic tradition history.¹⁹⁴ In light of the foregoing, future research into Gethsemane David-typology should be encouraged.

2.3.6.4 Adam Christology in Gethsemane?

In my research I have not yet encountered serious discussion on Matthew's Gethsemane-Adam typology.¹⁹⁵ This may be because Adam is mostly treated in connection with disobedience and obedience has not been a central concern in discussions on Gethsemane.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, the majority of scholars seem hesitant to mention (even the obscurity of) Adam Christology in the Gospels.¹⁹⁷ Yet a minority is breaking out of the status quo in an attempt to demonstrate the Jesus-Adam parallels. Crowe, for instance, using a narrative-critical reading of the final form of the text, treats the entire Gospel of Mathew in relation to Jesus' obedience "through the lens of the second Adam" who "corrects and perfects" what was done by the first Adam.¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, he hardly touches on Gethsemane except for two references (26:39, 42) to lay stress on the active and passive obedience of Jesus unto death. Jesus struggles through prayer and 'actively' submits himself to God's will in the context of covenantal love of God and neighbour.¹⁹⁹ In any event, one would suppose that if an

¹⁹³ See Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 2:869. This will be briefly explored in chapter five (5.2.2) below.

¹⁹⁴ Lidija Novakovic, "Jesus as the Davidic Messiah in Matthew," *HBT* 19, no. 1 (1997): 148; Zacharias, "Davidic Tradition and Typology," 1.

¹⁹⁵ Adam Christology is a topic of vast interest to many scholars especially of the Pauline corpus or New Testament writings outside the Gospel where the materials are in abundance.

¹⁹⁶ For instance, the disobedient Adam is contrasted with the obedient Christ, the eschatological Adam, in Frank J. Matera, "Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: a Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology," *TS* 67, no. 2 (2006): 244, 237-256.

¹⁹⁷ Adam Christology is a topic of great interest in Pauline studies. For instance, commentaries on Philippians 2:8 are replete with Jesus-Adam comparison in obedience.

¹⁹⁸ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 19, 37.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 175, 192.

obedience theme is sustainable in Matthew's Gospel as a whole, then Adam Christology should be seriously considered in the treatment of Gethsemane.

Some writers recognise such links. Although scholars like Brown and Ratzinger with many major commentators might object to any thought of Eden in Matthew's Gethsemane,²⁰⁰ others like Spadaro and John Bartunek attribute an Adam allusion to Gethsemane. Spadaro hears significant echoes of Adam's primordial temptation cum disobedience which ushered evil into the world and this is contrasted in Gethsemane with Jesus' endurance of evil presence amidst his obedience to God.²⁰¹ Bartunek connects Gethsemane with Eden as two similar stories of testing and temptation wherein Jesus, by his obedience, completely contrasts and reverses Adam's disobedience.²⁰²

For these intertextual links with the Old Testament, Abraham, David, and even Adam may remain the strongest possibilities for the present research as we shall see in chapter five. That is the reason I have given them special consideration under the Survey of Literature. Indicatively, simple traditions about these characters from the Hebrew Scripture may have been fed into, without dominating, Gethsemane.²⁰³ Intertextual studies can increase derivable knowledge about the character of Jesus in and outside Gethsemane and it is my conjecture that links with the above characters will be a fruitful area for further study along with intratextuality within Matthew's Gospel. Also, I note an oversight in the absence of comparison between Jesus in Gethsemane and Israel as a whole for whom Jesus remains an epitome of obedience. Although 4:1-11, which is often understood as an allusion to the Israelite desert trials, has similarities with 26:36-46, only a few scholars, like Carter and R. T.

²⁰⁰ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 149; Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 148-150.

²⁰¹ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 263, note 80.

²⁰² John Bartunek, *Inside the Passion: An Insider's Look at the Passion of the Christ* (West Chester: Ascension Press, 2005), 16-20.

²⁰³ See Allison, *The New Moses*, 70 about such identification.

France, observe an allusion between Gethsemane and Israel's desert experience.²⁰⁴ If such an allusion is encouraged, it could illuminate Jesus' obedience more. Admittedly, the survey is only a synopsis of these aforementioned topics and authors. I will interact with their details in the following chapters.

2.4 THE CONTRIBUTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

From the survey of research, it becomes apparent that the previous studies on Gethsemane touch on obedience but do not link obedience to the law directly. This is not surprising since law does not make an appearance in the pericope. However, in light of the broader context of Matthew's Gospel, talk of God's will does invite consideration of the law, however obliquely.²⁰⁵ Also, previous studies do not tie the Matthean Jesus' character directly with these two themes of obedience and law in order to find out how the textual Jesus applies them in his own life.²⁰⁶ Accordingly, there is hardly any sustained treatment that has dealt with all three issues regarding Gethsemane—Jesus, obedience, and law—interrelatedly. In other words, this episode has not received the full attention it should deserve with regard to obedience and how it may relate to the law in the broader Matthean context and I reckon this as an oversight. This is what makes my approach different.

Moreover, many of the treatments of Gethsemane have the pericope as a sub-topic and hardly has anything been done in terms of a thorough narrative criticism for a monograph of Gethsemane. Those who do exegesis or narrative criticism of Gethsemane seem to glance over it hastily with no concentration on the obedience theme while treating it as part of, or a

²⁰⁴ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 511 relates 26:41a to Exodus 17:1-7 and Deuteronomy 6-8 where the word, "temptation," appears as exhortations to not doubt God's faithfulness and power to fulfil his plans, notwithstanding looming evil or imminence of death. R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* (Vancouver: Regent College, 1998), 51-53 links Gethsemane with Israel at the Promised Land's threshold.

²⁰⁵ Also Tedford, "The Agony of Indeterminacy," 200.

²⁰⁶ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 62 and note 8 avers that it would be hypocritical if Jesus is not prepared to be judged also by the precepts he espouses.

gateway to, the Passion narrative.²⁰⁷ Furthermore, scholars who have paid attention to this passage have not really done it in light of reading Matthew from beginning to end. This narrative strategy undertaken by this research will be helpful in considering the importance and narrative function of this passage in the scheme of Matthew's narrative as a whole. I will be making use of intratextuality and intertextuality in the narrative approach in order to build up a relatively rich and holistic insight; nevertheless, my starting point and focus will be the Gethsemane text itself and other texts will only be used to buttress my observations from this key text. Bauer points out that a sound literary-critical investigation of the Gospel text or narrative begins with the text itself before moving onto comparison with other texts.²⁰⁸

Therefore, in view of the research framework: (i) this research fits into Matthean literary studies, specifically the category of those who have done a narrative criticism of Matthew's Gethsemane story. (ii) This thesis aims to contribute a new perspective on the Gethsemane narrative. (iii) This study will contribute to understanding the literary characterisation of the Matthean Jesus in a way that allows the theological agenda to come to the fore. (iv) It will contribute to the study of obedience in Matthew as a whole for it builds on the work of scholars that point to obedience and/or law as central or an important aspect to Matthew.²⁰⁹ (v) This research also belongs within a broader interest of what we can retrieve about the attitude of the Matthean Jesus especially toward the law.²¹⁰ (vi) This thesis will contribute to the scholarly debate on the relation between law and obedience in Matthew's Gospel²¹¹ by encouraging more dialogue in the area of law and obedience finding a meeting place in Matthew's Jesus himself exclusively. These three referents (Jesus, law, and obedience) will

²⁰⁷ See e.g., Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 101.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁰⁹ Some scholars who treat law/obedience in Matthew are: Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 30; B. W. Bacon, "The 'Five Books' of Matthew Against the Jews," *Expositor* 15 (1918): 56-66; Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*.

²¹⁰ See William R. G. Loader, *Jesus' Attitude Towards the Law: A Study of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 1.

²¹¹ See Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 58-164; also Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 3-4.

project the characterisation of Jesus in a specific and new direction. (vii) In its immediate context this study forms part of the Gethsemane discussion and will, thereby, also make clear the model of obedience which the text projects and which a faithful reader is invited to appropriate.²¹² (viii) Ultimately, situating the Matthean Gethsemane obedience within McCabe's definition of obedience described earlier,²¹³ this study considers obedience to be a hearing or an under-hearing that results in the union of hearts and wills between Jesus and God.

2.5 CONCLUSION

We have considered a range of views as represented by a number of scholars about Matthew's Gospel and particularly Gethsemane in relation to Jesus' obedience. Now, we undertake a few observations regarding the survey of literature. It has been shown that despite divergent perspectives, scholars are more unanimous on the designation of the unity and theme of the Gethsemane passage as a prayer episode centred on obedience. Although the theme of obedience is apparently dominant especially in Jesus' prayer as several commentators have noted, most recent studies have tended to overlook Gethsemane entirely or mostly glossed over it and its obedience concept.²¹⁴ It has also been shown that this passage has not received adequate attention in narrative studies, nor has there been detailed treatment of the theme of obedience. Narrative criticism being a relatively recent development²¹⁵ explains why there is relatively little scholarly literature on Matthew that is purely narrative in approach. Moreover, there is scarcely any monograph-length examination of the Gethsemane obedience theme.²¹⁶

²¹² See Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text*, 157, 167-169; Stephen Westerholm, *Understanding Matthew: The Early Christian Worldview of the First Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 26.

²¹³ Cf. '1.4 Research Hypothesis' above.

²¹⁴ Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 282.

²¹⁵ Cf. 2.0 above; Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 6-7; Emerson B. Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture: The Function of Jesus' Use of Scripture in the Synoptic Gospels* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 16.

²¹⁶ There are, however, a few commendable articles especially by Huizenga.

Among scholars who discuss obedience in Matthew's Gospel only a very few actually view Gethsemane as a focal point for the study. This research intends to fill this lacuna. In my reading so far, it is Huizenga who seems to be chief among them who consider it a fitting place to discuss obedience.²¹⁷ In this research, like Park, Blanton, and Giles, I pick a passage with the intention of seeing the contribution of Gethsemane to the obedience theology of Matthew's Gospel, while like Spadaro and Crowe I am considering the obedience of Jesus himself. The former three scholars deal more with Jesus' teaching to others and the latter two more with how obedience applies to Jesus himself.²¹⁸

One of the goals of this survey of literature is to determine fruitful areas to advance scholarly understanding on Jesus' Gethsemane obedience and the contribution of Matthew 26:36-46 to the broader Matthean obedience theology. Some of these areas will be reflected in the subsequent chapters where we will focus more attention on Matthew's literary skill, most especially in the Gethsemane pericope, which tells the Jesus-obedience story in Matthew's distinctive way. A thorough exegesis of the text, paying attention to the storytelling technique via a narrative critical approach, will help in drawing graphically the dramatic process of the episode in order to introduce us into the nature of Jesus' obedience. That is what we turn to in chapter three which looks into Matthew's presentation of Jesus' character as portrayed in Gethsemane.

²¹⁷ Hence titling one of his articles, "Obedience Unto Death: The Matthean Gethsemane and Arrest Sequence and the Aqedah."

²¹⁸ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 62, 71-73; Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 79 note 43 maintain that if Jesus is to be authentic he has to be judged based on the precepts and 'theses' he puts forward for people.

3. NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 26:36-46

In this chapter, I undertake a critical narrative analysis of the Gethsemane text (Matt 26:36-46) in order to find out how Jesus is characterised as he relates with God, his disciples, and his general circumstances. These will be helpful clues to finding out relevant traits which will lead me to make certain conclusions about the nature of his obedience. In order to understand Jesus' obedience properly, attention will be focused particularly on Matthew's emphasis on submission to the will of God in the Gethsemane text. Thus, this chapter will try to reveal the nature of Jesus' obedience by considering the narrative rhetoric and the various interactive levels of the elements of narrative analysis such as the literary structure, the settings, the plot, and the characterisation of Jesus. Intratextual links between Matthew's Gethsemane and other parts of Matthew's Gospel will be the focus of chapter four and intertextual links with the Old Testament will be explored in chapter five. Meanwhile, we start by taking a look at the structure of the Gethsemane pericope.

3.1 LITERARY STRUCTURE

I implicitly adopt the threefold division of the structure of Matthew's Gospel (1:1-4:16; 4:17-16:20; 16:21-28:20) which was discussed in chapter two.¹ This structure identifies three superscripts of a new beginning as marking the three stages and the Gethsemane pericope is located in stage three and toward the end of the entire narrative. It is at the threshold of the Passion narrative, close to the end of Jesus' life on earth. The structure of any passage, as demarcated by the reader to derive the text's meaning, marks off where the story begins and where it ends. This is known as the narrative closure. The narrative closure of the Gethsemane episode is marked by Jesus' entrance into, and 'exit-readiness' from, Gethsemane (26:36-46). The Gethsemane encounter can begin at 26:36 as the first word, τότε

¹ See "Survey of Research...: '(ii) Topical Structures'" above; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 40-45; Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 7-25.

(‘then’), denotes a new beginning, a shift in time and place, although it implies both continuity and discontinuity with what went before. It reports the only occasion that Jesus *comes with his disciples* to a place.² Also, Gethsemane appears for the first and only time in the entire Gospel. An episode is usually marked by the constancy of some elements. In this instance they are: place (Gethsemane); characters (Jesus, the unseen Father, Peter, the two sons of Zebedee, the body of disciples), event (prayer being the main apparent action) and time (all the events take place in one night [cf. 26:20, 31]). These four markers (place, characters, event, and time) remain unchanged. Therefore, the narrative closure is marked off as 26:36-46 because it begins with Jesus’ entrance and, although he does not exit yet, he is ready to ‘go’ at 26:46. The next verse (v. 47) introduces new characters and changes the apparent event, thus marking a formal change of scene and episode.

The structure of a text is indispensable for its interpretation. Chronologically, the structure of Gethsemane is made up of three successively ascending stages each introduced by the adverb, τότε (26:36, 38, 45), the third stage forming the climax.³ It may be better to keep that in mind while we project the apparent event of prayer as decisive for the structure. The diagram below sets out the structure.⁴

² The preposition, ‘with’ (μετὰ), as used elsewhere by the narrator for Jesus and his disciples reveals its use here as a unique way of expressing Jesus’ relationship with his disciples (cf. 9:15; 17:17; 26:18, 20, 29, 51, 69b, 71; 28:20). Usually, Jesus comes to the disciples (14:25; 17:7) or the disciples come to him (8:25; 13:36) or they all go/come (26:30) but never ‘*he comes with them*’ (26:36a) to a place. At Jesus’ trial, the first and second servant-girls use it (26:69b and 26:71 respectively) to describe Peter’s relationship with Jesus. Jesus uses ‘with’ (μετὰ) about his disciples (9:15; 26:18) and to his disciples (17:17; 26:29, [38, 40]; 28:20). Thus, on the whole, after the allusive designation of Jesus by the narrator as “Emmanuel” (1:23), Jesus uses ‘with’ the most to express his relationship with his disciples. The disciples may not be *with* Jesus (26:29, 71; cf. 26:73-74) always but he is *with* them.

³ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 392-393 has its proposed structure based on a mix of redundant features such as ‘then,’ ‘pray,’ and ‘with;’ Benoit, *The Passion and Resurrection*, 13-14 points out ‘then’ as Matthew’s familiar expression and ‘with’ as literary habit “to give Jesus the leading role.”

⁴ I use the methodology of Ronald D. Witherup, “Cornelius Over and Over Again: ‘Functional Redundancy’ in the Acts of the Apostles,” *JSNT* 15, no. 49 (1993): 50-54. Tedford, “The Agony of Indeterminacy,” 123-124 and Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 393-396 also have similar structure for Gethsemane.

STAGES	SCENE	DESCRIPTION
1. Jesus' intention (prayer) for coming to Gethsemane	1. 26:36 2. 26:37-38	Entrance and intention announcement Jesus' grief while with the singled out three disciples
2. Jesus' intention (main event, prayer) being actively accomplished	3. 26:39 4. 26:40-41 5. 26:42 6. 26:43 7. 26:44	Jesus' first prayer Jesus' return to the three Jesus' second prayer Jesus' return to the three Jesus' third prayer
3. Effect on Jesus of the execution of his intention	8. 26:45-46	Jesus' third return and charge to meet the opponent

It can be observed from the diagram that the eight-scene narrative structure is made up of three stages. In stage one, dealing with the opening setting, an atmosphere of suspense is created. Jesus comes to a hitherto 'unknown' Gethsemane with 'all' his disciples to pray alone. The first two scenes in stage one set the scene for the two following stages. Will Jesus be struck here followed by the abandonment by his disciples?⁵ The reader is kept in suspense.

But one thing is clear: prayer is key and central to the entire passage and stage two is about Jesus' threefold prayer. In stage two scene three, Jesus alone by himself offers his heartfelt

⁵ Cf. 26:31.

prayer to God to do God's will, irrespective of what Jesus wants, and, in scene four, returns to the trio to find out that they are not watching *with him* as he had told them to. Many commentators point out that figuratively at this stage the disciples are already *not with him* although Jesus at every stage is *with them* (26:36, 38, 40, 46).⁶ Having renewed the injunction, he adds for them to pray so as not to fall. The fifth scene sees Jesus again praying now more submissively in acceptance of God's will.⁷ In the sixth scene, the reader comes upon Jesus who has come again to find his disciples sleeping. Letting them be since he knows that the weakness of flesh overwhelms them, in scene seven Jesus prays again as he prayed at the second time. In stage two, the fifth scene is the climax of the prayer episode since the third prayer is only a repetition of the second. In any case, stage three scene eight points to a heightened pace and a climax in the readiness to 'go,' demonstrating that the threefold prayer has had its effect and a new level is attained. The expression, ἰδοὺ ἤγγικεν ('behold...is at hand' used twice, 26:45, 46b), at the end of the Gethsemane episode draws a contrast between Jesus and the unprepared disciples.⁸ Significantly, the first τότε (26:36) introduces a chronological shift in movement from a location on the Mount of Olives to Gethsemane. The second τότε (26:38) indicates another step in the movement of the narrative⁹ and the third τότε (26:45) marks a definitive shift from the entire prayer session. Significantly also, the three formulations with the preposition, μετά ('with,' 26:36, 38, 40), suggest Jesus' concern in abiding with his disciples. The call to rise and go (26:46a) strives to match the ending with the beginning. What is shown is the unshared agony and the threefold prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane, who in the midst of his companions, nevertheless, remains a solitary figure since the disciples sleep. He goes to God in prayer but gets no obvious response and comes back to his disciples and gets no response either with a constantly developing narrative

⁶ See Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 481.

⁷ E.g., the 'if it is possible...' becomes 'if it is not possible...', 'let pass' becomes 'unless I drink it,' and 'thy will be done' is a more unambiguous positive submission than the 'hesitation' expressed in 26:39.

⁸ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 392-393 outlines a structure in which he notes some of these points.

⁹ And also indicating his concern over the disciples, see Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 176.

tension which in the end shifts the reader's attention apprehensively to what might follow next. Bearing this structure in mind throughout, let us now see how the setting plays its role also in the overall development of the episode.

3.2 THE GETHSEMANE SETTING

As earlier noted in 1.5 (Theoretical Framework and Methodology), settings as literary device in a narrative denote that aspect "that provides context for the actions of the characters."¹⁰ They are expressive of *where*, *when* and *how* the actions are carried out. In the discussion of the Gethsemane episode to which we now turn, the *where*, *when*, and *how* may relate to the spatial, temporal, and social settings¹¹ respectively.

3.2.1 Spatial Setting

Spatial settings refer to the physical environment in which the events in the narrative occur.¹² Within this episode, Gethsemane serves a very central role as the *locus* where all the actions relating to this text are carried out. As the narrative setting, it is fully integrated with the plot by contributing to the rhetoric of the whole narrative and thereby adding to the evaluation of the characters and events.¹³ The identification of the setting as 'a place being called Gethsemane' (26:36a)¹⁴ assumes prior knowledge of the setting by the narrator that the reader

¹⁰ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 69.

¹¹ Matthew L. Skinner, *Locating Paul: Places of Custody as Narrative Settings in Acts 21-28* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 33 names the three dimensions of setting as "physical places, points in time, and social factors." See also Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 70.

¹² Skinner, *Narrative Settings in Acts*, 33.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 32-33, 48-49, 53-55; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 98. A 'place being called Gethsemane' is a mini-description of the setting and gives a minimal hint of the narrator's presence but more importantly calls attention to a further/needed explanation.

¹⁴ Technically, 'a place called Gethsemane' is a description or an explanatory gloss by the narrator. Being its first mention in the narrative, the lack of a definite article with 'place' may portray it as an uncertain place, and so suggestive of a turning point. Skinner, *Narrative Settings in Acts*, 2003), 54-55 and note 92 asserts that the paucity or lack "of descriptive detail in biblical" narrative settings similar to "the poetry of Greek tragedy" is in part due to the familiarity of the settings of ancient traditional tales, especially tragedies, to the audiences. Thus, the mention of a setting was adequate to suggest rich associations among the original biblical audiences and anything more than the mention would over-elaborate the point. The implied reader of Matthew's Gospel would have been familiar with the similar phenomena employed for 'Gethsemane.' The participle, λεγόμενος, always signals an anticipated explanation for it is different from a simple naming of an existing place. See also Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 107.

does not share and so he can identify the setting to the reader from the start of the pericope.¹⁵ Such identification illuminates the perspective that this is an entirely new plot, new adventure, and a turning point in the story being told¹⁶ and thereby arouses new expectations. Nevertheless, the paucity of information regarding the spatial setting may imply that such knowledge of its physicality most certainly is not directly needful for the plot of the story and its effect on the implied reader. In that case, the exact (precincts or even historicity of the) physical location may not have been intended as a major factor¹⁷ in the rhetoric of the narrative.¹⁸ Thus, without clear specificity of physical parameters and locations, the Gethsemane spatial setting may be limited to invoking a ‘cultural boundary’ which has a symbolic social and theological significance that is important for the direction of the story.¹⁹ Gethsemane, meaning ‘oil press,’²⁰ in addition to furnishing the events with a structure,²¹ may have been used with symbolic intent to colour the mood and the atmosphere of the narrative and as well reveal Jesus’ mental setting.²² It might suggest that just as olives are crushed to produce oil, Jesus has come to the place and moment of his ‘crushing’ or agony, notwithstanding a good outcome. Secondly, that there is no inference of protection or security

¹⁵ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 98 treats of ‘identification of characters.’

¹⁶ See Skinner, *Narrative Settings in Acts*, 2003, 53.

¹⁷ See Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 19-20, 328 on the importance of naming.

¹⁸ Skinner, *Narrative Settings in Acts*, 33, 54.

¹⁹ See *Ibid.*, 30, 49 (and note 70), 52 for such associations. Also Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 479; Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262; Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 372 all hint that Matthew implies Gethsemane is probably an orchard or olive grove on or near the Mount of Olives. R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 181 suggests that the implied author provides through such symbolisms ‘implicit commentary and directional signals’ to guide the implied reader. O’Leary, *Matthew’s Judaization of Mark*, 99 agrees that in Matthew, geographical settings as other generic features are not the primary focus of the units they appear in but instead “serve to reveal something more about the chief subject,” e.g., Jesus. Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 161 holds that hence, symbolically, ‘Gethsemane’ can be applied for any agony. To me the narrator delimits the story-space as Gethsemane without a precision on its locus and parameters because the emphasis on the identification of Gethsemane is more on the theological implications than on the literal. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 29.

²⁰ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 395; Senior, *Matthew*, 302-303; Turner, *Matthew*, 631; Viviano, “Gospel According to Matthew,” 670; John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966), 625.

²¹ See Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 70.

²² See Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 141-142; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 69-70; Skinner, *Narrative Settings in Acts*, 42-43 for the association between a literary setting and character either in an allegorical/metonymic connotation or a causal relationship. This is not meant to disprove Gethsemane’s historicity.

is suggestive of danger and susceptibility to attacks (cf. 26:1-16).²³ And thirdly, this location is within Jerusalem pilgrimage-sanctioned bounds for Passover night and, as such, Jesus who does not return to Bethany tonight (cf. 26:6) may be portrayed as being faithful to the Jewish law even in this perilous circumstance. France states that at Passover time the official pilgrimage-sanctioned bounds extended to Bethphage (21:1) but Bethany remained outside the approved bounds for Passover night.²⁴ What further proof of reverence for, and faithfulness to, the Jewish law could be expected from him in this regard? Jesus in Gethsemane fulfils the Mosaic Law. His understanding and application of the law, which is the central issue that fuels the religious authorities with malice (27:18) and the desire to kill him (12:1-14), is the same central issue that places him in this location tonight. In any case, having resolutely come from rural Nazareth in Galilee to Jerusalem, a city in Judaea, Jesus is miles away from home²⁵ and has intentionally plunged himself into the hostile territory of the religious authorities, his arch-opponents, who have been planning to kill him. He has many options open to him to avoid death but he seems to be setting the plot for his own murder. He can flee the hostile vicinity but he chooses to remain here to watch and pray.

3.2.2 Temporal Setting

Temporal settings pertain to the internal time of the story that an action takes place.²⁶ The Gethsemane episode takes place in the night (cf. 26:31) over the duration of a few hours (cf. 26:40).²⁷ This gives it an eerie, foreboding, sense of lurking danger. The temporal reference to time, ‘this very night,’ as earlier stated by Jesus (26:31), seems to ring a bell not only of its

²³ See Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 70.

²⁴ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 771, 1003.

²⁵ This is a massive geographical shift. (Not that it has any real value or makes much difference to Jesus. He too was rejected in his hometown, 13:54-58. And hardly will any character in the story know that Jesus is from Bethlehem in Judea [2:1].)

²⁶ See Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 72-74, 78-82; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 79. The time internal to the story is differentiated from the *time telling* (order, frequency, duration and pace of the narrative) which pertains to narration time.

²⁷ Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 17 thinks that Jesus prayed for one hour before his arrest but the majority of scholars think that the first prayer alone lasts for one hour.

imminence but also of its suddenness or unexpectedness to the disciples when Jesus ‘locates’ the hour of the Passion (26:45-46). Above all, this is transpiring during the Passover Feast that every pious male Jew is expected to attend.²⁸ But in all, Jesus is not taken by surprise for he has been moving consistently and steadily toward this hour (16:21; 26:2). Hence, with regard to the time of his approaching death Jesus is not acting in complete ignorance.

3.2.3 Social setting

Apart from the natural spatial setting, Jesus further sets the scene by positioning the disciples in two different *locations*. The first group is constituted of the body of the disciples *sitting* (26:36) near the entrance of Gethsemane. The second group is made up of Peter and the two sons of Zebedee whom Jesus takes along further into the interior of Gethsemane to be closer to him in physical, psychological, and spiritual distance (26:37-38). The third is Jesus by himself after separating himself from the trio and entirely from the whole disciples in order to pray *alone* (26:39).²⁹ The grouping is for a ‘utilitarian effect,’³⁰ as well as for symbolism as will be highlighted under the characterisation of Jesus. For one, the three groups numerically suggest perfection. This setting prepares for the events to follow.

The deliberate gathering of all his disciples in the night, in a country place called Gethsemane (26:36), away from the crowd, must suggest for the reader a very important moment for their master and all of them. The seclusion of the place, the order of group locations, the event of prayerful watch in the night, and Jesus’ pervasive distress create in the reader a sense of

²⁸ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 771.

²⁹ Skinner, *Narrative Settings in Acts*, 33.

³⁰ See Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 329; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 72. The separation of the disciples into two groups is not without its value as some scholars suppose (e.g., Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 178; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 392). In my understanding the specified task given to the first group is to ‘sit’ (cf. 26:36) and the second group is to ‘watch’ with Jesus in the first instance (cf. 26:38, 40). Therefore, Jesus’ question in 26:40 must be directed to these three if only by extension to the whole. Such ‘solidity of specification’ of functions can also be called ‘division of labour.’ This is not strange in Matthew but is similar to the distribution of talents in 25:14-27

sobriety and gloom. Such an unconfined setting not too far away from the settled area, Jerusalem, at a time when Jesus is a wanted man may denote danger and vulnerability.³¹ The Jerusalem authorities even regard him as a second-class citizen who is dispensable although they cannot deny his social and religious pedigree (cf. 21:23-27; 26:3-5).³² Jesus knows that the atmosphere is rife with hatred against him and that he will be condemned by the Jewish highest court and the whole house of Israel which will press the Roman political authority to crucify him as hinted at in the Passion predictions. However, since Jesus chooses the location where he will be arrested and takes charge of events, he acts with a certain level of awareness in total freedom to fulfil God's will for himself and the plot may reveal more complexities.

3.3 GETHSEMANE PLOT ANALYSIS

The plot of the story is the unifying structure which links the various actions and organises them into a coherent and continuous account.³³ There are two types of plot: (i) the resolution plot which asks the question, 'what happens?' and (ii) the revelation plot which answers the question, 'what is revealed or what does the character, or the reader, come to know?' A typical resolution plot is that in which a problem is introduced and a resolution is arrived at through some form of a transforming action. Here, Jesus comes into Gethsemane with his disciples and it soon becomes clear that he is burdened. He leaves them to pray by himself that the cause of his distress may be removed. But he does not want things just to be done the way he desires. He rather wants God to do as God pleases. In the end he rises from prayers to do only as God desires.

3.3.1 Parts of the Plot

The Gethsemane plot could be structured thus:

³¹ See Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 70-71.

³² France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 796-798.

³³ Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 40.

- (i) Initial situation or Exposition (26:36-37a)—Jesus comes into Gethsemane with his disciples and tells them all to sit while he will pray alone separated from them.
- (ii) Complication (26:37-38)—There is narrative tension as Jesus takes Peter and the Zebedees with him. There is dramatic tension as he begins to grieve unto death, divulges this to them, and asks them for support in watching with him. Jesus' grief is indicative of the disharmony between his human will and the divine will.³⁴
- (iii) Transforming action (26:39-44)—Jesus leaves the trio to pray alone by himself. At the pragmatic level (action), Jesus praying alone resolves the narrative tension of taking the trio along. Since the main conflict here, as the speech prayers show, is between God's will and Jesus' will which results ultimately in his distress, in the transforming action itself (watching and praying) lies the turning point of the story revolving around Jesus' submission to God.³⁵ Three times he affirms submission of his will to God's will and this expels the dramatic tension or conflict within him. But it has to be acknowledged that the combined transforming action of watching and praying is not straight one-off action but a complex and difficult long process. In the process, Jesus goes back and forth (prayer and return to the disciples) again and again in a seeming vacillation between the 'complication' and transforming action.
- (iv) Dénouement—At the end, Jesus 'arises' (cf. 26:46a) from the prayer and the watching fully resolved to do God's will. The prayer has strengthened him and he has accepted his destiny. His watching has enabled him to know that the crucial hour is at hand. The reader supposes that although the distress may subsist 'unto

³⁴ Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 85-87.

³⁵ See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 44.

death,' the effect of the transforming action is that the agitation has ceased (cf. 26:37b-38) and any suggestion of weakness has been expelled.³⁶

- (v) Final situation (plot resolution, 26:45-46)—The narrative tension of the conflict of wills has been relaxed and the new state reached by Jesus is that he has arisen from prayer and is *ready* to 'go' to face his destiny as determined by God's will. As at 26:36 Jesus is in full control of events again.³⁷

The episode contains a thrice repeated plot of prayerfulness and watch contrasted with prayerlessness and sleep in each case to ensure unambiguous reception of the message.³⁸ The text, basically, contains the two plots of resolution and revelation interwoven together.

Not much has happened. The lonely Jesus has prayed as he said he would. This resolution plot is at the service of the revelation plot in which Jesus is revealed in his humanness and weakness. This Gethsemane micro-narrative is mainly a revelation plot of Jesus seeking and adhering to God's will rather than a simple resolution of praying in a difficult time when he is encompassed by a betrayer, enemies, and weak unsupportive disciples. Nevertheless, much has been revealed. Jesus grows in awareness that as the obedient Son of the Father, his horrific destined end remains unchanged and he accepts it. We come to know that doing God's will calls for single-mindedness in watching and praying not to be swept away and it involves love, concern, patience, and unyielding effort. We also come to realise in Jesus, that a painful condition accepted as God's will, helps one to embrace one's suffering with 'more poise.'³⁹ Observably, the plot is not fully resolved. 26:47 shows that it is an interrupted story.

³⁶ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 398; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1003.

³⁷ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 398.

³⁸ Consider also the role of repetition, e.g., in 3.4.3.6 below.

³⁹ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 648.

3.3.2 Some Resolved Elements of the Plot

The episode contains some elements of resolution. As Jesus came in with his disciples so he is ready to go out with them. The command to ‘rise’ (26:46a) matches that of ‘sit’ (26:36b), and that of ‘go’ (26:46a) corresponds partially to the initial situation of ‘comes’ (26:36a). Since the disciples’ sleep contrasting with Jesus’ watching and praying has meant a gulf, a conflict between the two parties, Jesus’ call for the whole group to go together as they came into Gethsemane serves as Jesus’ attempt to resolve this conflict. Relevantly, Jesus has prayed as he had announced at the beginning and in his prayer of conflict within himself has resolved that God’s will be done.

3.3.3 The Unresolved Elements of the Plot

However, the abrupt ending at 26:46 leaves the micro-plot with a lot of narrative suspension. There still remain certain questions to be answered. For instance, the distress not shown to be signally expunged may still be present. The selection or nomination of character-disciples is opaque as Judas, the betrayer’s (10:4; 26:21) absence will only become noticeable or conspicuous at 26:46-47 which gives the story a new twist. That they ‘come’ into Gethsemane (26:36) presupposes that they ‘go’ out but the ‘go’ in 26:46a only anticipates the action which is yet in view and the first-time reader may be forced to ask, ‘go where?’ Notwithstanding, Jesus’ acceptance of God’s will may suffice to direct the reader’s attention rightly. This suspense demonstrates that the theme or portrayal of obedience is not fully resolved but is in process which continues after this Gethsemane story. Jesus has *accepted* to remain in God’s will but will he *do* it? In the meantime, let us treat the Gethsemane characterisation of Jesus more critically.

3.4 THE CHARACTERISATION OF JESUS

In this Gethsemane episode I focus chiefly on the characterisation of Jesus. All the other characters have no autonomous role but exist in relation to Jesus the central character.

Therefore, their characterisation will only be employed to project the character of Jesus as it may apply to his obedience. The narrator, through the technique of *telling* and *showing*,⁴⁰ takes chief responsibility of the characterisation while, sometimes, Jesus, the disciples, and God may be characterised through their action or inaction, speech or silence. Additionally, the perceived portraits of God and the disciples may reveal their point of view concerning Jesus which may lead the reader to make certain conclusions on their characterisation of Jesus. In some places, the interplays of the points of view and/or the focalizations⁴¹ either of the characters or the narrator are techniques employed to reveal Jesus' portrait in this episode. Overall, Jesus is in the foreground as the principal protagonist (with God, the prime and hidden protagonist, to whose will he submits) and the disciples are agents.⁴²

For the characterisation I follow roughly the order of presentation of events in the narrative. Notably, the narrator puts the onus on Jesus as the first and only speaker throughout the episode.⁴³ All the other characters are silent. Also, Jesus talks to both God and the disciples in second person but while his imperatives to the disciples are in the second person (26:36, 38, 41), in praying to God he uses the third person imperative (26:39, 42) which stands for a more polite expression, a humble plea.

⁴⁰ The technique of *telling* is that by which the narrator directly and precisely states the quality or character-trait without description whereas in *showing* the narrator describes or directly presents events and conversations without affirming it thereby leaving the reader to draw conclusions on the implied author's view of the character. See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 69; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 108; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 52-53.

⁴¹ Focalization refers to the perspective (of a character or otherwise) the narrator chooses to show an event. In Gethsemane the narrator perceives all the events and shows some from the perspective of Jesus (Jesus-focalized). The disciples are not given the privilege of *focalizing*, even if the reader might have an interest in their view. See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 72-75; Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), 225-227 for further reading on interplay of perspectives, viewpoints, and fusion of horizons.

⁴² Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 60 define a protagonist as any character "playing an important role in the development of the plot" and the agent as "a simple character playing a minor (or single) role in the development of the plot." The betrayer and sinners mentioned by Jesus are as yet beyond the temporal and spatial setting.

⁴³ Jesus is the subject of every statement excepting 26:43b, see Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 172, 180. That Jesus is the only speaker may indicate that the author has adopted Jesus' phraseological point of view in the narration of this episode [see Boris Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form*, trans. V. Zavarin and S. Wittig (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 15.]

3.4.1 Jesus Arrives in Gethsemane

Τότε ἔρχεται μετ’ αὐτῶν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς χωρίον λεγόμενον Γεθσημανὶ καὶ λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς· καθίσατε αὐτοῦ ἕως [οὔ] ἀπελθῶν ἐκεῖ προσεύξωμαι (26:36).

Through *telling*, the reliable narrator starts to characterise Jesus as coming *with* (26:36, 38, 40) his disciples ‘to a place being called Gethsemane.’ Literally, the preposition, ‘with,’ gives the Gethsemane pericope a well-defined Christological focus in that it is Jesus who ‘comes’⁴⁴ while at the same time recalling Jesus as Emmanuel (God with his people, 1:23).

As well as hint at Jesus’ divine status via the ‘Emmanuel’ echo, by naming the place the narrator may intend to impress upon the reader Gethsemane’s symbolic meaning tied to Jesus’ *mood* through analogous name.⁴⁵ Gethsemane (‘oil press’) though untranslated in the text might hint at Jesus’ sorrowful soul or ‘crushed spirit.’ The divine Jesus is also the ‘affected’ human Jesus. And so, both the physical locus on the Mount of Olives⁴⁶ and especially the metonym of Gethsemane have implication on the reader’s evaluation of Jesus’ portrait and potential in this passage.⁴⁷

The episode begins in external focalization (view of events from outside),⁴⁸ the narrator saying less than Jesus actually knows or intends.⁴⁹ The narrator shows Jesus in charge of

⁴⁴ The text is filled with the use of the ‘historic present’ which refers to the narrator’s ‘now.’ The historic present tense has the effect of drawing the reader into the ‘drama’ portrayed in the present. [See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 527. This is the case with all the verbs in present tense addressed to the reader (he says, he finds, he comes).

⁴⁵ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 66-70. Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 651 says Jesus, as would be expected of every human, was “emotionally crushed and mentally ‘crazy’” awhile.

⁴⁶ Cf. 4.2.12 note 230 below for a brief discussion on mountain.

⁴⁷ See Skinner, *Narrative Settings in Acts*, 43.

⁴⁸ Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 72-73. Focalization draws attention to the perspective through which the narrative views the event. The sentences in 26:36-37a are externally focalized since the narrator tells what anyone including the intradiegetic characters can see. ‘Being called Gethsemane’ is the narrator’s description and also implies that as at the time of writing that was how the place was known generally.

affairs. Jesus dictates the spatial, temporal, and social settings within Gethsemane and withholds certain information from the disciples such as the reason for, or content of, his prayer. With a desire for privacy, he orders the body of disciples directly in the second person plural, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray’ (26:36b). The command in the aorist gives it a ‘punctiliar’ one-time sense, their active sitting being at the service of Jesus’ prayer. The imperative, ‘sit,’ is modified by the adverb of place, αὐτοῦ (‘here’), whereas the verbs that express Jesus’ intention, ‘go’ and ‘pray,’ are modified by the adverb of place, ἐκεῖ (‘there’). ‘Here’ where the disciples remain contrasts with ‘there’ where Jesus will go and pray. Again, ‘there’ emphasises the profound distance, the separation between them.⁵⁰ The two actions are co-ordinated by the temporal phrase, ἕως οὗ (‘while,’ literally ‘until that’), which marks the time boundary in the story world as the end of Jesus’ prayer and the disciples’ sitting. Although within boundaries, the timeframe remains indefinite since it will be clear that Jesus himself, leaving everything in the hands of God, is not absolutely certain of how long the event will take. Nonetheless, the sense of temporal order is important in the development and unravelling of the resolution of a plot.⁵¹ For example, the sense of durative time in 26:36 (‘while’) will be brought to a close in 26:45-46 (‘behold...rise, let us go’). This first scene relates that from the start, the physical distance, angle of vision, and the length of time to be spent by the characters are comparatively fixed.⁵² By highlighting the goal (prayer) until which the sitting must endure,⁵³ the reader is equally introduced to the *primary purpose* of this night’s outing.⁵⁴ Jesus has come to pray.⁵⁵ Thus, the word, ‘until’ as used in the whole

⁴⁹ See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 72, 163.

⁵⁰ Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 102-103. The direct exhortations of Jesus sounding various contrasts between him and the disciples (physical, emotional, spiritual distance) will be rendered occasionally. They arrive in Gethsemane as one group but the contrast between them is becoming sharper. The psychological and point-of-view distance between disciples and their master is beginning to be highlighted by the physical distance. See also Covington, “The Garden of Anguish,” 296-297.

⁵¹ See Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 48.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 105.

⁵³ For a similar explanation of ‘until’ on 5:18c see Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 65-66.

⁵⁴ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 150.

sentence, is not intended to call attention to the duration so much as to the prayer event itself.⁵⁶ And although what the content of the prayer will be is not yet disclosed at this juncture, the sad events from the Passover should give a simple hint to serve as an indirect invitation to the listeners to pray also.

3.4.2 Jesus Begins to Agonise

καὶ παραλαβὼν τὸν Πέτρον καὶ τοὺς δύο υἱοὺς Ζεβεδαίου ἤρξατο λυπεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν. τότε λέγει αὐτοῖς· περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχὴ μου ἕως θανάτου· μείνατε ὧδε καὶ γρηγορεῖτε μετ' ἐμοῦ (26:37-38).

However, the narrator tells that Jesus begins to be grieved and distressed after having taken Peter and the two sons of Zebedee further on with him away from the body of disciples left sitting near the entrance to Gethsemane (26:37). His order for them to ‘sit’ and his taking with him this trio creates a narrative tension, while his grieving introduces a dramatic tension because this is unusual for Jesus.⁵⁷

That Jesus ‘began’ to be troubled draws attention to the start of his grief and means that the reader is to expect a mounting intensity of this emotion in Jesus or at least that it will be in process and may persist. Although in New Testament Greek, ἄρχομαι is nearly always a pleonastic auxiliary (a nonemphatic addition to the main verb) and, therefore, is left untranslated, here ἤρξατο in the *indicative* mood is employed to mark the *actual* beginning of Jesus’ grief and distress⁵⁸ while the aorist tense communicates a past completed punctiliar

⁵⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 479; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1001.

⁵⁶ Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 64-66, 70 have a similar explanation of ‘until.’

⁵⁷ All previous griefs have been of other people (14:9; 17:23; 18:31; 19:22; 26:22).

⁵⁸ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 8; See also Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 41, 86. They agree that in no case is the usage of ἄρχομαι in Matthew’s Gospel altogether pleonastic but is mostly distinctively and emphatically ‘to begin,’ marking off a new portion of time. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 153 also avers and stresses that this ἤρξατο is not a ‘pleonastic ἄρχομαι’ and that the narrator intends to draw the reader’s attention to the beginning of the distress as danger looms. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, 81 and note 136 understands this stage as a ‘Pre-passion’ (*prepassio*, the beginning of a passion) often used to specify

beginning. The ‘began,’ however, is not entirely asyndetic, breaking with the past, because it follows from the preceding ‘choice’ of the three disciples and is connected to it by means of the conjunction, καὶ, and the participle, παραλαβὼν. That this trio must be special to him is suggested not only by his choice of them but also by the apparent correlation between their selection and the surge of emotions in him.

“To be grieved” (λυπεῖσθαι) and “to be distressed” (ἀδημονεῖν),⁵⁹ both in the infinitive, combined with ‘began’ gives the verbs an imperfect passive sense conveying the meaning of a continuous action, just begun in the past.⁶⁰ This grief and distress properly become the start of a new phase in Jesus’ life as well as a new stage in Jesus’ feelings in Gethsemane.⁶¹ His inner Passion really starts here.⁶² The narrator has obtained and given an inside view of Jesus⁶³ and this has the effect of leading the reader to a sympathetic identification with, and to experience powerfully the “sensations and emotions” felt by, Jesus.⁶⁴

The omniscient narrator does not simply stop at telling the reader the present emotional state of Jesus but proceeds to *show* it in the brief discourse section that follows. This is a form of repetition to highlight and heighten the importance of the point made. Jesus in a direct speech

Jesus’ agonies or suffering before the physical Passion (*passio*). It is a ‘temptation,’ ‘antepassio,’ προπάθεια, so-called as it only marks the beginnings of the ‘internal motions’ that are yet the ‘dispositions to passion.’ On page 300 and note 255 Jerome explains Jesus’ agitation (Matt 26:37), distinguishing between an actual pathos considered as evil and Jesus’ προπάθεια (‘beginning of agitation’) which is morally neutral as it is yet an involuntary act.

⁵⁹ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 153; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510 especially holds that often use of the verb, ‘grieved,’ expresses distress in situations of danger and threat but that the verb, ‘agitated’ (ἀδημονεῖν, ‘to be troubled’), with the undertone of being detached from others, thus resulting in anguish, is rare. Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 648-649 translates ‘distressed and agitated’ as ‘depressed and confused;’ Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 65 as ‘grieved and anxious.’

⁶⁰ Duff, *New Testament Greek*, 68 employs the verb “he began” as an imperfect “used for a process in the past that is viewed as just beginning.” See also Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 153; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 399; Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, 81 and note 136.

⁶¹ See Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 8; see also Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 86 on the use/influence of ἀρχομαι.

⁶² I surmise that the beginning of the distress here does not mean that it is only now that Jesus suddenly becomes aware of what is to happen tonight or even its seriousness (cf. 26:31). He has always been in the know. And while he is distressed about it all, his strong determination is to remain in God’s will in the face of this horrifying death.

⁶³ See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 160-161, 384. In the Gospels inside views (most especially of Jesus) are rare occurrences.

⁶⁴ Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 384.

divulges his feeling, characterising himself to his three closest disciples that his ‘soul is very sorrowful even to death’ (26:38). The character of Jesus as revealed through *telling* (sorrowful and agitated, 26:37) is concurrent with his character as *shown* in his direct speech.⁶⁵ This is a consecutive combination technique of *telling* and *showing*, the *telling* being at the service of the *showing* for the former prepares for the latter. The extradiegetic authority of the narrator-focalizer gives way to the intradiegetic authority of Jesus.⁶⁶ The narrator introduces Jesus’ speech using the conjunctive adverb, ‘then’ (τότε, 26:38a), to indicate another chronological shift in the narrative (cf. 26:36a).

Additionally, apart from the direct speech of Jesus given in present tense, the narrator also reports it in the historic present, (λεγει, ‘he says’).⁶⁷ This historic present makes the point all the more vivid, drawing the reader into the ‘now’ moment of the narrator and making the reader participate in the ‘now’ moment of the story itself. Furthermore, the conjunctive adverb, “then” (26:38a), does not only indicate another chronological shift in the narrative but also moves the narrator’s observation forward to imply another step in Jesus’ anguish.⁶⁸ In any case, having told us what to think of Jesus, the narrator shows Jesus briefly in

⁶⁵ See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 68; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 52; Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 164. Different techniques may interact to bring forth the most reliable information on characterization. For further reading see also Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition*, 6.

⁶⁶ The extradiegetic narrator is the primary narrator external to the story and who has authoritatively been doing the narration of the Gethsemane episode. The intradiegetic narrator or secondary narrator is Jesus, who is internal to the Gethsemane story (primary narrative). See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 25-28.

⁶⁷ John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 1095 submits that the Gethsemane ‘historic present’ may track the story of Jesus’ exchange with the disciples while the aorists may trail Jesus alone in prayer. While Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 10 may aver that the *telling* is the narrator’s economical method, Ronald D. Witherup, “Functional Redundancy in the Acts of the Apostles: A Case Study,” *JSNT* 48 (1992): 68-70 may offer the perspective that the direct speech in 26:38 is a repetition in variation to reinforce the message. Also noticeably, although all events may be narrated only after their occurrence, the narrator here controls the temporal relations (distance) between event and narration. In 26:36, 40-41, 45-46 he simulates a simultaneous reporting with the occurrence of the action which makes the implied reader imagine being an observer ‘in the present’ with him. At 26:37-39, 42-44 he does ulterior narration, reporting (with the use of past tense) after the event has happened. 26:45-46 may secondarily pass for a “pocket” of anterior narration” for its proleptic nature. On the whole, such alternation of forms of narration controls the level or degree of the reader’s temporal involvement in the story. See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 90-92.

⁶⁸ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 154; Senior, *Passion According to Matthew*, 104 will agree that the τότε (26:38) moves the narrator’s observation (26:37b) forward, binding it more strongly to Jesus’ self-characterisation (26:38a).

agreement with the narrator's claims.⁶⁹ The repetition of, and likeness between, the *telling* and *showing* of Jesus' inner view, does not only confirm but necessarily points to an important consideration of Jesus' feelings. This is an effective narrative style, a rhetorical technique, to strengthen what the narrator has just stated, and thus it impresses upon the reader the seriousness of Jesus' distress. It is made even stronger coming especially from the lips of Jesus himself who is the most reliable witness in Matthew's narrative. The result is that of a 'double vision.' We have the effect of seeing things 'filtered' through both the narrator's and Jesus' perspectives. By taking time and using double means (telling and showing) to describe the emotions of Jesus the narrator creates empathy for the Matthean hero, Jesus, who suddenly takes on a very weak human dimension.

Jesus tells his three friends: "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death" (26:38a). This qualification locates Jesus, colouring him from now as grieving with mounting intensification in Gethsemane. 'My soul is very sorrowful' (26:38), 'my' appearing as genitive of possession to soul, is actually to be understood as Jesus' direct definition of himself, 'I am very sorrowful.'⁷⁰ Despite that, the phrase, 'my soul,' remains very cryptic as though the soul were an extrinsic property possessed by the individual. Still, it is not to be taken as a component part of a person but the very being of a person. It is a metaphor for 'I.' It is equally effective in creating a distance and cushioning the shock of the reader at finding Jesus so weak.⁷¹ The reader is led gradually to absorb the shock of Jesus' unfolding humanness and, therefore, it calls for a deeper thought and knowledge of the person of Jesus. 'My' is most importantly an attributive adjective, intricately and inseparably qualifying its noun, soul. The narrator has

⁶⁹ Throughout this episode the author employs the technique of 'telling' in the service of 'showing,' e.g., 26:37b-38a, 39, 42 cf. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 16.

⁷⁰ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 59-65; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 165-166 for the importance of direct and indirect descriptions.

⁷¹ Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 159-160; Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 650-651. This is the first time Jesus is directly characterised as 'distressed' (cf. 14:9; 17:23; 18:31; 19:22; 26:22).

Jesus say ‘my soul is very sorrowful’⁷² and this is more effective and deeper than ordinarily saying ‘I am very sorrowful.’ It makes ‘soul’ stand as a third person referent and Jesus as omniscient over the story he tells and also makes the visualisation of the description *shown* more graphic, directing the mind to another (subordinate) narrative level. The preposition, ἕως, in ‘unto death’ makes the superlative, ‘very sorrowful,’ even more intense and is indicative of either the terminally durative extent of the sorrow or its extreme stage in intensity.⁷³ Jesus divulges this feeling to his three disciples which he does not tell the body of disciples hence making the three his confidants.⁷⁴

However, on the side of the narrative presentation, the reader becomes aware of what is going on inside Jesus before these three disciples do. Again, whereas these three only understand Jesus to be ‘very sorrowful unto death’ (26:38a) the reader, in addition, knows Jesus to be both deeply sorrowful and agitated (26:37). He/she has gained an inside view of Jesus, a knowledge he/she now exclusively shares with the narrator. Thus, there is an imbalance between the reader’s superior position at the narrative level and the position of the three disciples, and still more so between them and the body of disciples at the level of the story.⁷⁵

The narrator has made a gradation at the story level and also between the story level and the rhetorical level. Therefore, the reader becomes a beneficiary of knowledge (at the narrative level) withheld from the disciples who consequently, lacking some information, may not be at the same level of sympathy with the implied reader. And since up to this point and

⁷² This technique whereby Jesus is speaking to the three disciples about his ‘soul’ or himself from a third person point of view or an outsider looking in, makes Jesus an omniscient secondary narrator engaged in a (subordinate) narrative that is within the principal narrative of the Gethsemane episode. For narrative levels see Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 92-95. This technique is applied also for the ‘Son of Man’ (26:45).

⁷³ Covington, “The Garden of Anguish,” 291; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510; Mitch and Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 340; Meier, *Matthew*, 323; Yeomans, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 185; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 395. ‘Unto death’ understood in temporal order of duration (cf. ἕως, 26:36) may signal for the reader that this ‘sorrow’ will end in (subsist until) death. In terms of the gravity, it may mean extreme sorrow which is close to killing him.

⁷⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480 say “Jesus speaks his heart to his own.” See also Mitch and Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 340; cf. 17:9.

⁷⁵ See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 72. And in saying this, it has to be recognised that from now also the three disciples have superior position to the body of disciples left behind at the story level.

subsequently the reader has superior position to the disciples, it will be observed that his or her evaluative point of view can hardly coincide with that of the disciples at any point.

Jesus further tells the three to ‘remain here’ and watch with him (26:38b). This ‘remain here’ has the undertone of abiding which may suggest that Jesus is pleased with their ‘relative position’ as disciples close to him⁷⁶ in relation to the others while implying that he will also leave them behind. Although the adverbs of place appear somewhat different, ‘Remain here’ (μείνατε ὧδε, 26:38) matches “sit here” (καθίσατε αὐτοῦ, 26:36) as second person plural aorist imperative active of durative verbs put into progressive tenses thereby bearing the idea of continued actions.⁷⁷ The order to ‘watch’⁷⁸ in the second person plural is a process command⁷⁹ for the trio to watch continuously while “with me” implies that Jesus entrusts them to be his watchful companions.⁸⁰ As a process command, the emphasis is on the necessity of continuing the act in addition to the demand of watching *with him*. It is unique in the entire life of Jesus that he seems to need companionship and support from human beings.⁸¹ Nevertheless, by this demand of the Matthean Jesus the narrator does not intend to portray Jesus as needing their support for the cup to be taken away from him (26:38, 39) but to be united with him as watchful companions⁸² in anticipating the hour (cf. 26: 38, 40, 45).⁸³

⁷⁶ So also Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 661.

⁷⁷ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 156. Notice that μείνατε (aorist imperative active second person plural), a one-time action, matches καθίσατε in all its forms but the adverb, ὧδε (here, 26:38), is distinguishable from αὐτοῦ (here, 26:36), a rare adverb in the New Testament. Also, the narrator gives the authority to Jesus whenever he intends to make very important points (e.g., 26:36, 38, 39, 40-41, 42, 45-46) or show how Jesus acts in obedience.

⁷⁸ ‘Watch’ does not just connote physical but also suggests spiritual alertness otherwise ‘look’ (θεωρεῶ) will suffice.

⁷⁹ This process command is one that expects a continuous action whereas a default with the use of aorist demands a one-time action or nothing about number and frequency is implied. See Duff, *New Testament Greek*, 81.

⁸⁰ See Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 164-165 for how direct and indirect phraseology are used in discourse. Martha Walther, “Obedience in Matthew and the Benedictine Charism,” *Sisters Today* 59, no. 6 (February 1988): 334 affirms that ‘with me’ stresses Jesus’ relationship with his disciples; Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 60 adds that it strengthens the connection between Jesus’ disciples and later followers (reader). Note that it is within the direct speech which draws the reader in.

⁸¹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480; Meier, *Matthew*, 324. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396 highlights the extremity of distress that makes ‘Emmanuel’ who is always with his disciples (26:36; cf. 26:18, 20, 29) for once reverse the situation to ask them to be ‘with’ him and not forsake him (cf. 26:35).

⁸² See Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 164-165.

This expresses a heightened solidarity with the trio in light of the narrator's earlier *telling* that Jesus "comes with" the body of disciples (26:36).⁸⁴ They are to keep vigil with the sorrowing Jesus. After giving this order he leaves them behind also. The time for the prayer (26:39a) for which he had told the body of disciples that he was *going yonder* (26:36b) has come. The implication is that although the body of disciples only know that Jesus is in prayer, the trio and the reader know that he is watching as well and the reader looks forward to the conjunction and nature of this 'prayer-watch.'

3.4.3 The Threefold Prayer of Jesus and His Return to the Disciples

The main obvious event in tonight's outing in Gethsemane is Jesus' prayer and despite the begun and ever escalating grief, he holds firm to his purpose. The proximity of Jesus' threefold prayer location (cf. 26:39-44) may be meant to be a lesson *shown* to the disciples⁸⁵ and reader. The narrator will use the technique of *telling* to introduce each of the prayers and that of *showing* in giving the content of Jesus' prayer except for the third prayer which is entirely a summary. There is clearly a *double showing* or a *showing*⁸⁶ on two levels—that by Jesus to his disciples⁸⁷ (internal) and that by the narrator to the reader (external). This *double showing* is equally doubly effective, requiring the reader to be more involved in the story and to be 'forced' to make an independent evaluation thus producing, *inter alia*, an increasing sense of concern.⁸⁸ There will be more things to be shown than told.

Also, the narrator tells that after each of the three prayer sessions Jesus comes to check on his disciples (26:40-41, 43, 45-46). The movements to and from Jesus' prayer location and the disciples can be a means to highlight the almost equal importance for Jesus of both watching

⁸³ When the hour he is watching for is near Jesus will alert his disciples 'behold, the hour is approaching' (26:45). Thus, he has been watching for this hour.

⁸⁴ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 156.

⁸⁵ So also Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 648.

⁸⁶ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 204 says that Jesus' dealings with his disciples in Gethsemane have a parabolic character.

⁸⁷ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 648 agrees that Jesus here teaches his disciples.

⁸⁸ See Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus*, 10; Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 28.

and praying and ensuring that the disciples are also doing the same under the sinister circumstances of this night. We now begin with Jesus' first prayer and follow the sequence of the narrative presentation.

3.4.3.1 The First Prayer of Jesus

Καὶ προελθὼν μικρὸν ἔπεσεν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ προσευχόμενος καὶ λέγων· πάτερ μου, εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν, παρελθάτω ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο· πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλ' ὡς σύ (26:39).

After Jesus' command to the trio to watch with him (26:38), the narrator tells that Jesus moves a little from them and prays privately. That a prayer follows this beginning of his distress immediately also shows Jesus' way of resolving a complication and demonstrates the magnitude of love and obedience that makes him stick to his purpose.⁸⁹ He is undeterred. He goes straight to the Father, God. What Jesus told the trio is more intimate and slightly different on the surface from what he had told the larger group of the disciples and now what he tells God in prayer is his most private feeling and 'desperate' concern in gut-level communication. This is his real bare self, weak and partially hidden from the disciples but unhidden from the 'Father' whom he tells the truth about his wishes in openness to be corrected if his request is wrong.⁹⁰

That Jesus goes straight to pray whereas he only tells his three disciples to watch with him means that he does more (prays cf. 26:36b; watches cf. 26:38b, 26:41a) than they and that there is a correlation between watching and praying, as we shall see later. For his first prayer, the narrator describes somewhat graphically Jesus' movement and posture—"And having gone forward a little he fell upon his face while praying and saying" (26:39a). He fell on his

⁸⁹ Brendan Byrne, *Lifting the Burden: Reading Matthew's Gospel in the Church Today* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004), 206.

⁹⁰ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 655-656.

face⁹¹ ‘while praying’⁹² suggests that the falling and the praying are done simultaneously. However, despite ‘falling on his face’ being the main clause, the participial or subordinate clause, ‘while praying,’ does not fully depend on the primary clause but seems to have a life of its own for Jesus may have been praying even before and after he fell on his face. The falling is a one-time action but the praying is a continuous one. This posture further highlights Jesus’ serious state of distress and could signify a posture of anguish and desperation,⁹³ humility,⁹⁴ and supplication and worship.⁹⁵ The praying should direct the reader’s mind to Jesus’ inner relationship with God and this moves him/her to a feeling of empathy for the notable ideal in Jesus.

The narrator then moves to *showing* whereby he reports Jesus’ prayer in direct speech. By following Jesus through his prayer, away from all his disciples, the reader is further placed at a vantage position above all the disciples in the story. Jesus is in a gut-level communication with the Father who is his confidant *par excellence*.⁹⁶ From after the entrance into Gethsemane Jesus has steadily moved physically away first from the body of disciples, second from the trio and now to God in an ascending order of self-disclosure. It is in Jesus’ prayer that the reader gleans the reason Jesus comes to Gethsemane and why his “soul is very sorrowful unto death” (26:38). There is a constant, stationary ‘cup’ before him which (in his human weakness) he wishes could be moved from him (26:39). This demonstrates an

⁹¹ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 153 says it is “the prayer posture of extreme submission to the will of God, of radical self-offering to him.”

⁹² προσευχόμενος is present participle.

⁹³ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510; Augustine Stock, *The Method and Message of Matthew* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994), 404.

⁹⁴ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 118; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 668 stresses that falling on his face, literally prostrating, is the adoption of the lowliest position of all. Jerome (*Commentary on Matthew*, 301) writes that Jesus thus “shows the humility of his mind by the disposition of his flesh.”

⁹⁵ Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 79; Mark Allan Powell, *God With Us: A Pastoral Theology of Matthew’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 45; Meier, *Matthew*, 324; See also Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 117-118.

⁹⁶ See also Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 206.

apparent tension with the divine will.⁹⁷ The imminence of death itself causes fear to any human. For Jesus foresees (cf. 26:31, 45-46) what will befall him which causes him cringing fear. Nevertheless, though fearful of what the ‘cup’ signifies, suffering and death by crucifixion,⁹⁸ Jesus is determined as God’s obedient Son to do only what God wants. His first prayer in full: “My Father, if it is possible let this cup pass away from me, nevertheless, not as I wish but as you [wish]” (26:39).

At the primary level of narration, Jesus is a character within the story. Through this prayer in direct speech the extradiegetic narrator shifts the technical point of view (and our attention) from himself.⁹⁹ As Jesus starts his prayer, he becomes the vehicle of focalization and simultaneously the intradiegetic temporary narrator on the secondary level through whom we now view the events, his inner concerns.¹⁰⁰ Thus, this carries much force and conviction as the reader is encouraged not just to ‘see’ with the eyes of Jesus but also to be ‘in’ Jesus (inner view) sharing his point of view while hoping for good fortune for him.¹⁰¹ As we feel through his heart, this heightens our sense of sympathy and empathy for him, the isolated sufferer. God becomes the (internal) narratee, the cup becomes the *imperceptible* focalized object, and the plea for the cup’s removal becomes the inner story.¹⁰² In addition to the importance of making the reader listen ‘first-hand’ to Jesus, the speech prayer has the effect of ‘vividness,’ making the reader ‘enter’ into and participate in the rhythm of the story world. In any event,

⁹⁷ Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 6.

⁹⁸ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 154-155; Stock, *Message of Matthew*, 404; Meier, *Matthew*, 228.

⁹⁹ I use ‘he’ for the narrator purely for convenience.

¹⁰⁰ See above, note 66 and Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 25-28 for extradiegetic and intradiegetic authority. See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 164; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 72-86, 87-106; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 26-27 for focalization and narration levels and the idea that, therefore, only the Matthean Jesus and God may understand fully what the cup means for Jesus or for both.

¹⁰¹ See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 245-246.

¹⁰² Focalized object is the object focused on by the one through whom the text is perceived, the focalizer. See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 74 for focalizer and focalized. The focalized is *imperceptible* in the sense that it is internal, the cup being not a physical but metaphorical object, and as a psychological fact, “can be perceived only from within.” See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 93-96 for the explanation that since Jesus participates in the inner story of the cup which is manifest by his use of personal pronouns (‘me’ and ‘I,’ 26:39), he is both *intradiegetic* and *homodiegetic* narrator (meaning he is respectively *character-narrator* and is *present in the inner story he tells*). He is therefore not ‘omniscient’ over his own story.

we must accept that the narrative ‘voice’ throughout is that of the extradiegetic narrator of Matthew’s Gospel who gives the narrative authority to Jesus in places. Apart from advancing the action of the first narrative or narrator, this secondary narrative offers an explanation as to the central concerns of Jesus and what has led to this prayer event. The reference to the cup being taken away, which looks back to the distress, and the bottom-line that God’s will be done are very informative.¹⁰³ Jesus is steeped in sorrow but he is, nevertheless, unconditionally committed to carry out God’s will no matter what.

Jesus starts his prayer by calling God ‘my Father’ (Πάτερ μου, 26:39) using the vocative case as a direct address to God. By directly addressing God as ‘my Father’ the Matthean Jesus indirectly characterises himself, through the use of possessive genitive (‘my’), as uniquely God’s Son.¹⁰⁴ In Gethsemane his sonship and his commitment to it literally will be proved by his knowledge of, and humble obedience to accepting, his Father’s will (26:39).¹⁰⁵

To begin, the metaphor, ‘Father,’ is an anthropomorphism, that is, use of a human image to describe God and it points to the familial relationship Jesus has with God. Pertinently, the idea of the possessive genitive at the beginning of the prayer heightens the sense of every motif in this pericope. For instance, the special claim of a familial relationship between Father and Son increases the temptation or ‘tragic’ level of continuing to follow, trust, and obey, a silent seemingly nonchalant Father in the face of his beloved Son’s plight.

The first part of Jesus’ request is a ‘striving prayer,’ “if it is possible let this cup pass away from me” (26:39). This is the human desire of Jesus seeking to escape suffering and death

¹⁰³ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 93-95 for subordinate narrative levels and their functions as functional, explicative, and thematic.

¹⁰⁴ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 73. Menken, *Matthew’s Bible*, 206 explains that ‘my Father’ is possessive genitive “of the personal pronoun used with substantives denoting family members.”

¹⁰⁵ Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 92; Meier, *Matthew*, 228; Huizenga, “Obedience Unto Death,” 524-525.

(‘cup’) to which the outcome of his committed life is bringing him. “If it is possible” is a hypothetical condition in the affirmative that tones down the imperative for the cup’s removal. Jesus uses *παρελθάτω* (‘let pass’), a verb in the aorist imperative third person which communicates a normal, undefined or default plea as well as a mild, and not a forceful, request.¹⁰⁶ And the whole point of the phrase, ‘if¹⁰⁷ it is possible,’ is to make this modification of the taking away of the cup. It is not an overbearing command from Jesus to God. He makes his request in the third person imperative ‘let this cup pass away’ and not in the second person imperative he uses for his disciples (cf. 26:36, 38, 41, 46).

Another point to note from here is that Jesus’ knowledge regarding the possibility of the removal of the cup is limited in relation to the Father’s. This could explain why ‘my Father’ is followed by ‘if it is possible.’ He is not questioning or doubting God’s capability.¹⁰⁸ He is wishing things were different or, in his humanity, he is simply ignorant of God’s concealed intentions regarding this cup and seeks knowledge of God’s will.¹⁰⁹ In support of this last point, as an intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator,¹¹⁰ Jesus’ knowledge in his case is limited and not omniscient because he is personally involved in the ‘inner story’ of the cup’s removal he narrates.¹¹¹ The demonstrative adjective in ‘this cup’ together with the preposition ‘from me’ means the cup is not far from but close to him (‘this’ not ‘that’) ‘spatially’ and/or ‘temporally’ and also makes the ‘cup’ something starkly real. This striving prayer (that the

¹⁰⁶ Duff, *New Testament Greek*, 80, and chapter 18 says the imperative has a broad range of understanding covering more or less forceful/polite expressions in form of a request, an exhortation, command, plea, etc. In 26:39 Jesus’ use of the third person softens the imperative.

¹⁰⁷ Scholars such as Crowe (*The Obedient Son*, 160) view the conditional statements (such as this) as ‘first class conditionals which assumes the truth of the statements.’

¹⁰⁸ Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 64 calls it the problem of “apparent doubt and ignorance of Jesus.”

¹⁰⁹ Also Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 655, 660.

¹¹⁰ An intradiegetic narrator is a character-narrator in the primary narrative by the extradiegetic narrator we have been following. This character-narrator becomes ‘homodiegetic’ if he becomes part of the story he himself now narrates (and heterodiegetic if he is not). See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 27-28; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 95-97.

¹¹¹ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 101. Personal involvement limits one’s scope.

cup be taken away) may be attributed to ‘fear’ and the weakness of the flesh (26:41b).¹¹² By asking to be delivered from the cup, the narrative evinces the extremely straining crisis Jesus is experiencing.¹¹³ Jesus’ fear in Gethsemane exemplifies that he is not a superman but that like all humans he passes through suffering in the process of learning and maturing in obedience to God.¹¹⁴ He struggles with the desire to avoid death on the cross with its accompanying temptation.¹¹⁵ By visualising the cup through the eyes of the isolated Jesus, the reader is connected to Jesus’ experience and this induces the reader to feel the struggle within Jesus’ heart and to sympathise with him.¹¹⁶

The second part of the petition is a prayer of submission to the Father, “nevertheless,¹¹⁷ not as I wish but as you [wish]” (26:39). This puts him ultimately on the side of, and beneath, God. That phrase characterises Jesus as having a human wish different from God’s wish. There is a concealed temptation, a deep struggle and conflict between Jesus’ will and the Father’s will.¹¹⁸ And the narrator makes sure this is understood by the reader with the insertion of the *emphatic* pronoun, ἐγὼ, in addition to θέλω which already means ‘I wish.’ This is in order to *contrast* it (ἐγὼ) with σύ, standing for Jesus and God (Father) respectively.¹¹⁹ The conjunction, ‘but,’ indispensably helps to highlight the contrast which is already indicated by the negative, ‘not as,’ accompanying the ‘I.’ And so, in the brief grammatical transformation, the negative ‘not as I’ stands in sharp contrast to the positive ‘as you.’ The final verb (‘wish’)

¹¹² See Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 399.

¹¹³ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 170.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. Again, Jesus is unlike Socrates who sees death as an entrance to a better world than this and so, eager to go, consoles his friends rather.

¹¹⁵ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 170-171. Brown says that this prayer-point (text) with its parallels is highly regarded by the Fathers of the Church (such as Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* III, q.18, a.1.) as the theology classic text “for proving that Jesus had a human will as well as a divine will.”

¹¹⁶ See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 281.

¹¹⁷ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396 note 27 agrees that πλὴν here is adversative (‘nevertheless’) rather than conditional (‘under condition that’).

¹¹⁸ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 660 maintains that Jesus only faces inner conflict and not that his will is in outright opposition to God for he is always within the sphere of God’s will.

¹¹⁹ Use of ἐγὼ for such emphasis is common. For further explanation on such emphasis see Duff, *New Testament Greek*, 104.

after ‘you’ is bracketed out to avoid repeating it. This technique of not repeating the second ‘wish’ amidst other repetitions functions to focus attention more on the ‘Father’ whose wish is normative. The pronoun, σὺ, is stressed as the last *echoing* word. Thus, the prayer is ‘elliptic’¹²⁰ or truncated. Reiteratively, this may well be intended to direct a subsisting attention ultimately more to the Father. The salient point is that Matthew’s Jesus shows that their wishes should not be on an equal level as to be mutually exclusive. The Father stands out conspicuously and so his wish is the normative and Matthew’s Jesus submits to it. This submission prayer (that God’s will be done) can be attributable to the spirit’s willingness (26:41b).¹²¹ Jesus’ fear and distress result from his natural will as man which resists and recoils from the cup which is God’s painful will. In spite of the natural human fear though, we encounter a courageously committed Jesus who fuses his mind and will with God’s. And although he implies that the Father can as well initiate the fusion with the Son’s mind, implicit in the expression ‘as you [wish]’ and the whole request, Jesus refrains from letting God’s permissive will (to do just as Jesus desires) replace God’s perfect will (to do as God wishes unaffectedly).¹²² In all this, Jesus is not God’s robot in doing God’s will but he is one with a choice and freedom and can go against God’s will but, nevertheless, chooses to abide by God’s will. Jesus’ focused attention amidst distress teaches the reader “at least three important truths: Jesus’ true humanity, his free obedience, and his real courage.”¹²³ The sacrificial and active embracing of the manner of obedience shows him to be self-renounced and altruistic, obeying even before (and whether or not) a response is given.¹²⁴

And whatever be the preferred interpretation of ‘cup’ here, the choice of the prayer words shows Jesus is inclined more to ‘drink it’ (26:42) than he is fearful of it. The adverb, ὡς, adds

¹²⁰ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 172.

¹²¹ See Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 399.

¹²² God, the superior partner here, does not condescend to follow the desire of Jesus but Jesus has equally checked that aspect by refraining from exerting his will (26:39b).

¹²³ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 651.

¹²⁴ Thérèse of Lisieux, *The Story of a Soul*, trans. Ronald Knox (Glasgow: William Collins, Sons, 1958), 90.

another layer of interpretation, for it could be understood as an adverb of manner or degree, time or place.¹²⁵ If it is so, we can paraphrase Jesus' request thus: (i) I wish this cup to be taken from me but the Father may not wish it to be taken, so let it be as the Father wishes. (ii) Whether the cup is taken from me or not let it not be in the manner that I desire but in the manner the Father desires. (iii) Should the cup pass away or not, let it not be according to my timing or calculation but according to the Father's. Therefore, the 'as' adverb, being all encompassing, draws our attention not only to the *what* that is wished by Son and Father regarding the cup's removal but also to the *how*, *when*, and *where*.¹²⁶ In relation to the Father, the Son prefers¹²⁷ to remain limited in this knowledge and control of events. Consequently, the second part of this first prayer may not be interpreted too quickly and unequivocally as simply resignation though it is a resignation. Its complexity has to be taken into account. It is not as simple as it may appear at first.

The ramifications of the adverb, ὡς, are all important, doubtlessly, but let me single out 'when' for an example in this context. The ὡς may not readily connote temporality as does the preposition 'until' (ἕως) which forms the adverbial phrase of time in 26:36b. However, if we give it credence to temporality then it enlightens the reader about subsequent material in this episode especially on how Jesus' submission can be understood and interpreted. (i) If in this first prayer Jesus watches for one hour (cf. 26:40) for the removal of the cup but it is not removed, this may have correlation with his question, 'could you not watch with me one hour?' (ii) If his whole prayers tonight last for one hour it could still have a bearing on the understanding of that phrase, "one hour" (26:40). (iii) At the end of the episode he says the

¹²⁵ *Collins Shorter Dictionary and Thesaurus* (Haydock: HarperCollins, 1995), 43 has many synonyms for 'as' including 'in the way that,' 'to the degree that,' 'at the time that,' etc. and may denote comparison, identity, reason, etc.

¹²⁶ With Jesus' will conformed with the divine will, both Father and Son wish (i) for the same thing (ii) in the same way, Jesus wishing what the Father's will wishes Jesus' will to wish (see Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 85-87).

¹²⁷ Cf. Matt 24:36; See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 104 about intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrators whose personal involvement subjects them to limited knowledge.

hour has drawn near (26:45). The durative chronological reference ('for one hour') gives way to the locative chronological reference ('the hour') for the physical Passion itself. That statement in itself, 'the hour has drawn near,' will then imply that Jesus who did not know when this hour will 'arrive' (the *when*) has been 'watching' for it and now can tell of its approach. So we see that however *ὡς* is interpreted, Jesus' struggle is immensely superlative in that it is not a simple submission he does here but he emerges from the deep struggle to give his all by letting the Father do *completely* as he wishes with the Son. He is totally at God's disposal. Jesus does not even want the exclusive privilege of a 'unique Son' to know the hour but chooses or accepts to remain ignorant of that.

By and large, at the first prayer, the request to take away the cup, qualified with 'if it is possible,' is comparatively stronger than the 'reluctant' submission to the Father's will but that does not undermine the gravity of the obedience portrayed. On the contrary, it heightens it. In his ignorance, he too like all humans is involved in a journey of faith, being uncertain about the future, and so prays and waits obediently for what is God's will. This type of obedience is not only venturing into the unknown but into the unexpected as well. He is prepared to let down his defences and step into the unknown, by way of accepting whatever may come his way. It is obedience rooted in faith to take him on a journey beyond any horizon at all into the limitlessness of God.¹²⁸

3.4.3.2 Jesus' First Return

καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς καὶ εὕρισκει αὐτοὺς καθεύδοντας, καὶ λέγει τῷ Πέτρῳ· οὕτως οὐκ ἰσχύσατε μίαν ὥραν γρηγορῆσαι μετ' ἐμοῦ; γρηγορεῖτε καὶ προσεύχεσθε, ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν· τὸ μὲν πνεῦμα πρόθυμον ἢ δὲ σὰρξ ἀσθενής (26:40-41).

¹²⁸ Herbert McCabe, *God, Christ and Us* (London: Continuum, 2003), 4; Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 11.

From *showing* in the first speech prayer of Jesus (26:39) the narrator moves to *tell* of Jesus' return to his disciples only to find¹²⁹ them sleeping (26:40) rather than watching (cf. 26:38). Jesus is presented as being disappointed with them and so is the reader. Jesus says to Peter,¹³⁰ "Could you not watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation" (26:40-41a). However, his reproach is in the plural and, therefore, directed to the three disciples to whom he had bared his heart and entrusted with the task of watching with him.¹³¹ He has allotted different tasks to the two groups and he will hardly be reproving for not watching (26:40) those he only told to 'sit' (26:36b). This also reveals that the closer a character comes to Jesus, the ideal, the more they are to imbibe Jesus' character and so the task assigned may be indicative of *one's relative position to Jesus*. Nevertheless, only Jesus in his *singular position* exemplifies the *perfect obedience* to the Father.

¹²⁹ The verb, εὐρίσκει, does not just imply that he 'sees' them but also impresses upon the reader a sense of discovery and/or expectation in the case of someone searching (Matt 1:18; 2:8; 7:7, 8, 14; 8:10; 12:43, 44; 18:13; 24:46; 26:43, 60; 27:32). That they are found sleeping must of necessity dampen Jesus' spirit. But again the reader learns that it is as though if one must fulfil destiny all help that could lead to the contrary is cut off or any 'pretentious' or so-called help only comes to dissuade one from fulfilling it.

¹³⁰ That Jesus addresses Peter is the narrator's point of view/external focalization (see Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition*, 14 for the narrator's control of focalization). Unlike Mark 14:37 Jesus calls no name here.

¹³¹ So also Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, trans. David E. Green (London: SPCK, 1976), 493; Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 652; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 194-195. The Good News Bible Catholic Edition gives clear indication that his question to Peter, the representative disciple and spokesperson, is about the inability of the three to have kept watch. Robert H. Gundry, *Peter: False Disciple and Apostle according to Saint Matthew* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2015), 42 and Werner H. Kelber, *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14-16* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 48 think that Jesus' reprimand of Peter changes to the three and through them to the body of disciples, suggesting a broadening viewpoint that transcends the immediate plot. While Brown, however, thinks Jesus comes back to all the disciples, some scholars [like Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396 and Eduard Schweizer, "Matthew's Church," in *The Interpretation of Matthew*, 2nd ed., ed. Graham N. Stanton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 156] suppose that Jesus also addresses the whole disciples. In fact, Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20: A Commentary*, ed. Helmut Koester; trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 394 surmises that "*the disciples*" always refers to the whole disciples. Nevertheless, the Transfiguration episode (17:1-8) may provide a similar setting in that Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him where 'disciples' is used for these three (17:6, 10, 13). When they came down the mountain, the body of disciples is referred to again as 'disciples' (17:16, 19). In Gethsemane, 26:36 and 26:45 may imply all the disciples. But 'disciples' in 26:40 most likely refers to the trio. I think that 'disciples' appearing three times (26:36, 40, 45) without specification can be meant for both the body and a cross-section of disciples and this difficulty to distinguish may indicate the 'imperfection,' gaps, or opaqueness in a narrative.

The aorist, ‘Could you not,’ refers to the one-time past¹³² and is immediately reminiscent of his earlier order for them to watch with him and hints at their expressed inability, rather than outright disobedience, to share his experience.¹³³ While γρηγορήσαι (‘to watch’) in the aorist makes the watching an undefined aspect, the infinitive mood coupled with the durative reference to time gives it an imperfect active sense of a continuous action completed in the past with him (26:38b, 40). ‘One hour’ then may be indicative of the duration in the story time that his first prayer has spanned.¹³⁴ By the interrogation Jesus with a ‘brotherly correction’¹³⁵ lovingly points out their weakness to them. But perhaps, ‘one hour’ refers to the whole period he is to watch?¹³⁶ In any case, Jesus’ renewed injunction for them to watch shows that (i) watching is indispensable, (ii) despite their failure he does not give up on them but still has high hopes, trust, and plans for them.¹³⁷ He renews the injunction to watch which could also now imply guarding the spiritual height they have attained (refer to 3.4.2) and not let themselves slip into temptation of unfaithfulness. He adds for them to pray (προσεύχεσθε) now for themselves because they are in danger¹³⁸ and need the help, the ‘divine assistance,’ only God can provide.¹³⁹ It so happens sometimes that watching with/for another person becomes a burden ‘too heavy’ to bear but once one realises that the danger is one’s own, amazingly the strength to watch returns. So, if they have not been able to watch with Jesus, they might watch for their own sakes and pray not to enter into temptation. And this implies they are as yet outside temptation, unlike Jesus.

¹³² οὐκ ἰσχύσατε (‘were you not able’) being in the aorist may also suggest a *default*, indicative mood may imply an *actual occurrence* of their inability, and active voice may apply to the *conscious effort* expected from the disciples.

¹³³ So Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 176; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396.

¹³⁴ Turner, *Matthew*, 632 believes ‘one hour’ refers to how long Jesus’ first prayer has lasted.

¹³⁵ Matt 26:33-35; cf. 18:15ff.

¹³⁶ Cf. 3.4.1 above about uncertainty of duration; Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 17 thinks that Jesus prayed for one hour before his arrest.

¹³⁷ See Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 196.

¹³⁸ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 511; Stock, *Message of Matthew*, 404. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 196-199 states that the disciples’ combined watching and praying is (still) to accompany Jesus and its purpose here is dictated “by the threatening ‘trial.’”

¹³⁹ Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 669; Jones, *Matthew*, 299.

On the whole, the disciples do or say nothing at all but their inability to watch and pray in such a time of distress (26:37-38) moves the plot on. Their sleep is significant to the theme of watching and depicts Jesus' concern about them. Their passive reticence serves to portray the inability of human beings to deal with this level of distress without divine assistance.¹⁴⁰ From the narrative point of view their passive role equally serves as a foil to highlight the superlative commitment of Jesus in his human weakness to remain unconditionally obedient to God. In Jesus' position he is alone as the ideal that is not thus far, or will hardly really be, met fully by any one disciple.

The emphasis on the Christological purpose of Matthew's Gethsemane is that 'watch' means more than just 'not sleeping' physically in the context but being spiritually alert as well.¹⁴¹ By having all the words of reproach meant for all three disciples, the text shows that any leader entrusted with a task is to make effort to be obedient as Jesus is to God.¹⁴² By sleeping (26:40-41), Peter as representative disciple is a negative example or model and there is a clear contrast between Peter and Jesus¹⁴³ who watches and prays.

The two verbs, 'watch and pray,' are process commands and, therefore, point to continuing actions.¹⁴⁴ The importance and urgency of this injunction may be gleaned from the fact that it moves straight from the interrogation to the renewed order and only afterwards followed by the reason for the order—so as to evade temptation.¹⁴⁵ Now, it appears that Jesus realises that because the disciples could not watch with him they are at a greater risk on their own such

¹⁴⁰ See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 60. Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 659 posits that "human nature is always in profound need of divine help."

¹⁴¹ Stock, *Message of Matthew*, 404. See Matt 24:42-50; 25:13.

¹⁴² Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 194-195 notes that the reproach in the plural cushions the effect on the one person, Peter.

¹⁴³ The text encourages comparison between Jesus and Peter as the only named characters. But Peter who enjoys special mention like Jesus is nothing like Jesus. See Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 19 on the importance of naming.

¹⁴⁴ Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 669.

¹⁴⁵ For a brief explanation of 'substantiation' see Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 15; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 33-34.

that watching alone will not alleviate or obliterate the danger they *could* plunge themselves into at this hour. It is imperative that the unprepared disciples do not even enter into temptation at this time.¹⁴⁶ So he invites them to pray too.

This shows that there is a correlation between praying and watching (26:38b; 26:39 cf. 26:36b),¹⁴⁷ and between praying and watching, on the one hand, and entering into temptation, on the other hand (26:41). Since it is the weakness of flesh that is responsible for the disciples' failure, Jesus has not been overcome by temptation because he is *watching* and *praying* and has not let the weakness of his flesh gain victory over his willing spirit.¹⁴⁸ That could be a principle of the kingdom. If this is correct then it proves the notion true that sometimes what a person says about another character also says something about themselves either in direct or inverse relationship and is equally revealing about the obedience of the person of Jesus.¹⁴⁹

The clause added to 'watch and pray,' *ἵνα μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν*, translates into 'that you may not enter into temptation.'¹⁵⁰ It could either be a purpose clause or give the content of the prayer. The conjunction, *ἵνα*, plus subjunctive ordinarily indicate purpose.¹⁵¹ If *ἵνα* signals purpose then avoidance of temptation becomes the goal of watching and praying. However, if *ἵνα* signals content, then not entering into temptation becomes the content of the prayer.¹⁵² Succinctly, if *ἵνα* depends solely upon 'pray' it introduces the content of prayer

¹⁴⁶ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 174, 197.

¹⁴⁷ The renewed injunction to watch and pray as a pair is in tune with what was prevalent in the New Testament era.

¹⁴⁸ Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 670; also Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 648.

¹⁴⁹ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 52; Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 164; Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition*, 6-100.

¹⁵⁰ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 657-658 says the double 'εἰς,' (*εἰσέλθητε εἰς*) as 'verbal prefix' and 'pure preposition' gives a double emphasis translatable as 'go headlong into.'

¹⁵¹ Duff, *New Testament Greek*, 189, 193.

¹⁵² Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 669. Duff, *New Testament Greek*, 195 states that in prohibitions aorist subjunctive is used in place of aorist imperative. As aorist prohibition, it (*μη + aorist subjunctive*) is a *default* and does not give room for a process prohibition. Thus, the 'so-called' purpose clause becomes a continuation of the command to watch and pray, giving a fuller meaning to Jesus' order which prohibits entering into trial even once, let alone entering into it repeatedly. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 197 observes that some scholars may

whereas if it depends upon both verbs then it possibly introduces the aim of watching and praying.¹⁵³ If watching and praying are aimed at avoiding temptation, then the purpose itself can at the same time be the content or theme¹⁵⁴ of the prayer. Watching and praying is at this very moment God's will because this is the needful and Jesus does both. Thus, this renewed injunction to watch and pray and Jesus' action of watching and praying stand as a corrective for the disciples to be obedient by following their master.¹⁵⁵ They had failed to 'accompany' him but he does not relent in 'accompanying' them on the path of righteousness. He is always with them (26:36, 38b, 40), prodding them to be obediently watchful and prayerful.¹⁵⁶ This is a stand of a selfless and other-centred personality, one that insists gently on doing God's will (26:39b, 42).

Apart from revealing his character, Jesus' admonitions to his disciples form a set of values the narrator presents within the narrative as component of the implied readers' edification¹⁵⁷ in matters of an enduring faithful obedience. The kerygmatic appeal of the watching motif of this command (26:41a) to avoid the dangerous trial, is distinguishable from the 'watch' of verse 38 which involves a request for company.¹⁵⁸ The reader learning from the Matthean Jesus is on equal position with the disciples, and with them is provoked as well as invited to respond in faith by watching and praying unceasingly. If through the reading experience these

argue "for an imperative force for ἵνα" but he argues that for ἵνα to signify 'content' besides signifying 'purpose,' it has to be understood epexegetically, i.e., as a word added to convey more fully the meaning intended in contrast to it being partitive.

¹⁵³ Morris (*Gospel According to Matthew*, 669) distinguishes between 'that' as in 24:20 and 'so that' as in 26:5 whereas Davies and Allison (*Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 481) maintain 'so that' but agree it is difficult to place what 'so that' depends on.

¹⁵⁴ See Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 159.

¹⁵⁵ Jones, *Matthew*, 299; Mitch and Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 342 understand 'temptation' to be the test which Jesus is already undergoing. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1005-1006 refers to the 'test' of their loyalty which will bring the 'temptation' to run away (26:56; cf. 26:31).

¹⁵⁶ Jesus' active role in dealing with both his Father and disciples may serve to portray him as servant whose role requires more movement around those he attends (20:28) like the 'Son of Man.' For a servant-active role, see Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition*, 4. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 143 says that in Matthew "the task of the servant describes the work of Jesus as obedient Son of God."

¹⁵⁷ See Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star*, 110-111; Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 636. Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 656-657 posits that it is not one's best intentions (cf. 26:33, 35), willpower, or even devotion that strengthens one in grave trial but prayer (26:41; cf. 17:20).

¹⁵⁸ See Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 194; Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 652.

values are embraced, they will help to shape or improve the reader's values. The exhortation of 26:41, for instance, has the effect of jolting the reader to consciousness to be ready always for it goes without saying that 'prevention is better than cure.' But ideally, that γρηγορεῖτε itself is active and placed first in the sentence order means that the watching is to be a deliberate commitment or activity of the disciples trained to be obedient to God as against being achieved as an effect of praying or the effort to avoid temptation.¹⁵⁹

It is after the renewed injunction that Jesus concludes his exhortation with the proverb that hints at the seeming 'anthropological dualism': 'Indeed, for the spirit is willing but the flesh weak' (26:41b). Already, the Greek sentence shows itself as a compound sentence with the 'timid' conjunction (the *postpositives*, μὲν...δὲ) whose use stresses a contrast between two things—μὲν (on the one hand) and δὲ (on the other hand). It translates as "(on the one hand) the spirit is willing, but (on the other hand) the flesh is weak." With the conjunction, 'indeed,' in the English translation, the maxim will imply a well-known common saying familiar to the implied reader with a positive history of reception that confirms the disciples' present disposition.¹⁶⁰ This is because the representational status is that either Jesus knows that the disciples are very familiar with this saying, or that they well know the referents (spirit and flesh) as qualified accordingly. It may also be that they should understand the referents as applicable to themselves. At any rate, spirit and flesh as contrasted here means that they are the central and decisive matters for the disciples. This is true for anyone seeking to do God's will. Thus, this is a commentary by the intradiegetic character, Jesus, an observation that is both an *interpretation* and a *generalization* of the disciples' disposition.¹⁶¹ The statement's

¹⁵⁹ See Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 68-69 about the 'active' or sense of 'doing'.

¹⁶⁰ Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 670. Schneiders, "Gospels and the Reader," 106 opines that the intention of a sentence to reach reality or the truth may be more complex to establish. The generalisation of the statement is further enhanced by the shift from second person to third person now (see Park, "Obedience in Matthew," 122 for the function[s] of such shift).

¹⁶¹ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 99-100. Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition*, 16 speaks of "ideological position or worldview."

truth goes beyond the Gethsemane temporal setting which places it in *zero focalization*.¹⁶² The weakness of the flesh common to all humans calls for the need for constant watch and prayer. A willing spirit is not enough for spiritual alertness and acts of obedience but must be supplemented by watching and prayer¹⁶³ so that the ‘good will’ is not stunted as a ‘contemplated act’¹⁶⁴ due to the weakness of the flesh.¹⁶⁵

Appropriately, the two adjectives—willing and weak—in this Synoptic context highlight and modify the basis of the contrast not in terms of strength *per se* but of willingness and submission to God’s will. Both are predicative adjectives qualifying spirit and flesh respectively. As predicative adjectives they are not permanent, unchangeable, attributes of the nouns they qualify, and that may inform the sense in the Matthean Jesus’ admonition (26:41a) for a change in the disciples’ attitude.¹⁶⁶

However, this real reader would have preferred a reordering of the statement in 26:41. Perhaps, if the admonition to watch and pray came last following the spirit-flesh maxim the disciples would be left with the resounding challenge and unforgettable warning to watch and pray rather than a seeming consoling and relaxing message.¹⁶⁷ This reordering would, therefore, mean a tall standing order for them which they might not easily break.

¹⁶² Zero focalization is achieved where the narrator gives information which goes beyond the limits of the temporal and spatial settings of the scene (Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 73-74.).

¹⁶³ Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 670.

¹⁶⁴ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 62. ‘Contemplated act’ is an unrealised intention of the character.

¹⁶⁵ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 659 translates ‘flesh’ as ‘human nature.’

¹⁶⁶ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 199 avers that “the human spirit through which people can be moved to do what is harmonious with God’s plan” can sometimes be taken over by the spirit of evil which may attack, test, or tempt and overcome the individual through the flesh that is weak and which “represents the vulnerability of the human being.” The flesh on its own is not evil but because it is weak, it is often the channel of attack (by the devil or “spirit of Wickedness”). Conversely, the spirit (of Truth) is always willing (and the spirit of Wickedness always evil) and their battleground is the flesh which is always weak. Therefore, there is need for constant watching and praying especially in the battle between good and evil. Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 658 maintains that if ‘spirit’ is lower case it might mean the ‘human spirit’ which desires what is good but if ‘spirit’ is capitalised then it might mean “God’s Holy Spirit,” in the disciples, eager to give them victory over temptation.

¹⁶⁷ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 98 notes that although some scholars may find the real motive for the exhortation to watch and pray as based on the weakness of the flesh motif and others on the popular *κατρός* motif, Brown himself thinks that the motive to watch and pray is based on the nearness of the temptation made more dangerous because the flesh is weak.

Nevertheless, that the question about their inability to watch is followed straightaway by the renewed injunction to watch and pray even before the gentle sense of the maxim on the weakness of the flesh highlights it as a state-of-emergency command.¹⁶⁸ Again, this text encourages seeking divine help always through prayer since weak or sick human nature can never overpower satanic strategies or temptation.¹⁶⁹

Through Jesus' speech, the implied author, apart from highlighting the disciples' potential, reveals the character of Jesus to the implied reader.¹⁷⁰ For Jesus, there is no time to waste in doing the right thing. The ordering of the sequence in Jesus' exhortation is, therefore, a most valuable guide to Jesus' character trait. The spirit-flesh maxim, additionally, is a gesture of understanding and kindness from Jesus to his disciples,¹⁷¹ a sympathetic explanation for why the disciples are so overwhelmed. Like the addendum to the exhortation to watch and pray—to evade temptation—the proverb tones down any conceivable harshness, thus, portraying the implied author as being “realistic regarding the failures of those with good motives (26:41).”¹⁷² The implied reader's evaluation of how one might respond to unhealthy situations where one is disappointed by other people is here critiqued and challenged by the order of Jesus' statements in Matthew's story. The obedient person continues to remain loving even when other people make it difficult for him or her to embrace God's will. The implied author values unaffected kindness rather than a payback from the side of Jesus, as becomes more evident in his second return.

3.4.3.3 *The Second Prayer of Jesus*

Πάλιν ἐκ δευτέρου ἀπελθὼν προσηύξατο λέγων· πάτερ μου, εἰ οὐ δύναται τοῦτο παρελθεῖν ἐὰν μὴ αὐτὸ πῖω, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου (26:42).

¹⁶⁸ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 197.

¹⁶⁹ See Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 658-659.

¹⁷⁰ Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 11; see also Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 68; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 52.

¹⁷¹ See Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 405; Meier, *Matthew*, 324-325; Beare, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 515.

¹⁷² Powell, *God With Us*, 93.

For Jesus' second prayer the narrator tells that Jesus goes back straight to prayer after the renewed injunction and admonition to the disciples to watch and pray (26:41). The brief summary giving way to discourse (showing) reveals that the text concentrates more on Jesus' faithful prayer and its content than on his leaving his disciples.¹⁷³ That nothing is said of the posture or the narrow context of prayer is effective to direct the reader's attention straight back to Jesus' continuous inner concerns. Now, the cup is not taking centre-stage but Jesus' submission is. The content of his second prayer, though basically remaining the same as the first prayer, is slightly modified and is indicating a progression of the increasing awareness that the cup might not pass away and also the increasing submission of Jesus to accepting his death¹⁷⁴ as the Father's will. Through prayer Jesus discovers the better way; relinquishing his earlier way he accepts the way of God.¹⁷⁵ The prayer in full: "My Father, if it is not possible for this to pass unless I drink it, thy will be done" (26:42).¹⁷⁶

Jesus loses no faith in his familial relationship with God as he still addresses God as 'my Father,' a verbatim equivalence with the first prayer address (26:42 cf. 26:39). He continues to express his sonship amidst distress by 'clinging' unto his Father's wish.¹⁷⁷ His address equally portrays that his obedience is a deep-rooted commitment or obedience of Son to Father¹⁷⁸ whatever the situation and he is not going back on that. "If it is not possible for this

¹⁷³ Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 82. Also the placement of *πάλιν* ('again') at the beginning of 26:42 controls more the main clause ('he prayed') than the subordinate clause ('having gone away') since the participial clause is at the service of the main clause.

¹⁷⁴ Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 82.

¹⁷⁵ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 563.

¹⁷⁶ Schweizer, *Matthew*, 493 observes that the second prayer "begins at once with submission to God's will" and on page 494 rightly points out that "In the Greek, 'this' can refer to the cup, but the expression is probably kept general so that it can stand for everything God imposes on men."

¹⁷⁷ See Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 102.

¹⁷⁸ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 73. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 309, will understand this address as carrying great weight and standing "over the entire prayer." See Richard N. Longenecker, "The Foundational of New Testament Christology: The Obedience/Faithfulness/Sonship of Christ," in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, eds. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 474-475. He says various titles and expressions ascribed to Jesus are founded on the conviction of his 'complete' obedience and faithfulness expressed throughout his life as God's Son.

to pass away except I drink it...” is still a hypothetical statement reformulated in the negative showing that at this stage Jesus is beginning to suspect that the chances that the cup will be taken away from him are slim.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, he is not categorical that the cup is not passing away. His observation and perspective are changing, giving the reader the impression that the ‘cup’ or situation which he beheld in 26:39 is still as it was in 26:42. However, a notable development of the prayer is expressed by employing the negative: εἰ οὐ δύναται, and this advancement is significant to the portrait of Jesus as developing. There can be no doubt that there is still a clear conflict of wishes here but Jesus is shown to make swift progress in his inner struggle and disposition.¹⁸⁰ He swings straight from the affirmative hypothetical position to the negative hypothetical position without any bargain for middle ground and whereas in 26:39 Jesus is the object of God’s act of removing the cup, in 26:42 he is the subject of drinking it.

This second prayer is almost a verbatim repetition of the first prayer but is accompanied by a grammatical transformation. The addition of the ‘not’ (26:42) to the ‘possible’ in 26:39 counterbalances the conditional clause of the first prayer. Again, ‘this cup’ (26:39) is truncated to ‘this’ and substituted with ‘it’ (26:42) thus reducing the emphasis on the cup. The idea of drinking the cup implicit in 26:39 is added in 26:42 with the expansion “unless I drink it.” All these modifications add clarity that the direction of the narrative is not to concentrate on the meaning and function of the cup but on Jesus’ relation to the Father as shown by this second prayer ending with “thy will be done.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ See Meier, *Matthew*, 325; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 205. Brown notes that being the equivalent of “unless I should drink it” emphasises the greater level of subordination understood in Jesus’ main clause about doing ‘God’s will.’

¹⁸⁰ Meier, *Matthew*, 325. Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 207 discerns in 26:39, 42 “a progress in his acceptance of the ‘cup’ (20:22).”

¹⁸¹ See Witherup, “Functional Redundancy,” 68-70; Witherup, “Cornelius Over and Over,” 47; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 365-440 on the use of repetition with variation or ‘functional’ or ‘informational redundancy’ in biblical narratives.

The conditional phrase as in 26:39 immediately gives way to the main submission prayer. Therefore, although the cup is crucial to the prayer of Jesus, the Matthean Jesus' prayer request settles its focus on the divine will being done and not the cup being taken away.¹⁸² Realizing the necessity of his death, he expresses whole hearted openness and increased acceptance of what pleases the Father.¹⁸³ He is more positively submissive and more resolved in accepting God's will for him as the negative, somewhat hesitant, submission of the first prayer 'not as I wish but as you wish' (26:39) is qualitatively modified by the positive 'let your will be done' (26:42). In addition, 'thy will be done' (26:42) is more reassuring than 'nevertheless, not as I wish but as you wish' (26:39). 'Let thy will be done' is the heart of this second prayer.¹⁸⁴ The fundamental concern for both first and second prayers is that God's will be fulfilled, thus emphasising obedience. The prayer progression effectively induces in the reader a heightened sense of anticipation and stronger feeling of empathy by the ideal of Jesus' example.

Again, the point of Jesus' gradated submission can be buttressed by comparing the two focal words (θέλω or θέλεις, 26:39 and θέλημα, 26:42). 'Wish' as an action verb (cf. θέλω 'I wish,' θέλεις, 'you wish,') used in 26:39, suggests that the willingness of both Father and Son is dynamic and so can be altered or modified by either of them (but Jesus declines his freedom to alter). This inclusive modification from both sides is further supported by the double use of the adverb, ὡς, one for Jesus and the other for the Father. If, for instance, the Father changes to respond to the will of the Son, this is to be understood as the permissive will of God.¹⁸⁵ But the θέλημα of God in Matthew 26:42 is a noun and, therefore, should be understood as static,

¹⁸² Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death," 521.

¹⁸³ Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 112; Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 82.

¹⁸⁴ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 205; Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death," 521.

¹⁸⁵ In Jesus' era it was commonplace among faithful Jews that sometimes God changed his mind in response to prayer.

unchangeable will of God. This is known as the perfect will of God. In Gethsemane, Jesus started by negotiating for the permissive will of God (v.39) but, as is clear, ended by subsuming the permissive will under the perfect will of God (26:39, 42).¹⁸⁶ The movement from the act of ‘wishing’ (verb in 26:39) to the full positive acceptance of the Father’s will (noun in 26:42) is part of the complete portrayal of the textual Jesus.¹⁸⁷ His obedience is revealed. The negative correlation between the first and second prayer emphasises that Jesus now reaches full submission to the Father’s will whatever its disastrous consequence for him and his disciples.¹⁸⁸ Jesus’ prayer now reaches perfection.¹⁸⁹

By the use of the conjunction, *πλὴν* (nevertheless), in 26:39 the text contrasts Jesus’ wish with God’s wish. In 26:42 unlike 26:39, there is no mention now of the wish of Jesus which indicates that he has relegated his will totally to that of his Father. If *θέλημά σου* (‘your will’) stresses exclusively the possessive genitive regarding the will of the Father, then the third person imperative, *γενηθήτω* (‘[let] be done’), makes normative God’s will. Its aorist tense gives it a punctiliar sense as opposed to a process aspect of God’s will being done. There is a note of ‘particularised’ and composed finality. The phrase being in the passive voice expresses a divine action¹⁹⁰ as well as the human receptivity of that action in Jesus the way that a simple ‘as you wish’ (26:39) cannot express.

3.4.3.4 *Jesus’ Second Return*

καὶ ἐλθὼν πάλιν εὔρεν αὐτοὺς καθεύδοντας, ἦσαν γὰρ αὐτῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ βεβαρημένοι (26:43).

¹⁸⁶ Also Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 660 although he notes in the second half of the first prayer Jesus’ request for God’s perfect will also.

¹⁸⁷ See Witherup, “Functional Redundancy,” 74 for a similar point.

¹⁸⁸ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 179.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁹⁰ Meier, “Matt 26:31-56,” 188; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 482. The divine passive is often suggested when the passive voice is used without the acting ‘object.’

After reporting Jesus' second prayer in direct speech (showing), the narrator summarily tells that Jesus came again and found the disciples sleeping (26:43a) as at his first return. This surprises the reader who expects them to have been provoked by Jesus' challenge, exhortation, and kindness in 26:40-41 to keep awake and pray, if not with Jesus, at least for themselves. This appears like flaunting their disobedience. There is even a heightened surprise 'stage-managed' by the narrator since unlike 26:40, the reader who does not 'come with Jesus' from the location of prayer to the disciples suddenly finds him where the disciples are. With the use of the aorist participle, 'having come,' seemingly the reader realises that Jesus is already at the location of the sleeping disciples.¹⁹¹ Thus, in that gap the narrator is intellectually ahead of the reader in knowledge and both are ahead of the oblivious disciples.¹⁹² The disciples' sleep naturally heightens the reader's feeling of empathy toward the lonely Jesus and of antipathy toward the 'careless' disciples. This second time, Jesus does not waken them. They do not know he has come and found them sleeping again.¹⁹³ The only people who know it now are Jesus, the narrator, and the reader. However, unlike at 26:40-41, Jesus is completely opaque, perceived only from without as the narrator does not disclose Jesus' inner feelings or intentions and Jesus does not even speak.¹⁹⁴

Clearly, through the narrative voice and its whisperings¹⁹⁵ the implied author guides the implied reader to understand the whole text and to pay closer attention to its discourse sections.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, because of the thorough economy of biblical narrative with words,

¹⁹¹ The aorist conveys the 'sequence' meaning that the *coming* occurs before the *finding*. This is the same summary rhetoric employed in 26:37a, 39a, 42a, 44 to move the narrative forward quickly to a more relevant concern. Duff, *New Testament Greek*, 160 (note 3) observes that sometimes the aorist participle may be used as 'undefined participle' more to avoid suggesting 'process' than to imply 'sequence.'

¹⁹² See Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 135 for such distances between characters, narrator and reader.

¹⁹³ See also Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 482; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 196. In this dramatically understanding behaviour Matthew's text reveals more Jesus' character than the disciples'. Also some real readers may identify with the disciples and feel convicted that Jesus' coming finds them unprepared.

¹⁹⁴ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 75-78 on focalization 'position relative to the story.'

¹⁹⁵ Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 102-120 explain narrative voice as the explicit and/or implicit voice guiding readers to understand the text through all the commentaries and the rhetoric provided by the narrator.

¹⁹⁶ In the summary sections the narration time is shorter than the story time while in the discourse (speech) sections the narration time approximates the story time presupposing its importance and more attention needs to

every word irrespective of its locus of usage is important.¹⁹⁷ The summary in this verse 43 calls for special attention.

The implied author ensures that Jesus does not wake the disciples here. Perhaps, to do so might mean rendering a redundant repetition of the first visit. This would destroy the narrative tension and suspense. As it is, the reader becomes more curious in anticipation of what will follow. That Jesus goes back straight to prayer without waking them may give a hint that figuratively the two parties are really now no longer together, so to speak. Still, it may further confirm his gesture of kindness toward them. It may also be evidently seen that as Jesus becomes more submissive to God, his trial of patience with the disciples is increased while at the same time the need for the ‘supportive’ role of the disciples is decreased. Morris expresses the paradox between the two parties thus: “just at the time when Jesus was showing the victory of spirit over flesh, the disciples were manifesting the victory of flesh over spirit.”¹⁹⁸ Here, we have a subtle narrative strategy. The reader who has superior knowledge to that of the sleeping disciples knows not only that Jesus has met them unawares but that they are now at a greater risk of entering into temptation (cf. 26:41) more than they (will) realise.

The silence from heaven in addition to that of the disciples as Jesus struggles alone accentuates Jesus’ loneliness. The implied author has to be commended for portraying Jesus as someone truly suffering alone and who does not coerce others to follow his orders.¹⁹⁹ This has the effect of conveying to the reader the notion that to be a human being truly dedicated entirely to doing God’s will on earth is to be a solitary figure, a lonely creature, along the

be paid to the details. For discussion of temporal relations between narration time and story time see Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 51-56; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 85-87; Jean Louis Ska, *Our Fathers Have Told Us:” Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000), 20-30.

¹⁹⁷ See Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 73, 143-144.

¹⁹⁸ Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 670.

¹⁹⁹ Stock, *Message of Matthew*, 404-405.

path of suffering.²⁰⁰ In spite of being in grief, Jesus who had committedly stuck to doing the will of God will not now cringe because of ‘simple’ failure on the side of his disciples. In all, therefore, as the reader perceives, Jesus does not change substantially because his heart all along has been in the right place. It is the disciples, as we hope, who need to brace up for major change or development. And like Jesus’ ‘surprise’ coming to them, the reader only gets to know in the following verse (v. 44) that Jesus has left them and gone away to pray again by himself for the third time. Prayer is Jesus’ habit.

(i) The Pause

Notwithstanding, at 26:43b, the narrator takes ‘time out’ to explain the reason why the disciples are found sleeping this second time. He says, “...for their eyes were heavy.”²⁰¹ 26:43b is called a *pause*, being that part of the narrative where the story time stops and the narration time continues as the narrator breaks his silence and ‘intrudes’ into the narrative he is giving by describing or explaining something.²⁰² And when narration time proceeds while story time stops, it must be of utmost importance for the benefit of the reader,²⁰³ signalling special attention to what is being described or explained. This intrusion is, as usual, a break from the *showing* technique of the relatively withdrawn narrator.²⁰⁴ Although very brief, this *pause* is revealing as the narrator gives his point of view which is that ‘their eyes were heavy.’ This statement is a clue to uncover the ‘narrator’s ideological view’ which should

²⁰⁰ Meier, *Matthew*, 325; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 154; Bruce Vawter, *The Four Gospels: An Introduction* (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, 1967), 360; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 481.

²⁰¹ This is a ‘causal γὰρ-clause,’ a phrase of reason behind the disciples’ sleep. This draws the reader’s attention to a perception level lying beneath or even beyond “the immediate plot structure” On the story level they close their eyes as a result of physical exhaustion but on the discourse level, they are ‘blind’ to the utmost importance of the Gethsemane event, their natural drowsiness being just a visible expression of the internal spiritual blindness. (See Kelber, *The Passion in Mark*, 49.)

²⁰² In a *pause*, story time = zero; narration time = in process. See Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 38-39. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 53 (and note 10), 90, would rather distinguish this pause as a higher degree “of perceptibility of the narrator in the text.”

²⁰³ Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 88.

²⁰⁴ See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 255.

give a more accurate standard of judgment.²⁰⁵ The narrator's *pause* is also a window through which to see the understanding and kind gesture of Jesus²⁰⁶ whose viewpoint always coincides with that of the omniscient narrator (cf. 26:36b, 39a; 26:37b, 38a).

The repeated sleep of the disciples may label them as permanently being in the habit of sleeping or even defiance of Jesus.²⁰⁷ This may suggest that the disciples are permanently withdrawn from Jesus, an impression the narrator tries to correct as rather due to lack of stamina to keep up with Jesus. Conversely, Jesus' character trait of repeated prayers and visits to the disciples may suggest a habit of prayer and love of God and concern for neighbour unceasingly even through difficulties.²⁰⁸ He is determined as a character obedient to God to reach his goal and destiny.

(ii) The Justification of the Pause

Although apparently the pause directs attention to the disciples, it says a lot about Jesus too. Jesus is shown to be understanding. Therefore, it could be that the reader needs to learn to be more sympathetic with the relatively weaker characters and not be hastily judgmental of them. At this stage the disciples might be said to be aware of the impending danger (cf. 26:41a) and willing to do something about it but their inability is explained. This inability will, nevertheless, have consequences which will later be seen in their unpreparedness to act accordingly in the ensuing situation.

By its nature of direct definition, the narrator's comment guides the reader against making evaluations that are not coherent with the norms and point of view of the narrative. The narrator here is not only intellectually but also morally ahead of the reader and, therefore,

²⁰⁵ See Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star*, 110.

²⁰⁶ See Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 405; Meier, *Matthew*, 324-325.

²⁰⁷ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 36-40 on how character is constructed from repeated traits.

²⁰⁸ See Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 648.

must be trustworthy and dependable in making moral judgments²⁰⁹ regarding the disciples' attitude. The narrator's excuse is a way of admitting that this demands explanation.²¹⁰

Hence, the intellectual differences between Jesus and the narrator, on the one hand, and the reader, on the other hand, regarding the state of the disciples are resolved. What Jesus knew in 26:41b when he said 'the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak' the reader now understands.²¹¹ It remains, however, glaring that in this passage we learn much of what we should know not so much from the primary narration as from the secondary narrator, Jesus himself, in interaction with God and his disciples. The implied author, through the interplay of the spirit-flesh maxim (26:41b) and this *pause*,²¹² shows Jesus to be well ahead in precognition, mercy, and kindness. The disciples all fail Jesus, leaving him to face the testing and agony alone, but Jesus continues to care for them.

Among other things, this pause is an authorial assistance and is justified in that in a more economically rhetorical way than dramatization it moulds the reader's judgment about certain expectations of obedience from the disciples.²¹³ The choice of this intrusion produces the desired effect which inevitably bans other innumerable effects.²¹⁴ Thus, the type of the commentary given plays a role in its overall contribution to the understanding of the Gethsemane narrative. By Aristotle's theory, three 'species of rhetoric' could be identified here, as Powell will maintain: *judicial* inasmuch as the disciples are defended, *deliberative* insofar as the reader is 'advised' and *epideictic* as long as the blame is reduced.²¹⁵ The choice

²⁰⁹ See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 157.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 131.

²¹¹ See Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 81.

²¹² Iser, *The Implied Reader*, 225-227. He says the accumulation and interplay of perspectives requires the reader to come up with associations through a process of interweaving and overlapping, grouping, selection of groupings leading to possible inexhaustible synthesis and countless offshoots that communicates the abundance of the 'observed world.'

²¹³ See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 197; Iser, *The Implied Reader*, 104, 106-114.

²¹⁴ See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 255 for a hint of such mutually exclusive effect.

²¹⁵ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 14-15. Powell explains rhetorical criticism using Aristotle's works (*The Art of Rhetoric*, and *The Poetics*) to define three 'species of rhetoric': judicial (accuses or defends); deliberative (gives advice); and epideictic (praises or blames). Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 99-100 says the

of the pause in this narrative accomplishes the effect of it being judicial, deliberative, and epideictic all at once.

The location of the comment is appropriate and equally plays a vital role that is intensely effective. The genius of the author makes it delightful and the implied reader welcomes it with pleasurable sigh of relief in a story of such tragedy. First, the narrator creates the emotion not only of surprise but of disappointment that the disciples sleep so soon again (26:43a) and then slips in the explanation that draws the reader to a sympathetic consideration without making him/her feel that his/her reactions are manipulated. The excuse that the *pause* gives comes timely. If it were given at Jesus' first or final return it would not carry the same weight as it does here and also coming from the narrator and not the disciples or even Jesus himself (as at or in addition to Matt 26:41b) perfectly colours and facilitates the reader's acceptance of it. The omniscient narrator's third person viewpoint establishes objectivity.²¹⁶ Put differently, if the narrator had become too deeply involved, or even entirely omitted it from the narrative, it would not have produced the same effect and force. The narrator pauses just at the point the reader may demonstrate disappointment at both the 'nonchalant' disciples and Jesus' reaction. This excuse would imply the objective assumption that the disciples are at least *willing* to stay awake in obedience to Jesus and Jesus knows it and his point of view is in harmony with that of the narrator. This has the effect of softening the reader's judgment on all concerned and even creating a feeling of sympathy or a realistic empathy as the disciples exhibit a trait possibly in common with the reader.²¹⁷

The reader benefits from the function of the pause. As stated above the real reader would have preferred a different ordering of Jesus' speech in 26:40-41 such that the exhortation

commentary could be an *interpretation* explaining the state of mind behind the character's action and behaviour or *judgment* revealing the narrator's moral judgment.

²¹⁶ See Witherup, "Cornelius Over and Over," 54.

²¹⁷ See Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 56-57.

comes last after the maxim in order to leave the disciples with an unforgettable renewed injunction to watch and pray. But the text as it stands (26:40b-41b) ensures that Jesus' understanding and kind statement to them prepares the implied reader not to be too surprised at finding them asleep when Jesus comes the second time.²¹⁸ Should the reader antipathize the disciples, the narrator²¹⁹ uses this comment (rhetoric of inside view) to caution the reader against hasty judgment²²⁰ and even prepare him/her further to anticipate Jesus' loving kindness to them at his third return. In any case, the narrator ensures that too much emotion is not expended on the disciples at the expense of Jesus for the comment is brief and the reader's attention is switched back to Jesus who goes away to pray for the third time.

3.4.3.5 The Third Prayer of Jesus

Καὶ ἄφεις αὐτοὺς πάλιν ἀπελθὼν προσήξατο ἐκ τρίτου τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον εἰπὼν πάλιν (26:44).

The third prayer is simply told as a summary. Summary is the narrator's way of controlling what should be told with more conciseness.²²¹ The narrator does not report Jesus' posture at the second prayer, and at the third there is neither report of Jesus' posture nor a direct speech of Jesus' prayer. There is only a suggestion of an exhaustive similarity with no progression between the second prayer and the third in contents. The content of the third prayer is anticipated from the second prayer and the reader is expected to hold the former words of the second prayer before their eyes. The narrator tells that Jesus prays for the third time 'saying the same words' of the second prayer. The move from second to third prayer ensures that

²¹⁸ Iser, *The Implied Reader*, 226-227 says that each 'chapter' (or passage) provides expectations concerning the next 'chapter' to orient the reader as each chapter reacts on the preceding and the subsequent aiding 'fusion of the horizons' for the reader.

²¹⁹ The implied author and narrator can be used interchangeably.

²²⁰ See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 76. On page 147 he agrees that sometimes the author's direct comments strengthens the passage as does the implicit judgment through other clues meant to create effects. Gundry, *Peter: False Disciple*, 42 rather understands the disciples' eyes being heavy as not meant to ameliorate but to highlight their disobedience of Jesus' command.

²²¹ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 99.

what is said of the second prayer is true of the third prayer and this stability in the prayer content thereby adds intensification to the second prayer. The third prayer drawn from the second indicates on the surface that as he has grown in the realisation and acceptance of God's will, the content of his prayer in the story world becomes an exact verbatim repetition revealing a fully resolved Jesus. It may, therefore, be safe to see the high point, the highlighted focus of the narrator's thrust at the second prayer and especially the last request of 'thy will be done.' Matthew's Jesus, as Son of God, focuses principally on the divine will and not on his human desire.²²² Thus, we deduce no difference between the second and the third except in the form of narration. Within the story world, full recounting of the prayer (and not mere hint) said to God is necessary but not for the narrative text confronted by the reader, for it will simply be an unneeded verbatim repetition where 'he prayed in the same words' suffices.²²³ Such phrasing indicates its complete agreement with the second prayer to further depict that the third prayer is a deepening of Jesus's attitude²²⁴ and a necessity for finality.

The placement and the summary nature of the third prayer are strategic in looking back to the first two prayers.²²⁵ Summaries aim at avoiding unnecessary details or repetition that would obscure the points to be highlighted. Deductively, in the story world nothing new is added between the second prayer and the third except its position in the order and temporality in relation to the two previous prayers. The summary is effective here to realistically complete the theologically symbolic number 'three' of perfection. The modification of the third prayer into summary attains the goal of 'functional redundancy'²²⁶ and this is significant for the

²²² See also Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death," 521.

²²³ See Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 376.

²²⁴ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 180.

²²⁵ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 57. Although the second prayer is repeated in the third, its new location in this segment "puts it in a different context which necessarily changes its meaning." I also notice the consistent pattern of ending the prayer with God's will being done and then rising to check the disciples on each occasion.

²²⁶ Witherup ("Functional Redundancy," 69; "Cornelius Over and Over," 47) defines functional redundancy as a literary technique of repetition, with variation, to highlight certain aspects and so ensure a clear and full 'reception of the message.'

understanding and interpretation of the narrative or plot direction that the needless verbatim repetition of the second prayer would destroy. It directs attention to the speech prayers of Jesus and is effective in highlighting the second prayer especially as the climax of the developing process. The use of summary at this point serves this purpose not because this third prayer is of less importance but because the words are exactly those that have been reported already in the second prayer. Thus, the prayer itself is of utmost importance but the narrator seeks: (i) to avoid ‘dysfunctional redundancy’ effect of verbatim repetition; (ii) to avoid the third prayer being misconstrued as the real, final, and ultimate resolution of Jesus’ struggle²²⁷ for Jesus is already fully resolved;²²⁸ and (iii), to highlight the second prayer especially that the ideal prayer, ‘your will be done,’ reverberates. (iv) It equally makes Jesus’ next encounter with the disciples stand out. In other words, it connects Jesus’ ideal and outstanding submission (26:42) with his speech in 26:45-46 thus giving focus and direction to the ‘rise, let us go’ as being an invitation to go in the flow of God’s will submitted to at 26:42 and not otherwise.

As the third prayer simply echoes the second, it stands to reason that by the third prayer no further increase can be made because Jesus’ (re-)affirmation of his resolve from the first to the second prayer is already at its zenith.²²⁹ Were this summary design located in the position of the first or second prayer it would not yield this same effect.

The third prayer marks a turning point which is accentuated by the literary technique of the author in employing, after the said prayer, the use of the adverb, τότε (26:45a), which signifies another step in the chronological presentation of events (cf. 26:36, 38, 45). It helps

²²⁷ See Huizenga, “Obedience Unto Death,” 521.

²²⁸ Even in the portrayal of his human weakness Jesus does not have to go round the ‘complete’ number of ‘three’ before he is stabilised.

²²⁹ Also Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 171.

to classify and separate the third prayer and indeed the whole scene of prayer (framed by τότε at 26:38 and 26:45a) from what is to follow²³⁰—the earthly Jesus’ last return and last words to the body of disciples. Again, as the ‘then Jesus comes’ (ἔρχεται, 26:36) introduced an important movement into Gethsemane, this ἔρχεται’ (26:45) may signal its end and the beginning of another important movement out.²³¹

3.4.3.6 The Repetition Technique of the Three Prayer Event and the Portrait of Jesus

Table of the Three Prayers

1 st Prayer	2 nd Prayer	3 rd Prayer
My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I wish but as you [wish].	My Father, if it is not possible for this to pass away except I drink it, your will be done	He prays for the third time saying the same words.

On one level Jesus *prays three times*. On another (second) level he not only prays three times but says the *same prayer three times* using similar language demonstrating unyielding attentiveness to doing God’s will.²³² Such ‘double-triple’ repetition has a very strong effect on the reader: there is a complete urgency and persistence of a superlative nature with the hammering of a specific point three full times. There is the constant and resolute request of

²³⁰ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 207.

²³¹ Note that in 26:38, it is ‘then he says.’

²³² Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 111 (note 2), notes that for the rabbis it was necessary to repeat prayers.

letting God's will be done ultimately. The narrator gives Jesus' prayer three times to emphasise this point. The modification of the prayer at each stage does not obscure but highlights this viewpoint. The reader grows in the changes taking place and the accompanying resolution of Jesus who through God's silence understands God's answer as to move from 'if it is possible' to 'if it is not possible.' His level of obedience goes beyond waiting to be told, listening to and following direct commands, from God. The goal of Jesus is to always do his Father's will. Even before a word is uttered he moves sensitively in love listening to the spirit behind the law, embracing what he knows to be God's wish at every moment. Consequently, he accepts the suffering which comes his way as a result of his commitment which stands as a symbol of his love.²³³

In addition to the comparison of the prayer contents, the context of each prayer is crucially important for the proper understanding and interpretation of the passage.²³⁴ The disciples' sleep constitutes a growing gulf between the disciples and Jesus which should make life increasingly difficult for Jesus coupled with the complete silence from God but it appears that is when Jesus' submission to God becomes progressively more positively expressed. Therefore, the forms of repetition and variation are part of the purposeful characterisation of Jesus as growing in positive resolve the nearer the 'hour' approaches.

Also, the frequency of reference to prayer (five times) and Jesus' quick return to prayer each time upon finding the disciples sleeping direct the reader to consider the prayers as having central significance in the episode.²³⁵ Yet, despite that, comparatively, 'watch' which proceeds directly from Jesus' lips three times (26:38, 40, 41), compared to 'pray' twice (26:36, 41a), is of considerable importance. Therefore, although prayer is the apparent event in Gethsemane, prayer itself seems to be at the service of watching for his end—'the hour.'

²³³ George A. Maloney, *Alone With The Alone* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1995), 87.

²³⁴ Witherup, "Functional Redundancy," 67-86, 70.

²³⁵ See Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 45, 46.

And still underneath the watching is his obedience which is the fundamental pillar that supplies strength for the watching. His being obedient to God makes him be cautious of anything that might make him derail. This makes him watchful until the very end when he invites his disciples to go with him in his type of obedience.

The repetition is a technique to ensure an unambiguous reception of the message of the text.²³⁶ It functions as a means to create emphasis, highlighting correspondence, contrast, and climax between the three prayer segments.²³⁷ It strengthens memory in the reader. Jesus making petitions three times is an expression of seriousness and the intensity of his prayer.²³⁸ The number three is a biblical structure symbolic of fullness or perfection to create the effect of exhaustiveness in Jesus' act of prayer and submission. The repetition of prayer shows the reader that Jesus has the habit of praying always and 'fully' through difficult times. It is also used in this episode to create a causal chain of heightening the narrative tension by degrees leading up to a climax and resolution²³⁹ in addition to denoting completion and perfection. The slight changes in phraseology give direction to the narrator's emphasis which is essential to the reason the story is being told.²⁴⁰ It also helps to enlighten the reader more about the theme, the plot, and the point of view of obedience in the episode. Three times the stress is on God's will being done revealing Jesus' incontestable obedience to God. And such affirmation (26:39, 42, 44) demonstrates a full and ideal response that is complete, purposeful, and free even in the midst of agony and imminent death.²⁴¹ This moral choice of Jesus implicit in his three prayers has an added effect upon the reader's sentiment when Jesus toward the end

²³⁶ Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 368; Witherup, "Functional Redundancy," 67-86, 69.

²³⁷ Witherup, "Functional Redundancy," 67-86, 69. Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 13-20 explains such functions under his "Categories of Compositional Relationships."

²³⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 482. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 398 notes that for some scholars it might mean that sometimes 'God does not answer the first prayer' and this teaches us perseverance.

²³⁹ Ska, *Analysis of Hebrew Narratives*, 26-27; Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 375-376.

²⁴⁰ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 204.

²⁴¹ Walther, "Obedience in Matthew," 334.

courageously and unhesitatingly is ready to ‘confront’ his opponents. Thus, the repetition functions to advance the characterisation of Jesus as progressing from a bit hesitant to a free, solidly founded submission.

So, repetition clarifies direction. If after Jesus announced his purpose for being in Gethsemane (26:36), the narrator rather gave a sweeping summary of the whole prayers straightaway like ‘Jesus prayed three times’ followed by a conclusion, without the unfolding drama, the thrust of the narrative would be lost. It would not have brought out the intricate details, the complexity, and the tension of Jesus’ inner struggle relating to God’s will which the narrator intends to unveil. The repetition builds up the dramatic tension and creates suspense or anticipation in the reader. The narrator narrates all three prayers rather than just summarising that Jesus prayed three times as a technique of making an indelible graphic impression of the prayers and the moment. Jesus has a standard habit of praying. Again, the disparity between Jesus and the disciples which in itself projects Jesus as superlatively set on the path of obedience, not minding the obstacles, would have been lost. That the second location of prayer—that of the disciples—does not function as it should acts as a foil to know why Jesus’ location is a success. It may show that success in prayer does not depend on number but on the individual’s relationship with God (cf. ‘my Father’ 26:39, 42) and on the motivation and effort to keep ‘awake’ in obedience to God. Conversely, a direct rendering in speech of the whole three prayers would be needless and redundant considering that two of the prayers are exactly the same word for word. Thus, the three prayers are centrally significant to this episode and the way they have been reported is perfect.

3.4.3.7 Jesus' Third Return

τότε ἔρχεται πρὸς τοὺς μαθητὰς καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· καθεύδετε [τὸ] λοιπὸν καὶ ἀναπαύεσθε· ἰδοὺ ἤγγικεν ἡ ὥρα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς χεῖρας ἀμαρτωλῶν. ἐγείρεσθε ἄγωμεν· ἰδοὺ ἤγγικεν ὁ παραδιδούς με (26:45-46).

The third prayer of Jesus is followed by his third return to his disciples (26:45-46) which is distinctive in several ways. Jesus, having watched unflinchingly, is aware of the approach of the hour and the betrayer and announces their arrival. Jesus, having prayed, is poised to meet his betrayer and the arresting party and herein too may lie the peak of the narrative tension and suspense.²⁴² This part is of utmost importance because it is the last part of the episode and the earthly Jesus' last words to the disciple-group.²⁴³

26:45 starts with the third occurrence of the adverb, τότε, marking the last stage in the forward movement of the plot (cf. 26:36, 38, and 45). He comes now to all the disciples but this coming with 'then' attached to it has the ring of a turning point, of a final coming. The narrator also resumes the narration in the effective historic present²⁴⁴ (ἔρχεται, λέγει) which draws the reader into the present 'now' moment of the narrator.²⁴⁵ The speech of Jesus is a 'showing' technique by the narrator which makes the reader feel present to the event.

Jesus has reacted slightly differently at each return. At his first return he reprimands and re-exhorts them. At his second return he says nothing to them. At his third it seems, ready or not, there is no time to waste.²⁴⁶ Therefore, on the surface, Jesus' attitude changes toward both the disciples and God. It is as though, although God and the disciples are unchanging,²⁴⁷

²⁴² However, the peak of the narrative tension in the three prayers of Jesus is to be located at the second prayer, the height of his submission to God in "thy will be done" (26:42).

²⁴³ Jesus will not talk to his disciples again until 28:16-20, after the resurrection. The words in Matt 26:52-53 are addressed to only the disciple with the sword.

²⁴⁴ 26:36-41 is more of historic present, 26:42-44 is more of aorist, and 26:45-46 is again historic present.

²⁴⁵ See 3.4.1 note 44 above.

²⁴⁶ Mitch and Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 341.

²⁴⁷ Although both God and the disciples abandon Jesus, the disciples' characterisation of him is incorrect whereas God's characterisation of Jesus is correct.

he grows in awareness and acquiescence and he continues to love both sides for better or worse. The conditions should make it increasingly difficult for Jesus to carry on alone but he is unrelenting.²⁴⁸ The recurrent prayers and encounters with the disciples show Jesus to be constantly progressing, symbolising his intent not to deviate from God's will.²⁴⁹

Jesus saying to the disciples, 'sleep from now on and rest' (26:45), appears simple but it is actually difficult because it is compounded by the uncertain meaning of λοιπὸν ('remaining')²⁵⁰ and the choice for the most accurate punctuation.²⁵¹ Thus, it is a statement pregnant with meaning and could be taken as an exclamatory indicative, a reproachful observation, a 'permission-granting' compassionate imperative,²⁵² or an interrogation.

As an affirmative statement stating the obvious, is 'you are still sleeping and taking your rest' expected from the character, Jesus? Could it be understood as an imperative? True, the episode is pervaded with imperatives from Jesus to his disciples. However, if this is adopted as an imperative, it will appear as an ironic or cynical remark since 'sleep' is followed immediately by 'rise.'²⁵³ Also, as an imperative it will go against the norms of the narrative²⁵⁴

²⁴⁸ Tom Wright, *Matthew for Everyone*, Part 1, *Chapters 1-15* (London: SPCK, 2002), page 180-181 avers that it is hard to know in the midst of 'opposition' if one is doing God's will. However, opposition cannot be a clear indication of abandonment by God but could be "a strange encouragement" especially if the rejection is not really against one's person but against the Gospel.

²⁴⁹ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 65 on how the external may signify character-trait.

²⁵⁰ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 208 says that λοιπὸν as a noun or adjective may translate as "what remains" while as an adverb it would convey the meaning of "from now on." The further difficulty raised by that is that no time is given for sleep. On the whole, such ambiguous portions of the narrative as here and 'one hour' (26:40) may be an indication of the real (modern) reader's inability to attain the goal of perfect alignment between Matthew's implied author and implied reader who possesses ideal knowledge appropriate to the story setting of the narrative (see Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star*, 93-94).

²⁵¹ See Duff, *New Testament Greek*, 18. Although we assume and appreciate the editors' sensibility in their judgments of punctuation, there was no punctuation in the original Greek text.

²⁵² Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 398 says that Origen and Augustine (*Consensu* 3.4) have interpreted the sentence as imperative; John Chrysostom and Euthymius Zigabemus (reproach); others (especially since humanism) as an ironic sentence that could be understood as a question, imperative, and indicative. It has been a matter of debate in the Church's exegesis.

²⁵³ Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 266; Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text*, xxiv says scholars like John Dominic Crossan view Jesus entirely as "a Jewish Cynic teacher of a new wisdom." Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 662 agrees that such irony is uncommon in Matthew.

²⁵⁴ But if 'sleep' is taken as a statement granting permission, will that not make our narrator unreliable since his values may be seen to digress from that of the implied author's value (that is, 'the norm of the work') for whom sleep in this tension should not be permitted and 'sleep' throughout the narrative tilts more toward the negative? See Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 149.

since Jesus will love to see them watching and praying while his spirit will be dampened by their sleep. Perhaps, the narrator seems to work to build in the reader the sense of ‘dramatic’ irony in the form of a contrast between what the reader expects and what appears here at face value?²⁵⁵ But then the narrative will lose its coherence and create a tension between the implied author and the narrator which destroys the narrativity for the reader and paints as unreliable the Gospel’s narrator whose point of view is always in perfect harmony with that of the implied author.²⁵⁶ The implicit beliefs of the implied author of the text become the reader’s guide. The reader knows Jesus is ready for the handing over but the disciples still need to ‘rise’ and Jesus cannot be encouraging them to ‘sleep.’²⁵⁷ Therefore, the interrogative interpretation is preferable because in matters of apparent discrepancy, the reader makes choice based on presumed narrative coherence.²⁵⁸ Secondly, the incredulous question will be similar then to that of 26:40 which is likely meant to draw the disciples to Jesus’ point of view and consciousness of the moment. In addition, hearing it as an interrogation has the effect of making the reader aware that the pace of events picks up from now on²⁵⁹ and also to ponder if he or she is sleeping metaphorically instead of watching and praying not to enter into temptation (26:41a). Jesus’ point about ‘sleep’ can find further explication and certitude when the next sentence is put in place. He says, “Behold, the hour has drawn near and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners” (26:45) and in the same discourse without break he tells them to ‘rise.’ Therefore, in this whole Gethsemane setting, ‘sleep’

²⁵⁵ See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 316-317.

²⁵⁶ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 26.

²⁵⁷ Also France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1007-1008.

²⁵⁸ Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 369; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 26. Aland et al., *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece*, 91 adopt the interrogative interpretation in their English translation while manuscripts such as ⱼ A D K Γ Δ Θ, the Majority text, and extant papyrus p37 support either a major break within the sentence or an interrogation. Also Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 207-208 and Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 392 support the interrogation.

²⁵⁹ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 398.

here is better understood in the context of a reproachful interrogation than an affirmative or an imperative, 'sleep' being interpretable as an attitude indicative of disobedience to God.²⁶⁰

Jesus tells the disciples to behold that the hour and the betrayer are at hand. 'Behold' is a psychological facet of focalization²⁶¹ using a verb of seeing to make the addressee recognise with their mind and emotions the critical hour of betrayal and Passion. The verb, ἰδοὺ, meaning "behold" in the second person singular is, therefore, a command that each disciple personally filter this viewpoint through Jesus, the focalizer. This is a rhetoric used subtly by the narrator to place the reader also on the same level with the story.²⁶² The double 'behold'²⁶³ (26:45-46), both in the psychological facet, indicates the vision the reader is expected to have of arresting his/her gaze on the approaching 'hour' and betrayer through the mind and 'eyes' of Jesus, the intradiegetic focalizer. Insofar as the second 'behold' rhymes with the first poetically, the image created is intensified as the arrival of the hour coincides with the arrival of the betrayer showing that something of very great importance, a climax, is about to take place.²⁶⁴ Here, Jesus has information which goes beyond the spatial and temporal settings of Gethsemane. The narrator is using a 'showing' technique and making these verses (26:45-46) a bridge to the next episode which will show how Jesus is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 'Sinners' contrasts Jesus as righteous, sinless, or innocent, yet to be given over to the sinners, the unjust ones, to be treated as they will.

²⁶⁰ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 397.

²⁶¹ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 78-82. Psychological facet, metaphorically, concerns the cognitive and emotive senses of the character as against the perceptual facet which concerns the external senses of sight, hearing, smelling, etc.

²⁶² See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 92-95 for other such uses/applications of interactions of various narrative levels.

²⁶³ Schweizer, *Matthew*, 494 says 'behold' emphasises Jesus' readiness and further shows that "he has overcome temptation."

²⁶⁴ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 81. Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 167 states, especially for 26:39-46, that Matthew's Gospel has characteristic of "parallelisms and antitheses" and 'triads' for symbolic communication.

The announcement, by Jesus, of the approaching hour and betrayer signifies that this is the moment he has been watching and waiting for. ‘The hour’ may simply mean ‘the time’ or the ‘hour of his betrayal’²⁶⁵ (26:45). However, the definite article attached to each of the three nouns (ἡ ὥρα, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ὁ παραδιδούς) even though this is their first and only mention in Gethsemane means we have to look outside the episode for their antecedents and fuller meaning.²⁶⁶ But this is not principally relevant to our discussion.

For someone who has placed everything in obedience into God’s hand, all the circumstances to make God’s will prevail will converge under God’s guidance to bring about God’s will. The geographical context of this confluence of the Son of Man, the approaching hour, the betrayer and sinners, is more fundamentally theological showing that, for the obedient one, God controls all the factors to bring about his purpose.²⁶⁷ The convergence is a major turning point marked by the concatenation of the word “behold” in relation to the hour and the betrayer (26:45-46).

These two verses (26:45-46) serve as predictive or ‘anterior narration,’ narrating events whose fulfilment they (and the reader) look forward to.²⁶⁸ They are, therefore, two-and-proleptic verses building a bridge between the present event and the next and simultaneously showing that the obedient Jesus continues, however, to be in control of events.²⁶⁹ They aim to *show* not only Jesus’ precognition,²⁷⁰ which highlights his control of the situation, but that the following events are not chance events but are to be located in the divine plan. Jesus is

²⁶⁵ Mitch and Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 341.

²⁶⁶ Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition*, 18 will maintain that by the articles “the,” and the ‘syntactical organisation’ of the sentences, the author invites the reader to share in the disciples’ knowledge of the referents and to adopt an internal point of view of Jesus the perceiving character. Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 73-74 consider as zero focalization where the narrator has information that goes beyond the temporal and/or spatial setting of the scene.

²⁶⁷ See Witherup, “Cornelius Over and Over,” 50 for similar observation.

²⁶⁸ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 91.

²⁶⁹ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 398.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 401 with some early authors suppose that Jesus had to pray three times before receiving an answer. If this is right then the answer must be in the form of precognition (26:45-46).

prescient and yet willing to face the ominous ensuing event; to be more passive,²⁷¹ acted upon by sinners as they will, in his determination to actively journey on in the flow of God's will for him. The passive voice ('is being betrayed,' 26:45), understandable as the 'divine passive,'²⁷² therefore, points to the 'extraordinary circumstance' that it is God who gives Jesus up. In Jesus' betrayal God is actively involved in the destiny of his Son.

Jesus characterises himself cryptically as 'Son of Man'²⁷³ who is being betrayed. We shall not dwell much on this title. The main theme of Matthew 26:36-46 is Jesus' unwavering obedience in enduring his sacrificial death.²⁷⁴ So, Jesus implicitly uses the title, 'Son of God' (26:39, 42) and 'Son of Man' (26:45) about himself who in faith submits to endure the agony obediently.²⁷⁵ By the narrator's subtle presentation of Jesus in this pericope, it seems the two titles (metaphors)—Son of God and Son of Man—frame the passage. The obedient Son of God is also the betrayed Son of Man. 'Son of Man,' which may mean 'this person' or 'a person in my position,' is in the third person point of view which makes Jesus omniscient over the betrayal story that he is narrating.²⁷⁶ Nevertheless, at the very end, Jesus steps down from the third person omniscient viewpoint to a more subjective first-person point of view

²⁷¹ See Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 12-13.

²⁷² With divine passive the passive voice is used without the acting 'object' to convey the meaning that the action is ultimately done by God. See Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 188; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 482; Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 149; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 80; Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 75; Witherup, "Functional Redundancy," 75-76.

²⁷³ Among the Jews, 'Son of Man' could mean 'human being,' 'this person,' 'mortal,' 'I,' 'I myself,' or 'someone like me' in contexts of messianic promise and its use by Jesus to refer to himself may hint at his imminent suffering, death, and vindication. See Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 6, 225.

²⁷⁴ Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death," 526.

²⁷⁵ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 104 about intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrators whose personal involvement subjects them to limited knowledge.

²⁷⁶ See 3.4.2 and note 72 above. In 26:45 Jesus, an intradiegetic (character-) narrator in the first narrative told by the main narrator appears cryptically external to his narration (heterodiegetic) with the 'third person' metaphor ('Son of Man') making him 'omniscient' over the story he narrates (cf. 26:38). In 26:46, with Jesus' use of the personal pronoun, 'me,' Jesus becomes present in the more subjective story he narrates (homodiegetic) and is thus limited in knowledge. Some of the indicators of omniscience here are: precognition (knowledge of future) and knowledge of two simultaneous events on different levels (the hour and betrayer approaching for the betrayal), familiarity with *innermost thoughts and intents* of the yet absent betrayer. See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 25-28; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 95-97 for a systematised typology of narrators and their interplay at various narrative levels.

which again limits his scope.²⁷⁷ He uses ‘me’ (26:46) once more for himself (cf. 26:39). This shows the reader that Jesus is part of the story he tells and that for him presently this is a journey of obedience into the unknown. He may be precognitive but he remains ignorant of the details of this journey which he, nonetheless, embraces.

He summons his disciples to ‘rise’ and ‘go’ with him (26:46). It is interesting that he uses the process command for ‘rise’ in the present second person plural; he must mean for the whole group of disciples to rise continuously from slumber and with him be in constant progress so as not to be taken unawares. It could be the ever progressive ‘rise’ to always live the fearless life of the victory of spirit over flesh. The same idea is implied with ‘let us go’ or ‘that we may go’ as the purpose of the rising. As a process (like the imperative),²⁷⁸ technically it may be expressing the active possibility of going continuously, implying also that only the person who is continuously awake and watching can *keep going*²⁷⁹ in this struggle of obedience, of wills, and spirit and flesh, to confront the ‘enemy.’ By using the first person plural command Jesus is part of the movement²⁸⁰ and is subject to the limitations of a personally involved and courageous pacesetter-wayfarer embarked on a journey into the unknown, an obedient journey of faith. The complication in the form of distress earlier indicated (cf. 3.3.1 and 3.4.2) may not have been eliminated and it is safe to say that it persists. This is so because from 26:37, Jesus’ state is marked by the progressively increasing grief and distress,²⁸¹ the peak of which the reader still anticipates with trepidation. However, Jesus is not passively remaining in Gethsemane to be betrayed. Obedience demands he moves forward toward the betrayer and arresters as one of the ‘willing’ elements in the circumstance of the converging

²⁷⁷ See Witherup, “Functional Redundancy,” 73.

²⁷⁸ See Duff, *New Testament Greek*, 190-192.

²⁷⁹ Both ‘rise’ and ‘go’ may also be ‘undefined.’

²⁸⁰ Unlike ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν is in the first person plural which makes Jesus more subjective and limited in knowledge.

²⁸¹ See 3.4.2 and note 58 above for the beginning of the progressive distress. I may, therefore, suggest that since the Passion has not ended, the distress too may not have ended.

factors to carry out God's will. Thus, having finished watching and having 'risen' from his location of prayer, he encourages his disciples to also rise and be going with him.

'Let us' is a 'community phrase' and might imply that obedience (in the flow of God's will) cannot be practised in isolation or without Jesus. With this narrative flow, ἀγωμεν, as used here, implies a decisive approach showing Jesus as willingly and actively submitting to the divine will which three times he has avowed.²⁸² This ἄγωμεν (not ἀναχωρέω, withdraw) is not the 'go' of fleeing but of advancing forward.²⁸³ He is prepared to drink the cup. Jesus is definitely presented as one who in spite of the high stakes is not willing to deviate from God's will. He remains the obedient one who will neither be swayed into disruptive behaviour by the apparent nonchalance of the disciples nor by the seeming silence of the God that he calls his Father. He is reliable. As he remains God's faithful and loving Son so he remains the disciples' loving master, guiding them in the path of obedience.²⁸⁴ Regardless of their behaviour, Jesus continues to treat them as 'disciples' (26:45a). The abandonment by both God and the disciples means that Jesus will wade through the coming storms alone and the reader hopes he succeeds in the spirit of a truly obedient character.

This has the effect of creating in the reader full and unambiguous delight in seeing Jesus triumph over the hard inner struggle as he sets his mind unflinchingly on his resolve to continue on his path of unbending obedience to his Father, implying the good winning over evil.²⁸⁵ We do not judge the foresighted and knowing Jesus to be stupid and unreasonable but heroic and poised.²⁸⁶ There is a ray of light toward the end of the tunnel and this seems to be the 'ironic' effect the author wishes to create here. The reader with the disciples is invited to 'rise' and 'go' with Jesus. 'Rise' is, therefore, a call to be continuously obedient and the first

²⁸² Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death," 522.

²⁸³ Ibid., 521-522 (Matthew employs ἀναχωρέω for a retreat, cf. 2:12-14; 12:15). Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 398 asserts that "There is no longer any trace of weakness and despair."

²⁸⁴ See Longenecker, "Foundational Conviction of Christology," 476.

²⁸⁵ See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 135.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 145.

person plural present subjunctive active in the very last command, ‘let us go’ (ἀγωμεν), makes it less daunting and helps to dispel fears. Jesus’ presence in the group serves as an encouragement that the disciples are not alone but that in the journey into the unknown, even though they are unprepared, Jesus who has been through all evil they can conceivably encounter goes with them also.

3.5 CONCLUSION

There is no iota of doubt that Jesus is perfectly and ideally obedient to God. In addition, the many process commands in the pericope show that it is not about making a one-time but constant progress on the ‘journey’ toward obedience to the will of God. This is the fundamental thrust of Jesus’ life so he encourages all his disciples to keep on rising and keep on advancing with him together in the flow of doing God’s will unflinchingly amidst opposition and betrayal.

Jesus is able to do this because he is single-minded and shares one mind and heart with God, desiring only what God desires.²⁸⁷ Therefore, I propose that Jesus’ obedience as portrayed in Gethsemane agrees with McCabe’s notion of perfect obedience as fusion of minds between two parties. He states that “[o]bedience only becomes perfect when the one who commands and the one who obeys come to share one mind.”²⁸⁸ This is the portrayal of Jesus’ character in Gethsemane where by the end Jesus’ will is no longer in conflict with God’s will. He unites his heart and will with God’s inseparably. In Gethsemane Jesus’ will is so perfectly united with the Father’s will showing that every fibre of his being is in agreement with God’s will.²⁸⁹ And now, to authenticate the discoveries here regarding the Gethsemane obedience, it is important to see how they harmonise with Matthew’s Gospel as a whole. This is the subject matter of chapter four to which we now turn.

²⁸⁷ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1002 agrees that in Gethsemane ‘harmony of will’ is achieved.

²⁸⁸ McCabe, “Obedience,” 282.

²⁸⁹ Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 74; Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 166.

4. MATTHEW 26:36-46 INTRATEXTUAL LINKS

This chapter observes the links between Matthew's Gethsemane pericope and the other parts of this Gospel, in order to give us the bigger picture of Jesus' mode of obedience according to Matthew. However, the main focus will remain to study the portrayal of Jesus' Gethsemane obedience in the light of the whole Gospel, thereby showing that this obedience is not severed from his entire life and ministry.¹ The Gospel is suffused with the theme of obedience,² and the nature of Jesus' obedience cannot be separated from what has brought him to Gethsemane.³ In fact, it is my hypothesis that herein, from the entire Gospel, we will find the convergence of all the constituents that show that he is truly and perfectly obedient to God.

To reiterate, Gethsemane is at a climactic literary and narrative location. The Gospel is a narrative of conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities of Israel. Jesus' journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem is a journey into the centre of the hostile geo-political and socio-religious conflict arena (cf. 2:1-3, 13-23) at a time when the conflict is at its most intense and the religious leaders have resolved to kill him (cf. 12:1-8, 9-14; 26:1-5).⁴ How does Jesus navigate his way through the conflict and remain steadily obedient? In order to proceed with this, it may be pertinent to locate the Gethsemane episode in the plot of the entire Gospel.

4.1 GETHSEMANE MICRO-PLOT IN THE MACRO-PLOT OF THE ENTIRE GOSPEL

The Gethsemane plot as described in chapter three (3.3) immediately falls under the sequence about Jesus' preparation for his death as indicated by the narrator's constant return to the

¹ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 16-17, 205 maintains that Jesus' lifelong obedience "must not be dichotomized from his death."

² See Longenecker, "Foundational Conviction of Christology," 485-488.

³ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 281 says that throughout the narrative Jesus is in danger from the Jerusalem authorities (cf. 2:3; 26:4).

⁴ Moreover, the Galileans were viewed as marginal or second-class Jews relative to Jerusalem (Matt 21:10-11, 23). The text does not clearly set up opposition between Galilee and Jerusalem but Jesus is identified differentially sometimes as being from Nazareth in Galilee (cf. 21:10-11, 23; 26:69, 71). In the temple in Jerusalem the chief priests and the elders, by their question to Jesus regarding the source of his authority (21:23), perhaps, insinuate in addition that Jerusalem, the capital, does not identify with him. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 6-9 has an extensive note on Jesus' marginality.

theme of betrayal and death (cf. 26:1-2, 4, 12, 15, 16, 21, 24, 25, 28, 31, 38, 45, 46, 66). The persistent reminders and repetition of the betrayal motif in Matthew 26:1-75⁵ is a good indication that the unifying plot of Matthew 26 is a ‘betrayal sequence.’ Thus, the Gethsemane episodic revelation plot about knowing and doing God’s will in the face of death falls within the unifying plot of Matthew 26 which is about the betrayal, arrest, and condemnation of Jesus. Betrayal is the key issue around which the plot turns and the pivotal transforming action of the unifying plot hangs on it. This is when the handing over of Jesus into the hands of sinners takes place. Hence, it is a resolution plot for the transforming action basically consists of a doing, a betrayal.⁶ This plot to betray him goes concomitantly with Jesus preparing himself for it. Within the unifying betrayal plot, the episodic plot reveals Jesus seeking God’s will under the circumstances. The handing over may be the work of Judas or ultimately of God but Jesus is centrally involved and offers himself freely and actively. The two words, παραδίδοται (handing over, 26:2) and κρατῶ (arrest, 26:4), in close proximity to each other form an inclusion (cf. 26:45, 50) to indicate that just as Jesus’ prediction of the handing over comes before the conspiracy to arrest him can begin (26:2-5), so it is only when the handing over is done that Jesus can be arrested (26:45-50). Then the scale tilts. Henceforth, he who has been the subject of many verbs will become the object of many verbs.

Matthew 26 falls within the third major division of the Gospel according to the ‘superscriptions’ (16:21-28:20; cf. 2.1. ii above) which is about the revelation of Jesus as the suffering Messiah who must be killed and raised up in accordance with God’s will.⁷

Moreover, Matthew 16:21-28:20 is subsumed within the grand unifying plot of the Gospel:

⁵ See such reminders in 26:2, 15, 16, 21, 24, 25, 45, 46.

⁶ See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 46-56 on the relationship between the transforming action, object-value, and plot type.

⁷ Note that Jesus will suffer at the hands of, and be killed by, ‘the elders and chief priests and scribes’ (Matt 16:21). The New Community Bible has them respectively as ‘the Jewish authorities, the chief priests and the teachers of the Law.’ The law is instrumentally a big reason for Jesus’ suffering and death.

Jesus is the anointed Saviour who in atonement according to God's will saves his people from their sins (1:1, 21; 20:28; 26:28);⁸ and this is a revelation plot. Consequently, although the unifying plot of Matt 26 is chiefly a resolution plot, the episodic plot of 26:36-46, the unifying plot of 16:21-28:20, and the unifying plot of the entire macro-narrative are each of a revelation type. Matthew's Gethsemane plot is within and intricately tied to the wider plot of the Gospel revealing Jesus as committed to his cause of obedience (3:15; 7:21; 16:21-23; 26:39, 42, 54) unto death in fulfilment of Scripture. The episodic plot of 26:36-46 reveals Jesus in his human weakness, struggling within himself, to know and do God's will in this given situation. The reader, filtering events through the narrator's perspective, recognises that the resolution plot to betray Jesus is running concurrently with the Gethsemane revelation plot to know and do God's will under the circumstance. The omniscient narrator refrains from giving a 'bird's eye view' showing the simultaneous events of betrayal plotting and Gethsemane on 'split-screen' vision and this directs the reader's concentration on the pertinent subject matter—Jesus and his submissiveness to God's will.

Matthew's narrative is a story about Jesus set in a bigger perspective of a story concerning God and God's viewpoint.⁹ Jesus as God's Son dwells perpetually in and furthers God's point of view to bring about God's reign. The Gethsemane plot is inserted into this overarching plot of the entire Gospel, and it is fixed on the recognition and mobilisation of prayer to know and do God's will.

To give a summary of the plot of Matthew's Gospel: Jesus, in doing the will of God and teaching others to do the same (cf. 5:19), runs into conflict with the religious authorities who

⁸ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 106 (note 61) is of the view that Jesus saves people from their sins through his sacrificial death.

⁹ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 48.

understand things differently (5:20; 9:1-4; 12:1-13).¹⁰ Ignorantly convinced of being the ones doing God's will, the authorities are propelled to strongly oppose and kill the righteous Jesus.¹¹ Ironically, this is all geared toward bringing about God's will which, if equally known and accepted by both parties, will trivialise the drama conflict and Jesus' real pain and frustrations at remaining obedient in order to fulfil God's will. This will have adverse effect on Jesus' salvific mission since he has to authentically give his life as a ransom for many (20:28).

This makes the Gethsemane plot, therefore, substantially an ambiguous one. It is impossible to classify all the events neatly into 'good' and 'bad'¹² because in Jesus' death what appears as the victory of evil over good is at a deeper structural level, the victory of good over evil.¹³ Jesus remains obedient to God to the very end and through that God's purpose to save his people is realised in him.

This realisation of God's purpose becomes better understood and appreciated when we note that beneath the surface of Jesus' conflict with the opponents is an over-arching plot.¹⁴ It is that God's rule will be established on the whole earth when all people are obedient to, and, therefore, ultimately guided by, him. God sent his Son, Jesus, to save his people from their sins (1:21) and thus establish God's kingdom. Jesus constantly relates righteousness with

¹⁰ See Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 31, 99. Giles, "Obedience Theology of Matthew," 195 asserts that Jesus' understanding of the law or "righteousness necessary for entering into the kingdom of heaven was superior to theirs (Mt 5:20)." Ordinarily, every faction feels justified as it relies on a pretext.

¹¹ Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Plot of Matthew's Story," in *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical & Social-Scientific Approaches*, ed. Jack Dean Kingsbury (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 20-21 identifies capital charges of blasphemy (9:3) as ordinarily arising from Jesus' conflict with the religious authorities and only of death when it involves Moses' Law (12:1-14). Additionally, as Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 77 observe, any encounter with the Pharisees, to say nothing of the teachers of the law (the scribes), is an encounter symbolic of "a confrontation with the Law" (e.g., 5:20; 9:34; 12:1-14; 15:1-3; 16:12; 19:3; 22:15-22, 34-40; 23:1-37). Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 125 states that "A clear breach of the Law would be sufficient evidence that Jesus' authority came from a source other than YHWH. This evidence, however, was hard to come by."

¹² So posits Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 27 regarding ambiguous plots.

¹³ Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 200; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 3 agrees that Jesus embodies the defeat of evil.

¹⁴ I owe the basis of the following point to Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 46-50.

God's kingdom (5:10, 20; 6:10; 7:21; 13:43; 21:31).¹⁵ This is God's grand purpose, and God's archenemy, Satan, fights to thwart God's plan by seeking to win over to himself, misguide, and destroy Jesus (2:16-18; 4:1-11), the proponent of perfect obedience to God's law and rule (cf. 3:15; 5:17). This is orchestrated to prevent Jesus from carrying out God's full purpose and to rather have Satan's will enacted. Thus, after Jesus' baptism and insistence on fulfilling all righteousness, before the commencement of his public ministry, he is led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (3:15-4:11) to prove whose side he is on genuinely. Jesus overcomes this initial spiritual opposition. However, unsuccessful at destroying Jesus seminally (4:11; cf. 2:13-16), Satan remains very active throughout Jesus' life and ministry, from time to time manifesting through forces of nature (8:23-27),¹⁶ demonic forces (e.g., 8:28-34), and human agents.¹⁷ In the midst of all this, God continues to affirm Jesus as being obedient to him (3:17; 17:5)¹⁸ even though the religious leaders, who unwittingly are in league with Satan (9:1-4; 12:34-39), ironically consider Jesus to be Satan's agent (12:22-24; 9:1-8) and so reject him. Additionally, even the disciples who have been close to Jesus find it hard to understand and follow some of his teachings (16:5-12, 21-23; 19:9-12; 26:51-54).¹⁹ And even though they promise undying allegiance to him (26:35), they find the Gethsemane testing ground unbearable. Therefore, they constitute subtle opposition.

As things stand, while the religious leaders who are evil like Satan (9:4; 12:34, 39, 45; 16:4 cf. 13:38) 'prevail' in their efforts to bring Jesus to the cross,²⁰ they unwittingly and

¹⁵ See also Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 180; Park, "Obedience in Matthew," 3, 104-105; Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus*, 13. The ordered structure of the genealogy (1:1-17) proves that God divinely orders his creation toward some purpose.

¹⁶ This is the only episode where the word, 'obey' (cf. ὑπακούουσιν, 8:27) is used; nature being the subject and Jesus the object.

¹⁷ This is perceivable in the religious leaders (12:14; 26:57-68), in conjunction with political leaders (cf. 2:1-23; 26:3-5; 27:1-2), and sometimes his disciples (16:23; 26:40-41).

¹⁸ Since Jesus is God's beloved and God tells disciples to listen to Jesus, I infer that this is because Jesus listens well to God and pleases God, and so it is divine affirmation of Jesus' obedience.

¹⁹ Allison, *Studies in Matthew*, 264 agrees that sometimes the disciples do not understand Jesus.

²⁰ Anders Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew: The Narrative World of the First Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 253-256; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 47-48. Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 43, 56 and Powell, "Narrative-Critical Understanding of Matthew," 13 think that the devil

ironically fulfil God's purpose and thwart Satan's purpose. Satan wants to destroy Jesus but the cross is where the fatal demonstration of Jesus' obedience for his salvific mission will bring defeat to Satan. The narrative, as is, reports that Jesus dies crucified and this is in accordance with God's will. The apparent defeats of Jesus by the religious authorities and his disciples are, in actuality, Jesus' victory as he remains unflinching in his commitment to obey God in the face of oppositions.²¹ Jesus obeys his Father to the last drop of his blood (26:28; 27:50). In the final analysis, Jesus' resurrection crowns the narrative's resolution as a divine verdict of his innocence and obedience.²² Therefore, on the deeper level, in Jesus God is revealed as being victorious over Satan regarding the grand conflict between good and evil.

4.2 INTRATEXTUAL LINKS BETWEEN GETHSEMANE AND OTHER PARTS OF MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

We turn our attention to how some features of the Gethsemane narrative are linked to other parts of the Gospel. We will base this on the various elements of prayer, the theme of temptation, and sonship to address how Gethsemane correlates with the body of Matthew's Gospel to expound on the theme of Jesus' lifelong obedience to God.

4.2.1. Jesus' Prayer: Context and Content

i. Prayer Place: The Gethsemane setting locates Jesus in prayer at a distance from his disciples. That Jesus goes aside before praying is in agreement with his exhortation and practice to pray in solitude (6:5-6; cf. 14:23-25) as a better righteousness that admits one into the kingdom of heaven (5:20).²³ Such privacy is symbolic of going into one's 'room'

and the religious leaders have identifiable or seamlessly interwoven agendas since the leaders appear as personification of evil forces defeated by God in Christ.

²¹ Kingsbury, "Plot of Matthew's Story," 16. Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 47 claims that by their failure to understand Jesus' teaching on servanthood and suffering (16:21-22; 19:13-14, 23-25; 20:20-28), the disciples constitute an opposition to Jesus.

²² See also Kingsbury, "Plot of Matthew's Story," 24; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 194; Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 167-168. Also, the Gentiles' interjection (27:54) proves their recognition of the divine verdict.

²³ The antitheses in the Sermon on the Mount (5:21-48) all reflect this basic proper heart disposition stressing obedience not just in the letter of the law but also the spirit behind the conformity. Bauer, *Structure of*

(ταμεῖόν) to pray, which in turn symbolises the secret place of the heart. One enters into the chambers of the heart to communicate in private with one's Father (6:6; 26:39, 42), God, who sees in secret (κρυπτῶ).²⁴ In the privacy of the heart God knows the truly obedient children. The genuineness of manifested obedience is to be seen and evaluated in the secret of the heart seen clearly by God who is not like humans who can be deceived and consequently reward erroneously.²⁵

ii. Prayer Posture: In Gethsemane Jesus falls on his face while praying. The body of Matthew's Gospel furnishes further details about Jesus' prayer posture. In Matthew's Gospel, to fall (πιπτω) on the face could be a sign of reverential fear as demonstrated by a similar posture of the disciples on the Transfiguration Mountain (17:6).²⁶ It could appear as a symbol of humility, distress, and supplication (18:26, 29),²⁷ prostration signifying the lowliest position of all. Gethsemane may show forth Jesus as humble always in readiness to accepting God's will.²⁸ But most importantly, it is regarded as the most appropriate posture of worship, reverence, supplication, and intense adoration all rolled into one (2:11; 4:9; 17:6; 18:26, 29).²⁹ The immediate context pictures Jesus' soul's extreme grief and fear.³⁰ Yet, it is highly

Matthew's Gospel, 30 and Beck, *Jesus and His Enemies*, 99 state that Jesus consistently demands inward righteousness that shows congruity "between motive and action" (cf. Matt 23:2-3), an internal-external alignment, opposed to 'hypocrisy' (Matt 6:1-18; 23:1-36).

²⁴ David Keller, *Come and See: The Transformation of Personal Prayer* (New York: Morehouse, 2009), 38-51. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 301-303 explains that without downplaying public prayer Matthew 6:5-15 teaches the right nature and purpose of prayer; communicating directly and sincerely with God and no one else, or it is no prayer (cf. 21:13). Finbarr Lynch, *When You Pray* (Dublin 2: Messenger, 2012), 41-45 links the metaphors (room, door, Father, reward) of Matt 6:6 to Jesus' experience of prayer.

²⁵ Wright, *Matthew Chapters 1-15*, 54-56; Park, "Obedience in Matthew," 120-121; Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 96 note 123. Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 163 adds that the reward is the fundamental experience of being the Father's Son or else it is not prayer. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 299-302 notes that Jesus does not abhor public prayer (cf. 11:25-27; 14:19c; 15:36b; 19:15) but espouses sincerity in prayer and that is also true of the three strophes (prayer, fasting and charity of individuals).

²⁶ Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 107.

²⁷ Meier, *Matthew*, 324; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 117-118. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 165 and Gundry, *Matthew*, 532 understand Matthew's use of 'on his face' (26:39) and the Aorist tense (ἔπεσεν) to mean that Matthew deliberately and slightly cushions Mark's moving picture of Jesus' distress expressed in the Imperfect, "he was falling" on the earth (ἔπιπτεν). Matthew's is a model of prayer for Christians contrasted with the Pharisees and publicans standing (cf. Matt 6:5-6).

²⁸ See Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 11.

²⁹ Turner, *Matthew*, 631; Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 79; Powell, *God With Us*, 45; Meier, *Matthew*, 324; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 117-118. Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and*

significant that he falls in no other place and this is the only time in the Gospel that Jesus is said to prostrate himself (26:39a).³¹ Satan had asked him to fall down in worship of him in the desert (4:8-10) but he falls down in worship of God alone; in supplication and total submissiveness to God's will.³²

iii. Prayer Content: In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus' long and short periods in prayer are mostly only glossed over by the narrator either quoting a brief prayer (11:25-26,³³ 27:46) or summarily referring to Jesus' prayer (e.g., 14:19c, 23; 15:36b; 19:13-15; 26:26).³⁴ Jesus' prayer in seclusion hitherto has not been quoted. In Gethsemane the reader is privileged to know the content³⁵ of Jesus' private prayer (26:39, 42). Thus, this prayer must be very relevant for the implied reader. There are a few places where a glimpse into Jesus' way of praying is given, indicating that his most central concern, as is obvious in Gethsemane, is that God's will be done. The Lord's Prayer third petition (6:10c) and Jesus' doxology (11:25-26) are examples of this.³⁶ Even his prayer of dereliction on the cross reveals that in all situations, whether he feels affirmed or abandoned, he confers with God in whose will he rests (27:46). This appears to be a reliable typical reflection of his mental state.³⁷ It becomes clear that the Gethsemane prayer of submission flows naturally as the outcome of Jesus' constant

the Fourfold Gospel Witness (London: SPCK, 2015), 44-45 cites instances related to worship of Matthew's Jesus as divine (e.g., 2:2, 11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 18:26; 20:20; 28:9, 17). Whereas Satan craves worship from Jesus (4:10), in Gethsemane Jesus in his human weakness worships his Father.

³⁰ See Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396.

³¹ Morris, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 668; Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 153-154; John Paul II, *Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004), 25; See also Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 117-118.

³² See Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 11.

³³ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 162 explains it as the prayer of thanksgiving, a characteristic prayer form of the Bible, uttered aloud and in public for the audience's emulation.

³⁴ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 647 reckons Gethsemane as the supreme prayer in Matthew's Gospel (other prayers being 6:5-15; 7:7-11; 9:37-38; 15:21-28; 17:14-20; 18:18-20; 21:18-22; 27:46; cf. also miracles 8-9).

³⁵ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 63-65 about content and form of speech being indicative of a character's trait.

³⁶ Richard J. Dillon, "On the Christian Obedience of Prayer (Matthew 6:5-13)," *Worship* 59, no. 5 (1985): 414 emphasises that injunctions on prayer occupy central portion of the Sermon on the Mount and the Lord's Prayer is the centre-piece of the prayer injunctions. Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 92 asserts that Jesus knows that it is God's will that he is rejected by the majority of Israelites. God withholds "his revelation from Israel" (the crowds) so that the Scriptures be fulfilled in Jesus (cf. Matt 16:21).

³⁷ Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 13 gives a similar example and explanation. In 6:9-13 Jesus gives the pattern of prayer and there is close affinity between that and the Gethsemane prayer.

disposition of obedience to his Father³⁸ which facilitates the acceptance of his destiny. This prayer's effect is that Jesus can confidently confront the arresting crowd as he sets himself to do God's will.³⁹

4.2.2 The Repetition Technique of the Threefold Prayer Event and the Portrait of Jesus

i. Jesus' Repetition Technique: Jesus says the same prayer three times (26:39, 42, 44) demonstrating the seriousness, thoroughness, and perfection of the prayer. It also reflects his threefold admonition regarding prayer (7:7) where the urgency and certainty of answered prayer is premised on the contemporary Jewish belief of God's constant love in the father-child relationship emphasised in both passages (7:7-11; 26:36-46).⁴⁰ Indicatively, Jesus did not jump at confirming God's will at the earliest appearance but endured through persistent and complete prayer.⁴¹ For him, thorough prayer is not optional but expected in every circumstance to ascertain God's will and that explains his teaching, 'when you pray' and not 'if you pray' (cf. 6:5-9a), with the certainty that God always answers. Jesus' confidence in the immediate fulfilment of his Gethsemane prayer⁴² is expressed at his arrest when he says, "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will *at once* send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" (26:53-54 NRSV). This indicates that he knows that God always answers him and that his death is his Father's will.⁴³

³⁸ Frank J. Matera, *Passion Narratives and Gospel Theologies: Interpreting the Synoptics Through Their Passion Stories* (New York: Paulist, 1986), 96-97; Brown, Fitzmyer, and Murphy, *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 670; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 494; Seung-In Song, "The Matthean Theology of Prayer," *Korean New Testament Studies* 26, no. 3 (2019): 657.

³⁹ Schweizer, *Matthew*, 494; Brown, Fitzmyer, and Murphy, *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 670; Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 182.

⁴⁰ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 358-359. Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 164-165 notes that in that familial relationship the child learns both by the parent's 'yes' and 'no' answer.

⁴¹ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 398. Pope, "Emotions, Pre-emotions," 36 avers that the aorist προσήζατο (26:42, 44) and not Mark's 'imperfect' προσήγγετο (a repeated desperate imploring) suggests a 'decorous one-time petition.'

⁴² Cf. also 21:18-22.

⁴³ Song, "Matthean Theology of Prayer," 653-657.

ii. The Narrator's Repetition Technique: 'Prayer' being referenced five times in the text (26:36b, 39, 41a, 42, 44b) underscores its importance.⁴⁴ By the repeated labelling and action, Jesus is portrayed as having the habit of praying always and with perseverance. Jesus' life of prayer is obvious throughout the Gospel in practice and teaching (5:44; 6:5-13; 7:7; 24:20; cf. 26:41a). For Jesus, prayer is not optional but a presumed general necessity.

Also, the three Gethsemane prayers reported in a singulative⁴⁵ narrative exhibit a literary technique found in Matthew, whereby normally the third repetition is modified to a summary.⁴⁶ For example, in 20:1-16 the instructions given to the first two batches of hired labourers are reported in direct speech but for the instructions to the later ones Jesus tells that the hirer 'did the same thing.' In 27:39-44 the mockery of two groups against the crucified Jesus is stated in direct discourse but of the third, the narrator simply tells that they 'also reviled him in the same way.' Matthew's narrator is known to operate according to definite numerical patterns,⁴⁷ especially of threes.⁴⁸ We noted in chapter three (3.4.3.6) some reasons for the repetition. Additionally, sometimes the narrator counts on the implied reader's familiarity with the formal techniques of the features and functions of repetition in biblical texts and merely alludes to the event content.⁴⁹ The meaning, similarity, and contrast of each prayer are enlightened by the threefold structure. The same thing applies between this Gethsemane prayer and other passages in Matthew. For example, the prayers' words and

⁴⁴ Jesus teaches praying for and in various situations (17:21; 21:13, 22; 5:44; 19:13-15; 24:20; 26:41), in sincerity (23:14), and in private (6:6; 14:23; 26:36, 39, 42, 44). Prayer is referenced about 18 times in Matthew.

⁴⁵ Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 96-97. A narrative is singulative when what happens x times is related x times.

⁴⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 479. Notably, sometimes, the first two are summarised and the third quoted (21:33-39); the first is summarised while the second and third are quoted (16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19); all three are quoted (25:14-30). Schweizer, *Matthew*, 494 agrees that 'same words' in Gethsemane implies "submission to God's will" and "not the plea to be saved from death."

⁴⁷ See Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 75; cf. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew*, 165-249; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*.

⁴⁸ Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 177. The genealogy divided into three sections of double-seven generations each (1:1-17) and the exhortation to pray stated in three different ways (7:7) offer some examples. Also, the numerical pattern prods the reader's consciousness into thinking of a theological narrative rather than a purely literal scene-by-scene event description. For instance, three is a special resurrection number (cf. 16:21; 17:23; 20:19).

⁴⁹ See Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 69-70 for type-scene.

phrasing, possessing similarities with those from previous passages in the Gospel (like ‘not to enter into temptation’ [6:13], ‘thy will be done’ [6:10]), delimit the narrator’s scope and focus the reader’s corresponding range for remembrance, linkage, and thoroughness in understanding.⁵⁰ Juxtaposition with the other texts creates the effect of enlightening, enriching, or synthesising into, the new text to give it more sense, and thus shift the new text forward.⁵¹ Proficiently, the singulative narrative of Jesus’ thrice repeated prayer and threefold visit to the disciples in the context of the Gethsemane settings serves also as the narrator’s style to portray Jesus as prayerful and loving God and neighbour. Asked by one of the Pharisees about which commandment in the law is the greatest Jesus puts forth first the love of God as the greatest, and then immediately links it with the second which is love of neighbour. In conclusion, he states that all the law and the prophets hang on these two commandments (22:34-40) to which he himself displays faithfulness in Gethsemane.

4.2.3 Jesus’ Watch

On the surface the observable main event of Gethsemane is prayer as declared by Jesus himself (26:36). To this life of prayer Jesus invites his disciples. Nonetheless, the three singled-out disciples are additionally invited to watch. ‘Watch’ contextually could mean to be alert in order to defend oneself from the danger of being ensnared by weakness of the flesh which turns one against doing God’s will (cf. 24:37-25:13).⁵² In the entire Gospel, while it almost appears that *praying* is taken for granted (e.g., 6:5), *watching* is being emphasised as an imperative, a difficult prerequisite, for entering into the kingdom (24:42-43; 25:13).

In Gethsemane, although prayer is mentioned five times (twice by Jesus and thrice by the narrator), the ‘watch’ motif is equally important since all three mentions of ‘watch’ proceed

⁵⁰ Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 368.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 368-369; see Allison, *Studies in Matthew*, 151. Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 62 and note 8 records, e.g., that Jesus is to be judged also by the same standards that he gives for all.

⁵² Stock, *Message of Matthew*, 404.

directly from the mouth of Jesus, denoting special emphasis accorded it. There is real need to watch to counteract the basic atmosphere of sleep. The word, ‘sleep’ (καθεύδω), appears in Matthew’s Gospel seven times (8:24; 9:24; 13:25; 25:5; 26:40; 43, 45).⁵³ Sleep has a negative connotation as a wrong action in the vicinity of real or perceived danger that allows evil to thrive. This is illuminating for the Gethsemane episode. The disciples remain ‘blind’ to the significance of Gethsemane, and the enemy is at his best when people sleep (13:25).⁵⁴

Therefore, in Gethsemane, Jesus conscious of their respective strengths and needs, firstly hints at the need for the body of disciples to pray, secondly orders the three to watch, but finally tells the three to embrace both watching and praying paired as double prerequisite.⁵⁵ This renewed summons suggests the seriousness and urgency demanded by the situation⁵⁶ as well as saying ‘this you should do without neglecting the other’ (cf. 23:23).

At any rate, it seems unusual for Jesus to watch. He admonishes his listeners to watch but never has he been in need of watching, let alone asking for support in watching⁵⁷ although the admonitions to watch (γρηγορεῖτε, γρηγορεῖν, 24:42-43; 25:13; 26:41) supposedly

⁵³ Jesus’ sleep may indicate his fearlessness of the storm (8:24) and that the little girl will be restored to life (9:24). Other words used in the English translation as ‘sleep’ (e.g., 1:24 [ὑπνος, spiritual sleep]; 27:52; 28:13 [κοιμωμένος, slumber or decease]) have different words and meanings in Greek.

⁵⁴ W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, eds., *A Concordance to the Greek Testament According to the Texts of Westcott and Hort, Tischendorf and the English Revisers*, 5th ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1978), 245; David Renwick, “Matthew 26,” *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 64, no. 4 (2010): 411-412; However, Schweizer, *Matthew*, 494 asserts that the disciples do comprehend and this is consonant with the Matthean characteristic of eliminating the Marcan motif of the disciples’ failure to understand (cf. Matt 13:16-17).

⁵⁵ Evans, *Matthew*, 435 says Jesus returns to the three and admonishes them again, ‘watch and pray’ being both literal and figurative.

⁵⁶ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 152-153 avers that the disciples’ drowsiness deadens the soul and thereby opens up possibilities for the power of the Evil One. Park, “Obedience in Matthew,” 138 posits that the eschatological/judgment tone is Matthew’s rhetoric of persuasion to obedience. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 397 asserts that watching and praying (26:41) by first century Judaism had become intricately paired showing the basic daily Christian attitude expected also in light of eschatology (cf. 24:42; 25:13) and Parousia, and the willingness to suffer (cf. 26:35).

⁵⁷ Significantly, Schweizer, *Matthew*, 494 pointedly explains that Jesus seeks “the companionship of his disciples because he wants to help them follow in his footsteps, inculcating in them the petition of the Lord’s Prayer found only in this Gospel—‘your will be done.’”

presuppose that he himself watches (cf. 23:1-4).⁵⁸ Whatever it may be, in Gethsemane Jesus divulges to his three friends that he himself watches now.

In the eschatological discourses, the reason for the order for vigilance as a major theme of Jesus' teaching lately in Jerusalem is ignorance of the anticipated day or hour (24:42-43; 25:13).⁵⁹ In Gethsemane, Jesus himself watches to know when the hour approaches (26:38, 45). This partial ignorance about the hour shows that the obedience of Jesus is demonstrated by faith that looks to the future, trusting in God.⁶⁰ He agonisingly watches prayerfully for the hour as it pleases God. Thus, the renewed injunction to watch and pray and Jesus' action of watching and praying⁶¹ stand as corrective for the disciples and the reader to be obedient by following the norms of the Gospel as Jesus does. If watching and praying keep one in the path of righteousness, then it is instructive that the exhortation also links this present moment with the overall presentation of Jesus as the teacher of righteousness (3:15 cf. 24:36-25:30).⁶² Since sleep represents the attitude of Christians that do not obey God,⁶³ and so is used as a foil to highlight Jesus' alertness and Gethsemane obedience, Jesus by contrast is portrayed to live appropriately obedient to God. This helps him interpret the signs of the time (24:3)⁶⁴ for his disciples. He suspects the hour from afar (26:38), knows when it is near (26:45), and announces its arrival (26:46).

⁵⁸ In Matthew's Gospel it appears six times (24:42, 43; 25:13; 26:38, 40, 41). Also, what a character says about another reveals something about themselves (cf. 3.4.3.2 above).

⁵⁹ Dunn and Rogerson, *Commentary on the Bible*, 1057. Therefore, the consequence of this ignorance should be an ongoing alertness. I am, nevertheless, not treating the eschatological dimension of Gethsemane.

⁶⁰ McCabe, *God, Christ and Us*, 4.

⁶¹ Patte, *Matthew*, 369 adds that through watching and praying Jesus overcomes the temptation (cf. 26:41) to deny his Father.

⁶² Righteousness in Jesus' first spoken words in the Gospel is programmatic for understanding Jesus in Matthew.

⁶³ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 397 attests that in the first century Judaism sleep was used more metaphorically to symbolise the attitude of Christians disobedient to the Lord's command.

⁶⁴ Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller*, 165.

4.2.4 Hour

In Gethsemane the use of the term, ‘hour,’ is in relation to the Passion and is a central element in the watch. As earlier said, watch seems to be more figurative than literal and likewise the use of ‘hour’ in both 26:40 and 26:45 seems to be more figurative than literal. However, both the literal and especially metaphorical senses are to be upheld in this study while the eschatological undertone may be in the background.⁶⁵

i. ‘One Hour’: The ‘one hour’ in Jesus’ question (26:40) may reflect the duration of his watch so far as well as being framed as an appeal to the memory either reminiscent of his last command to the trio to watch with him (26:38) or, by extension, of the disciples’ earlier boast of undying allegiance to him (26:31-35). This durative sense may also recall ‘one hour’ as used in the parable of the workers in the vineyard (20:1-16); the only other place the exact phrase (μίαὺν ὥραν) is used (20:12). There, ‘one hour’ is synonymous with the eleventh hour. Synthesising the two texts may suggest that the present moment in Gethsemane is equivalent to the ‘eleventh hour’ before Jesus’ death. However, this hour equals not just a time of retributive and distributive justice as demanded by the hirelings but also of grace and divine generosity toward the disciples as intercalated by the hirer. In saying that, Jesus is also mindful of eschatological re-compensatory payment (16:27).

ii. ‘The Hour’: ‘The hour’ as used in 26:45 is a metaphor for the Passion⁶⁶ and it is used in the locative chronological sense to stipulate the Passion within the earlier specified time. ‘The hour is near’ (ἤγγικεν ἡ ὥρα, 26:45) resonates with the broader and vaguer, ‘my time is near’ (Ὁ καιρὸς μου ἐγγύς, 26:18), relating to the time of Jesus’ death.⁶⁷ Matthew’s Jesus has been anticipating this hour and even in Gethsemane does not pray that ‘the hour’ should pass.

⁶⁵ See Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 79.

⁶⁶ Kelber, *The Passion in Mark*, 44; Huizenga, “Obedience Unto Death,” 525.

⁶⁷ It may also relate to the nearness of the kingdom, cf. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7.

The definite article, ‘the,’ qualifying ‘hour’ and ‘betrayer’ and indicating particularity refers back to what Jesus has earlier told the disciples in connection with ‘watching’ (24:36-42; 25:13; 26:18) and his ‘betrayal’ (17:22; 20:18; 26:2, 21) respectively. The place, time, characters, and all acts by Jesus and opponents (cf. 12:14, 34; 26:3-4) providentially merge to produce God’s will (26:54).⁶⁸ The framed poetry, “Behold the hour...Behold the betrayer,”⁶⁹ produces the literary effect of having the betrayer specify and illuminate the hour (ὥρα).⁷⁰ The double ‘behold’ and this ‘hour’ indicate that in 26:45-46 the Gethsemane watch arrives at its climax.⁷¹ Jesus’ call and poise to ‘behold’ becomes an invitation to see things in proper perspective through the eyes of God. Recalling his previous Passion predictions,⁷² now all is set for the Passion. Having overcome the temptation Jesus is ready for the next step.⁷³

Therefore, ‘one hour’ may, with ‘the hour,’ have a correlation which attempts to portray Jesus’ obedience in temporality, conveying the idea that the death of Jesus, or the righteous one, has God’s set time and is never untimely (cf. 26:18).⁷⁴ This is corroborated by the simultaneity of the arrival of Jesus, the hour, betrayer, and sinners for the arrest (26:46). This ‘convergence’ also means that even the infuriation of the evil agents to bring the obedient Jesus to death is, paradoxically, no accident (16:21; 26:45, 55-56). The evil agents may remain deluded that their programme is a success whereas their evil agenda is only being accommodated to further the grander programme of God in which Jesus freely immerses himself. The betrayal as fulfilment of earlier predictions (17:22; 20:18; 26:2) reveals the

⁶⁸ Huizenga, “Obedience Unto Death,” 523; cf. also Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 49. The convergence is also reminiscent of Matthew’s genealogy and infancy narrative (Matt 1-2) to communicate that God is the purposeful guide in Israel’s drama played out in Jesus as, in fact, in all of creation.

⁶⁹ Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 2. Poetry framed in a narrative calls for special attention.

⁷⁰ See also Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 168.

⁷¹ See Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 48-49 for similar view on baptism episode; Tedford, “The Agony of Indeterminacy,” 54.

⁷² Evans, *Matthew*, 436.

⁷³ Schweizer, *Matthew*, 494.

⁷⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 482. Mostly, Jesus’ interactions and prophetic declarations of healings, e.g., are ‘located’ in exactitude of time—‘in that hour.’ Cf. 8:13; 9:22; 10:19; 15:28; 17:18; 26:55; 27:46.

handing over to be God's work.⁷⁵ A look at Gethsemane through the eyes of faith reveals that, on the one hand, God is guiding the circumstances and, on the other hand, Jesus is submitting himself, and these two actions blend to bring about God's will (cf. 1.1 above).

4.2.5 Son of God

To be so altruistically determined to fulfil God's painful will is an indication of a special relationship with, and love for, God. Jesus' Gethsemane prayer address, 'My Father,' is an inference to Jesus as 'Son of God.' The term, 'Son of God,' known by its various expressions,⁷⁶ is a thoroughly Matthean idiom⁷⁷ and central Christological title.⁷⁸ Jesus, thus, characterises himself as God's *unique* Son.⁷⁹ He often calls God 'My Father,' a relationship typifying obedience on his part.⁸⁰ Some intradiegetic characters, chiefly believers through a revelation, use it as a 'confessional' title in referring to Jesus (14:33; 16:16).⁸¹ Most importantly, Jesus' self-characterisation as uniquely God's obedient Son also agrees with the narrator's (1:18, 20, 23; 2:15) and God's point of view concerning him.⁸² In fact, the *beloved sonship* declaration constitutes the only words directly spoken by God on the two occasions of God's direct intrusion in Matthew's Gospel (3:17; 17:5). God's pleasure in Jesus is always

⁷⁵ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 175.

⁷⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 42 highlights some of 'the Son of God' variants as: 'my Son' (2:15; 3:17; 17:5; 21:37), 'his son' (21:37), 'the Son' (11:27; 21:38; 24:36; 28:19), and 'Son of God' (8:29; 27:54), 'son' (1:21, 23, 25).

⁷⁷ Kingsbury, *Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 75 and Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 18 imply that because the Christological title, 'Son of God,' is a variant of 'my Father,' which is a Matthean idiom, 'Son of God' could be construed as a Matthean idiom.

⁷⁸ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 40-41 (or (40-83).

⁷⁹ In many passages Jesus calls God his Father (7:21; 10:32, 33; 11:27; 12:50; 15:13; 16:17; 18:10, 19, 35; 20:23; 25:34; 26:29, 39, 42; 26:53). The high priest and chief priests use his claim as 'Son of God' in mockery (27:40, 43) and blasphemy (26:63-65). About Jesus' sonship, see Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 185; P. E. Hallett, ed., *St. Thomas More's History of the Passion* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1941), 37. Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 62 maintains that although both Jesus and the disciples are identified as 'Son' and 'sons' of the Father (5.18; 20.23) respectively, Matthew's Gospel carefully differentiates between Jesus speaking of himself in terms of 'my Father' (never 'Our Father') and of the disciples as 'your Father.' The disciples enjoy privileges of sonship to the Father because of their fraternal relationship with Jesus (28:10).

⁸⁰ See Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 177 (cf. 7:21; 10:32, 33; 11:27; 12:50; 15:13; 16:17; 18:10, 19, 35; 20:23; 25:34; 26:29, 39, 42, 53); Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 2-3; Kingsbury, "Plot of Matthew's Story," 16-17. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 113-114 describes Jesus' obedience as always being in complete agreement with God's will.

⁸¹ This is also the Lord's angel's view (1:20), and the centurion's (and those with him at the cross) (27:54). Even the devil (4:1-11) and demons (8:29) recognise him thus.

⁸² Jesus alludes to himself in parables as God's Son (21:37; 22:2).

expressed in the context of Jesus' sonship (cf. 3:15-17; 17:5).⁸³ Significantly, even the devil recognises and uses Jesus' fundamental 'filial self-consciousness' as a platform and major focus to tempt him.⁸⁴

However, in Gethsemane his commitment to his sonship literally is to be proved through his knowledge and humble obedience in accepting his Father's will to die (26:39).⁸⁵ Interestingly, as soon as Son of God is referred to in many passages, what follows is a thought about the Passion (3:17-4:1-11; 16:13-21; 17:5-12).⁸⁶ Jesus' horrible death is certain if he remains committed as God's obedient Son (cf. 26:63-66).⁸⁷ Gethsemane in a way demonstrates the quality of Jesus' hearing as perfectly theocentric in the delicate balance or proportion between a formal application of the law and love.⁸⁸ Fulfilment of the law in Jesus can be perceived remotely in terms of his choice of priorities which gives greater weight to spiritual matters of faith and love (9:13; 12:7) which proceeds from the heart rather than to only physical factors in conformity with the law. Put differently, Jesus' true hearing makes possible the obedience from the heart produced through love, and this does not only satisfy

⁸³ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 70-71, 75.

⁸⁴ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 78; Derek A. Olsen, *Reading Matthew with Monks: Liturgical Interpretation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015), 123; Longenecker, "Foundational Conviction of Christology," 484. Michael Morris, "Deuteronomy in the Matthean and Lucan Temptation in Light of Early Jewish Antidemonic Tradition," *CBQ* 78, no. 2 (2016): 292 note 4 and Andrew Schmutzer, "Jesus' Temptation: A Reflection on Matthew's Use of Old Testament Theology and Imagery," *ATJ* (2008):19 aver that the Greek εἰ ('if') is a first class conditional which assumes the truth of the statement. Thus, the devil's statement in 4:3, 6 can be translated as, 'since you are the Son of God...' Hence, the devil is not tempting Jesus to prove that he is God's Son but tempts him in the manner he is to live and minister as God's Son. I sense that in Gethsemane, the temptation could also be: 'since you are God's Son you can make possible an option other than drinking the cup.'

⁸⁵ Bauer and Powell, *Treasures New and Old*, 92; Meier, *Matthew*, 228; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 80-8. Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death," 524-525 says that the inevitability of Jesus' death is actually only due to Jesus' chosen inflexible determination to obey his Father sacrificially to the last.

⁸⁶ In Matthew, sonship and obedience intertwine (cf. 3:15-17; 4:1-11); see Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 78.

⁸⁷ Also Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 81; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 45. The internal prolepses (14:1-13a; 23:29-32), Jesus' Passion predictions (16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19), allusions, (9:15; 12:38-40; 17:9-12 cf. 27:63; 26:2, 6-13, 26-29, 31) and parables about his death (21:33-41; 22:1-10) all suggest it.

⁸⁸ See Don Garlington, *In Defense of the New Perspective on Paul: Essays and Reviews* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 13.

the demands of the law but is the real fulfilment of the law.⁸⁹ The defective hearing of those who oppose and reject Jesus (12:1-14; 13:10-15; cf. 13:1-9) and, thereby, have ‘forced’ him to come to Gethsemane highlights Jesus’ obedience to God. The test of the quality of his obedient relationship with God will be based on his relationship with this central cup in Gethsemane.

4.2.6 Cup

In the Gethsemane context, the metaphorical cup⁹⁰ could be understood as a bitter painful situation, symbolising suffering and death.⁹¹ It reminds the reader of 20:22-23 where Jesus asks the two sons of Zebedee if they are able to drink the cup that he is about to drink, and also of the cup that he took at the Last Supper⁹² (26:27), offering it to all the disciples as ‘my blood of the covenant’ (26:27-28).

Jesus’ agony expressed in 26:37-38 and progressing in the narrative is ‘enfleshed’ in the metaphor of the cup (cf. 26:39). It is natural that human fear and aversion to suffering in the anticipation of torture and imminent death breed sorrow.⁹³ Notwithstanding, having followed Jesus from the beginning is it possible to pinpoint the reason for the distress only now in Gethsemane expressed?

Some scholars point backward to the conflict that has characterised Jesus’ relationship with the Jewish religious authorities who are now resolved to kill him (12:1-14-15a).⁹⁴ Others

⁸⁹ See Garlington, “The Obedience of Faith,” 62-67.

⁹⁰ In Matthew ‘cup’ is mentioned seven times (Matt 10:42; 20:22, 23; 23:25, 26; 26:27, 39, inferred in 26:42, 44) and almost in every case, is metaphorical. So also Tedford, “The Agony of Indeterminacy,” 180.

⁹¹ Werner H. Kelber, ed., *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14-16* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 51.

⁹² Allison, *Studies in Matthew*, 232. Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 159-160 believes that it is definitely not the cup Jesus took at the Last Supper but the cup of 20:22. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 169-170 refers to the two opinions as possible. In any case, it appears Jesus does not drink the cup at the Last Supper since it is symbolic and foreshadows the actual suffering and shedding of his blood. Also, that the disciples *drink from it* does not translate to *drinking it* (see also Kelber, *The Passion in Mark*, 174.). The disciples only *drink from it* as sharers in the mystery of Jesus’ self-giving. Therefore, the sons of Zebedee are still to look forward to actually drink the cup they have accepted to drink.

⁹³ Mitch and Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 340; Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 154-155. Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 107 agrees that “Anticipation is sometimes more terrifying than the reality.”

⁹⁴ See Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 166. Cf. 26:1-5; 26:14-16; 26:21, 23-25, 28, 31.

suggest that it is probably due to Jesus' knowledge of the present secret plots in Jerusalem between his betrayer-friend and the Jewish authorities⁹⁵ (26:1-5, 14-16, 21-25) to arrest him in Gethsemane. Still, some others posit that as a precognitive character (e.g., 26:2, 30-35, 45-46), he foresees the painful treachery by his disciple (26:23, 49), the physical Passion he will go through, and all the horrible sins his death atones for (20:28).⁹⁶ I add that it may be due to any combination of these or more realities and the results of these realities that have caused his soul (the most precious 'possession' of a person, cf. Matt 10:28; 16:26) to be sorrowful to the point of death.

In any event, note that Jesus' precognition seems to become sharper the nearer the time draws as Jesus' three predictions indicate, moving in ascending order of clarity.⁹⁷ At 16:21, the narrator tells that "Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and **undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed**, and on the third day be raised" (NRSV). This is somewhat vaguer than the next which is more expanded and vivid. At 17:22-23 Jesus directly tells his disciples, "The Son of Man is going to be **betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him**, and on the third day he will be raised" (NRSV). Then at 20:18-19 he tells them directly again but more graphically, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be **handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified**; and on the third day he will be raised" (NRSV).⁹⁸ Therefore, I think that at 26:37-38 Jesus may be experiencing a heightened precognition and clarity about all his ordeals leading up to his death, and this experience is

⁹⁵ See David E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 250; Evans, *Matthew*, 434-435.

⁹⁶ Jones, *Matthew*, 299; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 154-156; Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 250; Mays, "'Now I Know,'" 522. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 401 writes that Cornelius à Lapide in the High Middle Ages strongly holds to this opinion.

⁹⁷ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 97 merely hints at this.

⁹⁸ All emphases are mine. The most constant expression is that on the third day he will be raised.

summarised as “this cup.” He has spoken severally about his end because this for him is an existential concern. Even though he has graciously accepted his people’s rejection of him as his Father’s will⁹⁹ (11:25-28; cf. 16:21), sorrow and fear are natural instincts in the face of death.¹⁰⁰ Jesus brings into Gethsemane his entire lifetime, linked with his vocation and reliability as God’s Son, encountering himself in solitude that involves a reconsideration of God’s intention for him in a covenant life that will bear only theocentric consequences henceforth more than ever before.¹⁰¹ Suddenly then it is as if he enters into the dark night of his soul and is ‘struck’ or ‘shocked’ upon realising his situation metaphorised as ‘cup.’

It is difficult to take any one line of thought since there is no obvious clue in the text. France agrees that Matthew’s Jesus’ self-disclosure reveals not the cause but the depth of the distress.¹⁰² Nevertheless, it is not improbable that the convergence and summation of all perceivable factors may be in view.¹⁰³ Jesus’ unwavering obedience ensures that he feels the full impact of every pang. However, Mays captures, in a sublime way, the likely source of the agony:

Because having to drink the cup was the will of the Father, the handing over was also the doing of God. Therein lay the true terror of the cup: The power and purpose of God were behind and within the evil and cruelty of the men who would dispose of him. Accepting the will of God meant for him the absence of God. Around the cross, men would snarl, "He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him" (27:43). And he would say, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (27:46).

⁹⁹ Also Stanley E. Porter, ed., *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 66.

¹⁰⁰ Mitch and Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 340; Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 154-155; Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 107; Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 80; Vawter, *The Four Gospels*, 360; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 483 all agree that quaking before danger is natural. See also Job 1:1-2:10 and O’Leary, *Matthew’s Judaization of Mark*, 65-66. Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 144 note 4 say that “The self-cursing of the Jews in 27.25, ‘His blood be on us...’ itself proves the innocence of Jesus.

¹⁰¹ Charles Haley, *Beyond Leadership to Destiny—Jacob’s Lifetime Journey with God* (Xulon, 2005), 129-136; Knight, “Wrestling with Two Texts,” 57, 64; Covington, “The Garden of Anguish,” 307.

¹⁰² France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1004.

¹⁰³ Tedford, “The Agony of Indeterminacy,” 133.

This final cry would be his confirmation that he was truly "handed over" and totally alone.¹⁰⁴

This agony definitely betrays a hidden fear in Jesus as well as clash of wills with God resulting in the distress. He who has talked fearlessly in matters of death¹⁰⁵ suddenly seems to recoil momentarily from it like a person who having known that he or she might die of cancer suddenly is hit by the news of the imminence of death. Jesus is 'stunned,' so to speak, faced with God's occasionally unfathomable will.¹⁰⁶ Every previous occasion of 'distress' in Matthew's Gospel has to do with the characters' sudden shock or unpleasant realisation as if 'stung' into distress (14:9; 17:23; 18:31; 19:22; 26:22). This is the situation the 'Gethsemane distress' points to for Jesus who has never been distressed. Clearly, this Gethsemane context is exceptionally climactic for Jesus.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the question remains: what exactly 'shocks' or bewilders him?

4.2.7 Possibility

It is in such an excruciatingly unimaginable scenario that Matthew's Jesus still dares to tread warily forward regardless of whether it is possible (26:39) or not (26:42) that the cup be taken away from him. The prefix to the prayer request, 'If it is possible,' is a conditional phrase used to introduce something that is uncertain. But this 'if' does not translate into doubt, on the part of Jesus, in the power of God to do things.¹⁰⁸ In fact, this 'if' is a first-class conditional that assumes the truth of the statement.¹⁰⁹ He knows and has earlier firmly

¹⁰⁴ Mays, "Now I Know," 522.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. 9:24-25; 10:28; 11:5; 12:39-40; 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-18; 21:38-39; 23:31-32; 26:2, 18, 24-31.

¹⁰⁶ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 655.

¹⁰⁷ See also Tedford, "The Agony of Indeterminacy," 54; Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 159-160; Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 132 says so for Mark; Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 650-651. They all say Jesus is 'shocked,' 'stunned,' 'bewildered.'

¹⁰⁸ Meier, *Matthew*, 324; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 167; Powell, *God With Us*, 36-37.

¹⁰⁹ See Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 75. And additionally, as at 4:1-11, here Satan is testing not the fact but the mode of Jesus' obedience knowing that Jesus, Son of God, is capable himself of removing the cup if he wants to. Jesus has faith both in the power of God to do things and in his own (man's) capability to do the 'impossible' (cf. 17:20; 21:21) but he employs his faith in the service of God (filial obedience) and does not just do what is

asserted that impossibility is only a mortal's language, for with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26)¹¹⁰ and that one receives *anything* prayed for in faith (21:22). Moreover, that all things are possible with God covers both things in God's perfect will and things in his permissive will such as the taking away of the cup at present. Therefore, the striving prayer of possibility is not implying that there is something such as this which is an impossibility with God (cf. 19:26), but that God can say 'no' to Jesus like a parent who still means well for their child.¹¹¹

Put otherwise, the conditional clause, 'if possible,' in Matthew's narrative seems to imply knowledge and confidence, for the reader, of the dynamism of bringing about that which is wished but that the action does not turn out as stated. A similar expression is used in 24:24 for something that God may not give in to—allowing the elect to be led astray.¹¹² It is likely used here as a clue to the reader that things will not turn out in favour of this statement.

There is a deeper structure at work here. Because all things are possible with God, the 'scandalous' death of God's beloved Son at the hands of those he has come to save, is itself a possibility which Jesus is open to accept in exemplification of an equally 'scandalous' obedience. Just before they entered Gethsemane, Jesus had told his disciples that his obedience would scandalise them which would lead to their deserting him (cf. 26:31, 42, 56).¹¹³ The depth of this obedience is reckonable in that Jesus is free and if he wants to he can

possible and easy but what is right. Porter, *Hearing the Old Testament*, 62 avers that Matt 4:1-11 "is about what might legitimately be expected of the 'Son of God' on the basis of Scripture."

¹¹⁰ See also Augustine Kanachikuzhy, ed., *The New Community Bible Catholic Edition* (Strathfield: St Pauls, 2012), 1700, note on 'The Rich Young Man' (19:16-30). In Matthew's Gospel, 'impossibility' becomes 'possible' (only) when one in the spirit of detachment relinquishes everything to God (19:26), and God's possibilities are beyond human calculations.

¹¹¹ James J. H. Price, "Prayer and Arrest," *Presbyterian Outlook* 186, no. 8 (2004): 15.

¹¹² In some places, 'εἰ' ('if') used alone is a hypothetical introduction to state a condition too late for what is wished (23:30; 24:43; 26:24).

¹¹³ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 524 suggests that because God foreknew and fore-willed Jesus' suffering he may say man's salvation was 'impossible' otherwise.

make possible the removal of the cup himself since there is no impossibility for humans with faith (cf. 17:20-21; 21:21). Nevertheless, he unites his will with God's. Jesus, son of humanity, in anguish, is crying out to God appropriately.¹¹⁴ Consequently, Jesus' statement is the case of possibility of reconcilability of his wish with God's design that he has often predicted.¹¹⁵ By praying for the possibility of the cup's removal, Jesus is not fundamentally recoiling from his vocation but displaying the fullness of his humanity¹¹⁶ which naturally shrinks from the prospect of suffering and death. His decision to drink this cup means that his being obedient to God cannot be severed from its painful consequences of facing the death meant for God's unique Son and again that being God's Son does not make him immune to suffering and pain. *This cup* is for *God's Son* and it cannot be dissociated from him without affecting the obedient sonship. Jesus cannot harbour two mutually incompatible desires in him: to remain God's unique Son and not drink this cup. In his choice making, 'opportunity cost is alternative forgone.' Therefore, this prayer implies also that because everything is possible (it) does not mean that everything is in accordance with God's will.¹¹⁷ The strength of his obedience is highlighted in his complete openness to receive whatever God wills without his trying to force God's hand to do his bidding. For example, he knows that God will immediately dispatch more than enough angelic rescue teams if he asks for them but he refrains from asking in order to fulfil destiny (26:53-54). Prayer has to be in accord, not with

¹¹⁴ However, if $\epsilon\iota$ is used here to re-echo Satan's temptation of Jesus to cast doubt into him, then it will equally show the devil's intensified determination to crush Jesus' resistance by exploiting, this time, the difference between Jesus' desire and that of the Father. This temptation is made stronger by the awareness that if he refuses the cup the Father will not force it on him (cf. 20:22); and this very situation too will critically prove Jesus' quality of filial obedience and submission to the Father's will.

¹¹⁵ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 167, 175. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 319 opines that the active God's will demands an active, not passive, partner. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1003 avers that Jesus asks 'for some other way.' Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 654 asks: might this cup be death by crucifixion and Jesus be asking "if he might possibly fulfil God's plan by some other death," or a deferment? Why does he want "this cup removed at all?" To think one knows the answer is to run the risk of 'presumption.'

¹¹⁶ Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 254; Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 655; Paul Thigpen, *The Passion: Reflections on the Suffering and Death of Jesus Christ* (Charlotte: TAN Books, 2004), 12.

¹¹⁷ Powell, *God With Us*, 36-37.

human but, with God's will ¹¹⁸so as not to upset God's salvific plan (20:22-28).¹¹⁹ And so 'if it is possible' underlines his free submissiveness to God.¹²⁰ It is not Jesus' ability that defines his portrayal as obedient but his choice.¹²¹ He has power and freedom not to drink the cup but he chooses weakness that God's will may be realised.

Undoubtedly, this prayer betrays Jesus' fear but also, and more importantly, his prudence and courage which will be no courage at all if fear were absent. It is legitimately human to recoil in the face of death¹²² and to hope for an alternative within reasonable confines. However, what proves Jesus' perfect obedience is his not insisting on the alternative. If Jesus prevailed upon God for him not to drink the cup, then inevitably, he would be no different than Peter whom he had called Satan,¹²³ reasoning like man and not like God when faced with suffering (16:23). His mission in life would be truncated. The 'success' of an 'answered prayer' at the surface level would impinge on the real success at the deeper level. But Jesus does not succumb to the weakness of the flesh intending to obliterate God's will. He strives for the divine in the spirit of self-denial (16:22-26 cf. 10:37-39)¹²⁴ and sonship.

4.2.8 Temptation

The Matthean Gethsemane episode is structured as a combined type-scene of tragedy¹²⁵ and the final trial of the hero,¹²⁶ the aftermath of which will determine the outcome of Jesus' impending physical Passion. It is a temptation type-scene adapted to the particular needs of

¹¹⁸ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 64 agrees with this.

¹¹⁹ Jones, *Matthew*, 299.

¹²⁰ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 177.

¹²¹ Jesus' choice (βούλομαι, 11:27) is never accidental or a simple resignation but intentional and so we may say that he chooses to sacrifice himself out of mercy for his people's salvation (1:21).

¹²² Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 154-155.

¹²³ Seemingly, it was a very staggering temptation that has the effect of drawing out the name, 'Satan,' from Jesus' lips (16:23; cf. 4:8-10) and in Gethsemane (26:39) Jesus is close to being 'trapped' but reinstates himself.

¹²⁴ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 382-383.

¹²⁵ Turner, *Matthew*, 631 and Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 282-283 both regard Gethsemane as one of the saddest stories in all Scripture.

¹²⁶ The caption is culled from Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 60; David Kenneth Jaeger, "The Initiatory Trial Theme of the Hero in Hebrew Bible Narrative," (PhD diss., Iliff School of Theology and The University of Denver, 1992), 195, accessed March 20, 2019, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Jesus' sonship and vocation and invoked as a means to deeply test his steadfastness. In the Gospel, the noun, 'temptation,' occurs in two places, (6:13; 26:41). Variants of 'temptation' (πειρασμός) are used in about seven places, five of them by the narrator (Matt 4:1, 3; 16:1; 19:3; 22:35) and two by Jesus (4:7; 22:18¹²⁷). Through many other words and in many other forms Jesus is shown to be tempted or tested. For instance, Jesus faces temptation concerning his sonship (4:1-11), the demand for a 'sign' (12:38-40; 16:1-14), Peter's remonstrance (16:13-23),¹²⁸ the Pharisees' question on divorce (19:3), the greatest commandment of the Mosaic Law (22:35-40), the tax question (22:15-22), and in the Gethsemane pericope (26:36-46). Each of these occasions tests Jesus' faithfulness by opening a dilemma demanding rebellion against God's will or continued submission to God as he understands it.¹²⁹ The devil is the chief tempter (4:1, 3) but like the devil, the religious leaders and others even outside the cited passages and without the use of the keyword, "temptation," do tempt Jesus in many varied ways (cf. 26:68). They are either in league with Satan or the devil has capitalised on their weakness and evil intentions to bring temptation to Jesus.¹³⁰ By way of example, in 12:10 the Pharisees tempt Jesus when, with their feigned ignorance and in the presence of a handicapped man, they try to trap him with the question of whether or not it is permissible to heal on the Sabbath. Not to help the man will mean contradicting himself and to heal will provide grounds for charges against him. Satan tempts in and through various agents and guises¹³¹ and obedience is the fulcrum of every temptation.¹³² Ultimately on the cross he is

¹²⁷ 4:7 could be added and it shows Jesus as *not prohibiting* being tested or tempted (22:18) unlike he had specified regarding his Father.

¹²⁸ Matthew 16:16-26 demonstrates that Peter's remonstrance becomes a temptation for Jesus, not because Peter means it so, but because having to die on the cross is something Jesus deeply fears. Test comes even through well-meaning characters like Peter and this is understandable as temptation is more of an individual's internal and subjective reality than external.

¹²⁹ See Gibson, *The Temptations of Jesus*, 17, 123, 194-195, 288-289.

¹³⁰ Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 96 notes 149 and 191.

¹³¹ Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 96 note 149; Cregan, "Garden of Eden," 261.

¹³² See Olsen, *Reading Matthew with Monks*, 123.

tempted three times¹³³ to prove his divine sonship. The passers-by deride him, “If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross” (27:40). The religious authorities mock him saying, “let him come down from the cross now...for he said ‘I am God’s Son’” (27:42). Even the bandits who are crucified with him also jeer at him similarly (27:44) but he chooses to die as God’s obedient Son¹³⁴ rather than acquiesce to ‘triumphalism’ before humans.¹³⁵ In Gethsemane he must prove this obedience in solitariness as we shall attempt to show.

4.2.8.1 Gethsemane vs Temptation Episode (4:1-11)

At any rate, Gethsemane immediately recalls Jesus’ first temptation at the outset of his public life. Jesus had insisted that John baptise him rather than having it the other way round so in that way they would fulfil all righteousness. Immediately after the baptism God confirms Jesus as his obedient Son. Thereafter, Satan, externalised in the wilderness, tempts him three times anchored on Jesus’ consciousness of being God’s Son set to fulfil all righteousness (cf. 3:15-4:11). The premise for the first two temptations is explicitly based on “If you are the Son of God...” while for the third it is subtly implied.¹³⁶ Obviously, in Gethsemane there is a high sense of the temptation (πειρασμός) motif akin to that of 4:1-11. Just as Jesus was tempted before he launched into his public ministry, so is he tempted at the end of his public ministry. Strategically located in the Gospel, these two great temptations would form a bracket of vast magnitude (4:1-11; 26:36-46) and, apparently, the apexes of the underlying

¹³³ Michael Mullins, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Blackrock, Dublin: The Columba Press, 2007), 565-566 maintains that the number three depicts completeness of attitude or action.

¹³⁴ David R. Bauer, “The Major Characters of Matthew’s Story: Their Function and Significance,” in *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative-Critical & Social-Scientific Approaches*, ed. Jack Dean Kingsbury (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997), 31. For Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 102 Jesus dies as obedient Son thus “his death has power to save from sin” (1:20-21; 20:28; 26:28). Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, 317-318 believes that the demons, sensing the power of the cross and their strength broken immediately as Jesus is crucified, are orchestrating the evil plot, reviling Jesus to get him to come down from the cross (27:42) but Jesus in obedience to God remains on the cross and thereby destroys Satan.

¹³⁵ See Gibson, *The Temptations of Jesus*, 195.

¹³⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 50-51 presses that even though the title is not mentioned in 4:8, Satan as well tempts Jesus as ‘Son of God’ and does not mention the title to avoid contradicting himself by calling on ‘Son of God’ to whom all authority belongs to worship him (Satan) instead.

lifelong temptation.¹³⁷ Expectedly, the level of this temptation equals or even surpasses that of the first temptation and the devil will release all his horrors and do everything within his power to win this spiritual battle¹³⁸ this time around. Nevertheless, Jesus' victory over the first foreshadows his victory in Gethsemane.¹³⁹

Jesus withstands all the 'storms' of Gethsemane completely and emerges as the last man standing (cf. 7:24-25). And when he finally 'rises' from prayer, he encouragingly orders the disciples also to rise and go with him, an indication of his supportive presence in all their experiences. By not yielding to the two great temptations and those in between, Jesus proves himself as the Son who perfectly obeys his Father.¹⁴⁰

Similarities: There are lots of subtle parallels between these two 'temptations.' They are ordeals of the same person, Jesus, in 'solitude.' They have mountain settings although this is not a perfect fit as the mountain location during Jesus' desert temptation only pertains to the third temptation and not the whole narrative (4:8; cf. 26:30). In each Jesus is tempted alone first before he confronts his human opponents. Both temptations revolve around sonship and obedience;¹⁴¹ and Jesus' rejection of Satan's temptation three times (4:3, 6, 9) matches his assertion of allegiance to the Father three times (26:39, 42, 44).¹⁴² He is tempted in both

¹³⁷ Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 307. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 79, 99-102 attests that the initiatory test launches "Jesus into his ministry of obedient sonship," through a lifelong temptation (16:24), in which Jesus becomes completely victorious over the devil, his minions, and agents.

¹³⁸ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 168. Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 160 considers 4:1-11 also as a spiritual battle Jesus needed to win in private if he was to stand in public to bear witness to his Father. For Madame Cecilia, *The Gospel According to St Matthew*, 2nd ed. (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1906), 207-208, while in 4:1-11 Satan tries flatteries and Jesus expresses his intention to remain obedient to God, in Gethsemane Satan uses 'the door of fear' but Jesus *freely accepts* the cup of death for God's glory.

¹³⁹ In both episodes it is clear that temptation is surmounted through prayer, and Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 648 sees this reflected in "the climax of the Lord's Prayer itself, (6:13; also 26:41)."

¹⁴⁰ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 143 says this of 4:1-11. Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 60-61 and Evans, *Matthew*, 435-436 both regard the 'temptation' of 26:41 as referring to daily sins and falling away from the faith (cf. 6:13; 24:42; 25:13).

¹⁴¹ Mays, "Now I Know," 523.

¹⁴² Obach and Kirk, *A Commentary on Matthew*, 269.

episodes to pressure God to prove his Fatherly faithfulness in meeting his Son's need.¹⁴³ He is tried on his desire to indulge natural instincts; to use his power for self-glorification and self-preservation. As Jesus did not do anything that was not according to God's will at the first temptation,¹⁴⁴ so in Gethsemane he refrains from submitting to anything that is not according to God's will.¹⁴⁵ For instance, there is the theme of power over the world which Jesus is tempted to gain through allegiance to God's rival (4:9) but which he eventually gains (cf. 28:18) by falling down in worship before God alone and not Satan who had tried to lure him into devil worship (4:6; 26:39a).¹⁴⁶ Jesus' resolve in the *Shema* (cf. 4:10; 26:39b, 42b) establishes the theocentric basis of Matthew's temptation and Gospel narrative portraying the Son as responding in unreserved love to the Father. In both episodes Jesus denies himself completely and lays down his life (16:21-25), for God alone is to be served (4:10).¹⁴⁷ He displays wholehearted and unconditional love for God with all his will (26:39, 42), soul (26:38) and strength (26:45-46),¹⁴⁸ and with his incomparable authority resulting from his righteousness, vanquishes Satan.¹⁴⁹ Notably, it is only after each temptation series that there is a mention of angelic ministry (4:11; 26:53).

Differences: There are also noticeable differences between Gethsemane and the initial temptation in the wilderness. The first temptation was before his public ministry and the second is after his public ministry. Unlike in the first, there is no identifiable objectified

¹⁴³ France, *Jesus and the Old*, 52.

¹⁴⁴ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 54.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 54-55 observes that it is obedience to God that brings sustenance and salvation, not food; and disobedience to God's voice brings destruction (Deut 8:20). So also Andrew R. Davies, "The Blessings and Curses of Deuteronomy 27-28," *TBT* 56, no. 3 (May/June 2018): 174. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 75 insists that at both the baptism and temptation (3:15-4:11) Jesus' obedience is in the context of sonship.

¹⁴⁶ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 61-64; Alison, *The New Moses*, 171; France, *Jesus and the Old*, 50-51. Luz, *Matthew: 1-7*, 153 and Olsen, *Reading Matthew with Monks*, 123 assert that it is not world power but Satan that Jesus rejects for Jesus will receive from God's hand (28:18-20) what he refused to accept from the tempter in 4:8-10.

¹⁴⁷ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 63.

¹⁴⁸ Viviano, "Gospel According to Matthew," 670.

¹⁴⁹ Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 160.

adversary in Gethsemane. The temptation is internalised and implicit; within Jesus' very self as Son¹⁵⁰ in an intense spiritual 'battle' before he faces his human opponents (26:47ff).¹⁵¹ Furthermore, unlike the first temptation of Jesus, there are two levels of temptation in Gethsemane: (i) that of Jesus and (ii) the potential one of his disciples (cf. 26:41).¹⁵² They seem to go in parallel, causing him great double concern. However, our study mainly concerns Jesus' temptation. The devil, being subtle, has a way of tempting directly (cf. 4:1-11) or through agents (e.g., 16:21-23; 26:51-54) as has been the case during the ministry of Jesus. The disciples, making no recognisable effort in Gethsemane to walk the path of obedience with their master, constitute another level of temptation for Jesus. He struggles to both maintain his obedience and to prop his disciples up. Besides, Jesus is tempted in the company of others, the disciples, who act as foil to highlight Jesus' steadfastness.¹⁵³ This temptation in the midst of lax, uncooperative associates becomes a steeper uphill journey. Significantly, Jesus does not explicitly pray 'not to enter into temptation'¹⁵⁴ but to be delivered from evil (cup). For he has always accepted the lifelong temptation in which he is steeped (cf. 11:25-26; 18:7) as a result of his unique sonship and the vocation it entails.¹⁵⁵

4.2.8.2 *Abandonment of Jesus by God and the Disciples*

Jesus does not just face the temptation of obedient sonship but much worse, he is abandoned in the heat of temptation. In Jesus' ministry of proclaiming God's kingdom, he has been rejected by the religious leaders and the whole house of Israel. In Gethsemane the theme of

¹⁵⁰ Mays, "Now I Know," 523.

¹⁵¹ Jaeger, "The Initiatory Trial Theme," 157. He describes trial or temptation in terms of physical combat.

¹⁵² Lim, "The Emotive Semantics," 122 also thinks of the two levels of temptation.

¹⁵³ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 322 explains the temptation Jesus warns his disciples against as everyday temptations and not eschatological temptation since the expected definite article is missing. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, 301-302 comments that in both the Lord's Prayer and Gethsemane the focus is on 'Lead us not into temptation' beyond our strength of endurance and not a rejection to meet with temptation entirely for it is impossible for a human not to be tempted. But for Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 179, 'enter into' as a technical term for 'entering the kingdom of heaven' (5:20; 7:21; 19:23-24; 25:10, 21, 23), means the testing is a real future threat, the antithesis of future salvation.

¹⁵⁴ I suppose Jesus has already been led into temptation like in 4:1.

¹⁵⁵ Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 160 offers that Jesus begs not to be brought to drink the cup just like he taught his disciples to pray not to be brought into the time of trial. Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 179 submits that a thread of eschatology binds the two prayers together.

abandonment is stronger and with two prongs. Both his disciples and God desert him. The disciples' symbolic abandonment of him started from the onset of the Jerusalem journey with their increasing difficulty in understanding (cf. 15:12, 15) and accepting the mission of a suffering Messiah (16:22-23) whose patience is often being tried (17:17). In Gethsemane their total silence and perceived inconformity with Jesus' orders anticipates their physical abandonment which reaches its height in their desertion (26:56) and complete denial of Jesus accompanied with curses, 'I do not know the man' (cf. 26:69-74).¹⁵⁶ All this fulfils Jesus' prophetic expectation (26:31)¹⁵⁷ but that does not diminish the felt pain of betrayal.

Also, God's abandonment of Jesus is measured by God's complete silence to his prayers. Not that God has ever been portrayed as explicitly answering his prayers except by circumstantial evidence, like when he was able to feed multitudes with little food after praying (Matt 14:15-21; 15:32-38; cf. also 21:18-22). The height of God's forsakenness is felt on the cross in the midst of mockery recalling and matching the first temptation with Satan: 'if he is God's Son...' (27:40-44). This lasts until terminally Jesus has to voice out his forsakenness: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (27:46 NRSV).¹⁵⁸ Silence and abandonment from both disciples and God test his obedience.¹⁵⁹ How can one's obedience to God be authenticated when that same God seems to have turned his back on Jesus as if in support of Jesus' opponents? Thus, the test of obedience is harder. Yet, Jesus does not rescind his decision of committed obedience *ad infinitum*. Whether progressively abandoned by the

¹⁵⁶ The last words of the representative disciple in the entire narrative (26:74; cf. 16:16-19). After now they are all designated as a body—'disciples' (27:64; 28:7-8, 13, 16), the reader inclusive (28:19).

¹⁵⁷ See Harkins, "Ritualizing Jesus' Grief," 184-187.

¹⁵⁸ Song, "Matthean Theology of Prayer," 655.

¹⁵⁹ Also Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 307 who owes her idea to Jürgen Moltmann's view that Gethsemane is a scene indicative of division between Father and Son who have been in unalloyed relationship throughout life.

disciples and/or God, Jesus is iron-determined to do what he knows to be God's will for him as revealed in the Scriptures (26:54).¹⁶⁰

Observably, God and the disciples may exhibit the same action of silent renunciation but it stems from a differing viewpoint and characterisation of Jesus. If the disciples find the height of his obedience impossible to attain and, therefore, seem to reject his mission, God 'abandons' him because he trusts him to be able to deal with the temptation on his own. God's silence is the silence of majestically testing Jesus and paradoxically of trust for Jesus' capability to handle the situation alone (26:53). Thus, God's passivity is the 'divine passive'¹⁶¹ and means, therefore, that God is most active through the activities of all those involved in the drama of bringing about his will. Never assisted during a temptation,¹⁶² Jesus is seemingly on his own, totally abandoned under its full weight (cf. 4:1-11). This makes the obedience free, authentic, mature, and merit-worthy. In this way, the quality of obedience exhibited by Jesus is not reduced to 'assisted obedience' which transfers commendation to the helper. Jesus takes full credit for this obedience.

Jesus has no *counsellor* to guide him through temptation except the Scripture, the Word of God (cf. 4:1-11; 16:1-4; 19:3-9). Jesus assigns *companions* to himself but rejects the misleading counsel of Peter, his self-appointed *counsellor*. In Gethsemane as in all temptations throughout his life, the Scripture is his 'guide' and weapon of victory with regard to obeying God. He is faithful to the Scriptures¹⁶³ which for him record God's will. His predictions and the 'divine necessity' sayings (δεῖ sayings; 16:21; cf. 26:53-54) that he 'must'

¹⁶⁰ Olsen, *Reading Matthew with Monks*, 123. Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 184-185 submits that 26:54 reveals that Jesus might have gotten this insight during his Gethsemane prayer and this would add to Jesus' source of composure and security that it is Israel's Scripture finding fulfilment in him.

¹⁶¹ See chapter three above (3.4.3.3 and 3.4.3.7).

¹⁶² The ministration or activities of angels around Jesus is always a sign of his victory and not his need of assistance (cf. Matt 4:11; 28:1-7; cf. 26:53).

¹⁶³ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 153.

go to Jerusalem, suffer, die, and be raised on the third day confirm this.¹⁶⁴ In any case, the effect of the forsakenness cannot be downplayed. If the desertion by the disciples is ‘understandable,’ the uncanny abandonment by God is felt deeply. And the issue of dereliction by God is a most serious one here¹⁶⁵ because it subsists to the very end of Jesus’ life on earth. From the Gethsemane scene up to the death of Jesus, the reader senses that he or she is taken through a radically strange separation between Father and Son who have been uniquely intimate all through life.¹⁶⁶ Perhaps his most harrowing temptation lies in this seeming terminal abandonment by his Father which leads him in the end to cry on the cross questioning, ‘why?’¹⁶⁷ The last words of the earthly Jesus as he hangs on the cross are in his birth language; the best definite connection to exclusively express one’s profound emotions and thoughts to his Father.¹⁶⁸ They are transliterated words which read thus: “Ἡλί, ἡλί, λεμὰ σαβαχθάνι?”¹⁶⁹ (Θεέ μου, θεέ μου, ἵνατί με ἐγκατέλιπες; ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ [cf. 27:46]).¹⁷⁰ And although his second cry (27:50) is not quoted, the reader, used to the implied author’s summary technique of repetition, may infer from the first cry of dereliction that the Matthean Jesus crying “again with a loud voice” is synonymous with “Ἡλί, ἡλί, λεμὰ σαβαχθάνι?” These words would have remained as Jesus’ last endlessly reverberating question left hanging in the air except for the portents of 27:51-54 and the resurrection (28:1-8) which serve as God’s vindication of his Son. The agony is

¹⁶⁴ Menken, *Matthew’s Bible*, 62-63.

¹⁶⁵ Also Kelber, *The Passion in Mark*, 53 opines that God’s abandonment of Jesus causes agony exceeding that of the disciples’ abandonment.

¹⁶⁶ See Covington, “The Garden of Anguish,” 307.

¹⁶⁷ Invariably, dying people need some sort of consolation and assurance.

¹⁶⁸ Catherine Brown Tkacz, “Esther, Jesus and Psalm 22,” *CBQ* 70, no. 4 (October 2008): 722 also offers that ‘with a loud voice’ (cf. φωνῆ μεγάλῃ, 27:46) is ‘a biblical idiom for heartfelt expression.’

¹⁶⁹ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1075-1077 and note 15 explains that the prevalent view is that ἡλί ἡλί is in Hebrew while λεμὰ σαβαχθάνι is in Aramaic. However, he further expounds that it is likely that the Hebrew ἡλί had been assimilated into Aramaic to make the Matthean Jesus “use his vernacular Aramaic at this moment of supreme personal crisis.” Thus, he favours the full sentence as Aramaic since this will offer plausible explanation for the suggestion that Jesus is calling for Elijah (27:47).

¹⁷⁰ God’s complete silence as Jesus hangs on the cross, amidst derision, is a stern test of obedience indeed.

understandably extreme in the Son who, having enjoyed a uniquely intimate relationship with the Father, experiences equal abandonment to the depths of his being.

4.2.8.3 *Conflict within Jesus*

In Gethsemane, Jesus is plunged into his life's strongest temptation. Seemingly, he recognises for the first time the huge conflict between his will and that of God¹⁷¹ whom he proclaims to the people, resulting in his rejection. Jesus' distress, prayer, and admonition (26:37-41) betray the conflict within himself and between him and God. There is an internal battle raging between his weak flesh and willing spirit. There is a strong disharmony between his will (desire to live) and the Father's will (desire to die). This divergence between his will and God's is forcefully articulated in his prayer. He is inclined to "let this cup pass from me" but is ultimately resigned to God's will (26:39). Apart from the obvious tension between Jesus' will and the Father's will,¹⁷² we may be right in saying that there are two wills within Jesus—man's 'natural will' resisting suffering and 'filial will' that submits to the Father's will.¹⁷³ Noting that the Father utters no response at all, one may argue that Jesus struggles, not so much with the Father as, within himself in trying to chart decisively the right course of action.¹⁷⁴ In his solitariness, abandoned by God and humans,¹⁷⁵ Jesus is at war within himself.¹⁷⁶ Fundamentally, the conflict of Jesus is within his very self in his desire not to drink the cup.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷¹ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 395.

¹⁷² Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 105.

¹⁷³ Kirk Essary, "Calvin's Interpretation of Christ's Agony at Gethsemane: An Erasmian Reading?" *TJT* 30, no. 1 (2014), 60; Ralph Gorman, *Last Hours of Jesus: From Gethsemane to Golgotha* (Manchester: Sophia Institute Press, 2017), 55; Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 156-161.

¹⁷⁴ See also Price, "Prayer and Arrest," 15; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 479.

¹⁷⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 483. Kelber, *The Passion in Mark*, 49-53 explains that Jesus' abandonment by the disciples is most highlighted at the second visit when 'for their eyes were heavy' (26:43), an authorial explicit commentary (as in Matt 24:15; 27:8; 28:15), points the reader to an underlying level of perception even outside the immediate Gethsemane plot structure. On the narrative level they sleep as a result of physical exhaustion but on the deeper level, their heaviness of eyes reveals a blindness to comprehend the significance of the Gethsemane fundamental event and its implication. Thus, their natural sleepiness throughout is the outward reflection of their habitual incorrigible 'spiritual' blindness to Jesus' plight.

¹⁷⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 479; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 154; Vawter, *The Four Gospels*, 360; Madigan, *The Passions of Christ*, 4. The heartrending grief amidst uncertainty precipitates

On the narrative level, it is demonstrated as a private affair between Jesus and God, albeit, to a lesser degree than as at the first temptation (4:1-11) when he struggled with Satan objectified. Nevertheless, God is not pictured here as an external interlocutor in dialogue. Jesus is the only speaker and the same can be said of the conflict between Jesus and Satan. The conflict can be further externalised and dramatized in terms of an overhanging struggle between God and Satan¹⁷⁸ over Jesus. God and Satan respectively are representable cosmologically as two monumental, mythical symbols of principle¹⁷⁹ of universal good and evil.¹⁸⁰ In their own different ways then, while God keeps on saying, ‘this is my (obedient) Son’ (cf. 3:17; 17:5), Satan is saying, ‘if indeed he is your Son let him prove it’ (cf. 4:3, 6).¹⁸¹ Thus, at the microcosmic level, as Lim opines, Jesus wants his physical life but God wants his physical death while Satan wants his spiritual death. At the macrocosmic level, God wants Jesus’ ‘life’ whereas Satan wants Jesus’ ‘death’ and is using the horrors of crucifixion and physical death in order to destroy him unmitigatedly. But the moment Jesus resigns to his Father’s will, he experiences a deeply internal microcosmic shift that could be viewed as an “inner conversion,” for want of a better expression. Then the Father’s macrocosmic will for Jesus’ true ‘life’ becomes Jesus’ chosen zone in the end and Jesus’ microcosmic will to Jesus’ life which at the same time is the devil’s macrocosmic will to Jesus’ destruction moves into Jesus’ discarded zone.¹⁸² Jesus as an individual freely aligns himself with God.

into the ultimate emotionally felt abandonment of Jesus by God to make him voice it out in his bewildered ‘query of dereliction’ (27:45-46).

¹⁷⁷ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 105; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 481; Price, “Prayer and Arrest,” 15.

¹⁷⁸ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 83 though qualifies it as a battle on unequal terms because God is superior.

¹⁷⁹ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 98.

¹⁸⁰ Cregan, “Garden of Eden,” 262.

¹⁸¹ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 55 also may indirectly imply this. To me, then, the direct claim from these two ‘transcendent personalities’ will be like ‘you are my Son’ (3:17; 17:5) and ‘if you are God’s Son...’ (4:3, 6).

¹⁸² Lim, “The Emotive Semantics,” 122-123 details it.

Here is a hard struggle both within Jesus and between him and God as never before demanding Jesus' ultimate conviction and choice between what is right and what is easy (cf. 4:1-11).¹⁸³ The cup cannot be taken away without affecting Jesus' unique sonship and destiny like the weeds, in the parable of the weeds among the wheat (13:24-30, 36-43), cannot be pulled up without destroying the wheat also. They co-habit the same field until the end when they will be separated. The parable of the pearl (13:45-46) teaches that one cannot have it both ways, or have the best of both worlds. Jesus is manifestly in temptation which probes him to demonstrate how committed he is to obeying God completely in total self-denial.¹⁸⁴ Jesus' Gethsemane struggle in drinking the cup is resolved with his embrace of his destiny, "your will be done" (26:39, 42), which is the victory of good over evil.

Fundamentally, the force against obedience comes neither exclusively from without nor exclusively from within but the obedient one needs the strength from within to steadily carry on. By and large, in Jesus' Gethsemane 'drama,' his victory through core obedience sets him on the *ultimate* heroic role of delivering his people from the problem (sin) that threatens the Israelites (1:21) at this period.¹⁸⁵ In 26:36-46 Jesus gives Satan a knockout punch¹⁸⁶ and his non-resistant submission into the hands of 'sinners' is another victory weapon that still proves his obedience to what God wants (26:51-56; cf. 5:38-42).¹⁸⁷ And although by the end of Matthew's narrative it is not obvious if the people have been saved from their sins, there is a sense that the mission is a success vindicated by God (28:1-8, 18-20) and in process, through the Jesus-obedience, of being imbibed and taught by the disciples ubiquitously until

¹⁸³ For Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 181, Jesus struggles not to enter into the great *πειρασμός* (temptation) but with his acceptance of the cup enters it.

¹⁸⁴ Gibson, *The Temptations of Jesus*, 238 (note 1), 245.

¹⁸⁵ Jaeger, "The Initiatory Trial Theme," 78. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 163-170 stresses that in the initial temptation and during his ministry the seeds of Jesus' victory in binding the strong man (12:29; Satan) ultimately through his death have been planted.

¹⁸⁶ See Jaeger, "The Initiatory Trial Theme," 160.

¹⁸⁷ Also Allison, *Studies in Matthew*, 222.

the end-time (28:20).¹⁸⁸ Therefore, on the surface, Gethsemane may appear as a tragedy but the deeper structure in the context of the whole Gospel suggests that Jesus' unending obedience means God's never-ending victory over Satan and all of God's enemies. Even though Jesus' death is brought about by his human enemies governed by Satan (12:34), his lot is supremely under the guidance of God's will.¹⁸⁹

4.2.9 Obedience-Disobedience Option

Part of the drama of Gethsemane and its persuasive power for the reader is that the obedience theme also opens up the option to disobey. The theme of obedience as shown in the introduction (cf. 1.1 above) is pervasive in the Gospel and most often it is in a context which exhibits openness to both options, thus creating a narrative tension in the dramatic choice to obey or to disobey God. While some characters seem to display little or no qualms about disobeying, others appear to experience a struggle within them to do what is right. Relevant for our purposes, the first two chapters of Matthew present three interesting characters—Joseph, the Magi, and Herod. A first glance shows that Joseph and the Magi are obedient to God and Herod is disobedient. However, a careful re-reading could further unveil the possible underlying tension particularly in the two options open for each of them regarding the birth and life of Jesus.

The narrator directly characterises Joseph as a righteous man. Mary, his fiancée, is found to be pregnant before their formal marriage (1:18-19). His natural reaction is to dismiss her because she is pregnant out of wedlock.¹⁹⁰ He will be justified as far as the righteousness of the law is concerned. By the Jewish tradition he is right to disgrace her publicly but he is lenient and magnanimous by his plan to divorce her informally and to spare her publicity. With God's intervention Joseph realises that God's righteousness surpasses that of the law.

¹⁸⁸ Park ("Obedience in Matthew," 127) notes that a classical rhetoric intentionally omits some details in order to engage the reader.

¹⁸⁹ Huizenga, "The Akedah in Matthew," 315-317.

¹⁹⁰ Mary's thought or opinion is not conveyed and she is not given a voice here.

An angel of the Lord appears to him in a dream and reveals to him God's personal will for him in the salvation of his people. When he wakes up he follows the angel's directives. He takes Mary home as his wife, names the child born as Jesus, and thus becomes a faithful guardian to Jesus (1:18-25). The reader empathises with Joseph in his inner battle to find the right balance between upholding the law and maintaining the right relations with Mary and Jesus. Again, when Herod plans the destruction of Jesus, Joseph who has options does what the angel of God commands him in a dream and escapes with the child Jesus and Mary to Egypt where the family remains until all those who intend to kill Jesus are dead. Because of Joseph's obedience Jesus' life is preserved and the Scripture is fulfilled (cf. 2:13-15).

After Jesus is born, the Magi from the East choose to follow the guidance of the star in their search for this infant king of the Jews in order to pay him homage. Having come to Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, they unwittingly seek the human counsel of those who would rather have Jesus killed—Herod and all the Jerusalemites (2:1-7). Having been advised by Herod to go to Bethlehem and search diligently for the child and come back to tell him, they depart and are again guided by the star now from Jerusalem to the place where the child is in Bethlehem. As a sign of obedience still, they kneel before Jesus and offer him their gifts. They further listen to divine guidance in a dream not to go back to Herod who intends to kill the child. Here they have the choice to either go back to Herod or follow the divine directive in the dream. Whatever the consequences of disobeying Herod may be for them, they choose to go back to their country through another route thereby obeying God and aiding in accomplishing God's will (2:8-12).

Herod too has the option to obey or disobey. Upon getting the information about the birth of Jesus, Herod feels threatened by the prospect of a rival king. He chooses to destroy Jesus (2:1-8). When he realises that he has been tricked by the Magi, he organises male infanticide in and around Bethlehem. This involves children who are two years or under in his wide

guess of Jesus' age bracket so as to ensure Jesus' extermination beyond any doubt (2:13-18). Of all these narrative characters in the early events surrounding the birth of Jesus, Herod is the embodiment of the evil which resolutely seeks the total annihilation of Jesus. Herod's household for generations will remain perpetual antagonists of Jesus and of God's will (cf. 14:1-13). This evil trails Jesus to the cross which bears his offense meriting crucifixion as "This is Jesus, the king of the Jews" (27:37). Since Jesus stands for the obedience of God, all his opponents necessarily stand as a sign of disobedience. This tension that surrounds the birth of Jesus in the choice to obey or to disobey will be felt in his lifelong temptation and be a big feature in the Gethsemane drama where, as throughout his life, Jesus exhibits singlemindedness in obeying God.

4.2.10 The Lord's Prayer (6:9-13)

Jesus' victory is tied to his attitude in prayer. Seemingly, the Lord's Prayer offers an example of how Jesus normally prays. The Gethsemane event is saturated with the spirit of the 'Our Father' (6:9-13) which is at the heart of the Sermon on the Mount,¹⁹¹ a teaching about doing God's will (cf. 5:1-7:29). That Jesus moves away from all his disciples before he starts to pray is reminiscent of praying the Our Father in secret (κρυπτῶ, 6:6), a metaphor for the heart where God dwells, that hiddenness where no one else but God alone can see.¹⁹² This shows that he exemplifies what he teaches.¹⁹³ Jesus uses strikingly similar expressions in both prayers as we discussed in chapter two.¹⁹⁴ In both passages, the address to God as 'Father' (although the difference between 'my Father' and 'our Father' in the degree of

¹⁹¹ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 309 also makes this observation.

¹⁹² What is applicable to praying in secret is also applicable to the other virtues, e.g., almsgiving and fasting. In the same way, obedience is not something that is seen openly but something inside (cf. also 13:44) where God alone sees because if 'external conformity' alone were obedience then the hypocrites would be considered obedient as well (6:5). I owe this dimension of explanation to Professor Séamus O'Connell, director of Postgraduate Studies, St Patrick's College, Maynooth.

¹⁹³ Senior, "Directions in Matthean Studies," 14.

¹⁹⁴ Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 161; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480; Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 160; Jones, *Matthew*, 299; Song, "Matthean Theology of Prayer," 652; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 397.

possessiveness is significant) signals a familial relationship with God which calls for a filial obedience.

The expression, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου, ‘thy will be done’ (26:42; 6:10),¹⁹⁵ which forms an exact parallel, is the most striking similarity between the Gethsemane prayer and the Lord’s Prayer.¹⁹⁶ It is very central in binding the two prayers together. Using the Lord’s Prayer as a yardstick in Gethsemane, this perfect correspondence of the two phrases suggests that it is only now in 26:42 that this ideal is met,¹⁹⁷ that the force of the phrase in the Lord’s Prayer finds its full expression. Therefore, 26:42 portrays the close harmony between Jesus’ teaching and his exemplary living¹⁹⁸ and suggests Jesus’ complete alignment with the Father’s will.¹⁹⁹ This harmony may also show that, with regard to doing God’s will, Jesus makes no compromises. The fundamental case is that the correspondence between the two prayers reveals a decisive portrait of Jesus whose words match his deeds unto an undying fidelity and obedience to God’s will.²⁰⁰ There is already the promise of sustaining this portrait throughout the Passion which demonstrates that every component of his being is in harmony with God’s will.²⁰¹ Jesus’ obedience and his teaching on obedience pervade the Gospel (cf. 3:13-17; 5:18-20; 7:15-23; 12:33-37, 46-50; 21:28-32, 43; 25:1-30, 31-46; 28:20), and the passion

¹⁹⁵ For Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 309, therefore, both begin with ‘an aorist imperative in the third person.’

¹⁹⁶ Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 144; Neumann, “Thy Will Be Done,” 161; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480; Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 160. Schweizer, *Matthew*, 493 understands the second Gethsemane prayer as beginning “at once with submission to God’s will” and leading up straight to the third petition of the Lord’s Prayer. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 309, indicates additionally that both prayers begin with ‘an aorist imperative in the third person.’

¹⁹⁷ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 60 maintains that in 6:9 the Matthean Jesus establishes a standard, Οὕτως οὖν προσεύχεσθε ὑμεῖς (“pray then in this way”) in the context which includes this verbatim γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου (“your will be done,” 6:10). For Neumann, “Thy Will Be Done,” 179, Gethsemane is prefigured in the Lord’s Prayer. Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 647 reckons that ‘Gethsemane is the crowning prayer in the Gospel.’

¹⁹⁸ Senior, *The Passion Narrative*, 110-112; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480.

¹⁹⁹ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 171; Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 207.

²⁰⁰ So also Huizenga, “Obedience Unto Death,” 516.

²⁰¹ Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 166; Huizenga, “Obedience Unto Death,” 516; Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 77-78; Tedford, “The Agony of Indeterminacy,” 131.

narrative in particular will be a representation of Jesus' unwavering obedience.²⁰² "Thy will be done" portrays Jesus as a character that is not only willing to *accept* or *do* God's will but whom nothing will deter from exhaustively carrying out God's demand²⁰³ for the coming of God's kingdom (cf. 6:10). The positive form of 'Thy will be done' does not mean a passive acceptance of God's will but demands positive acts and also asking God for the enabling grace and strength to pro-actively participate in bringing about his will.²⁰⁴ The interplay between 'Father' and God's 'will' being done, as is obvious in each of these two prayers, may convey the idea, it seems to me, that no one dare call God 'Father' unless they are ready to not just submit but consent to fulfil the will of Jesus' Father (cf. 12:50).²⁰⁵

Furthermore, the meaning brought from the Lord's Prayer illuminates the Gethsemane context and vice versa.²⁰⁶ For instance, in 6:10 the 'will' has a universal sense and, therefore, even though it appears in a personal sense in Gethsemane, it carries a universal connotation which suggests that in consonance with God's norm, let God's supreme will be done in this particular situation. In every case, let God's will be done! Again, synthesising the two prayers shows that in practice it is not the saying of 'God's will be done' but the *doing* of God's will that brings salvation (also cf. 7:21; 21:28-31).²⁰⁷ Hence, God's will being done implies the earthly participant taking part in the life of heaven.²⁰⁸ In Gethsemane Jesus as always fulfils

²⁰² So also Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death," 516. I surmise that Matt 28:20 is the purpose or mission statement of Matthew's Gospel inviting every disciple to embrace the Jesus obedience.

²⁰³ Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation*, 70. Dillon, "Christian Obedience of Prayer," 422-423 posits that "thy will be done" suggests human need for submission to God's rule as precondition "for the final consummation."

²⁰⁴ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 319; Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star*, 182; Meier, "Matt 26:31-56," 188.

²⁰⁵ See also Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 55.

²⁰⁶ See Iser, *The Implied Reader*, 228; Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 178. Janice Capel Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again*, JSNT (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 43-44 states that repetition in a different context shapes its interpretation.

²⁰⁷ See Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 379; Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 165; Giles, "Obedience Theology of Matthew," 136-137.

²⁰⁸ See Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 316-318.

righteousness since in prayer and through active cooperation he accepts God's will for the coming of God's kingdom (6:10a).²⁰⁹

4.2.11 θέλημα

In Gethsemane Jesus, who is first motivated by the exercise of his natural instinct for survival, immediately relinquishes that by the deliberate act of man's will to embrace, though painfully,²¹⁰ God's salvific will (θέλημα). Even Jesus' very instinct for self-preservation is shown to be subordinated to his desire to do God's will and he refuses either human or heavenly assistance if this means going against God's will (26:39, 42; cf. 26:51-54).²¹¹ The θέλημα is the hub around which Jesus' obedience and all the events revolve. Jesus assents completely to God's will as God's immutable law. This is reflected in the 'divine necessity' sayings (δεῖ sayings; 16:21; 26:54) wherein Jesus constantly reminds his disciples that he must tread the path of suffering and death for the salvation of the world.

In the Gospel, the noun, θέλημα, occurs in six places (6:10; 7:21; 12:50; 18:14; 21:31; 26:42) and reminds the reader of the demand for better righteousness in deeds (5:20; 7:21).²¹² Jesus first uses the word in his teaching on prayer (6:5-13) in the Sermon on the Mount and lastly, exemplifies it in his own practical case (26:42). In Matthew's Gospel, θέλημα is consistently associated only with the 'Father,' denoting God's will to save.²¹³ Seemingly, God alone operates on the level of θέλημα. No human, therefore, is expected to exert their 'imagined' will since belonging in God's family implies doing God's will always. The closest a person can come is distinctly to 'wish' (26:39) and not to have a 'will' (26:42b) of their own.²¹⁴ In

²⁰⁹ Matera, *Passion Narratives*, 97.

²¹⁰ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 175.

²¹¹ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262.

²¹² Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 379.

²¹³ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 56; Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 167 note 29.

²¹⁴ See Giles, "Obedience Theology of Matthew," 144. In Matthew's Gospel, θέλω ('want') is used about 42 times but only twice indirectly from God's lips (9:13; 12:7) and five times from Jesus (8:2; 15:32; 23:37; 26:39; 27:34). Basically, therefore, it is a human language.

proclaiming God's kingdom, Jesus speaks of God as his Father and as the one whose will is normatively and unquestionably done (7:21; 12:46-50; 21:31)²¹⁵ and Jesus himself as God's authorised representative.²¹⁶ Jesus' life mission on earth is to do God's will. It seems to be taken for granted that God's will rules and the human will normatively has no place.²¹⁷ In 12:50 Jesus stresses the disciples' *doing*²¹⁸ "the will of my Father in heaven" as the prerequisite for sharing in his familial relationship with God.

However, at the start of Gethsemane (26:37-39) there is a brief apparent clash of wills between Jesus and God. Never before has Jesus spoken of his own will as distinct from the Father's.²¹⁹ Jesus implies that there is the likelihood of the human person choosing not to do God's will yet he submits so totally to God that his action matches his teaching regarding solely doing God's will.²²⁰ Notice that in the Gethsemane first prayer Jesus and God may 'wish' but in the second prayer even Jesus' wish is effaced before God's 'overruling' will (see 3.4.3.3 above).

The narrative norm reveals that it is the love commandment on which all the law and the prophets hang (22:37-40)²²¹ which guides Jesus in keeping to God's will and this same love-core positions Gethsemane to have powerful *causal connections* or 'teleological' links, with the entire Gospel. Jesus' choice for God's will in Gethsemane is based on love and

²¹⁵ Only sometimes in correcting the listeners' point of view regarding their obedience does Jesus employ 'your Father's will' (18:14), 'his/the Father's will' (21:31). Giles, "Obedience Theology of Matthew," 142 cautions that the Father in the parable (21:31) is representative of God.

²¹⁶ Park, "Obedience in Matthew," 132.

²¹⁷ St Augustine made individuals who joined his order to renounce the power to will their inheritance so that fair and objective judgment and allocation could be made by the order. See William E. Addis and Thomas Arnold, *A Catholic Dictionary* (London: Virtue, 1952), 836-837.

²¹⁸ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 386 attests that the emphasis is more on 'doing' than 'hearing' regarding God's will especially in Matthew 7.

²¹⁹ Gorman, *From Gethsemane to Golgotha*, 54, 57.

²²⁰ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480 though offer that from Matthew 26:36 through the entire prayer Jesus has set aside his own will to embrace that of the Father. Bonaventure, *The Breviloquium*, 169 says from the 'striving prayer' to the 'submission prayer,' Jesus has placed reason above instinct, his rationality displaying obedience.

²²¹ Park, "Obedience in Matthew," 102-103.

necessarily linked to both his past and future acceptance of God's will.²²² How he has lived his life obediently thus far can be understood as being the necessary cause of his Gethsemane choice and how he has lived can be the necessary effect of this Gethsemane choice. Again, Jesus' destined death in the future necessarily becomes the cause of his present Gethsemane choice as well as the effect.²²³ It works both ways. In the entire Gospel θέλημα ultimately appears to hint that Jesus must die crucified in atonement,²²⁴ and God's θέλημα becomes, at once, the cause and effect of Jesus' obedience.²²⁵

His external demonstration of obedience may oscillate between a formal keeping of the letter of the law (5:17-19) and the love-spirit of the law (12:9-13) but the substance of his rootedness in God remains constant. His obedience includes obedience to the law. Obedience to the law is incorporated in his teachings about admittance into the kingdom of heaven and he furthers this in the Sermon on the Mount by advocating for the righteousness that goes beyond merely conventional observance of the law or the motivation for people's praise (5:20-6:21). Jesus is concerned about genuine godly motivation and execution of any action. It is to this level of obedience he asks the rich young man who desires to enter into life to "keep" (τήρειω) the commandments (19:17-21). In Gethsemane the vacillation of Jesus between his place of prayer and the disciples which shows him as embodying love for God and neighbour respectively proves that he encapsulates in himself his teaching that it is in the perfect love of God and neighbour that all the law and the prophets hang (22:36-40). He is a complex character ever committed to God, but like a compass or sunflower, open to re-

²²² Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 48. See also Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 47.

²²³ Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 48; Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 18-19. Temporal succession throughout the Gospel is not necessarily causal. Nevertheless, it appears that in Gethsemane is to be found the choice of obedience whose causes lie both in the past, as the text's logic may show, as well as in the future, as long as it is the future goal that determines this choice in Gethsemane.

²²⁴ Giles, "Obedience Theology of Matthew," 143. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 176 suggests that the Aorist verb and the 'passive' (γενηθήτω) in both the 'Our Father' and Gethsemane imply a one-time divine eschatological action of enacting the divine will.

²²⁵ Walther, "Obedience in Matthew," 336.

orientating ‘Theo-tropically.’²²⁶ Even in Gethsemane with the brief conflict of wills he does not obey God less when he prays for a possibility of change of plan than when he submits to God’s unchanging plan for his death.²²⁷ He will drink this cup (26:42 cf. 20:22) freely and fully, albeit sorrowfully, as long as this is God’s will. In 5:18 *παρέρχεσθαι* (‘to pass away’) is closely related to *γινεσθαι* (‘to be done’ or accomplished), and the presence of these two verbs in 26:42, according to Deines, suggests that Jesus’ posture implies that God’s will cannot pass away without being accomplished.²²⁸

4.2.12 Transfiguration

Gethsemane is also reminiscent of the Transfiguration episode.²²⁹ The mountain setting and singling out of the three disciples recall Jesus taking these three up a high mountain where they witness Jesus’ glory and share privileged information (17:1-13).²³⁰ Here they are to witness Jesus’ suffering and again share privileged information, consequently, signalling the importance of the present event.²³¹ Having briefly discussed the interrelation between the two episodes in chapter two, I will focus on elements that have a direct bearing on obedience. In both passages Jesus is shown as God’s obedient Son. In 17:1-5, God confirms Jesus as his beloved Son worthy to be obeyed (listened to, cf. *ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ*) in consequence of his admirable obedience (cf. *εὐδόκησα*, 17:5b) to God.²³² However, that in Gethsemane it

²²⁶ See Cornelis Bennema, *A Theory of Character in New Testament Narrative* (Augsburg: Fortress, 2014), 6.

²²⁷ See Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Gospel*, 145-148.

²²⁸ Deines, “Righteousness in Matthew,” 76-77, 78-79.

²²⁹ See Neumann, “Thy Will Be Done,” 179. Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 14 and Allison, *Studies in Matthew*, 226-230 link transfiguration to the crucifixion scene (cf. 27:33-54).

²³⁰ See Jones, *Matthew*, 299; Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 56-58, 77, 80, 81; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 89, 109, 114; Meier, *Matthew*, 38, 190; Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 52. They all posit that the mountain is the Matthean favourite place of ‘showing’ or revelation (cf. 4:8; 17:1-8; 28:16-20) mainly of Jesus as obedient ‘Son of God.’ By its height symbolising nearness to God, Jesus may be about to be shown to depict what closeness to God entails. Jesus has a special relationship with the trio, the first disciples he called (Matt 4:18-22), he exclusively took to the Transfiguration Mountain (17:1-8), who form the inner caucus, are first to be mentioned on the disciples’ list (10:2-4), and desirous to be like him (14:22-33; 20:22).

²³¹ Kelber, *The Passion in Mark*, 47.

²³² Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 398-399. Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 50 understands the verb, *εὐδόκησα* (3:17; 17:5), as the Gospel’s way of saying that in Jesus, designated, God brings his Rule to humanity (cf. 1:23; 4:17, 23; 12:18; 24:14; 28:18-20). For Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 199 the Passion narrative

appears he is ‘not listened to’ even by the Father tests the quality of his unconditional obedience. Again, both passages are connected to the Passion. After both, Jesus draws attention to the Passion (17:9; 26:45-54) to be understood as the result of the committed obedience of the Son of Man.²³³ Jesus listens to God uniquely and accepts both glory and suffering. Truly alone in his agony, from his momentary inner conflict (26:39) he ‘transforms’ back to his iron-determined character (26:46). The word, ‘rise,’ at the end of both episodes coupled with the welcome ‘good’ and ‘evil’ interruption at the Transfiguration and in Gethsemane respectively (17:5-7; cf. 26:45-47) portrays significantly the indissoluble co-habitation of glory and cross in the obedient Jesus who, in glory or suffering, rises to move forward.

4.2.13 Son of Man

As Jesus prepares to exit Gethsemane to drink the cup, he characterises himself as the Son of Man²³⁴ who is being betrayed (26:45). The phrase, ‘Son of Man,’ one of the major Matthean Christological titles, pervades the entire Gospel,²³⁵ serving almost always as complementary to the title, ‘Son of God.’²³⁶ They are connected by the theme of the Passion but ‘Son of Man’ remains a more discreet phrase than ‘Son of God.’

Used first at 8:20 seemingly programmatically, it could be construed as creation’s representative of the exalted human species²³⁷ seen in paradoxical contrast for it is imbued

demonstrates that God’s obedient Son in whom God delights (3:17; 17:5) exhaustively fulfils all righteousness (3:15).

²³³ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 400; Stock, *Message of Matthew*, 404; Senior, *Matthew*, 303; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510; Meier, *Matthew*, 323; Reid, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 131.

²³⁴ ‘Son of Man’ is a title exclusively used by Jesus to refer to himself especially in public, in relation to his opponents, unbelievers or sinners (26:45; cf. 11:19; 13:41).

²³⁵ ‘Son of Man’ is used about thirty times (some of the passages being Matthew 8:20; 9:6; 16:13, 27, 28; 17:9, 12, 22; 20:18; 26:24, 45, 64).

²³⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 113-114. In Gethsemane, the obedient ‘Son of God’ is also portrayed as the obedient ‘Son of Man’ (also cf. 16:13-16; 17:5-9; 26:63-64).

²³⁷ See Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 6, 225; Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 118; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 38; Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web*, 95. They offer that among the Jews ‘Son of Man’ is self-reference and could mean ‘human being,’ ‘mortal,’ ‘I,’ ‘I myself,’ ‘this person here,’ ‘someone like

with yet unseen glory. Consequently, this is always a cause for amazement when the glory is glimpsed (9:6-8; 12:40; 16:27; 24:27, 30; 25:31; 26:64). Nevertheless, the Son of Man, an unflinching figure of righteousness, paradoxically remains controvertible especially to those who would rather stand against him. Only at the ultimate judgment when the whole truth is laid bare will all doubts be cleared (25:31-45; cf. 28:17).²³⁸ It is used cryptically in situations of conflicts of viewpoints (e.g., 8:20; 9:6; 11:19; 12:32) to describe Jesus and his earthly mission²³⁹ and in connection with the Passion and death.²⁴⁰ These conflicts and their drastic resolutions are real because each faction must be convinced of its stance to resist, label, and accuse the other of hypocrisy and imposture (12:38-40; cf. 27:62-64; also 23:1-33; 26:63-65).²⁴¹

Son of Man (or of humanity who outwardly is no different than any person) is used in contexts where Jesus relates to the public, unbelievers,²⁴² or sinners who presume they are the righteous ones compared to Jesus (8:20; 9:6; 26:20-25, 45, 64). For instance, at 8:20-21 where their points of view would clash, Jesus answers the teacher of the law (scribe) with the ‘Son of Man’ saying but answers a disciple with the ‘me’ saying (cf. also 16:13-16).²⁴³

me,’ in contexts of Messianic promise; and its use by Jesus to refer to himself hints at his approaching suffering, death and vindication.

²³⁸ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 17-18; Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 90 suggests that Matthew’s narrative while being ‘good news’ for a few, is concurrently and ironically condemnation for the many.

²³⁹ Also Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 42.

²⁴⁰ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 113-122 and Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 38 recognise three categories of ‘Son of Man’ sayings: (i) the works of the ‘Son of Man’ on earth, (ii) the suffering, death, and resurrection, (iii) the future glory of the ‘Son of Man.’ See also Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 379.

²⁴¹ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 282; Beck, *Jesus and His Enemies*, 100.

²⁴² These, e.g., scribes, refer to Jesus as ‘Teacher’ and Jesus answers back referring to himself as ‘Son of Man’ whereas the believers (disciples) call Jesus ‘Lord’ and he answers with ‘me.’ It is only at the Parousia—Judgment of the Nations—when scales have fallen from eyes that both the righteous and the unrighteous will refer to Jesus, the Son of Man, as ‘Lord’ (cf. 25:31, 37, 44).

²⁴³ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 113-122 has done an intensive and extensive ‘survey’ of this title (‘Son of Man’ as against ‘Son of God’ confessional title) with regard to its use to the ‘public,’ unbelievers, and sinners. However, I consider the ‘Son of Man’ title as being used always to contrast Jesus’ point of view, the perfect way of obedience or doing God’s will, with that of the opponents which, in the Gospel, is to be considered as evil.

The phraseology, ‘Son of Man betrayed into the hands of sinners’ (26:45), clearly contrasts Jesus as the sinless, righteous, innocent sufferer.²⁴⁴ The main encounter is between the righteous one and the sinners²⁴⁵ who ironically are for the moment given divine permission to judge the righteous one.²⁴⁶ Jesus accepts this as God’s will for him.²⁴⁷ Kingsbury rightly observes that in passages referring to Jesus’ endurance of mockery, abuse, and death, as is anticipated in Gethsemane, the two titles coincide (26:39, 45).²⁴⁸ Both titles show him as an epitome of limitless obedience for all humanity.²⁴⁹ Thus, the bridge verses (26:45-46) also aim not only to *display* Jesus’ foreknowledge and freedom and connect what is to happen with his previous predictions (26:2, 18, 21) but also *show* that the following events are not accidental but divinely planned²⁵⁰ and accepted by Jesus.

²⁴⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 482 think similarly. Evans, *Matthew*, 436 finds it ironic that those who had accused Jesus of associating with ‘sinners’ (9:11) are now acting the worst.

²⁴⁵ From the narrative itself, the Son of Man is betrayed to: the elders, chief priests and scribes (16:21), scribes (17:12), human hands (17:22), chief priests and scribes (20:18). This includes, by extension, all involved in his trial, condemnation, and death (26:3, 47). Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 29, 263, 281 and Kingsbury, “Plot of Matthew’s Story,” 17-18 think ‘sinners’ (cf. 1:21) may refer to the high priest—with the Jewish authorities, chief priests, and teachers of the law (16:21; 20:18)—with his delegation to Gethsemane, forming a unified institutional opposition to the Jesus-way. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 398; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh; T. & T. Clark, 1997), 3:501; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 482; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 76; and Blanton, “Saved by Obedience,” 393 describe ‘sinners’ as the lawless or transgressors of God’s law. However, while Luz and Davies and Allison specify for the immediate context both the Roman and Jewish authorities as ‘sinners’ (26:45) which reinforces Jesus’ innocence and thus presents his fate as caused by ‘sin’ of others, Crowe generalises more that ‘sin’ does not only constitute “unlawful acts but also the failure to do positively what God requires.”

²⁴⁶ Cregan, “Garden of Eden,” 262-263.

²⁴⁷ Price, “Prayer and Arrest,” 15 states that Jesus is given over to death by the action of his opponents, God, and himself. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 191-192 judges Jesus’ obedience as active for perfectly accomplishing all that God demands of him and passive for his willingness to suffer “the penalty of God’s law.”

²⁴⁸ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 114-117; Kingsbury, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 56. The two titles coincide in 16:13-21; 17:5-12; 26:39-45; 26:63-67. ‘Son of Man’ merely introduces Jesus’ earthly activity but it is central at the Parousia. Meanwhile, ‘Son of God,’ the hidden supreme title on earth, outranks ‘Son of Man,’ the supreme title at the Parousia. At the Judgment all shall behold the cryptic ‘Son of Man’ unveiled.

²⁴⁹ Kelber, *The Passion in Mark*, 44 and Thigpen, *The Passion*, 11 say Jesus’ lament and prayer in Gethsemane depict him as (i) having lost his courage in view of imminent death, (ii) being close to faltering in his resolve pictured in his Passion predictions, and (iii) being near shrinking from his vocation as the suffering Son of Man. In their view, Jesus seeking to escape his destiny in 26:39 is, therefore, not yet the Righteous Sufferer. Thus, it becomes appropriate that “Son of Man” is explicitly used when he becomes poised to embrace his destiny (26:45).

²⁵⁰ Meier, *The Vision of Matthew*, 188; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 482; Tedford, “The Agony of Indeterminacy,” 133, 145. The use of the passive voice (παραδίδοται) without the acting ‘object’ points to divine passive, conveying the meaning that the action is ultimately done by God.

4.2.14 ‘Rise, Let Us Go’

(i) ‘*Rise*’: Consequently, Jesus will show his disciples how to embrace God’s will. He tells them to rise and not be overwhelmed by the imposing forces. The verb, ἐγείρεσθε (‘get up,’ ‘rise;’ 26:46), is a resurrection word (17:9),²⁵¹ a wake-up call for the disciples thus indicating that Jesus himself has triumphed over his Gethsemane struggle.²⁵² Doubtlessly, this rising (26:46) foreshadows Jesus’ resurrection (28:6-7)²⁵³ but in the immediate context it is one that inspires courage and looks forward to other challenges involving the encounters in the betrayal, arrest, and the entire Passion.

(ii) ‘*Let us go*’: Jesus will ‘go’ to face his arresters (26:45-56).²⁵⁴ Jesus’ fundamental obedience through this act of free self-giving and the righteousness he will display all through the Passion invites the disciples to the same calling.²⁵⁵ The ἄγωμεν (‘let us go’) implies a decisive approach showing Jesus as willingly submitting to the divine will.²⁵⁶ There is a glimmer of hope for the command raises confidence in the victory of good over evil.²⁵⁷ ‘Rise, let us go’ is a double-command climactic construction intended to show that Jesus is not coerced into giving himself up but acts in total freedom and conviction.²⁵⁸ By continuously rising and going with Jesus, the disciples are to learn that being victorious in obedience demands constant endurance (10:22; cf. 24:13; 26:41).²⁵⁹ The ‘go’ also, therefore, anticipates the commissioning to teach the Jesus-obedience (28:19-20). The disciple must necessarily go

²⁵¹ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 394 sees a link between Transfiguration and Gethsemane through the keyword, ἐγείρω (26:46; 17:7, I raise up, wake). Renwick, “Matthew 26,” 412; Wright, *Matthew Chapters 1-15*, 102 view ‘rise’ (Matt 9:9) as a typical ‘resurrection’ word. Observably, every ‘rising’ is followed by an action either of going with Jesus or doing something for Jesus.

²⁵² Price, “Prayer and Arrest,” 15.

²⁵³ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 181 understands 26:45a as summons of the now risen Lord to the disciples (Church) to likewise watch and pray and comprehend “the force of Jesus’ next announcement.”

²⁵⁴ These two verbs, ‘rise’ and ‘go,’ are proleptic of Jesus who, having ‘risen’ from death, commands that his disciples ‘go’ to all nations (cf. 28:-6-7, 10) and teach the Jesus obedience.

²⁵⁵ Anthony J. Saldarini, “Matthew,” in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, eds. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 1057; Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 160.

²⁵⁶ Huizenga, “Obedience Unto Death,” 522; Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 255.

²⁵⁷ See Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 135.

²⁵⁸ See Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 81 for the quote and idea of building up to a climax.

²⁵⁹ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 72-73.

through what Jesus has undergone for the sake of the kingdom (10:24-25).²⁶⁰ At his arrest in Gethsemane (26:50b-54), Jesus neither resists nor retaliates and he does not welcome human or angelic violence on his behalf either. This is in keeping with his teaching to his disciples on nonviolence and the observance of the law and the prophets (5:21-26, 38-48). He shows love even to his enemies. In this he fulfils the commandments as one who practises what he preaches and, therefore, deserves to be called great in the kingdom of heaven (cf. 5:17-20).

4.2.15 Synkrisis between Jesus and the Disciples in Gethsemane

The only people physically present in our chosen Gethsemane enclosure (26:36-46; cf. 2.3.2) are Jesus and his disciples. Consequently, they are worth giving a special and an exclusive consideration in terms of a synkrisis or comparison. While the focus remains on the Gethsemane episode, we are carrying out the synkrisis here in chapter four and not, as may be expected, in chapter three because certain aspects of the comparison involve intratextual links with the other parts of Matthew's Gospel for a better comprehension. As we may have observed especially from chapters three and four here, the Gethsemane episode is replete with many areas of comparison and contrast between Jesus and the disciples. Since we have encountered some of them heretofore, we will limit ourselves to a few ones here. It is clear that Jesus follows God and the disciples follow Jesus. Therefore, in a way, they are all followers. However, they differ in their degree and quality as followers. Jesus follows God more perfectly than the disciples follow Jesus or God. When a disciple grows to be like the teacher (cf. 10:24-25), then, according to McCabe, they both share one mind and the learning or obedience process reaches its perfection.²⁶¹ Jesus reaches this peak but the disciples do not. In fact, Jesus is a representation of a perfect disciple whereas the disciples fail in their role as disciples. Thus, only Jesus qualifies in his singular position as 'Teacher' (cf. 23:8-10).

²⁶⁰ Schweizer, *Matthew*, 494 also states that Jesus seeks his disciples' companionship in order "to help them follow in his footsteps, inculcating in them the petition of the Lord's Prayer found only in this Gospel—"your will be done." See also Allison, "Anticipating the Passion," 706-707.

²⁶¹ McCabe, "Obedience," 282.

Suffice it here to restrict ourselves to a comparison between Jesus and Peter who is the representative disciple because what is said of Peter mostly applies to all the disciples. This comparison is encouraged by the rhetoric of the narrative as these are the only two personal names clearly mentioned in the text. The narrator's naming is significant. The Bible uses personal reference, assigning a name to a character, to bring out the character's singularity. In contrast, a character is relegated to anonymity and facelessness if they are only portrayed as a type character.²⁶² Hence, naming Peter lifts him out of this anonymity and facelessness. A name confers a prominent identity or an assured place in the history and future of the story being narrated and its symbolism is to be integrated into the social setting in the development of the plot.²⁶³ Although it hardly defines a character's personality, being named as Jesus and Peter are has a relationship with an increase in importance or uniqueness and may hint at their prenatal (or pre-naming) antecedents, their status, role, or even destiny.²⁶⁴ Their names were given to them by another (Jesus named by the angel and Peter [re-] named by Jesus) who are both reliable witnesses. Usually the name depicts more the character of the name-giver than that of the name-bearer who has no choice at birth.²⁶⁵ Therefore, Jesus is at an advantaged position as both a name-giver and a name-bearer. Jesus' name is given to him before his birth by the Lord's angel (cf. 1:21) but Peter's name is given to him later in life by Jesus. Their proper names signify their roles—Jesus means 'saviour' (1:21) and Peter means 'rock' (16:18). Jesus will save his people from their sins and Peter is the rock-foundation upon

²⁶² Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 330. Being nameless, as all the other disciples are, is being faceless. However, 'sons of Zebedee' (26:37) is a step higher than complete anonymity as is the case with the body of disciples.

²⁶³ Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 331; Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 82. Observably, among the Jews, names were highly symbolic and said something of a person's character. McQuillan, *The Narrative Reader*, 134 states that a "proper name should always be questioned" because the proper name is a most important signifier with rich, social, and symbolic connotations.

²⁶⁴ Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 330. From their initial call by Jesus, each disciple experiences a shift in role and status.

²⁶⁵ Therefore, Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 330-331 offers that etymologies should be limited and more so because a person's essence of being is "more ensured...than expressed" by their name which tells more of the character's identity, prenatal antecedents, status, role, or destiny, e.g., than of their individual secret and existential self.

which Jesus will build his church. Jesus' status as God's Son has remained the same from the beginning but Peter's name, given to him later in life, indicates a change to the new role and status graciously acquired by him as the head of Jesus' church to continue Jesus' mission on earth (cf. 16:18). On top of all that, Jesus' name is incomparable because it is given from heaven. Nevertheless, in Gethsemane Jesus' solid character portrays him both as 'saviour' and 'rock' while Peter yet needs to be 'saved' and to become the rock that he is meant to be.²⁶⁶ All these intricacies have to be factored in for a good understanding and appreciation of the comparison.

Furthermore, being in the same Gethsemane environment with similar circumstances, the comparison between these two characters is made more helpful. Jesus and Peter are both leaders although in varying capacities. Jesus is the prime leader and Peter is the leader of Jesus' disciples. Jesus is the active and alert head of this group and Peter is the passive and 'sleepy' leader of Jesus' 'sleepy' disciples. Jesus is the unique Son of God and Peter only shares in that familial relationship because of his relationship with Jesus. In fact, Peter has earlier been described by Jesus as satanic for thinking humanly and not Godlike (16:23). If both are considered as 'followers' of God Jesus stands out as the 'follower' or disciple par excellence and Peter as a total failure. Because Peter is in the company of the other disciples and Jesus is alone, success in accomplishing God's will is proved not to depend on quantity as much as quality which is represented by Jesus.

Beyond being in a similar Gethsemane setting, their attitude and response to their situation is very important and worth comparing. The whole group is in a sinister place and time. If the shepherd is struck they will all be affected (26:31). But how do they fare? In grief Jesus bares his heart to his disciples (26:38) and to God in prayer (26:39-44) whereas Peter appears

²⁶⁶ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 69, nevertheless, avers that an analogy can also stress a contrast between name and character often to create an ironic effect.

completely opaque. While Jesus checks on his disciples frequently, Peter seems unmoved and completely oblivious of his environment. Steeped in temptation, Jesus watches, prays, and is determined not to fall out with God but Peter does not watch and pray throughout and so remains in danger of entering and falling into temptation. Thus, in the end Jesus is ready to go in the flow of God's will but Peter is unprepared when the hour and the betrayer approach. Determined to have God's will done, Jesus does not allow his willing spirit to be surmounted by the weakness of the flesh but Peter's weakness of the flesh overcomes his willing spirit (26:41) making him unable to remain obedient to God. Jesus' unique sonship is proved by his perfect obedience to God but Peter, although with a willing spirit to obey God (cf. 26:31-35), is still being weighed down by weakness of the flesh. There is a mixture of good and evil yet in him. Also, Jesus stands by God and Peter at all times but Peter abandons Jesus and, by extension, God in difficult times (26:56, 69-75). Jesus' words match his deeds and he remains faithful to God (cf. 3:15) to the end but Peter does not keep his promise of being loyal to Jesus unto death (cf. 26:33-35, 56, 69-75). In any case, they come into Gethsemane as one but, although Jesus strives to maintain this unity (cf. the preposition, 'with,' 26:36, 38, 40 and the last command, 'let us go,' 26:46), they will not leave it as one due to Peter's weakness of the flesh overriding his willing spirit. The portrait of Jesus is a character that appears alive and to evolve internally in awareness and acceptance of God's particular will for him while Peter is seemingly dead and un-developing throughout.

They can also be compared based on their respective destinies. Toward the end of Gethsemane, it is presupposed that Jesus has risen from prayer and has, therefore, overcome the temptation. He is ready to go to the next level. On the contrary, Peter is still expected to rise. Peter's unpreparedness at this juncture may reveal that besides Jesus, no leader is actually ready as they should be when the crucial moment arrives. However, Jesus' doubled command (cf. 26:46, 'rise, let us go') shows Peter to be destined to rise and go forth with and

like Jesus. Therefore, whatever these imperatives foreshadow in the life of Jesus also apply in the life of Peter. Both characters are to share in the same destiny (cf. 10:24-25).

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Jesus serves a major function as the protagonist while Peter (the representative disciple) serves a minor function as agent representing a value system beyond himself.²⁶⁷ In all, Jesus' perfection (5:48) underscores Peter's imperfections and vice versa and this comparison between them is true of the comparison between Jesus, on the one hand, and the whole disciples, on the other hand. By the rhetoric of the narrative, it may be concluded that eventually Jesus' disciples will share in the lot of Jesus.

4.3 GETHSEMANE AS A TWO-SIDED MIRROR TEXT

As we noted in chapter three, there are two levels of the Gethsemane narrative: the primary narrative by the narrator and the secondary narrative by Matthew's Jesus (cf. 3.4.2 note 66 and 3.4.3.1 above). This secondary narrative is subordinate to the primary narrative in which it is entrenched.²⁶⁸ In Gethsemane we encounter various motifs²⁶⁹ of the Jesus-story each from a discourse section of the primary narrative. These motifs are each a mini inner story which if put together in the context of the Gethsemane spatial, social, and temporal settings, will form a broader story garnered from the actions and especially the words of Jesus.²⁷⁰ Following the order of the scenes in the primary narrative, we have: (i) the motif about Jesus the Saviour's entrance into Gethsemane (26:36); (ii) the distress motif (26:37-38); (iii) the watch and prayer motif (26:39-44), (iv) the hour and the betrayal motif (26:45); and (v) the

²⁶⁷ The disciples may be representing the reality that some people are incapable of carrying out some tasks even with their good intentions. Here the disciples are not treated based on their varied individual traits but as a group character represented by a prominent trait of passivity. See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 41 for more of a representative character as well as a minor character.

²⁶⁸ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 92.

²⁶⁹ Jaeger, "The Initiatory Trial Theme," 198 defines motif as the smallest unit of the story.

²⁷⁰ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 386; Park, "Obedience in Matthew," 75-76, 135; Bacon, *Studies in Matthew*, 81-82; Kingsbury, *Gospel Interpretation*, 59, assert that Matthew gives Jesus' words (logia) great importance in the narrative (cf. 7:24-26; 24:35) and acting upon them is equated with doing the heavenly Father's will (7:21). For example, the words have primary placement in summary descriptions of Jesus' activities (e.g., at 4:23; 9:35; 11:1) and central placement in Matthew's chiasmic arrangement at each of the five narrative blocks (e.g., 4:23-5:1[summary and deeds]—5:2-7:29 [words]—8:1-9:35 [summary and deeds]).

encouragement to move forward (26:46). I attempt to piece together in a compendium these ‘inner stories’ by Jesus in order to produce *an inner story*²⁷¹ for Jesus. It appears that using the *showing* technique, Jesus, in full control of events, is the storyteller symbolically telling his own story within the plot but not within the narrative.²⁷² This forms the Gethsemane secondary narrative where it tells its own Special Story, a deep structure which develops an underlying theme of abiding in God akin to the primary narrative. As seen in chapter three, Jesus goes through this circle in Gethsemane in his portrayal as obedient to God.

Narratives have their hierarchical structures and explanations dependent upon the implied reader’s operational level. With respect to narrative hierarchy, the extradiegetic level which we have been dealing with is the highest. At the diegetic level which is the next, Jesus as the character-narrator takes over the narration for much of Gethsemane, thus, creating the mini-plot which dialogues with the micro-plot as will be outlined below. The prominence of Jesus at this diegetic level provides a significant commentary on the wider Gospel.²⁷³ It is at this level that Jesus’ obedience to God in his varying circumstances of life could be better explained, understood, and appreciated. Matthew’s wider theological perspective makes for the emergence of the deeper meaning of the Gethsemane scene²⁷⁴ based on the overarching plot of the Gospel.

The Gethsemane episode, as we tried to establish in 3.2 (Literary Structure), is a major turning point being at the threshold of the Passion narrative. It serves as a borderline between

²⁷¹ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 93 writes that the secondary narrations may function as: (i) actional (maintaining or advancing ‘the action of the first narrative’), (ii) explicative (clarifying the primary level narrative), and/or (iii) thematic (establishing the relationship of analogy between the primary and the secondary levels of narrative).

²⁷² At this level the extradiegetic narrator is in some sense absent as the attention is purely on the plot level and not the surface narrative. See Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 66 about Moses as writer within the plot but not within the Pentateuchal narrative. This is different from the concept of David A. Bosworth, *The Story Within A Story in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (Washington, D. C: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2008), or William Kurz, “Effects of Variant Narrators in Acts 10-11,” *NTS* 43, no. 1 (October 1997): 571, where one story is imbedded into another both being on the narrative level.

²⁷³ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 92-95, following Genette, suggests other possible narrative hierarchies that are not relevant for the moment and scope of this research.

²⁷⁴ Cregan, “Garden of Eden,” 258.

Jesus' ministry and physical Passion and ties both sides together as an inserted plot which enlightens and is enlightened by the contexts that frame it. Where two stories interlock, they resonate with one another and there is a transfer of information from the inserted plot for the reader to grasp its relevance in the plot into which it is inserted.²⁷⁵ In playing this role, Gethsemane, therefore, functions as a partial recap in an analepsis-prolepsis combination, simultaneously looking backward and forward reflectively.²⁷⁶ Observably, motifs i-iii above have links with the previous events of Jesus and iv-v with what is yet to come. The secondary narration becomes a mirror or a reduplication²⁷⁷ of the entire Gospel's primary narrative—partly reviewing from the beginning of the Gospel to this point and partly overlapping from here in preview to the end.²⁷⁸ It is an abridgement engaged in review and preview respectively representing the entire setting of Jesus' life.²⁷⁹ For this reason, I propose that the Gethsemane episode is a 'two-sided mirror' narration of Jesus' whole life in miniature. The Gethsemane plot of progressive alignment with the Father's will becomes an integral element in the movement of the incarnation story toward its climax in the Paschal mystery.²⁸⁰

To reiterate, at this juncture the review of the preceding story and the preview of the subsequent events present a summary of Matthew's Gospel in chronological order from Jesus' birth to the Great Commission. Following the order of presentation of the Gethsemane

²⁷⁵ Marguerat and Bourquin, *Bible Stories*, 53-54.

²⁷⁶ Allison, *The New Moses*, 94 holds that similarities between two narratives never amount to 'mirror images' as no two narratives or events are without dissimilarities.

²⁷⁷ Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 93. This is a technique whereby the secondary narration is identical to (and is a miniature version of) the primary in what is described "as a transposition of the theme of a work to the level of the characters." For Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 291, Gethsemane represents the aggregate of all Christ's doings and sayings.

²⁷⁸ See also Robert C. Tannehill, *the Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 1, *The Gospel According to Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 277. Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 120 explains that analepses are usually employed to provide needful information to the reader while prolepses are used to 'arouse the reader's expectations.'

²⁷⁹ Kelber, *The Passion in Mark*, 53 attempts, though not obviously, such a review and preview (flash back and flash forward) in Mark's Gethsemane "narrative position." Nevertheless, Gethsemane seems to re-play (mirror) Jesus' whole life's journey or scenario.

²⁸⁰ Cregan, "Garden of Eden," 256; Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 7; Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 291. I surmise that the Gethsemane three groups may mirror Jesus' lifelong relationship with his entire world of immediate and distant disciples as we shall try to show later.

event, we have: Jesus' birth (including the mission statement) (26:36), Jesus' begun/early ministry (26:37-38), Jesus' watch and prayer amidst his continued ministry (26:39-44), the preparation for, and celebration of, the Passover Feast (26:45), and Jesus' resurrection and the Great Commission (26:46). The reviews and previews are not explicit but implicit in the plot. They demand the attentiveness and discernment of the reader.²⁸¹

A review is a re-reading or description of a past event interwoven with the reviewer's opinion of the subject matter. A preview is a 'trailer' of a real occurrence also done with the previewer's judgment without disclosing much of the event. According to Robert C. Tannehill, a partial overlap in a narrative may bridge an important transition from one story to another and the narrator may show this concern through the amount of material at such juncture "which either reviews what has already happened or previews what is going to happen. These reviews and previews also provide opportunity for the interpretation of these events in the way that the narrator finds most illuminating."²⁸² This is the case we find in Gethsemane. Below, we shall attempt to make a review and preview of Jesus' life and mission at either side of the double mirror, using the obedience of Jesus in Gethsemane as a lens. Manifestly, the bulk of the material is given in the review section while the preview section contains only two brief events (the 'rise' and 'go') which come as flashes. This is not surprising since future events are often foreseen as glimpses.

4.3.1 Review

For a review of Jesus' life thus far, allowing for a brief retrospective reconstruction, Jesus enters Gethsemane as (i) *Saviour* born to save his people from their sins (1:21)²⁸³ and (ii) as

²⁸¹ See Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 2, 6, 11, 140 for a similar review-preview juncture.

²⁸² Tannehill, *Narrative Unity* 1, 277.

²⁸³ Kingsbury, "Plot of Matthew's Story," 16. Walther, "Obedience in Matthew," 335 says that it is Jesus' obedience to God's will that brings about the forgiveness of sin for everybody. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 85 proposes summing up Matthew's Gospel's plot in this mission statement (1:21) which is accomplished by Jesus' vicarious obedience.

Emmanuel ('God-with-us,' 1:23) *with* his disciples.²⁸⁴ This stage could resonate with his entrance into the world as described in the infancy narrative. He is Saviour and God's presence with his people. Supposedly, his star at birth vaguely reveals his purpose and destiny and hence he is marked for destruction seminally by forces opposed to God's righteousness (2:1-18).²⁸⁵ Jesus recognises that his purpose will only be achieved by his fully remaining in God's will to the end (3:15; 5:19). He sets out on the path of righteousness, thereby, attracting an ever-increasing opposition from Satan and all other agents (3:15-5:20) controlled by Satan. After his baptism God confirms Jesus as his well-beloved Son. Then the devil tempts him in the desert based on his consciousness of obedient sonship and continues to do so throughout life. Thus, doing God's will brings him into conflict with Satan (4:1-11), the religious leaders (cf. 5:20), and even his disciples (16:21-23; 26:31).

Having been victorious against Satan in the initial trial (4:1-11), Jesus starts to preach about God's kingdom and chooses his twelve disciples to be *with him* as his companions (cf. 4:12-22ff).²⁸⁶ There are also others who have joined him as his disciples. He teaches all of them about the kingdom of heaven and to learn from his virtuous life how to be constant in relating to God for God's rule to be established on earth. But he relates more closely to the twelve that he has chosen to be his apostles. In Gethsemane, this closer band of disciples are represented by the three he takes on further with him while the body of disciples near the entrance represents the distant disciples on the fringes.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ The Gethsemane entrance has the primacy effect of perceiving Jesus both as man and God. During his prayers he characterises himself as 'Son of God' although at the end of Gethsemane he self-designates himself as 'Son of Man.'

²⁸⁵ Stanton ("Matthew in Recent Scholarship," 8) states that Jesus' destiny is launched "by the hostile reaction of Herod and the Jewish authorities" and is intertwined with many motifs.

²⁸⁶ The disciples' names are given in Matt 10:2-4.

²⁸⁷ Most of the disciples, irrespective of their distance from him, seem to remain his disciples until near the end of his life when they desert him as represented by all the disciples in Gethsemane. However, some disciples slip away or deviate along the way even unnoticed. An example of treacherous slipping away will be Judas. Notice that even in Gethsemane his presence is ambiguous until the certainty of his arrival with the mob to arrest Jesus.

However, having called the group of twelve, as he calls the trio to move on further with him, his mission to the house of Israel (10:6; 15:24) symbolically starts. He begins to feel distress at what this undertaking will lead him to—death (cf. 26:38). This is his cup (20:22; 26:27-28, 39) and he prays to be delivered from having to drink it if it is possible (cf. 26:39). Indicatively, Jesus feels fear and distress due to the weakness of the flesh although he is driven by the willing spirit (cf. 26:41b). In Gethsemane after he has called the trio he begins to be distressed and agitated but only lets them know of his distress. This may suggest that during his ministry he only allows his close followers to know that it is a distressing path unto death he is treading on. His way of life definitely ends in death; nevertheless, what he requires from them is not prayer to overturn God’s plan but to watch with him and also learn how to be obedient to God. However, they cannot even last long in this task of obedient watching. They become lax although they had promised faithfulness to the end. On this journey, although he is in the midst of companions, he is in reality alone.

Amidst his ministry and stern opposition from the opponents, and in this aloneness on his journey toward his destiny, Jesus often goes away to pray to God (e.g., 14:23). The body of disciples knows that he goes to pray alone and he also tells them so that they can learn from him (cf. 26:36) but, with their relative distance from him, they do not know beyond that. His close disciples who have been kept more abreast of his distress may know that in addition to praying he is watching constantly for the signs of the time (cf. *καίρως*, 26:18; cf. 17:9-12) but are unable to keep up with this standard.²⁸⁸ Jesus admonishes these disciples who will dare to

²⁸⁸ For instance, the apparent sterility of Jesus’ threefold visit to the disciples demonstrates that in their entire relationship with Jesus the disciples have been “sleeping,” that is, they lack comprehension of Jesus’ vocation in terms of the Passion (17:17; cf. 16:21-22). See Kelber, *The Passion in Mark*, 50-54.

be close to him, or be like him (16:24-25; 17:1-8; 20:22),²⁸⁹ to watch *always* (cf. 24:42-43; 25:13).²⁹⁰

As one who resolves all matters with God in prayer, he has always continued to pray and watch concomitantly throughout life (cf. 26:36b, 38-44) in anticipation of the time and manner of his ‘destined’ end. Nonetheless, even deeper than the watching known to these disciples is Jesus’ fundamental concern not to deviate from the Father’s will regarding his drinking the cup even if it were a possibility God might permit (26:39). God is silent about this. Left figuratively alone, his inner struggle translates to a tension between his will and God’s will²⁹¹ as dramatized in the Gethsemane episode. Perhaps, Jesus started his journey on this path of total submission to God’s will (cf. 26:54) somewhat in fear and hesitancy, uncertain of the future exactitude (cf. 26:38-39). The cup is always before him. He wants it removed but does not want to upset God’s plan. He is in the dilemma of the obedient one. As things unfold, in his increasing determination to accomplish God’s personal will for him, the future will gradually come into sharper focus for him. Note that in his first two Passion predictions he simply *shows* (δεικνύειν) and then *says* respectively that he will be ‘killed’ (ἀποκτανθῆναι, 16:21; 17:23). It is only in the third he clearly states that he will be ‘crucified’ (σταυρῶσαι, 20:19).²⁹² In his inner struggle God has not given any clear answer or guidance, leaving him free to choose and Jesus is determined to reach the goal.²⁹³ As he perseveres through prayer (the transforming action), his encounters with the disciples (as he

²⁸⁹ An idea also touched on at 17:9 by Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 399.

²⁹⁰ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 176 offers that ‘watching’ symbolises Parousia-hope and remains a prayer ingredient. That Jesus takes ‘Peter’ (26:37) and addresses ‘Peter’ (26:40)—the only disciple’s name mentioned along with his—would bridge the gap between Jesus’ promise to build his church upon him (Peter, rock, 16:16ff) and the first signs of Peter’s new leadership position. However, Kelber, *The Passion in Mark*, 47 will understand the attention on the trio as hinting at failure issues in leaders expected to be like Jesus.

²⁹¹ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 86 concurs that Jesus’ first words, which are “programmatic for his ministry,” are about obedience or “requirement for humanity.”

²⁹² But perhaps, the gradual disclosure serves as a buffer so that the disciples do not get overwhelmingly shocked or scandalised by Jesus’ destiny. Hence, Jesus begins to give them a clue to his coming crucifixion at 16:24.

²⁹³ Also Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 215.

vacillates between speaking with God and speaking with them) are always fraught with complications. His disciples cannot fully come to terms with this stance. They first rebuke him after the first prediction in order to dissuade him from facing death, but to no avail for he is unswerving (16:22-23). Then at the second prediction they start feeling greatly distressed themselves (17:23). At the third, some of the leading disciples start vying for positions of honour (20:20-28). Following their inability to dissuade their master, one might say that even though they finally pledge undying loyalty on the Mount of Olives (26:35), their complete silence in Gethsemane really signifies that they have exhausted their strength and given up trying to stop him.

4.3.2. Gethsemane and Passion

To capture the Gethsemane scenario more clearly, I juxtapose the three Passion predictions with Jesus' threefold Gethsemane prayer cum visit to the disciples. Doing this highlights remarkable similarities in wording and sense referent.²⁹⁴ God's will is the core expressed in the three predictions as it is the core of the Gethsemane prayers. In the Passion predictions Jesus' use of the 'must' (δεῖ) sayings refers to the Scriptures concerning his destiny as God's will (cf. 16:21). The disciples' reaction at each of the predictions is played out in their Gethsemane sleep symbolising their blindness to Jesus' mission and Jesus' corrective equally matches his Gethsemane reaction to them. The stage before he makes his first Passion prediction corresponds to his Gethsemane separation from the body of disciples and the trio to go a little farther to pray in complete prostration (26:36-39a). Jesus' revelation of God's will to his disciples regarding himself each time meets with complications or conflicts and

²⁹⁴ Kelber, *The Passion in Mark*, 50-56 and Daniel J. Harrington, "The Gospel According to Mark," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (London: Burns and Oates, 1995), 626 find in Mark's Gethsemane the peak and fulfilment of the dramatic movements of the three Passion predictions (Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34). I am struck by an analogous connection between Passion predictions and Gethsemane in Matthew's Gospel.

not the expected reaction. Find below the first Passion prediction narrative side by side with Matt 26:37-41.

From that time Jesus **began** to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him... **But he...said to Peter**, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men.’ Then **Jesus told his disciples**, ‘If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life...will find it’ (16:21-28 RSV).

And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he **began** to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.” And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.’ And **he came to the disciples** and found them sleeping; **and he said to Peter**, ‘So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak’ (26:37-41 RSV).

In the first Passion prediction, Jesus gives a hint to the disciples by *showing* them in some way that he must go to Jerusalem, suffer at the hands of the religious authorities, be killed, and be raised on the third day. This forms the exposition of this plot although in the macro-plot it would be a complication for the disciples and the first-time reader. While the τότε (‘then,’ 16:21) marks a turning point and chronological shift, the narrator’s presentation is from Jesus’ point of view. The narrator states that Jesus **began** (ἤρξατο)²⁹⁵ to show (δεικνύειν) his disciples (seemingly over a period of time) that he must go to Jerusalem for the accomplishment of his Passion, death, and resurrection. The fact that he will be killed and be raised is, however, expressed in the divine passive to imply that these are God’s actions even though the reader knows that the killing is carried out or masterminded by the religious leaders. The disciples are taken aback by what they perceive. The beginning of Jesus’ distress and agitation in Gethsemane may point to the beginning of the means of showing through

²⁹⁵ Cf. 3.4.2 above about ἀρχομαι (‘begin’) in the indicative aorist used as a past imperfect process for a progressively mounting action just begun.

which the disciples become privy to the knowledge of his anticipated Paschal mystery in Jerusalem. Peter, the representative disciple, takes him aside and similarly **begins** (ἤρξατο) to reproach him and Jesus reproaches him in return. This forms the complication. Both Jesus' act of showing and the disciples' expression of displeasure have a starting time and, therefore, imply that they go on for a while. Thus, the disciples, through Peter as spokesperson, resist Jesus' stance and rebuke him for in their view God cannot allow such a thing to happen to his anointed, the Son of the living God. They are blind to his vocation and what his mission for the salvation of the world entails. They are just thinking as human beings. Thinking humanly is placing an obstacle on the path to fulfilling God's plan. The watchful Jesus knows that it is Satan showing up through them to discourage him from embracing his destiny. They are obstinate but he is adamant too! So he rebukes them back sternly for allowing the flesh to overwhelm them. But he re-exhorts them immediately on how to be his followers who see things from God's point of view and to know that it is Satan who is using them through the weakness of flesh (cf. 26:41b) to stand in the way of Jesus fulfilling his destiny. Jesus' rebuke and exhortation for his would-be followers could also be construed as the episodic transforming action. Nevertheless, this must have been a very sore temptation for Jesus who will have been feeling increasingly distressed and in his unwillingness to be dissuaded seemingly turns (his back) to Peter with a sharp reproach. This undoes the obstinacy of the disciples. For the reader Jesus' response, 'Get behind me, Satan,' is reminiscent of Jesus' dreadful desert temptation in which he commands Satan to be out of his sight (4:10). This section corresponds in Gethsemane to Jesus' first return to his disciples to find them 'sleeping.' After the first prayer of self-abnegation for God's will, Jesus' direct address to Peter could be equated with taking him aside as well (cf. 16:22). Note that as Jesus begins to be distressed after taking the three disciples with him (παραλαβὼν, 26:37) so also does Peter begin to rebuke Jesus after taking him aside (προσλαβόμενος, 16:22). Now Jesus

reproaches them through the same Peter for their inability to watch with him one hour, a short while, without falling away. Then he re-exhorts them immediately to watch and pray now for sustainability along the way so that they do not fall into temptation but rather embrace their crosses. Jesus' reproach followed by the exhortation to watch and pray so as not to enter into temptation, recalls his reproach on the way followed by his exhortation for his would-be followers to make the conscious effort toward self-denial and pro-active embrace of suffering so as not to lose their souls (ψυχή, 16:25-26). He knows that their spirit is willing but their flesh is weak. Their sleep, symbolic of their oblivion of Gethsemane's significance, represents their obstinacy stemming from their ignorance of the implications of Jesus' salvific mission. In both episodes: (i) Jesus chiefly directly refers to himself in the subjective first-person viewpoint in his resoluteness to do God's will. This limits his scope (cf. 'me' in 3.4.3.7 above). (ii) There are reproaches indicating Jesus' disappointment but they contain exhortations and the desire to follow the Jesus-obedience. (iii) There are the ideas of renunciation and prohibition and Jesus' insinuation about the inability of humans to save themselves except by help from God. (iv) The final situations seem to hint that Jesus, the Son of Man, will come gloriously in his kingdom with mercy and just recompense signifying vindication of his authentic obedience (cf. 4.2.4).

In the meantime, if the disciples begin to have doubts that he is truly God's Son for he is to suffer horribly, God intervenes on the Transfiguration Mountain.²⁹⁶ He shows them (represented by Peter, James, and John) the hidden heavenly glory of the obedient Jesus²⁹⁷ and confirms that he is indeed his Son in whom he is well pleased. They should listen to him.²⁹⁸ Then Jesus gives them the hint that God's Son is equally the Son of Man who will

²⁹⁶ The dating of the transfiguration as 'six days later' (17:1) highlights the importance of Jesus' exhortation and the link between the two episodes of the first Passion prediction and the transfiguration. See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity* 1, 223.

²⁹⁷ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 398.

²⁹⁸ Seemingly, God will not tell the disciples to listen to Jesus if Jesus himself does not 'listen to' God.

face death at the hands of the scribes but be raised from the dead (17:1-12). Perhaps, if they hold these two aspects complementarily they will not fall into the temptation of deflection should they be scandalised by the nature of his obedience later. Not long after the Transfiguration, he makes his second Passion prediction:

As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, 'The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day.' And they were greatly distressed (17:22-23 RSV).

Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done.' And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away... (26:42-44a RSV).

The gathering in Galilee is the exposition and Jesus' prediction creates a narrative tension. The occurrence of the horrible events remains unchanged but will it now be in Galilee and not in Jerusalem anymore?²⁹⁹ In this second prediction, as a detached outsider he speaks of his destiny more objectively in the Son of Man third-person-omniscient viewpoint³⁰⁰ which now presents the scenario more from God's perspective. The poetic play on word-sound is intriguing. 'The Son of Man' (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) will be betrayed into 'the hands of men' (χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων). This expression with the use of the passive voice without the acting subject may be suggestive of a divine plot. His pro-actively going to Jerusalem to suffer (16:21) is substituted with his being *delivered into men's hands* (17:22) expressed through the divine passive, thus portraying it fundamentally as God's action. The indicative mood of all the future tense verbs expresses an actual situation in the future. In any case, God's intervention on the Transfiguration Mountain must be part of the ongoing transforming act so that the disciples are not now overly resistant but distressed. Also, there is a progression between the first prediction and the second. In 16:21 it is stated that he will actively undergo

²⁹⁹ Note that Galilee and Jerusalem are not set in opposition. But perhaps the location is not the issue at the moment.

³⁰⁰ Patricia Grogan, ed., *Christian Community Bible Catholic Pastoral Edition* (Bangalore: Claretian, 2005), 51.

suffering. The suffering will be undergone at the hands of the religious leaders and the killing and raising may be understood as expressed through the divine passive. At any rate, the inclusive conjunction, καὶ ('and' not 'but'), for all the verbs demonstrates that these actions are ultimately controlled by God. In 17:22-23 the Son of Man (Jesus) becomes the object of three actions of betrayal, killing, and raising. Here, what is apparent is that although the killing is carried out by human beings the betrayal and the raising may be construed as God's acts. Although the human intent of killing is evil God acts through, but beyond the human realm, for good. The humans are simply opportunists unwittingly serving God's purpose. This is supposed to cast a shadow of hope over the disciples because for Jesus this is not a misfortune.³⁰¹ However, contrary to Jesus' expectation the disciples, being humans (cf. 16:23), are understandably deeply grieved and this induces in the reader a feeling of realistic empathy toward them. They fall silent with great grief at the prospect of their master's suffering and death. If Jesus has been distressed from before the first prediction, it is only now that the reality of the looming danger seems to dawn on the disciples and they become greatly distressed. They seem to come to some understanding but their human emotion is overwhelmed. Again, one may say that they deeply resist even this revelation that is entirely from God's point of view. They have come to realise that Jesus, their Lord and master, is resolute and will not condone their dissuading him. Also, having had their doubts cleared on the Transfiguration Mountain by God who, upon confirming Jesus as his Son, told them to listen to Jesus, they do not say anything this time. That transforming action guided by God seems to be having an effect on them. Because they say nothing although they are not at home with what is at stake Jesus too says nothing but allows them to assimilate and ponder on God's viewpoint. This second prediction and reaction match Jesus' second prayer and return to his disciples. Jesus' second prayer in Gethsemane is more affirmatively centred on

³⁰¹ Grogan, *Christian Community Bible*, 51.

God's will being done. Jesus' second visit to them to find them sleeping again correlates with his second prediction at which they remain speechless. As nothing further was said after the second prediction so nothing further is said after Jesus' second visit to them in Gethsemane. Jesus lets them be and returns straight to prayer. The disciples' silence in Gethsemane and the narrator's (metaphorical) point of view that 'their eyes were heavy' agree with his viewpoint in 17:23 that they were deeply grieved which portrays their lack of understanding reality from God's point of view.

Shortly after that the disciples ask Jesus about who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. They seem to be having an inkling of the nearness of the kingdom establishment and are beginning to scheme for offices. He tells them that the humblest is the greatest (18:1-5). He proceeds with a lengthy discourse in Galilee and later in Judaea about the kingdom ethics and then sets off for Jerusalem.

And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and...**said to them**, '**Behold...and the Son of man will be delivered** to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and **deliver him** to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be **raised on the third day.**' Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee...said to him, 'Command that these two sons of mine may sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.' But Jesus answered...'Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?' They said to him, 'We are able.' He said to them, 'You will drink my cup...Jesus said [to the ten disciples angry with the two brothers]...'whoever would be great among you must be your servant...even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (20:17-28 RSV).

So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for **the third** time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and **said to them**, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? **Behold**, the hour is at hand, **and the Son of man is betrayed** into the hands of sinners. **Rise**, let us be going; **behold**, my betrayer is at hand' (26:44-46 RSV).

Here the narrator notes that on the way to Jerusalem it is now Jesus who takes the twelve disciples aside (παρέλαβεν, 20:17; cf. προσλαβόμενος, 16:22) for an important message. If the representative Peter spoke for the twelve in 16:22, Jesus now speaks to the twelve directly. This third time, he uses the ἰδοὺ ('behold') expression. As we tried to explain in 3.4.3.7 above, 'behold' denotes a climax of realisation to impress upon them that what he will encounter in Jerusalem is God's viewpoint and they are invited to see and accept everything thus. Still maintaining the posture of the Son of Man third-person-omniscient viewpoint and using the 'divine passive' expression ('will be delivered'), Jesus may be portraying the betrayal as God's act. The religious leaders are unmistakably active subjects of his condemnation and the second handover to the Gentiles for ridicule, torture, and crucifixion. Being active subjects may suggest that they are fully responsible for all their actions. However, the multi καὶ-conjunctions (and not ἀλλὰ, 'but') seem to imply a chain of actions controlled by God and exclusively culminating in the resurrection as his doing. The clause, 'he will be raised' (ἐγερθήσεται in the aorist third person singular passive voice), without the acting subject indicates a punctiliar divine action while the future indicative describes the rising as an actual future situation.

At this stage on their journey toward Jerusalem, having given up trying to convince their master, the disciples rest in the perception that the predictions also have something to do with the establishment of the kingdom. The question of greatness among them after he is crucified still bothers them. The Zebedees make a request of him for them to have the second place of honour in Jesus' kingdom and this desire for exclusive greatness introduces a complication. Jesus starts the transforming action by telling them that they are ignorant of their request's implication. There is a cup that precedes the glory. They accept to drink Jesus' cup and he promises them that they will drink it. This mini-plot is, however, not fully resolved since granting seats of honour is not Jesus' but God's sole prerogative. Notwithstanding, a further

complication develops. Now the body of (ten) disciples is fuelled by anger toward the two brothers. In a further transforming action Jesus corrects their obnoxious notion of leadership defined by means of putting on airs and bullying others as the Gentiles do. Leaders among his disciples must be humble servants like the Son of Man giving his life as a ransom for many. For the final situation, the reader is kept in suspense as to whether the disciples accept and act on this stance.³⁰² The third prediction encounter tallies with Jesus' third return to his disciples in Gethsemane where he reproaches them and charges them to wake up³⁰³ to *behold* (ἰδοὺ) that the Son of Man is being betrayed and giving his life as a ransom into the hands of sinners. The interrogation, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?" (26:45) is similar to "Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" (20:22) which could be meant to draw the disciples and the reader to Jesus' point of view. The 'behold' of the third prediction corresponds with the 'behold' in Gethsemane (26:45-46) where Jesus tells his disciples to see that the circumstances are converging for the climactic event (the Passion). As he eventually points out the identity of the 'instrumental' human betrayer in 26:21-25 so he does in 26:45-50. He will drink the cup and in this way he is showing them an example of the servant Son-of-Man sacrificial leadership among his flock. It is not about saving one's life or seeking honour but losing one's life for the sake of the kingdom so as to save others. Both parallel episodes explicitly refer to Jesus in the Son-of-Man third-person-omniscient viewpoint. The disciples are to behold God's point of view as well as the Son of Man being handed over (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδοθήσεται, 20:18; cf. 26:45) and carrying out God's will obediently. The 'chief priests and scribes' and Gentiles to whom he will be delivered are correspondingly the 'sinners.' They will mock, scourge, and crucify him but he will be raised on the third

³⁰² It is likely that as the representative disciple, Peter, follows Jesus 'distantly' during Jesus' Passion so will it play out in the life of every would-be disciple.

³⁰³ By the constant return to the disciples' sleep the alertness of the implied reader is thus indirectly implored. See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 106.

day.³⁰⁴ He will not resist it even though he can (cf. 26:53-54). The disciples have already known him as ‘Son of God’ but they are yet to understand his status as the controversial ‘Son of Man.’

Synthesising all the parallel episodes reveals some common elements. Jesus knowingly will suffer, be killed, and be raised in Jerusalem. He sublimely directs attention to God’s will which he has fully accepted while his disciples’ focus remains on the human level and he is, therefore, at pains to make them see and embrace God’s point of view through his own manner of accomplishing it. He is shown to evolve regarding the knowledge of the details of the Passion although he is steadfast in his determination to reach his goal. Again, moving from *showing* to *telling* his disciples about his Passion and climactically intervening in their ensuing conflicts, Jesus is portrayed as evolving methodically in inculcating in his disciples a legacy for the Jesus-obedience in the way they will live their lives henceforth. A lot is going on in the relationship between Jesus and his disciples through which we can decipher his authentic obedience. It is not enough to carry one’s cross and stay put, waiting for the crown. One must be prepared to follow Jesus to the end by laying down one’s life for others. Also, although the *showing* in the first prediction may have been perceived by all the disciples, Jesus’ attention is mainly on the twelve (20:17-19). This may mean that even his third visit to the disciples in Gethsemane is focused ultimately on the representative singled-out three disciples as the chief leaders of his flock. In all, the disciples’ dead silence in Gethsemane is made alive and active through their reactions after each prediction and their interaction with Jesus helps the reader to understand better the obedient character of Jesus.

Let us briefly consider Jesus’ time consciousness and preparedness for his destiny. Through life and ministry Matthew’s Jesus has been watching for his eventful end as his Passion

³⁰⁴ Additionally, that in Gethsemane Jesus prayed for the third time saying the same words that he used at the second prayer may match his third prediction being basically a repetition of the second prediction.

predictions indicate (cf. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19) without mention of the actual day. When he eventually enters Jerusalem and finishes *all his sayings*, he tells his disciples, “after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified” (26:2 NRSVCE). Thus, now before the Passover he talks in terms of days. Once the first day of the Passover Festival comes, his language changes to first, “My time is near” (26:18), second, “this very night” (26:31), third, “one hour” (26:40), and fourth, “‘the hour’ is at hand” (26:45). Finally, the betrayer’s arrival specifically locates the decisive moment and action! The prevalence of temporal precisions in the Passion narrative contributes to its solemnity and the progressive chronological indications slow down the narrative³⁰⁵ and simultaneously increase the pace of events to enthrall the reader. This heightens the sense of imminence and tension. Put in other words, by watching and praying throughout life Jesus is able to obediently follow the ticking of the broader story time. When it becomes so urgent that the betrayal of the Son of Man usher him into his Passion and death, he signals his disciples about the approaching time (26:18). He gathers them together for the Passover in which he institutes the Lord’s Supper. He alerts them about the nearness of his betrayer, betrayal, and death and lets them know that fellowship with them will resume after his resurrection and in his Father’s kingdom. They become greatly grieved but pledge unceasing loyalty to him although Jesus knows that they will all desert him (cf. 26:20-35).³⁰⁶ The tighter overlap between the broader life and Gethsemane miniature scenarios has begun.

The Gethsemane event is so significant because this is the last time Jesus gathers his disciples for a vital lesson before commissioning them with the promise of his exalted presence (28:19-20). At any rate, by the time he has gone through the threshold of the Passion, he has given

³⁰⁵ Boxall, *Discovering Matthew*, 150-151.

³⁰⁶ The disciples all desert him (26:56) but it is God’s mysterious abandonment of him that he seeks explanation for on the cross (27:46). The reader is ultimately exposed to the shocking humanness of Jesus who now says, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ Interestingly, every person will see an ordinary man hanging helplessly on the cross. Even the typical disciple, Peter, who usually calls him “Lord,” had denied him as “the man” (26:69-75), and it is only with the eyes of faith in retrospect that anyone like the Gentiles at the cross can possibly behold ‘the Son of God’ (27:54).

his final and ultimate ‘yes’ answer to God that he is fully ready for the end and whatever that might entail. Thus, we notice that the ‘time,’ betrayal, and betrayer in the bigger picture coincide with the ‘hour,’ betrayal, and betrayer in the Gethsemane miniaturised picture (26:45-46; cf. 26:18-25). At this juncture, the superimposing scene of Gethsemane solidifies and fills the reader’s vision.

In Gethsemane, this is the ‘hour’ for which Jesus admonishes the representative disciples to watch and pray (26:38b, 40-41a) but they cannot even stay awake for his threefold return to them (26:40, 43, 45; cf. 24:44). And when the hour of the Passion as fixed by the Father alone (24:36) finally comes, with all the circumstances and events converging,³⁰⁷ only Jesus is aware and unresistingly ready but the disciples are caught off-guard (26:45-46; cf. 24:36-50a). In total freedom, although with great sorrow and pain, he embraces his destiny while all his scandalised disciples desert him in fulfilment of his earlier prediction (26:31, 56). His journey into Jerusalem as an abandoned captive may suggest that even at the triumphant entry he was symbolically alone. He is a strong character who knowing the will of God and standing by it enduringly, prays and watches for the hour until the end. That said, it is significant that in all the predictions, the most constant thing is the resurrection and in Gethsemane the ‘rise’ is ultimately and climactically followed by the ‘go.’³⁰⁸

4.3.2.1 Passover Meal and Drinking the Cup

However, before we consider the preview on its own let us talk about the cup which is the central element in the Gethsemane episode. In 20:22 Jesus refers to the cup that he is about to drink and in 26:28 he takes a cup that he gives to his disciples. But where exactly does he drink the cup? The overlap between the Gethsemane narrative and the entire Gospel is

³⁰⁷ All the factors that will bring about his destined end—the geographical, temporal, and social settings—come together and make the plot to kill him (26:3-5, 14-16) materialise. With the overlap of the bigger and miniature pictures at this moment, the narrative moves on to the physical Passion (arrest, condemnation, and death) of Jesus.

³⁰⁸ Interestingly, a large crowd follows Jesus to Jerusalem (20:29) as a large arresting crowd with Judas arrives in Gethsemane to take Jesus into Jerusalem (26:47).

revealing. As the Passover meal follows the nearness of the time (26:18), so in the Gethsemane narrative the coming Passion follows the nearness of the hour (26:45). At the Last Supper Jesus told his disciples, ‘This is my body...this is my blood of the [new] covenant...for the forgiveness of sins...’ (26:26-28). Jesus is not said to “drink the cup” at the Last Supper and that is a good narrative strategy. If he does drink it there, it might mislead the reader into thinking that by drinking that cup, Jesus has accomplished God’s will and thenceforth only anticipates the glory (cf. 20:22). But evidently, even here at the main Gethsemane event he is yet to drink it as deducible from each of his threefold prayer. Note that in his second and third prayer, he still prays, ‘...if it is not possible for this [cup] to pass unless I drink it...’ (cf. 26:42, 44). Drinking a cup means undergoing suffering, punishment, or God’s judgment (see 5.2.2 Cup and God’s θέλημα). This experience for Jesus will be obvious during the coming Passion. There is no particular spot in the narrative where we can pinpoint his drinking this cup because the whole experience of his Passion is itself the drinking of the cup.³⁰⁹ Therefore, the event of the Last Supper is itself yet symbolic and foreshadowing the Passion in which he will undergo the salvific suffering, having his body broken and his blood shed for the forgiveness of sins (26:26-28//26:47-27:50). His actions and words at the Last Supper will be understood better in light of the physical Passion to come and vice versa. Jesus’ symbolic gesture while they were eating the Old Covenant sacrificial meal of the Passover means that the old is being replaced and is now to be understood in light of the new. It is now not lambs but Jesus’ body that is broken and his blood that is shed for the forgiveness of sins. Thus, Jesus, in obedience, fulfils heaven’s mission statement on his behalf (cf. 1:21).

In the Gethsemane primary narrative there is no specified place to fit in this Passover-Passion parallel. It seems to be passed over in silence giving the hint of a quantum jump from the

³⁰⁹ For the ‘cup’ as a metaphor for suffering see France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 758 and 1005; Viviano, “Gospel According to Matthew,” 670.

nearness of the time/hour (26:18, 45) to the resurrection/command to ‘rise’ (28:1-10; 26:46a). This gap is a dead point of convergence of the following events which are the Passover meal, on the one hand, and the Lord’s Passion, on the other hand. Therefore, it is a space that can stand for both the review of the Lord’s Supper within the context of the Passover meal celebration and the preview of the following events in which Jesus undergoes his physical Passion and death. The Passover meal and the anticipated physical Passion make the most central and perfect overlap after 26:45b before the review yields to the preview exclusively in 26:46a.³¹⁰

4.3.3 Preview

Hence, at 26:45-46 the review of the past overlaps with and gives way to the preview. Jesus is ready to ‘go’ to confront the human opponents but he has hardly finished speaking of the betrayer when Judas appears. As an interrupted story (cf. 26:47) a temporary gap or suspense is created.³¹¹ Nevertheless, the ‘rise’ (ἐγείρεσθε, 26:46) and ‘let us go’ (ἄγωμεν, 26:46) foreshadow the resurrection and the command of the Great Commission (28:1-8, 16-20) respectively while the reference to the betrayal and hour point to the Passion and death. Jesus who has risen from his Gethsemane battle victoriously, is ready to go on into the future³¹² and

³¹⁰ As the physical Passion is followed by the resurrection and the Great Commission, so in Gethsemane the gap ‘reserved’ for the coming Passion (between 26:45b and 26:46a) is followed by the summons to ‘rise’ and ‘go.’ This gap which appears as a skip or a quantum jump from the nearness of the hour of the Passion to the resurrection (26:45-46a) is, in fact, loaded with the central and significant elements of the Passion at which point the obedience of Jesus is proved beyond doubt in all its truest shades and colours. Any detail or hint about it is skipped so as not to confuse his actual drinking of the cup at the Passion with any event prior to the Passion. However, since Gethsemane is his spiritual Passion foreshadowing his Physical Passion (cf. 2.3.4 and 5.3.1), then Gethsemane as an exemplar of his entire life also means that Jesus could be said to experience a lifelong spiritual Passion climaxing at the Passover.

³¹¹ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 126-130. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 185-190, 206-207 and Iser, *The Implied Reader*, 33 assert that reading necessarily involves filling in gaps to actualise the text. That is what the reader is expected to do here.

³¹² Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1105-1106.

encourages his disciples to ‘rise’ and ‘go’ forth repeatedly and continuously, assuring them of his unceasing presence with them as they teach the validated Jesus-obedience.³¹³

To repeat in other words, elements of the preview are: ‘rise’ and ‘go’ foreshadowing the resurrection and the Great Commission respectively. Thus, by the time the Gethsemane call to ‘rise’ is given, Jesus will have undergone his Passion and death. Therefore, in that intervening gap between the nearness of the hour (26:45) and the summons for the disciples to ‘rise’ (26:46b), Jesus will have drunk the cup as a lone figure.³¹⁴ The disciples who remain oblivious of all this could truly be said to be sleeping. Notice that in the primary narrative of the Gospel, throughout the physical Passion and the resurrection events (26:57-28:10), the scattered disciples (cf. 26:31-32) are really nowhere near Jesus. He is abandoned as a solitary figure and it is the angel’s and Jesus’ message through the two Marys who witness the resurrection (cf. 28:1-10) that attempts to overcome the deficiency of faith in the disciples³¹⁵ and to prepare them for the reunion in Galilee. This makes Jesus’ question (“Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?” [26:45]) very appropriate as a sharp reproach or corrective that highlights the disciples’ misplaced priorities.³¹⁶ The disciples need to rise, be active, and go with him in the flow of God’s will. However, the force of this double command (‘rise’ and ‘go’) should be realised more fully after the resurrection of Jesus and not at his endurance of the Passion because even if we suppose that the disciples rise at this command, we know that they do not go with him to partake of his Passion. Jesus commands them to ‘rise’ and ‘go’

³¹³ Also Dale C. Allison, “Anticipating the Passion: The Literary Reach of Matthew 26:47-27:56,” *CBQ* 56, no. 4 (October 1994): 701-714. Neumann, “Thy Will Be Done,” 177-179 and Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web*, 152-172 agree that Matthew is known to signal foreshadowing and flashbacks or to use language-echoes and temporal dimension, pertinently in Gethsemane, to hint at contextual meaning. Renwick, “Matthew 26,” 412 and Mays, “‘Now I Know,’” 519-521 accept that this hope reasserts “Jesus’ confident leadership” and the ‘rise...the hour is at hand’ affirms Jesus’ belief that God whose will is being done remains in charge. Luz (*Matthew 21-28*, 396-397 and *Matthew 1-7*, 322-323) suggests that ‘temptation’ (26:41a; cf. 6:13) without the definite article may refer to daily temptations to sin and not primarily the final test, to suggest that the disciples must repeatedly pass through in their lives what Jesus has been through.

³¹⁴ We notice that the nearer Jesus draws to his death, which is the ultimate sign of his acceptance of God’s will, the lonelier he becomes and that is what Satan wants him to feel—that no one takes sides with him.

³¹⁵ See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity* 1, 277.

³¹⁶ The disciples are sleeping at the time they should be most alert. They are not yet transformed.

with him but these actions do not occur immediately as they are interrupted by the arrival of the arresting party.³¹⁷ In any case, they do not go with him yet (26:56). Therefore, the command, ‘let us be going,’ would relate more perfectly to when Jesus promises to go with them in perpetuity to all the nations of the world to teach the Jesus-obedience (28:19-20). The abidance of Jesus in this mission that he was entrusted with, and which he promised to carry out in a way proper for him to ‘fulfil all righteousness’ (3:15), is a sign that he remains obedient to his Father as ever before.³¹⁸

The significance of both the review of Jesus’ past life and ministry and the preview of future events is that Jesus is presented as an excellent model of obedience who presses on amidst difficulties to reach his goal and receive his vindicating reward (28:18; cf. 6:4, 6, 18). The review-preview story is symbolically imbedded in the plot and the import of its rich significance regarding obedience is largely shaped by the reader’s operational level and lens of viewing. The lens of the Gethsemane obedience offers a picture of Jesus as being uniquely obedient throughout his life. The events in the life of Jesus take on a special significance and the Gethsemane obedience itself viewed through the lens of the broader story of Jesus takes on a special significance. Put differently, the Gethsemane obedience sheds a special spectrum of light on the entire life of Jesus and the wider life of Jesus also highlights the Gethsemane obedience in a surprisingly beneficial way.

Through the similarity that the Gethsemane plot, themes, and scenes have with the wider Gospel context, the narrator helps the reader to recognise and interpret Gethsemane as an exemplar. Telling this Gethsemane symbolic story as an exemplar placed in a frame of the Passover events signifies that the sacrificial death of Jesus is the perfect atonement for

³¹⁷ The ‘rise’ and ‘go’ may also recall for the reader the earlier prediction of Jesus when he said to his disciples that after he would have been raised from the dead he would go ahead of them to Galilee (26:32). Nevertheless, the prediction itself looks forward to the future whose fulfilment is yet anticipated even at this moment.

³¹⁸ If the beginning of Jesus’ journey with his disciples started in Galilee, then the next phase of the journey with Jesus now accompanying his disciples spiritually, also starts in Galilee and this circle figuratively repeats itself in every generation.

deliverance from bondage and the forgiveness of sins.³¹⁹ The atonement is perfect because he has remained perfectly obedient to God throughout his life. The command to ‘rise’ inspires a sense of new life, hope, and divine purpose. I say this because the command bears functional similarity to contexts in which ‘rise’ is used to give hope and courage in an attempt to dispel fear and doubt (28:1-5, 8-10; cf. 8:15; 9:6, 25; 17:6-7; 26:32).³²⁰ The command for the disciples to ‘rise’ presupposes that Jesus himself is risen already and thus it is a preview of the disciples’ inaction or fallen state while ‘let us be going’ serves as climactic to the preview and it calls for an interpretation of his obedience as limitless. Even after the resurrection, he is not only graciously offering his disciples new lease of life, but by these final and climactic words he means he will keep going with them perpetually. Abiding with them endlessly may convey the idea that to journey with Jesus as his student begins symbolically in Galilee, follows the difficult trajectory of the travel narrative to Jerusalem, and comes back to Galilee for a transfer or an extension of the baton of leadership to the subsisting disciple. Yet, Jesus does not abandon the disciple here to be on their own but he goes with them endlessly. This becomes a characteristic experience of a providential circle which is likely to be repeated for Jesus’ close followers in every generation. Thus, the reader is forewarned that Jesus’ resurrection which follows as a vindication of his authentic obedience does not mark the limit of Jesus’ obedience. He still listens to the Father, accepts the full authority committed to him, and is ready to continue his mission in another form through his willing disciples. This is meant to help the disciples as well as the reader to not just rise and stay put but to embrace a boundless obedience in emulation of their master. Also, on their journey of obedience to God, they, like Jesus, are not to be afraid of their persecutors but are to courageously confront their opponents. Jesus has always called his disciples to ‘follow’ in his footsteps (4:18-22; 9:9;

³¹⁹ Jesus symbolises the unblemished lamb which the people normally choose for the Passover sacrifice. See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity* 2, 142 about the significance of framing a story.

³²⁰ For an example of a sense added to a preview by its functional similarity to other contexts see Tannehill, *Narrative Unity* 2, 239.

10:24-25; 16:24-26). The disciples who would follow Jesus closely were given the previews of their coming persecutions in the mission of the twelve (cf. 10:5-27) and the threefold Passion prediction of Jesus. In light of anticipated future challenges, this alerts the reader to the exhortation to ‘not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.’ They are to rather ultimately fear only God who has power over body and soul (cf. 10:28).³²¹ Faithfulness to this path ensures that what becomes of Jesus is also true of the disciple. The two sides of the mirror are unified by the theme of obedience to God.

The thrust of the Gethsemane higher narrative is that in determining to do God’s will, Jesus is brought to the crossroads, the Gethsemane, of his life. He faces his ultimate test about his ultimate choice of obedience³²² which is pivotal to the direction of the narrative. He painfully chooses the ultimate good for all concerned. Jesus is portrayed in the full conflict of his life in which through remaining obedient to God he becomes victorious over all the forces militating against his success. The fact that Gethsemane can reflect Jesus’ entire life scenario confirms the hypothesis of this study which is that Gethsemane represents a crowning synthesis of all the constituents of Jesus’ lifelong obedience. Notwithstanding, the Gethsemane obedience is not just a past feat crowning everything that ever went before but is also indicative of a salvific trajectory to the consummation of time.³²³

In an overlap with the Gethsemane micro-plot (cf. 3.3 above) we may set forth the macro-plot thus:

³²¹ However, following the arrest of Jesus the disciples exhibit “a misdirected fear of the persecutor rather than God” (cf. 26:56). See Tannehill, *Narrative Unity* 2, 117 for an example of such ‘misdirected fear.’

³²² Jesus’ deliberate choice through the fear, pain, and sorrow proves him as a model of obedience for all humans in the face of suffering and death. This contrasts the observations of Celsus, Macarius Magnes, and Emperor Julian who castigate Jesus’ divinity because he fears. (See Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 394.)

³²³ While the past may point to the beginning, Genesis, the future points to the end-time, Revelation (cf. Rev 20-22).

- (i) Initial situation or Exposition (1:1-4:17)—Jesus is presented as Saviour-Emmanuel and soon starts his initial preaching about God’s kingdom and authentic obedience.
- (ii) Complication (4:18-14:21)—Jesus begins to select his twelve disciples and by implication also begins to feel distress unto death regarding his destiny.
- (iii) Transforming action (14:22-26:46³²⁴)—Amidst his mission fraught with conflicts Jesus watches for the time of his accomplishing the Paschal mystery and from time to time leaves his twelve disciples so as to pray alone by himself. Watching and praying form the transforming action in which lies the turning point of the story revolving around his submission to God. However, the transforming action is a difficult and complex long process meeting with further complications each time he predicts his Passion to his disciples. Jesus gives them a threefold prediction in his seeming break from his constant watch and prayer, a situation which appears as his vacillation between the ‘complication’ and transforming action.
- (iv) Dénouement (26:47-28:15)—Jesus undergoes his Passion, crucifixion, and death and rises to new life. He has accomplished God’s will.
- (v) Final situation (plot resolution, 28:16-20)—Jesus is reunited with his disciples (minus Judas). In full control of events again, having been endowed with full authority in heaven and on earth, Jesus passes the baton of his mission to his commissioned disciples to disciple all nations and teach them the Jesus-obedience. As at the beginning when they followed him everywhere he went, he will be with them wherever they go. For the unresolved elements of the plot, Jesus is yet to go

³²⁴ Although the three-stage structure I adopt in this thesis has its second break at 16:21, I consider the transforming action of the macro-plot to start at 14:22. There seems to be a build-up from here as ‘Jesus prays alone’ and will soon be acknowledged as “Son of God” by his disciples and then subsequently by the representative Peter (14:33; 16:16). An overlap seems to have begun between the complication and the transforming action which becomes clear at 16:21 where Jesus makes his first Passion prediction.

into the bleak future with them. Therefore, although the theme of obedience may be said to be resolved in Jesus as a person, it is still an evolving process to be demonstrated in and through the universal mission entrusted to the disciples.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In summary, we have attempted through observing intratextual relationships to demonstrate that: (i) the features of obedience in Gethsemane are consonant with, and an intrinsic part of, Matthew's theology of obedience. The Gethsemane pericope contributes significant components to the understanding of the theology of obedience in Matthew's Gospel. Jesus' obedience, portrayed throughout the Gospel, is the chief concern of Gethsemane.³²⁵ This convergence of the Gethsemane obedience and broader Matthean obedience theme places due constraints on the reader. For instance, we come to know that all of Jesus' desires are always subordinate to the Father's will (7:21; 26:39, 53).³²⁶ In both the Gospel's discourse (5-7; 10; 13; 18; 24-25) and narrative (Matt 1-4; 8-9; 11-12, 14-17) sections Jesus is portrayed as the authoritative revealer of God's will in words³²⁷ and deeds; (ii) although Matthew's Gospel points to the Passion and death as pivotal, the obedience demonstrated in Gethsemane is the hub of all manifested obedience in Jesus' entire life; (iii) Jesus' obedience is lifelong and should not be separated from any part of his life. Jesus is not simply obedient at the terminus of life but his whole life is entrenched in obedience to God. (iv) Jesus' obedience which is the better righteousness is more authentic than that of his opponents. (v) Hence, Jesus can be presented as the model of obedience because his obedience is verifiably unbroken right up to death. Considering the primary narrative, it is this steadfastness that brings him to Gethsemane in the first place.

³²⁵ Huizenga, "The Akedah in Matthew," 314.

³²⁶ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262 (specifically for Gethsemane).

³²⁷ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 9.

Evidently, the story of obedience is also a story of courage in the face of fear, of advancement despite abandonment, of determination amidst conflict. This teaches that the path of obedience is narrow (Matt 7:13-14; 16:24) and could be lonely but also is one of inspiration, hope, and victory against all odds. Nothing compares to victory-with-God. However, having studied Jesus' obedience in the midst of the narrative conflict with his opponents, the understanding of Jesus' obedience would be deepened if considered in light of the Old Testament obedient characters, and this is the subject of chapter five.

5. INTERTEXTUAL LINKS BETWEEN GETHSEMANE AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

In this chapter, the research attempts to find some possible links between Matthew's Gethsemane and the Old Testament through what is known as intertextuality.¹ Intertextuality is the literary relationship between two or more texts such that the meaning of one text is shaped by another, thereby influencing the reader's interpretation. The signals of intertextuality range between the most explicit citation² and the most implicit reference known as an allusion. A biblical allusion may refer to any text which covertly evokes another, drawing upon the precursor passage(s), personage(s), and/or event(s) consciously or unconsciously. The literary techniques which help to highlight such allusions are: use of verbal or phrasal echoes, syllabic resonances, similar language, narrational structures, circumstances, themes, and images. Characteristically, allusions evoke the entire world of the context from which they are drawn³ and this helps to give the new text direction and coherence with the parent text.

The Old Testament sheds light on Matthew and vice versa in essential details and theological principles. Matthew's Gospel is replete with both explicit and implicit references to the Old Testament⁴ which are fundamentally integrated into the Gospel to serve as guide toward a greater wealth of insight underlying a surface reading.⁵ Such links, especially those supported by the reception history, imply that certain themes or aspects of Jesus' life are foreshadowed

¹ Byrne, *Lifting the Burden*, 200, and Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 35-38 highlight the importance of intertextuality in that Jesus' degrading Passion and scandalous death required a search tracing 'Scriptural predictions and echoes' to ascertain if the Jesus story fulfilled the Scriptures for the promised Messiah.

² Allison, *The New Moses*, 137-270. Explicit citations are direct quotations (e.g., 1:22-23; 2:5-6, 17-18) or explicit references to precursor texts (cf. Matt 12:38-41-42; 16:13-14).

³ Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 19, 29. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 100, and Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 368 explain that the effect of such rhetoric of allusion on the reader who understands it is to put him or her in the frame of mind suitable to remember and link the present word or phrase to its prior context. O'Leary, *Matthew's Judaization of Mark*, 12-19 agrees that allusion to expand and deepen meaning was common in ancient Jewish and Christian literature. Remember there is no Q-Source in Matt 26:36-46, cf. 2.3.1 'Sources and Redactional Activity' above.

⁴ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 56. Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 34 asserts that every scriptural citation "provides an authoritative statement."

⁵ Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 17; Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 9.

in individuals, events, or even entire communities in the Hebrew Scripture.⁶ Matthew's implied reader is expected to know the Hebrew Bible in its Greek translation and this is helpful as the main background knowledge for the literary, or even a Christological, study.⁷ In light of the Gospel's Jewishness, this repertoire of knowledge produces impressive insights crucial for a richer understanding of the Gospel,⁸ pertinently, apropos the Old Testament fulfilment of the messianic hope. Although many of the elements of Matthew's Gospel that deal with the obedience of Jesus that were treated in chapter four could be expanded or sharpened through intertextual studies, my focus here will remain on Gethsemane. My approach will be scriptural-theological, meaning that the attention is more on canonical biblical texts than on extra-biblical materials.

5.1 GETHSEMANE AND INTERTEXTUALITY

The Gethsemane pericope does not have explicit and direct citations⁹ but it is filled with allusions to Old Testament passages¹⁰ that are discreet, more like the narrator's whispering voice. They constitute another subtle narrative layer. Without clamouring for attention, the Old Testament background information, through analepses, expounds and brings into perspective the Gethsemane narrative. While the Gethsemane drama is broadened by its intratextual links to temporally distant events in Jesus' life, these Gethsemane allusions find

⁶ Allison, *The New Moses*, 94 holds that no two stories produce 'mirror images' or carbon copies for there are always observable differences and, therefore, a few corresponding points suffice for links.

⁷ Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 7, 10, 13, 20-21, 28, 31; Allison, *The New Moses*, 19-20; Nolan, *Royal Son of God*, 23.

⁸ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 70 (note 12); Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 6, 8-9; Allison, *The New Moses*, 284-287. Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 1-2, 7-10 proposes Matthew as the crowning conclusion to the Hebrew Scripture metanarrative. Let me state here that the allusion is mainly between Matthew and the Old Testament (without recourse to the other canonical Gospels or New Testament writings), and any in-depth analysis of extra biblical sources with their consequences on the Jesus obedience is not part of this research.

⁹ See Talbert, *Matthew*, 315. Porter, *Hearing the Old Testament*, 72 avers that Matthew explores Jesus' fulfilment of Scripture not only explicitly but also implicitly via typology and allusions. For Meier, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 326-328, the narrator's sketchy presentation of *Jesus with his disciples* (26:36a) before he goes into the model action of salvific obedience would suggest an allusion to Jesus incarnating his name as Saviour-Emmanuel.

¹⁰ See Porter, *Hearing the Old Testament*, 66. Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 10 seems to agree with D. Dimant that explicit citations help to interpret the biblical world, "implying a 'new teaching'" while allusions intend to "recreate the biblical world" by weaving the precursor text into the present narrative, "implying 'acceptance' of that world."

narratively thematic resonance with biblical events prior to Jesus' life.¹¹ The exclusive use of allusion is proper since explicit citations "never occur within prayers."¹² Moreover, allusions are a more engaging and powerful method than explicit references. Spotting such allusions and paying appropriate attention to how they are used help to furnish the reader with the needed background knowledge to hear an intertextual 'conversation' between the parent and progeny texts. This illuminates and contributes to the understanding of Gethsemane and the broader Matthean obedience theology.¹³ Doubtlessly, the more covert the references are, the more indeterminate the intertextual associations will become and this places greater demand on the reader's attentiveness and sometimes requires a re-reading to identify and unravel the allusions.¹⁴

The Gethsemane model story with its theological motive normally should reveal the Old Testament basis upon which the thought of Gethsemane may have been shaped.¹⁵ Our study aims to locate Jesus with the obedient Old Testament characters functioning as foils to see Jesus in a clearer and deeper light. Every trait of the nature of obedience manifested in Gethsemane may be reminiscent of that of some Hebrew Scripture personalities in direct or inverse relationship. Matthew¹⁶ may have woven these Old Testament figures into the fabric of Gethsemane such that they serve as narrative substructure for Jesus' obedience portrayed therein.¹⁷ Nevertheless, just like Gethsemane lacks the word, 'obedience,' although suffused

¹¹ For a similar notion of linkages see R. Rawdon Wilson, *Shakespearean Narrative* (London: Associated University Presses, 1995), 58-59.

¹² Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 5, 17; see Porter, *Hearing the Old Testament*, 66. Explicit citations are chiefly used in polemics.

¹³ See Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 18; Steve Moyise and Maarten J.J. Menken, eds., *Isaiah in the New Testament: The New Testament and the Scriptures of Israel* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), 64; Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 8-9, 23. Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 253 attests that throughout Matthew's Gospel Jesus is presented "as obedient to the divine will."¹³

¹⁴ Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 7-8; Allison, *The New Moses*, 92. Porter, *Hearing the Old Testament*, 69 insists that in general some allusions may be text-specific but others broadly appear thematic insofar as more than a single text may be applicable to them.

¹⁵ See also Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 20 who uses Brian M. Nolan's stipulations.

¹⁶ That is, the implied author.

¹⁷ See Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262-263. Additionally, King Josiah's reform (2 Kgs 23) had this place for crushing the Ashtoreth/idols, excruciating pain, mourning, grief, and death.

with the spirit of obedience, many of the employed Old Testament passages may equally be in explicit want of it.

Furthermore, the attributes of Jesus in Gethsemane will spread unevenly across these various selected biblical characters as there is no single Old Testament passage that mirrors or structures the entire Gethsemane episode perfectly. Correspondence does not entitle forcing all of Jesus' qualities onto another character. Therefore, although any particular feature of Jesus may be perceived in any number of the biblical characters to be treated, some characteristics will only be expounded more in characters in whom they are most obvious. Again, the traits of any such character used as a foil could go beyond one Old Testament episode.¹⁸

Allusion with David and Abraham becomes relevant because Matthew's genealogy programmatically rates Jesus with them (Matt 1:1), his important progenitors. I will also include Adam for his strategic position in humanity, and Israel-as-nation through whom Jesus is sent to minister.¹⁹ Whether these allusions were intended by the implied author or not²⁰ their presence affects the understanding of Gethsemane. These four types will be treated in their reverse chronological order of biblical antiquity (David-Israel-Abraham-Adam) as Matthew's Gospel's incipit order suggests (cf. 1:1, 'son of David, son of Abraham'). It is hoped that each treatment of a model will, therefore, be more understood in light of the subsequent models and ultimately Jesus' obedience and its effects will be pre-eminently shown. Let us begin with David, the proximate, and move backward.

¹⁸ Johnson, "Passion according to David," 252-254, 262 applies a similar technique.

¹⁹ In this research we restrict ourselves to the treatment of these four typologies which have an inherent consistency while we keep in mind that there are other perceivable typologies some of which were mentioned in chapter two. Additionally, scholars have identified no less than eight prominent female typologies some of whom would otherwise be relevant for Gethsemane. For instance, see Catherine Brown Tkacz, "Exclaimed in a Great Voice: Susanna and the Synoptic Passion Narratives," *Gregorianum* 87, no. 3 (2006): 449-486; "Women as Types of Christ: Susanna and Jephthah's Daughter," *Gregorianum* 85, no. 2 (2004): 278-311; "A Biblical Woman's Paraphrase of King David: Susanna's Refusal of the Elders," *The Downside Review* 128, no. 450 (2010): 39-51.

²⁰ Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 19.

5.2 DAVID

Matthew's Gospel begins with 'Jesus the Messiah, son of David' (Matt 1:1) revealing the David-tradition which underlies the Jesus story.²¹ Davidic echoes, as argued in chapter two, undergird the entire Gethsemane pericope²² and Matthew's implied reader, being a Jewish Christian and familiar with the Old Testament, may be expected to pick up these links. For instance, first century readers would associate the Psalms generally with Israel's sweetest psalmist, David (cf. 2 Sam 23:1), as their principal author.²³ In Acts 2:25-28 Peter quotes Psalm 15:8-11 ('...For you will not abandon my soul to Hades...') as David's prophetic words applicable to Jesus. Thus, 'my soul is sorrowful' (Ps 42:5) which is used by Jesus in Matt 26:38 would have been viewed as David's words finding expression in Jesus.

5.2.1 Sonship and Distress Expression

In Gethsemane Jesus starts each prayer by calling God his Father.²⁴ Understanding the fatherhood of God and the sonship of Jesus established through the rhetoric of filial obedience finds its anchor in the Old Testament tradition with the term 'son of God' or its variants.²⁵ Sonship is covenantally tied with the theme of obedience in biblical perspective.²⁶

²¹ Joel Willitts, *Matthew's Messianic Shepherd-King: In Search of 'The Lost Sheep of the House of Israel'* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 1-2.

²² See also Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 257 and Johnson, "Passion according to David," 247-248.

²³ See also Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 146.

²⁴ In many passages Jesus calls God his Father (Matt 11:25; 18:35; 21:37; 22:2). Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 82 also understands that Jesus' sonship is characterised by perfect obedience contrasting Israel as son for they 'yielded to temptation' and abandoned faith in the wilderness.

²⁵ Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 18 refers to 'My Father' as a Matthean idiom which is Jesus' way of talking about God and may also be showing Jesus as king/son of David (cf. Ps 2:7) and also as Israel-in-person (Matt 2:15; 3:17; 4:1-11). Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 73, 75 proposes that 'my Father' may be synonymous with 'my God' (27:54) and pointing to Jesus as Son of God. O'Leary, *Matthew's Judaization of Mark*, 159 has 'Father' as Old Testament vocabulary for 'God.' Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 62 says that although both Jesus and the disciples are identified as 'Son' and 'sons' of the Father (5.18; 20.23) respectively, the disciples only enjoy sonship privileges to the Father because of their familial relationship with Jesus. Matthew is careful to always differentiate between Jesus' 'my Father' and 'your Father' meant for the disciples; "the Matthean Jesus never speaks of 'our Father.'"

²⁶ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 58-61.

The Matthean father-son relationship between God and Jesus is reminiscent of David's relationship with God even as there are no explicit links in Gethsemane.²⁷

As king, David is son to God for in LXX Psalm 2:7 he bears witness to God saying to him, 'You are a son to me, today I have become your Father.'²⁸ The sonship of David is declared by God in the context of David's and God's rejection by the peoples which God's verdict overrides. Davidic sonship means that God will now bless Israel through the obedience of the representative king David and punish them through his disobedience (cf. 2 Sam 24:10-17). Following the covenant, God's promise is that he is Father to David as well as to David's son or Davidic king (2 Sam 7:14; 1 Chr 17:13; 22:10; 28:6).²⁹ Thus, beginning with David, every king descended from David was considered as 'son of God' in a representative role of Israel as a whole (Exod 4:22-23; cf. Hos 11:1).³⁰ As a title in Judaism, 'son of David' was birthed to refer to the messianic deliverer, like David, whom God would, in keeping with his divine promise, raise up for Israel, his people (cf. 2 Sam 7:12-16).³¹

Matthew's genealogy centres on David's dynastic succession and the story of Jesus' birth (1:18-21) shows his adoption into the human lineage of David. Jesus is doubly David's son both by his adoption into David's lineage (1:1, 20-21)³² and by virtue of his messianic and kingly role (1:1; 2:2; 16:16; 27:37). As David's son it is Jesus who, by the Old Testament

²⁷ See Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 90-97 (in discussing covenant relationship in Deuteronomy). Hays, *Reading Backwards*, 47-48 recognises such allusions in other Matthew's passages without a verbal echo.

²⁸ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 49. Cf. also Ps 89:26-29.

²⁹ Westerholm, *Understanding Matthew*, 72.

³⁰ See 2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:7; 89:26-37; 132:10-12; Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Revised and Expanded (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2015), 359. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 29 says God as king means Israel as son or royal nation and any Davidic king then is foremost God's royal son representing Israel that has failed in its filial obedience to God.

³¹ Willard M. Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 222; Park, "Obedience in Matthew," 155-156; Nolan, *Royal Son of God*, 149, 158, 201 distinguishes between 'a son of David' with regard to family tree (that could be any 'Davidid') and 'the son of David,' concerning messianic authority (theologically but not necessarily a son of David), who would reproduce 'the shalom of yore,' and Jesus was both.

³² Jesus is identified as such by the narrator (1:1) and other intradiegetic characters, e.g., 1:20-21; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15.

prophecy, fulfils the role of the Davidic Messiah³³ who brings blessings to Israel³⁴ through his representative lifelong obedience. ‘Son of David,’ (υιοῦ Δαυὶδ) as one of three or four titles of Jesus in Matthew’s incipit (1:1)³⁵ and as the Gospel’s pervasive presentation of Jesus, predisposes the reader to a reading in light of a Davidic Christological motif.³⁶

Jesus’ life echoes David’s as Johnson’s “Passion according to David,” which we treated in chapter two, makes clear. In 2 Samuel 15, dissatisfied Absalom, supported by the men of Israel whose hearts he had stolen by trickery, planned a coup d’état against his father, King David. Upon hearing of it, David fled his throne in Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives with his supporters. The conspiracy grew strong when Ahitophel, David’s and Israel’s prime counsellor, was conscripted into churlish Absalom’s camp. To add insult to injury, Shimei, from former King Saul’s household, abused David who was on his escape route but David was willing to accept any situation if that was God’s way of resolving the conflict be it in his favour or not.

Jesus, for his part, is also attested king in the context of rejection by the Jews (2:1-18; 27:11-37).³⁷ Jesus’ claim to Davidic kingship abounds in Matthew (2:1-21; 21:1-16; 25:34-45). Besides, Jesus’ baptism in the context of John’s proclamation about the kingdom is adjudged as a kingly anointing and enthronement ceremony in which God himself declares him as his well-beloved Son (3:17; cf. Ps 2:7)³⁸ in response to Jesus’ perfect obedience.³⁹ Again, Jesus, as David, in his triumphal entry ‘seizes’ Jerusalem as a homeless king (Matt 21:1-17; cf. 2

³³ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 99-103. Boxall, *Discovering Matthew*, 155 notes that the mocking of Jesus reflects Ps 22:7-8 and also Wis 2:18 which refers to ‘the taunt of the righteous man’ explicitly identified as God’s Son.

³⁴ Just as all the nations are to find blessings in Abraham.

³⁵ Jesus, Christ, son of David, son of Abraham.

³⁶ Johnson, “Passion according to David,” 247; Zacharias, “Matthew’s Son of David,” 1-2, 33. Matthew’s Gospel opens with ‘The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David’ (1:1) and often explicitly refers to him as ‘son of David’ (υιοῦ Δαυὶδ) (9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15; 22:42, [43, 45]).

³⁷ Matthew 3:15-17 could be considered as the ‘anointing’ and declaration of Jesus as ‘king’ and Matthew 21:4-9 could be seen as the king’s declaration by the prophet and acclaimed by the people.

³⁸ Westerholm, *Understanding Matthew*, 72; Swartley, *Israel’s Scripture Traditions*, 226.

³⁹ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 144.

Sam 5:1-12) and temporally leaves it for the Mount of Olives as a ‘wanted’ or rejected distressed king (Matt 26:14-30; 27:37; cf. 2 Sam 15:13-30) when betrayed and exposed to death by a close companion.⁴⁰

As David’s adopted son (1:1, 18-25), Jesus could rightly be designated as God’s son; moreover every Davidic king is son of God (cf. 2 Sam 7:14). Yet, Matthew strives to show that despite being ‘son of David,’ Jesus’ conception through the Holy Spirit demonstrates his higher direct station than his claim to divinity through Davidic descent. ‘Son of God’ is used exclusively to refer to Jesus’ divinity and Jesus himself quotes Psalm 110 to set the puzzle of David who had recognised the Christ as his Lord (cf. Matt 22:41-45). Therefore, even the title, Christ the Son of God (16:16), already points to Jesus as Messiah, possessing high divine Lordship, and sitting at God’s right hand.⁴¹ Both are sons by adoption—David adopted by God (Ps 2:7) and Jesus adopted by ‘David’ (Matt 1:18-25); and Jesus’ direct divine paternity uniquely furthers David’s divine sonship.⁴²

When betrayed by their close associates, David and Jesus both come to the Mount of Olives (ἐξῆλθον...[τὸ ὄρος] τῶν Ἐλαιῶν (cf. 2 Sam 15:16, 30; Matt 26:30)⁴³ to express their agony and supplications (2 Sam 15:23-34; Matt 26:30-38)⁴⁴ which reveal their relationship with

⁴⁰ Johnson, “Passion according to David,” 256-262 agrees that they are both betrayed (2 Sam 15:31; Matt 26:45-46), distressed (κλαίων, 2 Samuel 15:30; λυπεῖσθαι, Matt 26:37, περίλυπος... ψυχῇ, 26:38) and that their conspirators (Ahitophel with Absalom against David [2 Sam 15:31] and Judas with the religious authorities against Jesus [Matt 26:14-16; cf. Ps 41:9; 55]) are identifiable as extremely infamous treacherous friends to their close masters in the traditions of Psalm 41 and 55 (cf. Matt 26:23).

⁴¹ See Giles, “Obedience Theology of Matthew,” 185. Nolan, *Royal Son of God*, 59 also reckons that the Semitic numeral interplay of three and seven or fourteen in Matthew’s genealogy resonates with Jesus as the climax of the divine order.

⁴² See Swartley, *Israel’s Scripture Traditions*, 225. Joachim Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, vol. 1, *The Proclamation of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1971), 63-68 asserts that the direct address, ‘my Father,’ is absent in the Hebrew Scripture.

⁴³ For Gabrielson, *Paul’s Non-violent Gospel*, 36-37, Zechariah is strongly alluded to in Matt 26:31 which may be intended to be read in light of the context of the Mount of Olives in Zechariah. With its rich symbolic and theological significance, this Mount has become a very important site in talking about David and Jesus. There are other possible allusions for reasons of similar language and themes: Zech 14:9//Matt 27:29, 37, Zech 11:12-13//Matt 26:15; 27:9, Zech 14:21//Matt 21:12-13, Zech 9:9//Matt 21:5.

⁴⁴ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510; Gabrielson, *Paul’s Non-violent Gospel*, 36-37 presume Gethsemane to be on the Mount of Olives (26:30; cf. Zech 14:1-5), God’s eschatological triumph site where Jesus comes to at the threshold of the Passion and redemption of the world to fulfil this prophecy. ‘Emmanuel’ (Matt 1:23; cf. Isa

God as centred on filial obedience.⁴⁵ David's grief is obviously demonstrated (2 Sam 15:30) and Jesus' distress which begins in Gethsemane could actually be understood in the broader Matthean context as lifelong. And although there are no contextual verbal correspondences in their expression of grief, I surmise the two protagonists' souls are very sorrowful unto death (cf. 2 Sam 16:11; Matt 26:38) as they experience the dark night of their souls.⁴⁶

Jesus' excruciating distress is dressed in the words of David, περίλυπός [ἐστίν] ἡ ψυχή μου, "My soul is sorrowful" (cf. LXX Ps 42:5-6, 11).⁴⁷ This is a very expressive prayer echoing David's utmost misery when he feels God has abandoned him and withdrawn his spiritual favours. Nevertheless, amidst adversity and fear of death he still hopes and pleads for God's deliverance from cruel foes (Ps 42:9-10; 43:1-2; 55:1-5).⁴⁸ Typical of Matthean allusion, the soul with its referent in Matt 26:38 is not that of David but specifically that of Jesus. Thus, Jesus becomes the righteous sufferer who calls out to God in lament like David.⁴⁹ In any case, the Gethsemane "very sorrowful" (περίλυπός, with λυπεῖσθαι and ὀδημονεῖν) suggests a

7:14) has therefore set his feet on this mountain. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible*, 625 claims that the mountain is alluded to as high places or sanctuary in 1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 23:13; Ezekiel 11:16.

⁴⁵ Johnson, "Passion according to David," 250-251 notes that emotion display is rare in biblical world. Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, eds., *The Oxford Companion to the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 564-565 observe only Jesus' relation to God.

⁴⁶ Leopold Sabourin, *The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning* (New York: Society of St. Paul, 1974), 240. Douglas J. Moo, *The Old Testament in the Gospel Passion Narratives* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1983), 242; Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken, eds., *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London: T. & T. Clark International, 2004), 75 describe the soul as the seat of human emotions.

⁴⁷ Moo, *Old Testament Passion Narratives*, 240. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 395 and Allison, *The New Moses*, 19-20 claim that similarity in words and circumstances points to allusions. Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 11 avers that a scriptural citation by any character raises their credibility for the reader, albeit, initially. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 165-166 agrees that an indirect description such as ψυχή for 'self' would colour the message.

⁴⁸ Sabourin, *The Psalms*, 240; Stock, *Message of Matthew*, 404; Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 77; Price, "Prayer and Arrest," 15. The Psalms contain several of such phrases (e.g., Ps 6:3; 7:5; 22:20).

⁴⁹ Moyise and Menken, *Psalms in New Testament*, 75; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510; Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 153. Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 155 states that personalising the Scripture appropriately is sometimes allowed when it makes God's Word very powerful in our life's situation. Jesus understands his situation and fulfilment of Scripture in terms of the psalmist's plight and desire.

deeper level of grief.⁵⁰ And it is significant that here is the only place this predicative adjective is used in Matthew's Gospel.

Again, Jesus' distress is underlined by 'unto death.'⁵¹ This may bind Jesus' sorrow proleptically to the Passion story⁵² in addition to furthering this Psalm of lament. Jesus experiences an intense and extreme anguish.⁵³ The lack of 'unto death' in the Psalm⁵⁴ has led some scholars to view Jesus' statement as arising from two conflated texts of Psalm 42:6 and Jonah 4:8-9⁵⁵ where Jonah rather begs to die. Notwithstanding, since Jesus does not long for death like Jonah but prays to be delivered from death⁵⁶ like David, Jesus' sorrow may be similar to the extreme sorrow in Sirach 37:2; 51:6.⁵⁷ This may consequently point to a fatally immitigable perfect heaviness of mind, heart, and spirit; a pang even greater than any Jesus has ever previously felt.⁵⁸ It is this painful situation that is also describable as 'cup.'

⁵⁰ Moo, *Old Testament Passion Narratives*, 240; Westerholm, *Understanding Matthew*, 73 and note 70. Harkins, "Ritualizing Jesus' Grief," 192 says that Matthew's use of *λυπεῖσθαι* and *ἀδημονεῖν* (26:38) doubles the 'grief' language thus expressing excessive grief (*περίλυπος*, cf. LXX 1 Esd 8:68-69; Ezra 9-10).

⁵¹ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 154. Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510 remarks that 'unto death' underlines the intensity of the distress of Jesus who does not embrace death with calmness like Socrates or with nobility like the Maccabean martyrs willing and glad to die for their commitment to the sacred and revered laws (2 Macc 6:18-7:42). Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 78 says "even unto death" is an ominous phrase not found in the original Hebrew Scripture but may have been an early Christian adaptation of the Psalm to fit in the Christological vision of reading the Psalm "in the light of Jesus' prayer before his death."

⁵² Senior, *Matthew*, 303; Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 146-147; Westerholm, *Understanding Matthew*, 74. Observably, Jesus' cry of dereliction in his ancestor David's words (Matt 27:43) is inserted in context similar to that of the God-truster of Psalm 22:1 amidst crucifixion-derision.

⁵³ Yeomans, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 185; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 101. Mitch and Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 340 and Moo, *Old Testament Passion Narratives*, 240-242 see 'sorrowful' as being probably an allusion to LXX Psalm 42-43 where it expresses the painful agony felt within the 'soul' of the psalmist (cf. Ps 42:6, 12; 43:5).

⁵⁴ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 155; Senior, *Matthew*, 303.

⁵⁵ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396; Meier, *Matthew*, 323; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 155; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480.

⁵⁶ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 155.

⁵⁷ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396 note 24; Moo, *Old Testament Passion Narratives*, 240.

⁵⁸ Covington, "The Garden of Anguish," 291; Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 54, 65-66; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 185. For Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 651-652 it gives a picture of a soul or life besieged by grief, like burnout.

5.2.2 Cup and God's Θέλημα

Considering the Old Testament context, cup, most often, figuratively⁵⁹ symbolises: (i) sorrow, horror, desolation, scorn, and derision; (ii) one's fate, especially punishment, resulting from God's wrath or indignation. Thus, drinking a cup becomes a metaphor for undergoing suffering, punishment, or God's judgment (cf. Ps 11:6; 75:8; cf. Ezek 23:31-34; Hab 2:15-16; Zech 12:2).⁶⁰ The Hebrew prophets present the 'cup of Yahweh's wrath' as that which the wicked are forced to drink (Isa 51:17-22; Jer 25:15-29) while the righteous will simultaneously experience vindication.⁶¹ 'Cup,' in the Psalms, indicates that David has experiences with it. Although he strives to be righteous, seemingly he is sometimes forced to drink the cup and particularly by being open to God's will on the Mount of Olives (2 Sam 15:26; cf. also 24:11-14, 24) he accepts to drink the cup of Yahweh.⁶² Occasionally, cup signifies one's condition in life as given by God (cf. Ps 16:5; 116:13) or even a blessing (Ps 23:5). The cup for the righteous is a blessing in disguise⁶³ and so is regarded as positive for the just but negative for the wicked. Gundry insightfully paints the Gethsemane perilous scenario in light of Psalm 23:5 where Jesus sits at table with his Father acting as host who hands him the cup⁶⁴ he is afraid to drink. That ironically, the righteous Jesus will have to drink this cup aggravates the pain and horror and demonstrates that his death is truly in atonement. It suggests a "vicarious suffering of a punishment deserved by others" (cf. Isa 52:13-53:12; Jer 49:12; Matt 20:28; 26:28).⁶⁵ Jesus' fear of the cup, then, may be understood

⁵⁹ Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Gospel*, 99-110; see Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 29-30. Inferentially, 'cup,' as biblical language, is a symbol of cultural and social range which beneficially derives its meaning from the historical context of Israel.

⁶⁰ Meier, *Matthew*, 228, 324; Evans, *Matthew*, 435; Stock, *Message of Matthew*, 404; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 101; Gundry, *Matthew*, 533; Price, "Prayer and Arrest," 15; see Gundry, *Mark*, 869.

⁶¹ Wright, *Matthew Chapters 16-28*, 159-160. See also Psalm 75:8-10.

⁶² Like some other Old Testament characters, e.g., Abraham and Daniel (Gen 22:1-2, 9-10; Dan 3:16-18). The two ways of Psalm 1 are also enlightening for the choice of obeying and not obeying God.

⁶³ Beare, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 514 sees it as cup of God's judgment viewed within God's will and Jesus drinks the cup on behalf of the people who become recipients of eternal blessing and salvation (Isa 51:17-23; cf. Matt 20:22-28; 26:28).

⁶⁴ See Gundry, *Mark*, 869. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396; Renwick, "Matthew 26," 411.

⁶⁵ See Gundry, *Mark*, 869.

as not just a simple normal human recoiling from death but also a profound trepidation before God's horrendous judgment of the wicked.⁶⁶ This metaphorical cup is a tangible reality causing him horror and distress but at the same time portraying him as prototypic human whose great courage in horror of death is inspirational and exemplary to all encountering life-changing or existential struggles.⁶⁷ Jesus, in obedience to God's will, drinks the cup which the Father offers him so as to bring blessings to many.

In most Old Testament passages, God's will, revealed in his Word, anticipates unreserved human obedience (e.g., Exod 24:3-8; Deut 12:28; 28:1-14; Josh 24:14-24; 2 Sam 15:25-26). David may typify this notion of obedience by his prayer to God on this mountain (2 Sam 15:32) in his seeking God's counsel as he does at other times (e.g., 2 Sam 12:16). Amidst extreme distress and fear, his heart is set on God. Similarly, Gethsemane reveals that Jesus has the habit of consulting with, and obeying, God in every situation. And just like his distress extends and deepens any expressed in the Old Testament so does his prayer, centred on God's salvific will being realised, further and fulfil the expectations of old.

The parallels between Gethsemane and the David events at the Kidron are striking. When fleeing, David sends Zadok the priest back to Jerusalem with the implicit prayer articulated in the hypothetical clause, "If the Lord looks kindly on me, he will bring me back and allow me to see again the ark and its lodging place. But if he says, 'I am not pleased with you,' I am here; let him do to me what seems good to him" (2 Sam 15:25-26 NCBCE). This is akin to Jesus' prayer of 'possibility' and 'impossibility' which suggests total acquiescence to God's

⁶⁶ So Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 654.

⁶⁷ See Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 155. Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 398; Harkins, "Ritualizing Jesus' Grief," 178, 192; and Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 171-172 note the embarrassment (without a sense of reverence) caused early Christians due to attacks by such figures as 2nd century Celsus, Emperor Julian, and the Arians. I argue that Jesus' fear is preferable and more merit-worthy than, e.g., Socrates' fearlessness and humans can specifically identify with Jesus.

will (Matt 26:39b, 42b, 44).⁶⁸ Indicatively, God's will does not always promise palatable results but expects total openness and active receptivity of God's pleasure.

The Matthean Jesus demonstrates a willing spirit to obey God unconditionally. 'Willing' (πρόθυμος, e.g., in 1 Chr 28:21; 2 Chr 29:31) is used for people with regard to eagerness or steadfastness in holy alignment with God's plans (cf. Exod 35:21; Matt 26:41).⁶⁹ David longs to be granted a willing spirit (Ps 51:12)⁷⁰ and sometimes strives for God's will with the hope of a return favour. A conditional doing of God's will (2 Sam 16:11-12; cf. 1 Sam 24:6-7), as noble as it appears, conceals a reservation and it is a sign of the weakness of the flesh (Matt 26:39). Jesus has always shown a willing spirit readily resolute to obey God's will identified by 'cup' (Matt 20:22-23; 26:27).⁷¹ Letting God's will be done is furthered for it is not fragmentary or based on a retributive condition as is sometimes the case with David (2 Sam 16:5-13) but is the habitual portrait of the Matthean Jesus. Jesus is totally self-effaced. It is intriguing that the ever-mounting sorrow of Jesus unto death does not lead to defection but is matched by his ceaselessly progressive submission. And this gracious expression, 'your will be done,' is unprecedented and remains uniquely Matthean.⁷² God's will is his heartbeat (Matt 12:50; Ps 40:7-8).⁷³ His willingness and resoluteness are manifest in his unceasing prayer and watch ensuring that the outcome of his life is nothing short of God's perfect will.

Watching is a constituent of prayer and both correlate with obedience (Deut 4:9, 15; Tob 4:14; Prov 8:34; Jer 20:10). Old Testament obedient characters, for instance, Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:3) and Job (Job 1:1-5) among others, watch. For Jesus, predisposed for God's will to be

⁶⁸ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 167.

⁶⁹ See Rom 1:15.

⁷⁰ Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 658 thinks Matthew meant the human spirit but that the 'willing spirit' in Psalm 51:12 directs post-Pentecost Christians appropriately to think of divine Spirit that helps 'humanity in its struggles.'

⁷¹ See Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 199. Brown's priority in the treatment of the Gospels is Mark and all other points are made either linked to Mark or I decipher them through Brown's use of Mark.

⁷² Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 167, 177 says the phrase's variant forms may be found elsewhere but pairing γενηθήτω with θέλημά "is unattested prior to Matthew."

⁷³ See Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 51. Heb 10:5-7 echoes this.

achieved in his life, watching stabilises him to not derail and so brings him to merge his will with God's.⁷⁴ Thus, he is not taken unawares (cp. 2 Sam 15:13-16).⁷⁵ His constant watch moves him to the Mount of Olives (26:30) not in flight but to courageously confront the opponent. He is portrayed in military poise with his double last command to his disciples, 'rise, (and) let us go.' In the Old Testament, frequently, the word, 'rise' (ἐγείρω), used to counteract the negative effect of sleep (Jdt 14:13; Eccl 40:7), is in contexts of divine guidance and assurance to those who attentively listen to the Lord (e.g., Gen 19:14-15; Deut 9:12; 10:11). His very last command in Gethsemane, ἄγωμεν ('let us go,' 26:46) and not φύγωμεν ('let us flee,' 2 Sam 15:14), depicts timeliness and the willingness in him overriding the weakness of the flesh. The pairing of watching and praying is rooted in the Psalms (cf. Ps 42:9; 63:7; 77:3) and idealised at Qumran (1QS 6:7-8),⁷⁶ and the coupling of the *willing spirit* with *watching* and *praying* (Ps 51:12; Matt 26:41) which constitute the discipline and effort of obedient conduct (cf. Prov 6:4-11) is realised and fulfilled in Jesus. Overall, Jesus displays an obedience that can be termed Davidic. He portrays similar but definitely a higher quality of obedience through humility and prayer on the Mount of Olives to that exhibited by David at the Kidron (2 Sam 15:30-32).⁷⁷

In the midst of their troubles, each has followers who, on the way to the Mount, pledge loyalty unto death (2 Sam 15:21; Matt 26:35) and are ready to vehemently and brutally defend their master's cause.⁷⁸ However, they both denounce human violence and order their

⁷⁴ Gen 50 has a similar story of circumstances all working and converging toward the fulfilment of Joseph's destiny to the extent that Joseph can tell his wicked brothers, "you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good" (Gen 50:20 RSV). [See R. T. Kendall, *God Meant it for Good* (Carlisle: Authentic Media, 2007.)]

⁷⁵ Although David watches for his good at times (1 Sam 26), he 'stumbles' a number of times when he ought rather to watch internally to be faithful to God (2 Sam 11-12; 24). He may shun retributive justice but mostly for his good (1 Sam 24:1-16; 26:1-12). Also, during Absalom's revolt, David is caught off-guard and flees to the Mount of Olives (2 Sam 15:13ff). Throughout the Scriptures, the negative impact of sleep is obvious (1 Sam 26; Ps 121:4; 132:4; Prov 6:4; Nah 8:13; Job 33:15-18) and, e.g., in Judg 14:10-18; 16:4-21, for letting his guard down Samson could be said to be 'sleeping.'

⁷⁶ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 196-197.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 167 says the same.

⁷⁸ Matt 26:51, ἀφείλεν αὐτοῦ τὸ ὄπιόν; cf. LXX 2 Samuel 16:9, ἀφελῶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ.

followers to forego the scriptural entitlements to retaliation (*lex talionis*)⁷⁹ and rather accept God's will. They spare their enemies although they have an opportunity for retributive justice (26:51-52; cf. 5:38-42; 2 Sam 16:5-13; 19:16-23). They equally shun heavenly violence for their sakes but rather concede their humiliation without resistance, entrusting themselves to God's will.⁸⁰ On another occasion, when David took census to know the number of valiant men as if it was by their might that he would gain victory, he incurred the wrath of God who sent pestilence upon Israel, resulting in the death of many because of David's sin. Although David himself is spared, he, nonetheless, begs God who commands the wielder of the sword killing his people to 'put his sword back into its sheath' (2 Sam 24:1-25; 1 Chr 21:27). David would rather die in place of the people, but this request is not granted. Taking on God's role, Jesus at his arrest orders his violent disciple to 'put the sword back into its place' and not use it to fight in his defence (26:51-54).⁸¹ He also refrains from asking for heaven's intervention and, therefore, will die for the people altruistically as David had wished for himself. The sinless Jesus has the proper pedigree for a substitutionary atoning and salvific self-sacrifice. His obedience is unblemished⁸² holocaust accepted by God (cp. 2 Sam 24:14-17; 1 Chr 21:17).⁸³ Jesus submits completely to what God brings his way (Matt 26:45-46). He does not bargain to fall exclusively into God's hand rather than into the hands of sinners who will treat him as they please (cp. 2 Sam 24:14; Matt 26:45-46). He accepts from God both wheat and chaff (cf. Job 2:10). The Gethsemane tale furthers what is latent or lacking in David's story.⁸⁴ Jesus' all-encompassing embrace of what befalls him⁸⁵ is the most perfect way of ever falling

⁷⁹ Gibson, *The Temptations of Jesus*, 203-211; Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 96 note 125. Cf. Exod 21:23-25; Lev 24:17-21; Deut 19:21 for retaliation rights.

⁸⁰ Johnson, "Passion according to David," 272.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 260-261. However, there is no intention to simply project Jesus at the expense of David.

⁸³ Johnson, "Passion according to David," 260-261 notes that some scholars locate conjecturally all the three willing self-sacrifices of Isaac, David, and Jesus in the vicinity of the Mount of Olives to ensure that they are brought together in alignment.

⁸⁴ Johnson, "Passion according to David," 252. Ahitophel's advice for David's capture is activated in Judas' betrayal (2 Sam 17:1-2; cf. Matt 26:47, 31, 45, 31, 56).

⁸⁵ Mays, "'Now I Know,'" 522.

into God's hand. Jesus resolves the conflict with the religious authorities, with God that sent him, and the struggle within himself by choosing to fall completely into God's hand.⁸⁶ Through prayer for God's will to hold sway in their lives, they make their heroic fundamental decision which presupposes their unconditional obedience to God (2 Sam 15:31-32; Matt 26:39).⁸⁷ David tells the priest Zadok that he submits to whatever pleases God to do with him (2 Sam 15:24-26) and Jesus thrice affirms his total submission to God's will (26:39-44). This stance of enduring abidance with God's pleasure alone (2 Sam 24:14, 17; Matt 26:54-56) is not unconnected with their later respective victories—David over Absalom (cf. 2 Sam 18:1-7) and Jesus over Satan who seeks to turn him away from God. Consequent upon the triumph, and as vindication, the authority of both David and Jesus is consolidated. David rules over all Israel and Jesus rules over all heaven and earth (cf. 2 Sam 19:22; Matt 28:18). They are representative heads whose choices have consequences for the whole people.⁸⁸

5.2.3 Conclusion

The prophets hoped for the establishment of a new creation associated with the advent of the Davidic king (Ps 45; 72; cf. Isa 9:6-7; 11:1-10; Jer 23:5-6; 33:14-26; Ezek 34:23-24) in a covenant relationship restoring people to God. For Matthew, this is realised in Jesus who is of one stock with David, approved by God as a man after God's heart, who will carry out God's whole purposes (1 Sam 13:14; Ps 89:20 cf. Matt 3:17; 17:5). David is a man who delights in obeying God (cf. Ps 1:1-2) and teaches his sons to do likewise (cf. Ps 19:7; 1 Kgs 2:1-4) as the obedient Jesus ensures the disciples are obedient by watching and praying (Matt 26:38-41). If David is remembered for desiring God's will always but sometimes overpowered by

⁸⁶ Robert R. Beck, *Jesus and His Enemies: Narrative Conflict in the Four Gospels* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), 21-23.

⁸⁷ See Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1176. The Mount of Olives is considered sacred, alluded to as a place of worship (Ezek 11:23; 1 Kgs 11:7-8; 2 Kgs 23:13).

⁸⁸ Johnson, "Passion according to David," 259.

evil (2 Sam 11:27b; 24:1-10; 1 Kgs 15:5),⁸⁹ this desire finds its culmination in Jesus. Gethsemane presents a critically unique familial obedience to God.⁹⁰

5.3 ISRAEL

The establishment of the Davidic covenant followed in the wake of Israel's failure to abide by God's covenant. The Davidic dynasty is an extension of God's covenant with Israel, which is ultimately advanced through Jesus who remains representative and guide of Israel (cf. 15:14; 16:6-12; 23:1-39).⁹¹ Therefore, understanding Israel to whom Jesus is sent (15:24) deepens the colour to the understanding of Jesus' obedience.⁹²

5.3.1 Sonship and Trial

The obedience of Jesus is brought into sharper focus in light of the sonship of Israel. Israel-as-nation became God's elected covenantal son in Abraham (Gen 15-17),⁹³ the anchor of universal blessings to humans, and whom God had promised an incredible number of descendants. Through them all the earth would be blessed. Later, amidst their suffering in Egypt, Abraham's increasing offspring was proclaimed God's covenantal 'son' (Exod 4:22-23) to be liberated and accompanied through the desert onto the Promised Land. Henceforth, God required from his chosen nation, Israel, covenantal obligation of filial obedience (Exod 19:5; Deut 7:6-11; 8:5-6; cf. Isa 1:2; 63:8).⁹⁴ But Israel failed in the desert (Deut 32:18-20).⁹⁵ This led to the establishment of the sonship of king David and every Davidic king climaxing

⁸⁹ See Allison, *The New Moses*, 36-37.

⁹⁰ See Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 113-117; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 56-68.

⁹¹ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 78.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 56. Additionally, the Matthean genealogy (1:1-17) is a compact salvation history of Israel divided into three segments each made up of fourteen generations.

⁹³ Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 359.

⁹⁴ See Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 63.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 55-81. Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 103-104 opines that, as attested by many scholars, the close relationship between sonship and obedience in Deuteronomy 8:5-6 should not be overlooked.

in Jesus. As God has been Father to all Israel⁹⁶ (Isa 63:16; 64:8; Jer 3:4; 31:9), so he is now to Jesus (Hos 11:1; cf. Matt 2:15) through whom he is to bless all the nations of the world.⁹⁷

Matthew's presentation of Jesus borrows considerably from Israel's story.⁹⁸ As a representative figure, Jesus recapitulates in himself a significant proportion of Israel's story,⁹⁹ making him Israel-in-person¹⁰⁰ and often showing him as God's Son and a model for Israel. As God called Israel his son out of Egypt so does he call Jesus out of Egypt (Matt 2:15//Hos 11:1) and as Israel was tested in the desert so is Jesus (Matt 4:1-11//Deut 6-8).¹⁰¹ In Gethsemane Jesus is portrayed as Son of God (26:39, 42) underscoring his role as the ideal Israel.¹⁰² Yet, although the majority of scholars find the 'Son of God' title to have an allusion with Israel (e.g., in 4:1-11),¹⁰³ only a few scholars like France¹⁰⁴ and Ratzinger¹⁰⁵ note any son-of-God allusion to Israel in the Gethsemane passage.

Nevertheless, in Gethsemane, Jesus significantly models Israel as revealed in Jesus' use of the Psalms of the innocent sufferer, "my soul is sorrowful" (Ps 42-43; cf. Matt 26:38). These Psalms were dealt with earlier under David, but I return to them here through the lens of Israel. They are equally national Psalms of lamentation representing corporate Israel's experiences expressed in the first person singular¹⁰⁶ in the context of an increasing distress giving way finally to hope and confidence in God's deliverance from agony.¹⁰⁷ These Psalms

⁹⁶ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 29. Israel as (firstborn) son is found in Exod 4:22-23; Deut 1:31; 8:5-6; 14:1-2; 32:4-6, 8-20, 43; Isa 1:2; Jer 3-4.

⁹⁷ Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 359 assert that every scriptural covenant is 'grounded' "in God's ultimate promise to redeem."

⁹⁸ Crowe, *Obedient Son*, 20-21.

⁹⁹ The temptation episode (4:1-11) presents Jesus as the ideal Israel where Israel-as-nation failed.

¹⁰⁰ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 35.

¹⁰¹ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 86.

¹⁰² Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 18-81; Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 85.

¹⁰³ See Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 152; Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 53-55.

¹⁰⁴ France, *Jesus and the Old*, 50-53.

¹⁰⁵ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 153.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*; France, *Jesus and the Old*, 56.

¹⁰⁷ France, *Jesus and the Old*, 57-58.

are now fully subjectified in Jesus.¹⁰⁸ There is a patterning principle resonating with Israel's vivid experience. Even the abandonment felt by Jesus, which he voices on the cross in his classic cry of forsakenness, is an indication of the correlation between Israel's sufferings and Jesus' trials (Matt 27:46; cf. Ps 22:1).¹⁰⁹ He takes up and repeats Israel's story as a pattern and simultaneously advances it toward its intended goal (Hos 6:1-3).¹¹⁰ Jesus sums up Israel's sufferings and hopes in himself, in a more perfectly submissive way. And yet it remains ironic that Jesus who models the path of faithful filial obedience to God meets his death at the hands of the unfaithful Israel (21:33-46; 23:29-32).¹¹¹

Jesus' attributed obedience becomes clearer taking into consideration Israel's filial role.¹¹² Looking further backward in antiquity, an allusion to Israel's desert test during their forty years' journey to the Promised Land is expository.¹¹³ For instance, by his baptism (Matt 3:1-17) Jesus significantly identifies with Israel, especially through the Red Sea (Exod 14:21-31),¹¹⁴ and through his temptation (Matt 4:1-11) he embodies Israel tested in the desert as God's covenantal son (Deut 8:5-6) from whom filial obedience is expected. I surmise that Jesus' Gethsemane character-test, like his post-baptismal temptation, recalls Israel's desert test insofar as Jesus, symbol of the 'new Israel' (2:15),¹¹⁵ is in solitude tried by God his Father.

¹⁰⁸ Ratzinger, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 146-147.

¹⁰⁹ France, *Jesus and the Old*, 56-57.

¹¹⁰ Steve Moyise, *Jesus and Scripture* (London: SPCK, 2010), 97-99. France, *Jesus and the Old*, 59 affirms that there is discontinuity in the 'correspondence-typology.'

¹¹¹ Out of envy, God's Son is killed by 'God's son' (27:18-25; cf. Wis 2:10-20).

¹¹² Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 55.

¹¹³ Stephen C. Barton, "The Gospel According to Matthew," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels*, ed. Stephen C. Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 125-127. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 74-81 emphasises links between Matt 4:1-11 and Israel's and Adam's testing.

¹¹⁴ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 74-81.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75; Wright, *Matthew Chapters 1-15*, 15; O'Leary, *Matthew's Judaization of Mark*, 140; Allison, *The New Moses*, 165; Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 54. Again, note also that Jesus' responses at 4:1-11 allude to Deut 6:11-12, 13, 16. For co-identification or similarities between Gethsemane and 4:1-11 see 2.3.5.3 and 4.2.8.1 above.

In the desert Israel suffers lack of some kind (Deut 8:3) intentionally caused by God to serve as a lesson in obedience¹¹⁶ and this foreshadows Jesus' Gethsemane trials. Israel lacks food (Exod 16:1-12), drink (Exod 15:24-27), power (cf. Deut 8:17-18), and feels abandoned by God (Exod 17:7). They pressure God to act providentially to prove his nearness (Exod 17:7; Deut 6:16). In the tension brought about by their difficult desert journey and fight with enemies, Israel is often tempted to go back to the land of slavery as their easy choice in the challenge of a vague future before them (Exod 14:10-12; 16:2-3; 17:1-3; Num 14:1-4; 20:2-5).¹¹⁷ Their dissatisfaction with God leads to their grumbling (Exod 16:2-3; Num 11:1-6; 14:1-27; Ps 78:17-20) which reveals the ungodly content of their heart (Exod 16:4b; Deut 8:2, 16). Testing God's faithfulness in turn (Exod 17:2-7), eventually they abandon God and fall into idolatry (Exod 32:1-23; Num 25; cf. Exod 20:1-5; 24:3b; Lev 26:1; Deut 4:3; 5:6-10; 32:17).¹¹⁸ However, through Moses and then Joshua, God's Word continues to sustain and guide them into the Promised Land (Exod 14:13-31; 16:4-20; Josh 1:1-5).

This background knowledge of Israel's desert trial and their response will illumine Jesus' portrait as God's obedient Son. Faced with the prospect of the cup, Jesus suffers the limitations which go with personal involvement in one's story and perceived abandonment by associates and by God. Every lack seems to be caused intentionally by God.¹¹⁹ Totally abandoned to be alone, the Son is filled with fear capable of making him recoil from his avowed faithfulness to God (Matt 26:37-39a; cf. 3:15). He wants God's nearness (cf. 27:46)¹²⁰ but although he lacks its immediate gratification, he gives his fullest devotion to God alone. Jesus' faithfulness will not dare to test God even by any pre-emptive action on his

¹¹⁶ Crowe, *Obedient Son*, 20-21; France, *Jesus and the Old*, 51; Don Garlington, *Exegetical Essays*, 3rd ed. (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 87; Heb 5:8.

¹¹⁷ See France, *Jesus and the Old*, 52.

¹¹⁸ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 75-76; Maarten J. J. Menken and Steve Moyise, eds., *Genesis in the New Testament* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 48.

¹¹⁹ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262 cites Isa 63:5 to postulate that Jesus' ministry to God 'was to be rendered without the assistance of other human beings.'

¹²⁰ See France, *Jesus and the Old*, 52.

part (cf. Matt 4:6-7; Deut 6:16). He is other-centred and ultimately only God-centred. Tested with power to do his will, he relinquishes it and tested not to drink the cup, he painfully drinks it as God desires.¹²¹ Jesus does not invoke supernatural assistance in Gethsemane to satisfy his natural desires (Matt 26:53; cf. 4:6-7; Exod 32:1-6; Ps 91:11-12). He struggles with the implicit tempter¹²² within himself to remain faithful according to the Scriptures (cf. 4:1-11; 26:54).¹²³ He refuses to worship God's rival whatsoever and falls down in worship of God alone (26:39; cf. 4:8-10).¹²⁴ He prefers to live by the Word of God (26:39b, 42b; cf. 4:4). He upholds God's law and point of view to the very end¹²⁵ and remains an un-begrudging model who forfeits all in obedience to God.¹²⁶

Furthermore, Israel at the very threshold of Canaan forms a most suitable parallel to Gethsemane. There, Moses calls Israel to a decisive wholehearted obedience to God (Deut 6:13, 16; 8:3) just like Jesus faces his critical trial of unreserved obedience in Gethsemane. The two texts express the same "moral principle" whereby the Deuteronomy text may serve as a foreshadowing of Jesus' threshold-of-the-Passion experience in Gethsemane.¹²⁷ Israel and Jesus go through a hard time of testing in preparation for a special mission.¹²⁸ Israel prepares for the overthrow of Canaan and Jesus for the subjugation of Satan. For their success which ushers them into glory, each must show wholehearted obedience to God as proof of sonship (Deut 8:2-6). Jesus' steadfastness unto death emerges as a model for Israel's cowardice (cf. Num 13:25-14:4). He advances the expected obedience of Israel. Jesus' temptation in 4:1-11, often compared to Israel's entire desert temptations is severe enough.

¹²¹ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 55.

¹²² Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 77; France, *Jesus and the Old*, 51.

¹²³ 4:1-11, typical of Jesus' temptation, portrays that Jesus counters every temptation with the Scripture, what Israel ought to have done but failed. Morris, "Matthean and Lucan Temptation," 296 asserts that by quoting Deuteronomy specifically in the temptation Jesus affirms his obedience to the Torah.

¹²⁴ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 75-76; Menken and Moyise, *Genesis in New Testament*, 48.

¹²⁵ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 75-77.

¹²⁶ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 54-55. In matters of testing God wants to know what is in a person's heart. (cf. Gen 22:12; Deut 8:2, 16; 2 Chr 32:31).

¹²⁷ France, *Jesus and the Old*, 50-51.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

However, in Gethsemane his soul epitomising the seat of human emotions¹²⁹ is crushed and crucified even before his body is to be scourged and nailed to the cross.¹³⁰ Since the extent of his soul's Passion is unto death and foreshadowing his physical Passion which culminates in his crucifixion, it might be concluded that "My soul is sorrowful unto death" (26:38) is symptomatic of his physical death by crucifixion. Unlike the Israelites, death or fear of death cannot deter him. He demonstrates the perfect courageous obedience required from God's covenantal son and passes the test. So he fulfils the prophetic hope for Israel as God's instrument of blessing to the whole world (28:18-20; cf. Gen 12:3).¹³¹

5.3.2 Conclusion

In Gethsemane is the theme of obedience in father-son relationship as expected of all Israel.¹³² The reader perceives in Jesus the right understanding and application of obedience to God through which blessing comes to the world. He submits unconditionally to God (cf. Exod 15:26a) on behalf of others for God's reign to come. In the spirit of faithfulness he loves God with all his heart (Matt 26:39a; cf. 4:10); this being the expectation of the recital of the *Shema* which is at the centre of Judaism (Deut 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num 15:37-41).¹³³ Thus, progressively Jesus' obedience is brought into clearer perspective with the background knowledge of Israel and David, and it will be brought into even sharper focus when we look further back to Abraham. God's covenant and promises to Abraham, Israel's ancestor (Gen 15:1-6; 17:1-22),¹³⁴ will amply enrich the reader concerning Jesus' obedience to God exemplified by complete faith, trust, and perfect hearing of God.

¹²⁹ Moo, *Old Testament Passion Narratives*, 242; Moyise and Menken, *Psalms in New Testament*, 75.

¹³⁰ Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 107.

¹³¹ France, *Jesus and the Old*, 53 adds that the 'antitype' is always greater than the 'type.'

¹³² Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 56. (See Deut 8:5-6; 14:1-2; 32:4-6, 18-20).

¹³³ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 61-63. The centrality of the *Shema* is hinted at in chapter one (1.2).

¹³⁴ See Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 358.

5.4 ABRAHAM

There is a strong connection between Jesus and Abraham the progenitor of the nation of Israel.¹³⁵ From the Gospel's programmatic incipit (1:1), the title, 'son of Abraham' (υιοῦ Ἀβραάμ, Matt 1:1) as designation for Jesus, links the two characters together signalling "a covenantal framework" for the whole narrative.¹³⁶ Abraham remains in the background of the entire Gospel, and Jesus' worldwide outreach programme (28:19-20) is a possible allusion to the Abrahamic blessing. As revealed under the literature review (2.3.6.2) and in light of some allusions in the Gospel, Abraham tradition informs the Gethsemane theological motive whereby Abraham's son fulfils Abraham's obedient role.

5.4.1 Sonship and Test

Abraham is not explicitly referred to as son of God¹³⁷ but every covenant with God is presupposed as established with a 'vassal' who invariably is subordinate and from whom filial obedience is expected.¹³⁸ Also, Jesus being Abraham's and God's Son may suggest the same ultimate paternity for both of them. In the Gospel almost every Abrahamic theme invoked is in the context of Jesus as 'Son of God' (e.g., 1:1-18; 3:7-17; 28:16-20).¹³⁹ Therefore, the Gethsemane 'Son of God' may conceal the presupposed and latent 'son of Abraham.' Jesus is Abraham's seed in whom Israel's history which began in Abraham reaches its summit (1:17).¹⁴⁰ God had promised to bless all nations through Abraham and his descendants (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4)¹⁴¹ and this finds fulfilment in Jesus.

¹³⁵ Green and McKnight, *Dictionary of Jesus*, 4 only link the two figures as originator and culminator respectively of Israel's history.

¹³⁶ Zacharias, "Matthew's Son of David," 36 and Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 70 both argue that the title, 'son of Abraham,' is problematic in that it is not repeated in the Gospel and was seen as a generic title echoing Abrahamic covenant cum blessing for everyone with Jewish descent (and not only Jesus). Menken and Moyise, *Genesis in New Testament*, 52-54 further agree that there is a possible allusion between Genesis 22 and Matt 26.

¹³⁷ In fact, Abraham is known by the title 'father,' (cf. 1:1; 3:9), the human equivalent of God's Fatherhood.

¹³⁸ Nolan, *Royal Son of God*, 217-221 adduces that every learning, obedient, loyal, legitimated person is 'son.'

¹³⁹ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 86.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 85; Green and McKnight, *Dictionary of Jesus*, 4.

¹⁴¹ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 85.

Genesis 22 (LXX) specifically offers Abrahamic links with Gethsemane. Each event has an uncertain location on a mountain,¹⁴² is a prayer and an act of obedience involving a costly sacrifice¹⁴³ situated in a climactic and pivotal location in its narrative literary context.¹⁴⁴ They are both occasions of testing. Jesus under trial exhorts his disciples to ‘watch and pray not to enter into temptation’ (εἰς πειρασμόν, 26:41) and in Genesis 22 God tested (ἐπείραζεν, Gen 22:1) Abraham.¹⁴⁵ Before God tested him, God had singled him out to have a close relationship with him. However, from the time of Abraham’s call to leave his father’s land for an uncertain land God will show him (Gen 12:1-9), he has begun a lifelong testing¹⁴⁶ by God. In this he shows an unusual trust born of an unusual ‘hearing’ from God who is pleased with him (Gen 15:6). Genesis 12:1-3 describes Abraham’s obedience in the conditions of leaving behind what matters most to a Semite for a strange journey’s vague objective.¹⁴⁷ This marks him as the great patriarch-hero of the journey of faith and the excellent exemplar of Hebrew piety; for he trusts God’s lead completely.¹⁴⁸ Again, in spite of circumstances suggesting the contrary, a one-hundred-year old Abraham believes God (Gen 17:1-8) and gives birth to the son of promise, Isaac, who will increase and prolong Abraham’s descendants for ever. Through them God is to bless all humanity. However, this very son, God asks him to offer as a holocaust to him. Having an only son by God’s promise through a miracle and believing God for descendants and trusting him altogether although asked by the

¹⁴² Ibid., 77 and Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 89 affirm that mountain serves as a place of revelation. Additionally, mountain serves as God’s ‘sanctuary’ (cf. Exod 15:17); where one comes closer to God (Exod 19:3, 14, 17, 20; 24:12; 1 Kgs 19:11; 2 Kgs 4:27). It is a place of prayer, offering, worship, and sacrifice to God (Gen 22:2; Exod 3:12; Deut 12:2; 1 Kgs 11:7; Isa 27:13; 57:7; Hos 4:13; Ezek 29:40 cf. Matt 14:23).

¹⁴³ Susan Brayford, *Genesis* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007), 331 points that Abraham obeying God in silence supports more ‘the act of sacrifice’ than does the binding which the Jewish Akedah emphasises.

¹⁴⁴ Viviano, “Gospel According to Matthew,” 670; Mays, “‘Now I Know,’” 524-525.

¹⁴⁵ Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 251, 256.

¹⁴⁶ Samuel Sandmel, *A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 1977), 23 expands to twelve the list of test-commands following the Jewish *haggada* in the *Midrash* starting from Gen 12. Menken and Moyise, *Genesis in New Testament*, 16-26 agree with the book of *Jubilees* (*Jub* 17:17-18:19) that Abraham had been tested six times before Isaac’s truncated sacrifice (e.g., ‘Abraham’s land, the famine, the wealth of kings, his wife when she was taken forcibly, circumcision, Ishmael and his servant girl Hagar when he sent them away’). They also argue that Abraham is tested not so that God may ‘know’ but that God may demonstrate “to others how faithful Abraham is to God.”

¹⁴⁷ Moriarty, *Introducing the Old Testament*, 1.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 15 quotes Gregory of Nyssa on Heb 11:7.

same God to sacrifice this same son (Gen 22) is extraordinary. That this is an extremely horrendous test as is the Gethsemane test is indubitable.¹⁴⁹

Like Abraham, Jesus cannot be the harbinger of this universal blessing without a proof of his worth and credentials. From the beginning of his public life Jesus too leaves behind everything that matters to him if it is not in consonance with God's will. For example, in order to fulfil all righteousness, he lets himself be baptised by John instead of having it the other way round (3:13-15). In the temptation that follows, Jesus will not do anything contrary to God's expectation from his obedient Son (4:1-11). In ministry he accepts rejection from Israel although that will culminate in his crucifixion, since it is God's pleasure (11:25-27). He leaves behind his home (4:13; 8:20), relatives, and even life (16:24-26; 19:28-29). In Gethsemane his total self-relinquishment for God's will is demonstrated with absolute clarity and God's universal blessing is potentially finding fullest expression.

In Old Testament 'radical monotheism,' which would view everything as ultimately coming from God (e.g., Gen 1-2; Deut 10:14-22; 1 Chr 21:1-7//2 Sam 24:1-10; Job 1-2; Ps 95), it is God who tests individuals and communities.¹⁵⁰ The central idea seems to lie in God wanting to know what is in the heart of the character tested (Gen 22:12; Deut 8:2; 2 Chr 32:31). Noticeably, it is the righteous that the Lord mostly tests, probing heart and mind (cf. Job 1:8-12; Jer 20:12). The more God-like the character is, the harder the test becomes. Also, the greater the mission, the more Satan is personally and anthropomorphically portrayed as the direct agent of the trial (Gen 1:26-31; 3:1-13; [22:1-18];¹⁵¹ Zech 3:1-10; Job 1-2; cf. Matt 1:21; 3:15-4:11). Going through their ghastly physical, mental, psychological, and spiritual

¹⁴⁹ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 263 note 80.

¹⁵⁰ The idea of 'test' through the devil, by God's permission, pervades the book of Job. The issue of trial from God awakens or answers the question that sometimes, seemingly, God sends someone on an errand and then sends a storm against them. However, Scripture does not encourage humans testing God (Exod 17:2; Deut 6:16; cf. Matt 4:11).

¹⁵¹ Huizenga, "Obedience Unto Death," 510-511; Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 83-86 writes that *Jubilees* presents the Akedah as "a dualistic cosmic contest between the Angel of the Presence and the demonic Prince Mastema."

agony¹⁵² and the extreme sense of abandonment by God and humans, God still becomes their only resort and vindicator.¹⁵³ The ordeal they go through in obedience shows that God, in ensuring uncompromised integrity, tests *deeply* anyone he intends to use *greatly*.¹⁵⁴ Abraham and Jesus whom God tests are not assuaged with the consciousness that they are ‘merely’ being tested. They have no thought of ‘passing’ a test but rather of being ‘faithful’ to God.¹⁵⁵ They obey God without resistance, trusting that God’s desire, although difficult and not fully understood, is the best. Even when they feel distress they still do God’s bidding (Gen 21:9-14; Matt 26:37-39).

Fundamentally, in Matthew’s Gospel, test and temptation bear the same connotation of trial and it is God who ultimately ‘instigates’ or leads one to be tested (4:1).¹⁵⁶ Yet, the idea of test is employed more as a device of the devil (Matt 4:3; 16:1; 19:3; 22:18) to sway the righteous from God’s path.¹⁵⁷ The Matthean characterisation of Jesus in Gethsemane follows the Old Testament narrative rhetoric whereby heroes like Abraham are in a learning process.¹⁵⁸ Thus, Jesus evolves through trial even as he remains dauntless in expressing his undying allegiance to God.¹⁵⁹ In any event, Jesus’ filial obedience at the imminence of death bears strong allusion to the sacrificial obedience of Abraham and Isaac (Gen 22:1-19).¹⁶⁰ The resonance between Gethsemane and Genesis 22 is mostly depicted in the profound verbal and circumstantial correspondences.¹⁶¹ At the mountain where Isaac is to be sacrificed, Abraham tells his two servants, Καθίσατε αὐτοῦ...διελευσόμεθα ἕως ὧδε· καὶ προσκυνήσαντες (‘Sit here...we will go over there and worship,’ Gen 22:5). Jesus tells his disciples, καθίσατε

¹⁵² Lim, “The Emotive Semantics,” 118-119.

¹⁵³ See Moriarty, *Introducing the Old Testament*, 202-215 (for Job).

¹⁵⁴ See Jer 20:12.

¹⁵⁵ John J. Scullion, *Genesis: A Commentary for Students, Teachers, and Preachers* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992), 172-174. Job 1:1-2:10 presents Job’s testing likewise.

¹⁵⁶ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfilment*, 54; Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 253.

¹⁵⁷ In Jas 1:12-13 God tempts no one but we are tried and tempted by our own desires.

¹⁵⁸ See Bennema, *A Theory of Character*, 10.

¹⁵⁹ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 63. Jesus falls down in worship of God alone (cp. 4:9-10; cf. Deut 6:13).

¹⁶⁰ Senior, *Passion According to Matthew*, 102.

¹⁶¹ See Allison, *The New Moses*, 20, 21-23.

αὐτοῦ ἕως [οὔ] ἀπελθὼν ἐκεῖ προσεύξωμαι (‘Sit here while I go over there and pray,’ Matt 26:36). The un-Matthean use of the Greek personal pronoun, αὐτοῦ (26:36), as a demonstrative adverb of place (‘here’) as centrally used in Genesis 22:5 is striking and strengthens this conjectural link between the two episodes.¹⁶²

Furthermore, there is attitudinal echo in that Abraham and Jesus detach themselves from the larger body and take along three people.¹⁶³ They make their journey to the prayer spot in stages, half revealing to, and half concealing from, their companions their deepest concerns¹⁶⁴ which, however, remain fully open to God who sees in secret and whom they approach in silent sacrificial and covenantal obedience.¹⁶⁵ Through this allusion, Gethsemane presupposes a presentation of a Jesus of Abrahamic mien whose feelings about death are subverted under the desire to obey God. There may be a doubling of the Abraham allusion in Jesus leaving behind again his (three) closest disciples to go aside and pray alone, where Abraham goes with Isaac who is to become the holocaust. Jesus becomes both Abraham and Isaac; priest and sacrificial lamb,¹⁶⁶ and by extension he doubles as the priest (who does the sacrifice), the sacrifice (the Lamb),¹⁶⁷ and the altar, so to speak.¹⁶⁸

There are further shared verbal and syntactical parallels. En route to the worship spot, Isaac calls Abraham ‘Father,’ Πάτερ (Gen 22:7), in a context of perceived partial ignorance amidst

¹⁶² Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 395; Huizenga, “Obedience Unto Death,” 519; Moo, *Old Testament Passion Narratives*, 325; Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 59. Also note that Matthew translates ‘here’ as αὐτοῦ (26:36) and ὧδε (26:38) where the Markan source has ὧδε in both 14:32 and 14:34. In the New Testament this adverbial αὐτοῦ occurs again only in Luke-Acts three times (Luke 9:27; Acts 18:19; 21:4).

¹⁶³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 480 reckon that it is difficult to infer obvious parallel between the two texts. For Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 59 the link is established more with the *Aqedah* based on the use of αὐτοῦ, an ‘un-Matthean’/New Testament pronoun (cf. Gen 22:5; Matt 26:36) which results in understanding Jesus both as sacrifice and the offerer. However, there is no angelic intervention, and the ‘now I know’ in Jesus’ case is to be supplied by the reader.

¹⁶⁴ Jesus will do more than just ‘pray.’ Abraham will do more than just ‘worship.’

¹⁶⁵ Brayford, *Genesis*, 331-332. Hermann Gunkel, trans., *Genesis* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997), 234-239 adds that Gen 22 is originally based on “the legend of child sacrifice at Jeruel.”

¹⁶⁶ Senior, *The Passion of Jesus*, 76-77.

¹⁶⁷ Dukes, “Inverting the Akedah,” 2-5, 12-13. Abraham is metaphorically both sacrificer and victim (cf. 2.3.6.2).

¹⁶⁸ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 59; cf. James Socías, ed., *Daily Roman Missal*, 6th ed. (Schiller Park: World Library, 2004), 709. However, Luz, *Matthew*, 395 declares boldly that based on Gen 22 Jesus assumes “Abraham’s role and not that of Isaac.”

test of obedience. This foreshadows Jesus calling God ‘My Father,’ Πάτερ μου (Matt 26:39), amidst his partial ignorance in Gethsemane. In the end, from heaven Abraham is forbidden to sacrifice Isaac who is pronounced for Abraham as τὸν υἱὸν σου τὸν ἀγαπητὸν ὃν ἠγάπησας (‘your son, the beloved, whom you love,’ Gen 22:2, 11, 15), as Jesus has been declared by God from heaven as ὁ Υἱός μου, ὁ ἀγαπητός (‘my beloved Son,’ 3:17; 17:5). As we have attempted to explain above, although Abraham is not explicitly labelled as God’s son, he too is obviously under a severe test of his sonship to God. At any rate, the reader infers the beloved sonship-test-obedience theme in both episodes. Both Abraham and Jesus demonstrate extraordinary obedience¹⁶⁹ but the reason for and the degree of self-involvement in Abraham’s sacrifice are furthered in Jesus.¹⁷⁰ Like the obedient Maccabean martyrs (2 Macc 6-7), Jesus’ death as Isaac’s is not inevitable given available alternative options. Being faithful and law-abiding, Abraham follows God’s command religiously as Jesus does the Scriptures, both of which are the ‘Word of God’ in each case. They wait on God to the last and their obedience will bring blessing and multiple heirs (Gen 22:15-18).¹⁷¹

In Matthew’s arrest scene the parallels tighten. The Gethsemane arresting crowd bring swords and clubs (μετὰ μαχαιρῶν καὶ ξύλων, 26:47, 55). Abraham brings knife (Gen 22:6, 10) and wood (τὴν μάχαιραν, Gen 22:6, 10; [τὰ] ξύλα, Gen 22:3, 6, 7, 9). The crowd ‘laid hands on Jesus’ (Τότε προσελθόντες ἐπέβαλον τὰς χεῖρας ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰησοῦν, 26:50) where, at the instance of slaying Isaac, the angel commands Abraham, ‘do not lay your hand on the boy’ (καὶ εἶπεν Μὴ ἐπιβάλης τὴν χεῖρά σου ἐπὶ τὸ παιδάριον, Gen 22:12). “And one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the high priest’s servant” (καὶ ἰδοὺ εἷς τῶν μετὰ Ἰησοῦ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἀπέσπασεν τὴν μάχαιραν αὐτοῦ, καὶ πατάξας τὸν,

¹⁶⁹ Allison, *The New Moses*, 94.

¹⁷⁰ Mays, “Now I Know,” 519-521. Allison, *The New Moses*, 260 would argue that Jesus’ is a surpassing *self-sacrifice*.

¹⁷¹ See Isa 53:10 often used for Jesus as God’s suffering servant.

Matt 26:51)¹⁷² corresponds with Abraham stretching his hand to take the knife to slay his son (καὶ ἐξέτεινεν Ἀβραὰμ τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ λαβεῖν τὴν μάχαιραν, σφάζει τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, Gen 22:10). It is not simply coincidental that in both passages these murderous weapons are juxtaposed in close clusters. The ironic thematic links between them (words and actions by oddly differing characters) show that God is in absolute control of events to bring about his divine purpose in each case. And Jesus being in control would orchestrate events to ensure that God's will is fulfilled in him as it was in Abraham.¹⁷³ Jesus too takes on God's posture in addition to and beyond that of Abraham and Isaac. The verbal and theological correspondences regarding obedience and the Gethsemane mention of the possibility of angelic intervention (26:53) demonstrate that Jesus' also is an interaction with heaven.

In relation to God, Abraham's heart is in the right place for his God-driven choices in life, obeying God's contradictory (positive and negative) commands regarding the same object—sacrifice (Gen 22:2, 12a).¹⁷⁴ This proves that he can even abandon God's very gift or promise at God's Word and still remain faithful to God's will.¹⁷⁵ In the end, this informs God of Abraham's reliability¹⁷⁶ and God lets him know that he has passed. All that has transpired in Genesis 22 is but a stern test of the innermost drive of the heart. By projection, if Abraham was not stopped he would consummate the incredible sacrifice.

Similarly, Jesus renounces all including God's precious gift of his life in accordance with God's will. Yet, he gets no such consoling command from heaven.¹⁷⁷ Hands are laid on him (26:50) and he is eventually sacrificed. Without any direct command whatsoever but guided by his choice to fulfil Scripture (5:17-20; 26:54-56), he single-handedly charts his own whole

¹⁷² Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 251-252.

¹⁷³ Huizenga, *The New Isaac*, 256-257.

¹⁷⁴ Dukes, "Inverting the Akedah," 11-12.

¹⁷⁵ Scullion, *Genesis*, 173-175.

¹⁷⁶ See also Viviano, "Gospel According to Matthew," 670; Mays, "'Now I Know,'" 524-525.

¹⁷⁷ In Luke 22:43 Jesus gets strengthened by an angel but in Matthew angels do not intervene. He bears the whole brunt and only enjoys their ministry as a 'reward' (cf. 4:11; 28:1-8).

life's course to the very end even when he foresees 'shocking' events. It is difficult enough to watch one's only beloved son suffer and die let alone oneself being compelled to be their son's killer. God could be described in relation to his Son, Jesus, to be in the same dicey situation as Abraham for God does not only silently watch but is actively and mysteriously involved in Jesus' death. Mysteriously still, Jesus in a very altruistically creative act of perfect obedience 'tragically' hands over his life in martyrdom and ransom (20:28) to be taken in apparent defeat by his enemies in fulfilment of his Father's wish.

The silence of God in both Genesis 22 and Gethsemane is part of the test process and implies that God conceals his plan from his son (Gen 18:17). From Genesis 12 onward Abraham is kept in constant suspense on his journey with God (cf. Gen 22:1-13).¹⁷⁸ It is God's way of testing the heart's most interior motive (2 Chr 32:31).¹⁷⁹ The same principle is operative in Jesus' lifelong and Gethsemane suspense which necessitates Jesus' watching until the very end. Jesus and Abraham, to a certain degree, remain ignorant of the outcome of their respective adventures (cf. 3.4.3.1 and 4.2.3 for Jesus). God's uncanny involvement in these salvific sacrifices may reveal an underlying theological motive that tilts toward a radical monotheism regarding God's incomprehensible purpose in dealings with humans. So, having finished testing Abraham, God says, "Now I know that you fear God" (Gen 22:12).¹⁸⁰ Such declaration is the peak of a learning experience, and God acknowledges that Abraham did not withhold his dear son's life from God or take other options open to him. By the end of the Gethsemane prayer (cf. 26:45-46) God has finished testing his Son in what seems like the ultimate test (πειρασμός). And God would say the same thing of Jesus who withholds from

¹⁷⁸ Dukes, "Inverting the Akedah," 1-2.

¹⁷⁹ Gunkel, *Genesis*, 234-235.

¹⁸⁰ Mays, "'Now I Know,'" 519-521.

God nothing, including his very dear life, and remains in God's favour.¹⁸¹ But even at this juncture Jesus gets no consolation. God is silent to the very last as if to prove exhaustively the utmost inclination of the heart (cf. 4.2.8.2), to be able to say, 'Now I know.'¹⁸² However, through the vindicating resurrection-exaltation, Jesus is proved to love God completely with his whole heart, soul, and strength (cf. Gen 22:12).¹⁸³ The 'now I know' of God concerning him starts with God's portents immediately after Jesus' death climaxing in his resurrection (27:51-54; 28:1-8) attested to by angels. Although for Jesus the ministry of angels does not come as a divine intervention, it also bears the sign of approval (cf. 4:1-11; 28:1-7). Like Abraham, Jesus undergoes God's sore test successfully¹⁸⁴ and this climax of the learning experience arouses in them both the sense of a trial well endured.

5.4.2 Prayer Event

Prayer is one main door through which the heart's interior is directly laid bare before God; otherwise it is no prayer at all (cf. Matt 6:5-6).¹⁸⁵ Jesus as Abraham is a man who prays through his problems, completely sincere with God (Gen 15:2-3; 17:17-18; 18:23-33; Matt 26:39-42). Jesus' prayer of the possibility ('εἰ δυνατόν') of the cup's removal is in line with the Old Testament tenet. Begging for a reconsideration of plan is not an act of rebellion or a portrayal of faithlessness but harmonises with the Jewish belief that in response to prayer, sin, or repentance, God can undergo a change of mind.¹⁸⁶ It is common in the biblical tradition in such figures as Noah (Gen 8:20-22), Moses (Exod 32:10-14), David (2 Sam 15:25-26),

¹⁸¹ Ibid.; James F. McGrath, "Obedient Unto Death: Philippians 2:8, Gethsemane, and the Historical Jesus," *JSHJ* 14, no. 3 (2016): 240. Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 171 says the same about the disciples regarding 'sleep motif.'

¹⁸² Lim, "The Emotive Semantics," 127-128. The Father apparently abandons the Son and it is only in light of the memory of God's rescue of Isaac (or Abraham?) and Jesus' resurrection that we realise that Father and Son have been in an incomprehensibly inseparable union. Also, we realise that even when God's presence is not felt, God is still working behind the scenes.

¹⁸³ Mays, "'Now I Know,'" 519-521; Viviano, "Gospel According to Matthew," 670.

¹⁸⁴ See Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 55. Cf. Gen 22.

¹⁸⁵ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 302-303.

¹⁸⁶ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396; Davies and Allison, *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, 481-482. God changes his mind in 2 Kgs 20:1-11; Jer 18:1-11; Jonah 3-4, and in Isa 51:17-23 even takes 'the cup of his wrath' away from Israel.

Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:1-6), the Ninevites (Jonah 3:10), and Judas (1 Macc 3:58-60).¹⁸⁷ Abraham too usually makes requests for the possibility of God changing plans¹⁸⁸ based on the same principle as Jesus' request.¹⁸⁹ For instance, within the wider context of there being no impossibility for God ('μη ἀδυνατεῖ,' cf. Gen 18:14-21:7), Abraham pleads for Sodom to be spared for the sake of the righteous in it since God is the universal righteous judge (Gen 18:22-32).¹⁹⁰ Such mind-set and desire for clarity or change of God's plan result in persistent and earnest prayer (cf. Matt 26:39-44). For any reasons God could spare or destroy Sodom. As it is, in the end Sodom was destroyed not because God did not listen to Abraham but because there were no ten righteous people found in it following Abraham's appeal (Gen 18:32-33).¹⁹¹ In human dealings with God both parties are free to act as they so desire, the ideal being God's will. The righteous Jesus will die in the end because God *will not* change his plan and that is still in full agreement with Jesus' desire. Pertinently, Jesus' initial hope of not drinking the cup at the onset of his journey to destiny (26:39; cf. 4.2.7 and 4.3.1 above) has precedent on Isaac being spared the sacrificial death (Gen 22:9-19) which is an indirect allusion to God's favour on Abraham for his obedience. Faith in God to whom nothing is impossible is reckoned as righteousness (Gen 15:6). However, as serious as Jesus' desire for a change is, he will not do what God does not sanction. His prayer of possibility is a sign that he painfully but freely anchors everything on God.

Jesus' Gethsemane physical posture also gives his prayer a biblical flavour (Num 14:5; 16:4; 22:31; Ruth 2:10; 2 Kgs 9:6)¹⁹² expressive of worship, awe, humility, earnest supplication, or

¹⁸⁷ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 166-167; Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 172.

¹⁸⁸ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262 and note 75 combines the ideas of 'possibility' and Jesus' earnest prayers as recalling Old Testament heroes such as Abraham (Moses, Daniel, and Jonah).

¹⁸⁹ However, sometimes Abraham's possibility prayer stems from doubt (Gen 15:2-20; cf. Gen 13:14-18; 17:15-19).

¹⁹⁰ Sodom could be said to drink the cup of God's wrath (cf. Deut 29:23; Ps 11:6; Jude 1:7; Rev 14:10).

¹⁹¹ Lot with his family of four was spared because apart from the righteousness-concern he was remembered for Abraham's sake (Gen 19:29).

¹⁹² Senior, *Passion According to Matthew*, 107; Evans, *Matthew*, 435; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 493.

even anguish.¹⁹³ Admittedly, Abraham's posture is not given in Genesis 22 but in general he devoutly falls on his face (ἔπεσεν Ἀβραὰμ ἐπὶ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, Gen 17:3, 17)¹⁹⁴ when praying or encountering God. In any event, the external posture must be an authentic reflection of the internal act of obeisance. The Scripture repeatedly asserts that external acts alone toward God are not enough and cannot compensate for the absence of true obedience in the heart (cf. 1 Sam 15:22; Isa 29:13-15; Hos 6:6).¹⁹⁵ That may be a fundamental reason God tests the heart; to ensure the internal-external congruity, the portrait of which is found in Jesus even as revealed through his teaching (Matt 6:3-18; 15:8-9; 23:23-28).¹⁹⁶ The Old Testament seminal idea of obedience in the heart (Exod 20; Deut 6:4-7; 11:13; 1 Sam 15:22) finds expansion in Matthew primarily as faithfulness to God in the heart (Matt 22:37-40). In Jesus, not only do the internal and external synchronise with one another¹⁹⁷ but the two are in perfect harmony with the Father¹⁹⁸ as demonstrated in Gethsemane and on the cross.

Therefore, overall, the Gethsemane prayer of Jesus is revealing. One of the 613 commandments of the Torah is about serving “God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut 10:12) and one way of doing this is by praying to him. Jesus interprets this Mosaic Law as the greatest and first commandment (22:37-38). This harks back to the Deuteronomic

¹⁹³ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 510; Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 164; Meier, *Matthew*, 324; Powell, *Methods for Matthew*, 65, 404; Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star*, 93; Senior, *Passion According to Matthew*, 107; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396. A few of these Old Testament characters are: Abraham (Gen 17:3, 17; 18:2; 19:1); Joshua (Josh 5:14; 7:6); Manoah and his wife (Judg 13:20); David and the elders (1 Chr 21:16); Daniel (Dan 8:17), Moses and Aaron (Num 14:5); and all Israel (1 Kgs 18:39). Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 99-102 talks of lifelong obedience in every form of suffering introduced by Adam's disobedience (cf. Matt 16:24). Harkins, “Ritualizing Jesus' Grief,” 181-184 sees it as an accepted practice for these and many reasons in the Second Temple Judaism.

¹⁹⁴ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 396; Gundry, *Matthew*, 532. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, 301 writes that Jesus thus “shows the humility of his mind by the disposition of his flesh.”

¹⁹⁵ J. D. Douglas, *The New Bible Dictionary* (London: Inter-varsity Press, 1962), 904; William L. Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy,” *CBQ* 25, no. 1 (January 1963): 78. Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 653 simply states that “[p]hysical position tells spiritual condition.”

¹⁹⁶ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 175 note 11. Also, sometimes, a character's speech reveals more about themselves (cf. 3.4.3.2 above).

¹⁹⁷ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 107, 172-178, 200. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Ibadan: St Pauls, 1994), [2100] states that genuine outward sacrifice must equally express genuine spiritual sacrifice in the heart.

¹⁹⁸ Also Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 96-97, 172. On page 176 Crowe will imply that Jesus' perfect harmony of his will with the Father's entails full trust in God without grumbling or complaining over an iota of issue (cf. Deut 1:26-27; 8:1-6) or neglecting “any aspect of the law of righteousness” (cf. Matt 3:15; 5:18-20; 23:23).

hearing (cf. 1.2 above) which is the Jewish prayer centrepiece, the *Shema*: “Hear, O Israel” (Deut 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num 15:37-41). Following the Old Testament tradition Jews are expected to pray three times daily (cf. Ps 55:18; Dan 6:10). In Gethsemane Jesus’ threefold prayer, characterising him as one who is in the habit of praying always (cf. 3.4.3.6 and 4.2.2), is symbolic of numerical perfection and portrays him as a devout Jew who listens to the Torah’s call for frequent and regular prayer.

5.4.3 Conclusion

Abraham’s obedience occasions the reason God will *bless all families of the earth* (Gen 12:3). Israel, Abraham’s descendants could not advance this so the Davidic dynasty through whom Israel would be blessed was established. Jesus came as David’s son who fulfils the prophetic hope of Israel’s Messiah and as son of Abraham blesses all nations. Jesus’ role as God’s Son who perfectly under-hears God (cf. 17:5) encompasses both that of David and Abraham.¹⁹⁹ Jesus is a covenant representative; particularised for Israel in David (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89:3-4; 132:10-17) and universalised in Abraham (Gen 12:1-3; cf. Matt 28:16-20). Jesus’ obedient ministry in Israel particularly blesses the Jews (10:5-6) and his universal outreach programme (28:19-20) blesses the entire world (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14 cf. Matt 8:11),²⁰⁰ that is, all the children of Adam. The extension of blessing to the Gentiles is born, however, not out of blood descent from Abraham but out of being adjudged as bearing good fruit resulting from a fundamental authentic ‘inner conversion’ (cf. Matt 3:8-10; 7:17-

¹⁹⁹ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 35; Moyise and Menken, *Isaiah in New Testament*, 77.

²⁰⁰ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 85-86; Richard Bauckham, *The Jewish World Around the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 189; Walter C. Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins, 1995), 37-38. The Abrahamic blessing may hark back to the σπέρμα (seed) contextually alluding to ‘messianic’ intention of Gen 3:15.

19)²⁰¹ as expected of all. Now, all Adam's children are beneficiaries of Jesus' salvific obedience.

5.5 ADAM

By and large, it appears that while links are so observable between Matthew's Gethsemane and David and Abraham, they are not so obvious with Adam and this places greater demand on the reader.²⁰² As noted in chapter two, Adam Christology seems not to have formed a key concern in discussions on Matthew's Gethsemane²⁰³ or even the entire Gospel.²⁰⁴ However, Matthew's Jesus is understandable as correcting and perfecting what was done by the first Adam, humanity's progenitor.²⁰⁵ In any case, it is my proposition that Adam allusion should be considered in the treatment of Gethsemane. Direct verbal correspondence may be lacking but links could be anticipated based on motifs and the following themes may suggest some associations.

5.5.1 Sonship

Jesus' sonship which is underscored by his covenantal obedience to Scripture (cf. 4:3-10) probably has an Adamic foundation because in Adam is the primordial filial imagery which signals obedience (Gen 1:26-27; 3:1-3).²⁰⁶ Moreover, Matthew's genealogy recalls words and phrases used at the beginning for Adam. The exceptional phrasal correlation of Matthew's

²⁰¹ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 137; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 142-145; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 1:306-309; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 35.

²⁰² See Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 7; Porter, *Hearing the Old Testament*, 69.

²⁰³ Matera, "Christ in Theologies," 244. For instance, the disobedient Adam is contrasted with the obedient, eschatological Adam, the Christ.

²⁰⁴ Other New Testament writings like the Pauline corpus (e.g., Phil 2:8) have abundant commentaries replete with Jesus-Adam comparison in obedience.

²⁰⁵ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 19. Cregan, "Garden of Eden," 247-248 affirms that long held traditions have always linked Gethsemane with Eden.

²⁰⁶ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 53-63 avers that Jesus' sonship is comparable to Adam's sonship (cf. Gen 1:26-27; 5:1, 3) and Jesus' obedience is what is expected of Adam. Notably, no human 'family tree' is complete without its root in Adam, the prime progenitor. Matthew's genealogy starts from Abraham to Jesus so picking up from where Genesis left off, starting from Adam to Abraham (cf. Gen 5:1-32; 10: [1-20] 21-31; 11:10-26; cf. 17:5; 21:1-3). For Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 70 Matthew probably writes a new 'Book of Genesis' of Jesus Christ.

incipit, Βίβλος γενέσεως (“The book of ‘Genesis’”) with Genesis 2:4 and 5:1²⁰⁷ which give the origins of creation and Adam’s descendants respectively, is understood as a probable Adamic allusion underpinning the Jesus story.²⁰⁸ This verbal parallel adds up with explicit new creational language and Adamic imageries to frame and pervade Matthew’s Gospel in silent communication (e.g., Matt 1:18, 20; 3:16 [cf. Gen 1:2]; 19:4, 28; 28:18 [cf. Gen 1:27-28; 2:19-20]).²⁰⁹ Jesus’ sonship and Adam’s coincide as God’s original sinless images.²¹⁰ The framework for understanding Adam as a son of God, created in God’s sinless image (Gen 1:26-27; 5:1-3),²¹¹ correlates well with Jesus conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:18-23). Both of them occupy very strategic positions in humanity and salvation history as God’s unique sons. As Adam is the epitome of God’s original creation so is Jesus the epitome of the new creation.²¹² In Matthew sonship and obedience always intersect (e.g., 3:15-4:11; 17:1-9; cf. Deut 8:5-6), obedience being the litmus test of sonship.²¹³ This may echo Adam’s primeval existential condition in Eden.²¹⁴

5.5.2 Temptation

Although there are no verbal parallels and the word, ‘temptation,’ is not used in Genesis 1-3, the Gethsemane world is enlightened by the Eden context. The presentation of temptation and obedience in Gethsemane makes it a fruitful area of Adam allusion. After God created Adam, he placed him in the Garden of Eden, an uncertain and secluded location,²¹⁵ and told him not

²⁰⁷ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 34-36; Allison, *Studies in Matthew*, 157-162; Zhodi Angami, *Tribals, Empire and God: A Tribal Reading of the Birth of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2017), 85. Thomas R. Hatina, ed., *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels*, vol. 2, *The Gospel of Matthew*, LNTS (London: T. & T. Clark, 2008), 63-67 suggests with most commentators Gen 2:4a; 5:1; 6:9 but he also adds Gen 10:1; Num 3:1 (which use γενέσεως as Gen 6:9) as hinting at new beginnings.

²⁰⁸ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 36.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 34-50, 67-81; Nolan, *Royal Son of God*, 24.

²¹⁰ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 35-36.

²¹¹ See Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 357.

²¹² Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 358; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 60; Glenn Morrison, “A Theology of Feasting: Encountering the Kingdom of God,” *ITQ* 82, no. 2 (May 2017): 11, 16, 24.

²¹³ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 78; Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 103-104.

²¹⁴ Angami (*Tribals, Empire and God*, 85-87) interprets Matt 1:1’s Βίβλος γενέσεως to mean ‘God’s work of creation or re-creation’ in Jesus.

²¹⁵ Cf. 3.2.1 above for significance of unspecified location.

to eat the forbidden fruit under pain of death. Having commanded him thus, God creates Eve, Adam's wife and helpmate. In them God honours humanity above every other living thing on earth. Adam as God's son is expected to be unreservedly obedient to God by means of which he is to exercise universal dominion which is meant to bring universal blessing.²¹⁶ The serpent-tempter is envious and formidably armed with subtlety to mislead Adam in God's absence and so disrupt the loving relationship between God and humanity. Adam's wife is used as a foil and agent to intensify the temptation. The devil plants transmissible doubt in the mind of Eve, who, driven by a desire to know and indulge the senses, eats of the forbidden tree and also gives some to her husband and he falls with her (Gen 3:1-7). They yield to Satan's will. Thus Adam, as primordial covenantal son of God (Gen 1:27; 5:1), disobeys God (Gen 2:16-17; 3:1-13) and rather does his own will. He exhibits no resistance to temptation whereby he loses the potential authority and dominion given him over all creation (Gen 2:15-23; 3:23-24). His fall bears colossal and universal negative consequences.²¹⁷ Through his fall he defies his nature and status as God's righteous son,²¹⁸ forfeits his role as humanity's model, and exits Eden in shame. However, God had promised a Messiah, Adam's offspring, who would redeem all humankind (Gen 3:15)²¹⁹ in this earthly begun conflict between good and evil, obedience and disobedience, by crushing the serpent's head. This is played out in Jesus' sternest test and he conquers by yielding to the will of God. In Gethsemane, sonship, temptation, and obedience are also linked (cf. also Matt 3:17-4:11) as they are in Eden and Jesus' unique obedience may be better understood by considering the unique obedience expected of Adam.²²⁰ Jesus, God's Son, in an uncertain and secluded

²¹⁶ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 61; Cregan, "Garden of Eden," 254.

²¹⁷ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 57.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

²¹⁹ David R. Anderson, *Free Grace Soteriology* (NP: Xulon Press, 2010), 63.

²²⁰ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 55-62. Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 92 note 22 agrees that an allusion can imply an irony. Even though Adamic link is not obvious in Matthew, Jesus sometimes refers back to God's intention at and for creation (e.g., 19:4; 24:21).

location, also faces the temptation of obedience²²¹ pregnant with universal consequences.²²² He faces the temptation to not drink the cup²²³ he has been given by God. But, although he has power to remove the cup (cf. 17:20; 21:21-22; 26:53 [δύναμαι]), he does not remove it just as he refuses to selfishly employ his powers in 4:1-11. He is consistent and not an opportunist. He chooses to drink the cup in accordance with God's will. Every choice to act implies a judgment of morality²²⁴ and the Matthean Jesus' act is symptomatic of his steadfastness and radical choice for salvific obedience. Although the disciples' role serves as a vehicle of increasing the temptation level (cf. 4.2.8.1), Jesus neither caves in nor gives up. From all ramifications, he is tempted to act for selfish reasons to preserve his life but he subordinates it to God's desire thereby acceding to his role in God's plan of salvation.²²⁵ Jesus perfectly understands God's will through the Scriptures even though he does not receive from God a direct and situational command.²²⁶ His life is in 'conformity' to the way things were before the fall and thus remains the unswervingly God's obedient Son²²⁷ who creditably undoes Adam's disobedience with its universal consequences as well.²²⁸ Jesus' determination to do God's will²²⁹ seems to increase proportionally to his suffering, climaxing in the crucifixion. He appears to be stimulated to perform better even with the ever increasing pressure; as the temptation level increases it is matched by an increasing resistance level. This portrays Jesus as having to perilously endure temptation unto death whereas being overpowered by temptation would mark the end of the precarious struggle. Therefore, Jesus gains the dominion that Adam lost consequent upon his fall.

²²¹ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 75.

²²² See Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1379.

²²³ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 263 note 80; Bartunek, *Inside the Passion*, 16-20.

²²⁴ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 41.

²²⁵ Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 262; Cregan, "Garden of Eden," 249; also cf. Matt 4:3-10.

²²⁶ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 77 gives parallel areas in temptation between Jesus and Adam (e.g., Matt 4:3//Gen 2:16-17; 3:1-8, eating food selfishly and Matt 4:5-6//Gen 3:15; cf. Ps 91[:11-12], striking the foot) but I just want to maintain here intertextuality with Gethsemane.

²²⁷ Cf. Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 154; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 75.

²²⁸ See Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1379.

²²⁹ Bartunek, *Inside the Passion*, 16-20.

As hinted above (5.3.1 and 5.4.1), during a temptation God seems absent, abandoning the character to be on their own as if to prove what substance they are made of.²³⁰ Jesus is totally abandoned in Gethsemane to the end of his trial which ultimately climaxes in his death which is symbolic of his meritorious and victorious obedience. He crosses the Rubicon. In this regard, the reader perceives that the attitudes that are found wanting in Adam find their antidotes in Jesus who exclusively supplies us with the right attitudes during a temptation. God's perceived abandonment in interaction with Jesus' endless obedience shows how genuine Jesus' obedience is, devoid of hypocrisy, eye service, or reward-expectation.²³¹ To maintain this quality of obedience, Jesus prays avowing thrice that God's will be done.²³² Prayer helps to nurture a healthy relationship with God within the heart and Jesus keeps this alive in Gethsemane. Praying through temptation is anchored on the belief that in answer to a request God steers situations toward the right outcome (6:13; 26:41).²³³ Jesus' moral principle is in continuity with the Old Testament pattern in obedient characters. For instance, in felt abandonment Hezekiah prays to God who, changing his mind, heals him (cf. 2 Kgs 20:1-7ff). Also, Cregan offers that Jesus falling on his face in Gethsemane (Matt 26:39) reflects deepest humility announcing "humanity's origins in 'the dust of the ground' (Gen 2:7)"²³⁴ and this undoes Adam's pride.

Another attitude of Jesus in Gethsemane is his unflinching watch. It involves both outward and particularly inward alertness to forestall falling into sin²³⁵ or temptation (26:41) and this underscores his dedication in seeking and doing God's will. The watch motif pervades the

²³⁰ Gen 6:7; 1 Sam 15:11 also depict anthropomorphic ignorance of God (and the trial's full result authentically ascribable to the pupils) but the entire Scripture paints God as omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent.

²³¹ Harkins, "Ritualizing Jesus' Grief," 186-187 understands the total abandonment and death experienced as fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy (Zech 13:7; cf. Matt 26:31).

²³² *Catechism of Catholic Church*, [2098] (consider [2095-2100]) states that "[p]rayer is an indispensable condition for being able to obey God's commandments."

²³³ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 41-42.

²³⁴ Cregan, "Garden of Eden," 264. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 36 using Matt 11:28-30 avers that Jesus identifying himself as gentle and humble in heart "may be contrasted with Adam's prideful sin leading to the curse (cf. Lam 1:14)."

²³⁵ See Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 94.

Old Testament especially in passages that concern obedience to God. Being more an interior disposition in the secret chamber of the heart but known most fully to God, it aligns Jesus with biblical figures who were careful not to offend God by sinning (e.g., Job 1:1-5; 2 Kgs 20:3) and, therefore, attained their destiny. To stay awake (cf. 26:40-41) is intrinsically a clue for prayer because watch is an integral element of prayer.²³⁶ Thus, humbly coupling prayer and watch in temptation, as Jesus does in exhortation and practice (26:38-41), is the intensified summons to faithfulness and to deliverance from defection.²³⁷

5.5.3 Jesus' Adherence to God's Command

This steadfast attitude of Jesus may be expository in his relationship with the Jewish law and the God who is the source of the law. Jesus' exposition of the law appeals to God's will in antiquity (cf. 5:17-20; 8:1-4; 9:10-13) which has its basis in the beginning (19:3-6).²³⁸ Even the textual Pharisees who strictly but erroneously uphold the letter of the law are always redirected backward by Jesus to the days of old (12:1-7, 38-40; 15:3-6) when the focus was more on the spirit of the law. Thus, Jesus is exonerated when on the Sabbath he lets his hungry disciples pick and eat ears of corn as David and his companions were guiltless when in hunger they unlawfully ate the bread of the Presence in God's house (12:1-4; 1 Sam 21:1-10).²³⁹ Again, as the priests in the temple break the Sabbath without being guilty, Jesus is sinless when he heals on the Sabbath which is 'prohibited' by the law (12:5-13).²⁴⁰ Although

²³⁶ Senior, *Passion According to Matthew*, 104; Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 176.

²³⁷ Reid, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 132.

²³⁸ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 12; Beck, *Jesus and His Enemies*, 99.

²³⁹ Richard B. Hays, "The Canonical Matrix of the Gospels," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels*, ed. Stephen C. Barton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 66-67 asserts that Jesus' obedience to the law is radical and more exacting than that of the religious leaders for it simultaneously revolves around mercy and forgiveness. Also, W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 1, *Introduction and Commentary on Matthew I-VII*, ed. Dale C. Allison, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 482. Thus, for Matthias Konradt, "The Love Command in Matthew, James, and the Didache," in *Matthew, James, Didache: Three Related Documents in their Jewish and Christian Settings*, eds. Huub van de Sandt and Jürgen K. Zangenberg (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), 272-277, it is the religious leaders' interpretation of the Torah that is a distortion.

²⁴⁰ See also John 7:22-24 cf. Gen 17:10.

it appears that God's will in these instances clash with God's law,²⁴¹ the crux of the argument is that the law finds appropriate application and fulfilment in doing the good always. Any good that results from a God-centred heart transcends the letter of the law.²⁴² Jesus discourages the law itself being turned on its head and used to justify going against the spirit of the law. God's will is for humans to always be doing the good²⁴³ without condition as to time and Jesus calls for a return to common Scripture and its proper and renewed understanding²⁴⁴ of God's *good* intentions from inception (Gen 1:4, 10, 12) which is reminiscent of Adam. Evidently, any resonance with Adam in the light of obedience calls for a return to the beginning²⁴⁵ when the created order devotedly submitted wholly to God. In Matthew, the religious authorities blindly uphold their own wills by their ignorant and hypocritical dependence on the tradition of the elders which substantially contradicts God's will revealed in the Hebrew Scripture (15:1-9; 23:16-23).²⁴⁶ Matthew's narrative becomes a counter-narrative to that of doing one's own will at the expense of God's will. From Jesus' perspective, doing either God's will or one's own will becomes the central issue at stake in the conflict with his antagonists.²⁴⁷ The thrust to revert to creational original standard as expressive of doing God's will becomes clearer in the divorce law controversy.

It is intriguing that the Pharisees also use Scripture like the devil to justify their erroneous stand (cf. 4:13-10; Gen 3:1-5) on divorce as a command from Moses (Matt 19:3-12; cf. Deut 24:1-4). The Matthean narrative corrects their interpretation by pointing out that Moses had

²⁴¹ Powery, *Jesus Reads Scripture*, 96 note 52. Also, a thought of the present ban on church and other gatherings due to the coronavirus worldwide pandemic hints at the question of God sending one on an errand and sending a storm against the messenger. This simulates a worldwide gethsemane whereby the law seems to clash with God's will.

²⁴² Moyise, *Jesus and Scripture*, 85, 101; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 278-280.

²⁴³ Giles, "Obedience Theology of Matthew," 202-203; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 277.

²⁴⁴ See Porter, *Hearing the Old Testament*, 64-66.

²⁴⁵ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 35-36; Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 8; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 517.

²⁴⁶ Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 71.

²⁴⁷ Beck, *Jesus and His Enemies*, 100.

“allowed” (ἐπέτρεψεν [not ‘commanded,’ ἐνετείλατο])²⁴⁸ divorce as the lesser evil²⁴⁹ only in response to their hard-heartedness that craved the weakness of the flesh.²⁵⁰ Jesus seemingly disallows emendations and concessions based on the weakness of the flesh (Matt 19:8; cf. 26:40-41) which makes one deflect.²⁵¹ He rather makes recourse to the prelapsarian idealism, invoking creational foundational truth (Matt 19:4; cf. Gen 1:27, Matt 19:5; cf. Gen 2:24)²⁵² as a guiding moral principle.²⁵³ Pertinently also, it is revealing that the teaching on the law is almost always imbedded in the context of having a good heart devoid of hardness (18:35-19:9; cf. 5:17-7:29), reflective of human condition before the fall.

Jesus’ life with his teaching is not really a change regarding obedience to the law and to God as the religious authorities suppose. In fact, it is going back to the beginning for a more radical response to God. It is the loss of this basis that necessitated the giving of the law in the first place in order to bring people’s heart back to God. Jesus’ programmatic invitation to the “greater righteousness” (3:15; 5:20) which goes beyond mere letter of the law (Matt 5-7) is a call to the spirit underlying and underlining all the law and the prophets. Jesus’ stance is that external conformity to the law without the accompanying inner integrity of total submissiveness to God loses salvific value.²⁵⁴ God’s original demands are not obsolete and unattainable ideals (Deut 30:10-14) but are to find expression in the fresh task of marrying the new with the old (Matt 13:52)²⁵⁵ so as to make the old order understood in light of the new messianic teaching. Kingsbury advances this point:

²⁴⁸ Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 80.

²⁴⁹ W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, ICC (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), 3:15.

²⁵⁰ Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 14.

²⁵¹ Giles, “Obedience Theology of Matthew,” 203-204 and note 751.

²⁵² Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 36; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 380-382. Menken and Moyise, *Genesis in New Testament*, 44-46 understand Matthew’s citations as pointing to both the immediate story and cohering with motives woven throughout the narrative. For example, Gen 1:27 complements the story level as well as adds to Matthean themes in Matt 19 viewing Jesus as definitive interpreter of the law.

²⁵³ Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 10.

²⁵⁴ Moriarty, *Introducing the Old Testament*, 18; Meier, *Matthew*, 325.

²⁵⁵ Porter, *Hearing the Old Testament*, 61.

The law of God and the Son of God are not antithetical. The Son of God appeals to the law for guidance and validation (4:1-11)... As important as the law is, something new has arrived with the kingdom. The law is no longer the centre of gravity; Jesus is. He is the one to whom the scriptures point, the one who lives in accord with the scriptures, and who shows their intent.²⁵⁶

5.5.4 Son of Man and Exit from Gethsemane

As Jesus prepares to exit Gethsemane, he refers to himself as ‘Son of Man.’ ‘Son of Man’ (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) could also be understood as relating to Adam, ‘the man’²⁵⁷ (LXX Gen 1-2), who is the primeval human given dominion and divine glory in the beginning.²⁵⁸ Although it first appears in Numbers 23:19 as, ‘mortal,’ ‘a human being’ (e.g., Ezek 2:1), it mainly recalls figures in the Old Testament with the connotation of representative divine authority and so describes Jesus’ earthly activity. It is mostly linked to the Parousia and is often thought to evoke Daniel 7:13-14 of the glorious dominion of the Son of Man. Considering that no Old Testament passage speaks of the suffering Son of Man,²⁵⁹ it introduces a cognitive dissonance with the reader’s expectations at hearing that “the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners” (26:45). The earthly authority and the glorious abstraction in Son of Man are hereby contradicted and brought to a shocking paradoxical practical level in Gethsemane. This acute clash between the reader’s expectations and the tangible reality makes it difficult to reconcile fresh impressions with ‘old’ ones.²⁶⁰ However, a critical re-examination in the context of the entire Gospel reveals that there is more to it than meets the eye. This cognitive dissonance is what Jesus has been discreetly at pains to teach his disciples (cf. 4.2.13 and 4.3.2). The Son of God will suffer and be crucified as the Son of Man and he will be raised. This realisation gives rise to the effect of satisfaction as Jesus’ self-designation

²⁵⁶ Kingsbury, *Gospel Interpretation*, 47.

²⁵⁷ W. Horbury, “The Messianic Associations of ‘the Son of Man,’” *JTS* 36, no. 1 (April 1985): 49-52 claims that biblically ‘man’ is interpreted messianically.

²⁵⁸ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 18-23; Joel Marcus, “Son of Man as Son of Adam,” *RB* 110, no. 1 (Janvier 2003): 45-47.

²⁵⁹ Marcus, “Son of Man,” 48-49.

²⁶⁰ See Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction*, 123, 129.

still matches the primacy effect of his entrance into Gethsemane indicative of him both as divine and human. His speech shows that he is still in full control of events. This Son of Man that is betrayed to be killed will rise again on the third day and will be seen “seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven” (26:64 RSV). This is reminiscent of the Danielic symbol for obedient or saintly Israelites and associated with messianic significance.²⁶¹ Indeed, his disciples will begin to have a taste of it on the Galilee mountain soon after the resurrection when Jesus announces to them his new endowment with all conceivable authority (28:18-20; cf. Dan 7:13-14).²⁶²

Meanwhile, in Gethsemane Jesus *rises* and is set to exit not in shame but to *go* to the next level of confrontation with the enemy and this gives a glimmer of hope. In the Old Testament, most occurrences of the words, ‘rise’ and ‘go’ (cf. 26:46), are in the contexts of divine guidance and assurance to those who listen to, or obey, God (e.g., Num 22:20; Deut 9:12; 1 Sam 9:26; Mic 2:10). The Jesus obedience is normative if one is to exit either ‘Gethsemane’ or this world as we know it, with courage and hope, once we have endeavoured to rise above the trials.

5.5.5 Conclusion to Adamic Link

The Gethsemane allusions with Adam based on the themes of sonship, temptation, and obedience are consonant with the narrative references to creation standard.²⁶³ The restoration of humanity’s dominion as at creation is the prophetic hope and is central to God’s redemption plan through each covenant reinstatement, which reaches its *telos* and fulfilment ultimately in Jesus, Adam’s offspring (Gen 3:15).²⁶⁴ Matthew’s salvation history stretches to the consummation of time (28:20; cf. 25:46) not simply from Abraham (1:1) but from the

²⁶¹ Horbury, “The Messianic Associations,” 36-38, 53.

²⁶² Ellis, *Matthew: Mind and Message*, 23-25.

²⁶³ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 36 (see 34-50); also Cregan, “Garden of Eden,” 254.

²⁶⁴ Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 356-360.

beginning of the world (19:4, 8; 24:21) with Jesus located somewhere midway in the continuum.²⁶⁵ Jesus cites the various Old Testament characters and passages as examples²⁶⁶ through whom lessons could be learned. However, the primary thrust for him is the return to that primary, primordial, state when humanity in the state of original innocence remains obedient to, and ultimately guided by, God. What is more, Jesus will overcome the very serpent that made Adam fall (Gen 3:15). Jesus' life and ministry pose a threat to Satan who having opposed God from the beginning has since claimed dominion over the whole world (Matt 4:8-9; cf. Gen 1:26-28). Now, this dominion is to return to man through the instrumentality of Jesus whom Satan cannot defeat.²⁶⁷ The world order has been thwarted because of humanity's sin in Adam and it is necessary to restore that order so things can be as perfect (5:48; 19:21) as at the beginning (19:4-6, 28).²⁶⁸

5.6 CONCLUSION

Summarily, the Gethsemane allusions explored above have in common that each of the characters is God's son and, therefore, God's image bearer from whom covenantal filial obedience is expected.²⁶⁹ By scriptural logic Jesus is son of David, son of Abraham, son of Adam, son of God, where all are representative covenantal heads of people.

As consistent with these Old Testament heroes, it behoves Jesus to go through a major critical testing initiated by God so as to know the content of the heart and foundational motive of his loyalty (cf. Gen 2:16-17; 22:1-2; Exod 16:4; 1 Sam 13:14).²⁷⁰ Israel-as-nation and Adam

²⁶⁵ Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, 41; Moyise and Menken, *Isaiah in New Testament*, 75; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* 48.

²⁶⁶ David (12:1-8; 22:41-45); Isaiah (15:7-9); Moses and Abraham (22:29-33); Moses and Adam (cf. 19:4-8).

²⁶⁷ See Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 263 note 80. For further reading, cf. Rev 20-22.

²⁶⁸ For the idea of returning to the beginning see also Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 228. John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 186-187 holds that the author of 'ApMos' also describes Adam's original state as 'righteousness' and the sage understands Adam 'as an Israelite ancestor' (pp. 150, 153, cf. Wis 10:1-2).

²⁶⁹ See Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 357. [David (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89; 132), Israel (cf. Exod 4:22-23), Abraham (Gen 12:1-3), and Adam (Gen 1:28; 2:16-17; 5:1, 3 cf. Hos 6:7).]

²⁷⁰ Cf. Job (Job 1:1-2:6); Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:31). The action and answer of Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego to king Nebuchadnezzar of their unconditional loyalty to God prove their faithfulness (cf. Dan 3:15-95).

have a negative remark of failure. God tells Abraham at the end of his test, “Now I know that you fear God and have not held back from me your only son...” (Gen 22:12 NCBCE). Of David God says, “I have found David...a man after my own heart” (cf. 1 Sam 13:14; cf. Ps 89:20). Jesus’ resurrection is the living testimony of God’s perfect and eternal approval of his Son (Ps 110:1). That the Father does not directly address the Son in similar words as the duo above may be because the *showing* method of the exaltation already says it all. Moreover, the omniscient God has in the past reiterated his full delight in Jesus and it would appear superfluous to so address Emmanuel (cf. 1:23). Jesus advances the efforts from of old in obedience.²⁷¹ Matthew’s Jesus’ covenantal obedience goes beyond an intrinsic contractual responsibility to an ideal complete ‘ownership’ by God (e.g., Deut 7:6). For instance, without any protracted Abrahamic *bargain* (Gen 18:22-32) or Davidic *condition* (2 Sam 16:11-12), God can do *whatever* he wills with his Son (cf. 3.4.3.1 and 3.4.3.3 above).

Hence, in light of Old Testament background, Jesus’ obedience to God is both in continuity and discontinuity because the Old Testament patterns in him are repeated on a higher level and significance (cf. Matt 12:6, 41, 42; 13:16-17).²⁷² And beyond mere continuity and discontinuity, these patterns find their ultimate fulfilment in him.²⁷³ On the whole, it is as though as long as there is something lacking in the obedient response expected of any incumbent ‘son of God,’ God continues to initiate yet a new covenant until Jesus’ culminating obedience seals permanently that covenant between God and humanity (Matt 26:28). It has been God’s intention to save humanity and he provides his Son, Jesus,²⁷⁴ who

²⁷¹ Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 109.

²⁷² France, *Jesus and the Old*, 78-79; Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 7.

²⁷³ See France, *Jesus and the Old*, 79-80; Menken and Moyise, *Genesis in New Testament*, 42; Wright, *Matthew Chapters 1-15*, 1, 4; Spadaro, *Matthew as Climactic Fulfillment*, 7-26; Crowe, *The Obedient Son*, 23-31; Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 5, 84-85. Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 91 stresses the addition of perfection of the Old Testament law in Jesus.

²⁷⁴ Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 357.

fulfils all the prophetic messianic expectations of Israel, not as the wrongly thought of political deliverer from enemies, but as the anointed saviour who atones for their sins.²⁷⁵

By his life of obedience, Jesus leads his people back to the original status quo to dwell in perfect and perpetual submission to God from which he himself has not deviated. The nature of Jesus' obedience is not as much a radical break from the present societal norms as it is a pointer to God's original norm. By the Jesus obedience, Matthew's Gospel reminds humanity of what we have forgotten in our consciousness—the living of life in that original state in which God created us as his children in his image.

Additionally, Jesus comes to restore things not just to their original order in the prelapsarian period but further back toward re-grafting them onto their established eternal order in heaven. The establishment of God's kingdom (3:2; 4:17; 6:10) on earth as the realisation of God's intention at the beginning of time does not only restore earth's lost paradise. It unites creation and redemption²⁷⁶ regarding the perfect realisation of God's will to wipe away every dichotomy between heaven and earth.²⁷⁷ Inviting humanity to the heavenly sphere is not unexpected for Gethsemane, the only place Jesus comes *with* (26:36a) his disciples recalling him as Emmanuel, God-with-us (Matt 1:23). His Gethsemane portrait may show the disciples and the reader the lived life of heaven. In Isaiah 7:14-16, 'Emmanuel' is the promised sign given to the house of David in the context of unrest. This prophecy of Isaiah, although finding immediate fulfilment in Ahaz's son, Hezekiah, who was the sign that God was with his people by his God-fearing kingly rule (Isa 7:14-16), finds fuller expression in the coming royal Messiah (2 Sam 7:12-16; cf. Isa 9:1-6), Jesus. Jesus becomes the fulfilment of the

²⁷⁵ And for the whole world (cf. 1:21; 20:28; 26:28; 28:18-20).

²⁷⁶ Davies and Allison, *Gospel According to Matthew*, 14. Aagaard, "Doing God's Will," 223 names the Lord's Prayer also visible in Gethsemane as 'the Kingdom-prayer.'

²⁷⁷ Note that the mythical return to the earthly paradise is forbidden by two angels (Gen 3:24). So we return by way of obedience amidst usual existential tensions in the world (Rev 2:7; 22:14, 19).

messianic hopes that God will never abandon his people.²⁷⁸ The sign of God being with his people in Isaiah may further look back to the very original order of things in Genesis when God was in full fellowship with humans (cf. Gen 3:8-10). Jesus in Gethsemane, therefore, is the perfect image of God as stated at the beginning and implied at the end of the Gospel (Matt 1:23 and 28: 20).

His free submission points to heaven where there is no rebellion against, but perpetual love for, God's will (cf. Matt 6:10; 26:39, 42). The life of heaven mingles with the life of earth, thus establishing the age of salvation.²⁷⁹ Jesus is doing in Gethsemane what is obtainable in heaven. God's rule comes when his will (cf. 7:21; 12:50; 21:31), as done in heaven, is implemented on earth and this exemplifies God's ultimate plan for creation.²⁸⁰ So focal is God's θέλημα that it remains the centre of reference in prayers, teachings, and deeds. Is it any wonder that the two Matthean great prayers (6:9-13; 26:39-44) have God's will as their high points marking a breakthrough to that place where the ideal in heaven and the real on earth meet?²⁸¹ God's perfect will is realised in Jesus' heart on earth as it is perfectly realised in heaven.²⁸² And this is the expectation for all humanity.

Since our bloodline is ingrained in us, I propose that Jesus inherited and developed qualities which became dominant in him although dormant or recessive in others of common ancestry. The prodigious ancestors are alive and furthered in him through his spiritual DNA, to borrow the geneticist language; and the line goes back to God. The grand design human family tree links every human, if not directly through David or Abraham, definitely through Adam.

²⁷⁸ Kanachikuzhy, *The New Community Bible*, 1239 note on Isa 7:14. Should the people feel abandoned, Jesus-Emmanuel's steadfastness should remind them of God's faithfulness.

²⁷⁹ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom*, 96. Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew*, 301 asserts that Jesus refuses the cup due to human trepidation and accepts it "from the persona of the Son of God."

²⁸⁰ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 38-39.

²⁸¹ Yeomans, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 186; Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 53-57; Neumann, "Thy Will Be Done," 180.

²⁸² Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 33-57 emphasises that the complete realisation of God's will is in heaven.

Therefore, our common DNA with Jesus also promises the ability of trait mutation or evolution for the possible manifestation of the highest good assured us in Jesus if only we endeavour to imbibe his exhortation and example and truly follow him.²⁸³

²⁸³ Also Ellias and Theanna Lonsdale, *The Christ Letters: An Evolutionary Guide Home* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2012), 107-108.

6. CONCLUSION

THE NATURE OF OBEDIENCE IN MATTHEW 26:36-46

The aim of this thesis, as described in the Introduction, was to ascertain Matthew's portrayal of Jesus' obedience in the midst of all implied opinions of obedience clamouring for supremacy. The research sought to answer this question by attempting to join the implied reader of Matthew's Gospel to consider the nature of Jesus' obedience. While a few studies have been done on the Matthean obedience theology based on different passages, this research focused on Gethsemane as the key text where we could discover literary clues to indicate that throughout his life Jesus perfectly obeyed God. It was in the Gethsemane episode that we could view Jesus' fundamental attitude in relating to God because being at his life's critical stage his choice would be decisive and pivotal. Next, was to observe if the portrayed obedience agreed with McCabe's understanding of perfect obedience as unity of minds between a superior and a subordinate.

6.1 Summary of Study

The second chapter considered the survey of literature on Matthew's obedience theology and especially on Gethsemane. Jesus' obedience would be better appreciated and appraised in light of the history of effects that went with the history of interpretation of the Gethsemane text down through the ages to today.¹ It was, however, shown that Gethsemane had not received adequate scholarly treatment via a narrative-critical approach regarding Jesus' obedience and the research intended to fill this lacuna.

¹ See Ulrich Luz, *Studies in Matthew*, trans. Rosemary Selle (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 349-352 and Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text*, 160 for how the past shapes the text and us. Additionally, this present dark and gloomy coronavirus worldwide pandemic may remain as an ineliminable influence in the understanding, interpretation, and appropriation of the Gethsemane obedience.

The third chapter critically analysed the Gethsemane narrative (26:36-46). Although the obvious and popular focus among scholars is on the agonising prayer and watch motif, the analysis was undertaken with an eye on the portrayed and decipherable features of Jesus' obedience. It focused on the exegetical study of the characterisation of Jesus to unfold the meaning and impact of the Gethsemane obedience idealised in the attainment of perfect agreement between the protagonist's will and God's will. This revealed that Jesus was truly and perfectly obedient since *he submitted his will completely to God*.

The fourth chapter observed some intratextual links between Gethsemane and the rest of the Gospel. This revealed that the features of obedience discovered in chapter three were compatible with Matthean obedience theology² which is basically about *doing the will of God*. It also uncovered that the Gethsemane passage formed a major turning point at a critical narrative position in the Gospel and had expository function as a summary of the entire Gospel. The fact that Gethsemane alone could reflect the whole life scenario of Jesus was proof that it represented a crowning synthesis of all the constituents of Jesus' lifelong obedience, thus, confirming this study's hypothesis. We had hoped to find in Gethsemane literary clues to indicate that throughout Jesus' life he was perfectly obedient to God³ and the fourth chapter enhanced and reinforced that Gethsemane served as the epitome of Jesus' obedient life. Consequently, the literary-critical approach brought to the fore the theological import being *Jesus' lifelong obedience onto his destiny*.

The fifth chapter discerned intertextual connections between Gethsemane and the Old Testament which added colour to the perceived obedience of Jesus when considered in light of David, Israel, Abraham, and Adam. The Gethsemane obedience traits were proved to be rooted in the Old Testament tradition which forms the implied reader's background

² See Giles, "Obedience Theology of Matthew," 225.

³ Boxall, *Discovering Matthew*, 154.

knowledge. Jesus was portrayed as continuing, advancing, and fulfilling the Old Testament patterns and prophetic expectations of the Messiah. For instance, God was at the centre of Jesus' life and attitude to the law. Thus, he accomplished all that God desired from him as a faithful law-abiding devotee who would not deviate from God's original intent for his people. Jesus maintained that love is the hermeneutical key of the law⁴ and any application of the law that contradicted the love-of-God-and-neighbour commandments (22:34-40) was, therefore, erroneous. His obedience emerged as fundamentally perfect since he carried out God's will on earth as is obtainable in heaven to God's fullest pleasure. Now, the Jesus-obedience is representative for all humanity, showing Jesus as authentically obedient in the way God expects every person devoted to him to be obedient.

Doubtlessly, through the reader-text interaction the meaning of the Gethsemane text has both modified and been modified by the world of the reader, consciously or unconsciously, explicitly and implicitly. Accordingly, the Gethsemane text presents its truth claim strongly. Authentic obedience to God is unconditionally unbroken and is throughout life. It comes to full expression when its external form agrees with one's internal disposition and both harmonise with God's will. Despite not understanding fully God's will, one who chooses to remain obedient to God must let down their every defence and entirely submit themselves inside and out to his master-guidance throughout life. And that is also the best way to fulfil one's destiny.

6.2 Matthew's Narrative Persuasion

Matthew's narrative persuasion or rhetorical device to convince his reader about the necessity of obedience to God can be seen in his constant return to the theme of obedience or righteousness as the condition to enter into God's kingdom. By presenting Jesus as proving his sonship to God through his obedience, obedience is made paramount in the Gospel. This

⁴ See Giles, "Obedience Theology of Matthew," 219.

invites the reader to aspire to a familial relationship with God through the enviable Jesus-obedience which receives undying affirmation from God. Thus, the Gospel makes ample allowances for the modern reader to make inferences as the entire narrative conflict setting provokes deep reflection on their sociohistorical location regarding the knowledge and experience⁵ of obedience. The Gospel's principal concern is doing God's will⁶ and the narrative characters are presented as foils to facilitate transformation in the reader.⁷ The rightness of doing the will of God⁸ is revealed through presenting the life of Jesus as the obedient one *par excellence* opposed by Satan and all agents controlled by Satan.⁹ To emulate Jesus (11:29) is to be obedient to God while to oppose him is to oppose God and side with Satan. Nevertheless, the hold of Satan is broken as long as humanity appropriates the interminable obedience of Jesus.

Specifically, the Gethsemane text's exceptionally skilful competence (e.g., the expansible analepses-prolepses plotline covering the whole Gospel¹⁰) is very effective in winning the reader's attention. The Gethsemane event expedites memory in the reader who perceives it as a symbolic abridgement of the entire Gospel collapsing distant spatial and temporal life events of Jesus into a small place within a few hours in the night.¹¹ Then, aside from the gloomy 'night' facilitating Jesus' safe arrest (cf. 26:5), it may simulate Jesus' all-round introspection expository of an obedient grief-shadowed life in a dark sinful world; a life, however, that shines in the dark for the upright.¹²

God's will for Jesus stands out as paradoxically rescuing the very people who think God's will for them is to antagonise Jesus. The scenario is like the proverbial monk and the

⁵ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷ Bennema, *Character in New Testament Narrative*, 5.

⁸ Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

¹⁰ Cf. 4.3 above.

¹¹ See Wilson, *Shakespearean Narrative*, 57 for such function of characterisation.

¹² Cf. Ps 112:1-4.

entangled scorpion which keeps stinging him as he keeps trying to untie it. His motive is: “it is in the scorpion’s nature to sting and it is in my nature to save.” Jesus will continue to do God’s will irrespective of what the enemies are thinking and doing. The disciple is forewarned of the uniquely adapted test that accompanies every obedience journey and of the peril that precedes the ultimate victory wherein their weakness will be exhaustively exploited by Satan.¹³ But the light shines. The all-encompassing love of Jesus which conquers all evil teaches the reader to love the genuine experience of loving and to hate even the fleeting thought of hating at all.¹⁴ Gethsemane portrays a Jesus whose circumstances never detract from being theocentric and this encourages the reader to remain unconditionally theocentric.¹⁵ In Jesus is the precedent that God will triumph over evil if his people learn how to discern and incessantly accomplish God’s specific will for them revealed through personal and general life events.¹⁶

6.3 Contribution of the Gethsemane Episode

It is my hope that this research has added to the understanding of Jesus’ characterisation and that he has been proved to be completely obedient in Gethsemane. I have also expanded on the previous understanding of Gethsemane as being a potential synopsis of the entire Gospel¹⁷ thereby substantiating the standpoint that Jesus is perfectly obedient throughout his life. This projects Gethsemane, especially its concept of “your will be done,” as integral to and the hub of the Matthean obedience theology. This study has added to the understanding that doing God’s will is equivalent to being obedient to God and that the thrust of Jesus’ life is *doing the will of God* in all its ramifications. Through his lifelong and salvific obedience, Jesus is shown as saviour of the world and that he remains with us in our life struggles. Not

¹³ Brown, *Death of the Messiah*, 200.

¹⁴ Nygaard, *Prayer in the Gospels*, 32 may suggest similarly, though using a different expression.

¹⁵ Keener, *A Commentary on Matthew*, 639.

¹⁶ James Hastings, ed., *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), 2:258. For instance, while the church’s one hour adoration vigil especially of Holy Thursday stems from the Gethsemane tradition, faithful disciples are encouraged to be watchfully obedient throughout life.

¹⁷ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 7; Covington, “The Garden of Anguish,” 291.

taking advantage of his divinity, he exemplarily remains obedient to God as should all humanity, whose nature he has taken¹⁸ and shows in Gethsemane the possible fullest expression of divinised humanity's obedience to God. Every disciple is a 'divinised' son or daughter in Jesus, able to do what Jesus does (Matt 10:24-25).¹⁹ Hence, behind the Gethsemane tale may lie the pedagogical intention to make disciples learn Jesus' entire teaching. And to be obedient to God unto death, the disciple's thoughts must flow from Jesus' Gethsemane thoughts.²⁰

The invitation of Gethsemane is to practise unwaveringly the proper primordial obedience to God in all situations without allowing conflict or temptation of any kind, either directly from Satan or through Satan's agents, to deter one. A true God-lover seeks always, in joy and sorrow, to do that which pleases God (Matt 6:33). God's incomprehensible plan for a person can only be fully realised through their unreserved allegiance to God. The Jesus-obedience assures fulfilment of destiny but only a few find the narrow gate to their destiny (Matt 7:13-14) and still fewer dare to go through it because the destiny's objective may appear impracticable to many. From the Gethsemane text's meaning interacting with the 'effective history' it has generated, the reader is presented with certain truth claims.²¹ Because in Matthew's Gethsemane *Jesus' will is in perfect harmony with God's*, the disciples can rest assured of salvation in that to obey Jesus is to obey God.²² This understanding harbours expository powers that make it easier to comprehend Jesus' claim to sovereign dominion and authoritative confidence in the ultimate commissioning of his disciples to teach the whole world his obedience (28:18-20).

¹⁸ Cregan, "Garden of Eden," 241-245 puts it differently in his 'embodiment of Christ' perspective.

¹⁹ Since Jesus is God's Son (3:17), all who become his brothers and sisters through doing God's will (12:50) are, therefore, God's children.

²⁰ Donnelly, *Our Father in Gethsemane*, 55.

²¹ Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text*, 175-176 insists that meaning and reception history together are paramount for a text's existential interpretation.

²² Cf. Heb 5:7-9.

The world the Gethsemane text projects interacts with the world of the reader, and life and art intermingle to mediate Jesus' obedience more intimately.²³ It offers the vision of a world that probes the reader's world, thus, making the reader confront their expectations and sometimes even pressing them to change their mind. For instance, through the Gethsemane portrayal of Jesus' weakness, the new initiate is disillusioned regarding their often high and unreal expectations of endless extraordinary epiphany in the believer's life. We are encouraged to live and participate in the projected world through the eyes of Matthew. Obeying God does not guarantee invulnerability for, paradoxically, God tries his followers the hardest. Emulating Jesus does not immunize one from the evils of this world (although, of course, God does guide his own) but surprisingly increases one's susceptibility to attacks. Jesus' obedience through his darkest moment on earth should strengthen and help disciples in resolving their own inner and outer conflict story by learning how Jesus behaves in conflict.²⁴ He seeks to know and do God's will. It is in our 'gethsemane' too that we can know if we are truly obedient or not because the *best* people are often the saints whose feathers have never been ruffled. Real saints may be identified in adversity.

Set as a paradigm, Jesus' remote obedience amidst adversity has become universally effective timelessly because no life's event is isolated but interacts with the past-present-future, or 'historical consciousness,' within every knower.²⁵ Now, even to behold a crucifix is enough stimulus to ignite a reflection, in a Christian, on the nature and depth of evil as well as the nature and depth of obedience that leads Jesus to be nailed and kept hanging on the cross until death snatches his distressed soul. Whatever the pain and suffering, the obedient one has so conditioned themselves to not allow others or even the weakness of their own flesh to stand in their way of accomplishing God's will or design in their life. This is called

²³ Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text*, 157; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 7; Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Gospel*, 102-103 make a similar point.

²⁴ See Beck, *Jesus and His Enemies*, ix-1, 11, 227.

²⁵ Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text*, 160-161.

mortification. Thus, Jesus' flesh could be nailed to the cross from where he would expire, all as part of fulfilling God's will in himself. God remains alive in his soul that is distressed unto death. Discipleship means a call to the same disposition to endlessly think and do good and not evil and to love God and humanity enough to be able to die for their sakes. Undeniably, some of us are disciples on the fringes and fall off by the wayside as obedience to God becomes a most arduous and an 'impossible' task. On experiencing fear and conflicts of wills, these disciples that have not been authentically changed by the text recoil and take the easy way out rather than advance warily. They never get to deny themselves to the extent of taking up their cross and getting nailed to it. This is our challenge in life, perhaps, between our baptism and our last breath on earth, to unfailingly persevere and be saved (24:13). Each obedient person's life does not necessarily have to end in being murdered and Jesus continuously exhorts us to not be complacent but ever keep moving forward with him as our constant companion (26:46; cf. 18:20; 28:20).

One may not understand completely the way of the God one is following and one need not and ought not to. Living in a sinful, rebellious world, the Jesus-obedience to God entails suffering both in ensuring that God's will is established and in accepting the pain that ensues from it (16:21).²⁶ What is more, in the real world, the ideal disciple encounters more sore conflicts than they ever envisaged. Jesus' brutal death in fulfilment of Scripture surpasses every scriptural prediction²⁷ by its graphic details of the horrors of mockery, torture, abandonment, etc. However, Jesus' life demonstrates that doing God's will starts with a decision within the heart and sustaining it in the midst of obstacles and oppositions is a possibility only for the individual with a heart of gold for God. Finding the truth of the

²⁶ Patte, *Matthew*, 368, 403; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 105. Crowe, *The Last Adam*, 191-192 note 68, following Robert Letham, refers to Jesus' lifelong suffering as both active and passive, 'passive' meaning 'to suffer' (from Latin: *patior* [Greek: *páschō*], and not 'passivity.'

²⁷ The Old Testament (e.g., Ps 22:1-8//Matt 27:42-46; Isa 50:3-6//Matt 27:27-31) and Jesus' Passion predictions are merely like snapshots just like Joseph's dreams are nothing compared to the ordeals that eventually finds him as governor of Egypt (Gen 37-50).

narrative convincing, the reader is invited and challenged to enter and habitually live the obedient life of Jesus in their modern context.

6.4 Evaluation of Jesus' Obedience through McCabe's Worldview

The ultimate portrayal of Jesus' character in Gethsemane is that his will is in perfect harmony with God's will. The total subordination of Jesus' will to that of his Father proves him to be impeccably obedient with a theocentric unwavering moral compass. This ideal disposition of amalgamating our wills with God's is the expectation of Gethsemane.²⁸

But how does this observation fare in McCabe's worldview? Within the contemporary faith community, McCabe asserts that obedience is a good thing in contrast to the widely held opinion that it is a necessary evil of a last resort when all compromises have failed. In his view, there are two modern extreme opposing notions of obedience to be avoided. On the one hand, the subject relinquishes their will to the superior, and on the other hand, the subject has an autonomous will that is interfered with through obedience. In either view, whether the relinquishment is voluntary or reluctant, permanent or temporary, the superior is understood as 'interfering' with the subject's will. It is reckoned as inadequately surrendering one's will to the superior's prevailing will; so thought because nothing has been learnt and the gap between them widens. Both notions of obedience are wrong as they centre purely on the will "and submission of the will."²⁹ He reiterates that "obedience is not the suppression of our will in favour of someone else's."³⁰ Therefore, the Gethsemane text's apparent presentation, and a sheer attention, on *submission of will to God* as a sign of obedience would not be adequate to demonstrate, and will not pass McCabe's test of, perfect obedience.³¹ For the medieval view adopted by the Dominicans, the superior needs to be right and intelligent to play the central

²⁸ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1002 agrees that in Gethsemane 'harmony of will' is achieved.

²⁹ McCabe, "Obedience," 283.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 285.

³¹ The delicate balance between *mind* and *will* should be maintained.

role of making the good clear to everyone in the house. Obedience then primarily becomes an openness of mind to learn practical truths in solidarity and purpose in the community leading to free full agreement with the superior party regarding an objective common good.³² Thus, he concludes that “[o]bedience only becomes perfect when the one who commands and the one who obeys come to share one mind.”³³ Obedience belongs not to an individual but to the community and the community’s ‘common mind grows up’ around the superior and this makes true obedience and true authority possible.³⁴ No one’s exclusively subjective will enters into it and no one need be forced before they do anything but the superior necessarily being right and equally obedient in the learning process³⁵ represents and speaks the community mind.

Our deeper appreciation of the Gethsemane obedience is hereby enhanced through McCabe’s understanding of obedience. He maintains that obedience means learning to live; to live in solidarity with community members. By this we learn and unlearn and discover ourselves for in losing ourselves we find ourselves at a deeper level (cf. Matt 16:24-25).³⁶ For him, Jesus’ eternal procession from the Father means that through his incarnation his eternal dependence on the Father “shows itself as obedience”³⁷ which appears as the Father’s command to his Son to be human. Jesus’ obedience is unto death because he incarnated into a sinful history “in which to be really human is to be murdered.”³⁸ Although equal to his Father, Christ lived and died in total obedience to his Father. As we described in the Introduction (cf. 1.2 above), biblical obedience is free, genuine, and permanent, devoid of coercion or manipulation onto conformity but trusting that God’s view always holds the complete truth and good for all. McCabe is not against commanding but compelled obeying or simply complying which he

³² McCabe, “Obedience,” 282-284.

³³ *Ibid.*, 282.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 284.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 283.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 285-286.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 287.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

regards as erroneous for it limits the subject's freedom and development. In Matthew's Gethsemane God's command is in the background, as insinuated in the Passion predictions and references to 'the Scriptures' indicating "the declared will of God for Jesus,"³⁹ and Jesus is not compelled to obey. Hence, by McCabe, God would have played that expected central role in the enlightening process through which the common good becomes obvious to all concerned. Father and Son have already built between them a familial unity and mission, the world's salvation.⁴⁰ The core of that unity or agreement is in the Father who as an equal acts as superior around whom the common mind grows.⁴¹ This establishes true obedience and true authority, uncompelled but formed in love. The good is never considered subjectively but objectively by the community of love which makes it possible for the self to unlearn and re-learn itself,⁴² a kind of dying to self (Matt 16:24-25). For McCabe, sharing a common mind, in relation to dying to the old self and rising to the new self, leads to perfection in obedience.⁴³ From his point of view Jesus remains the perfectly obedient model⁴⁴ whose will is so perfectly united with the Father's will resulting from the fact that the Father who commands and Jesus who obeys have 'come to share one mind.' Thus, from the life of God, we learn genuine obedience which "is not a necessary evil" of "a chain of command" or of breaking Jesus' will to make life easier through conformity. It is a community of love necessarily presupposing great 'effort' and patience put into it from everyone involved in making the right choice.⁴⁵ Now, as disciples sharing into Christ's relationship with the Father, by grace the Father loves us as he loves Jesus and we love, obey, and pray to, the Father as Jesus does.⁴⁶

³⁹ Stanley, *Jesus in Gethsemane*, 7.

⁴⁰ McCabe, "Obedience," 284.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 285.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 285-287.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 286-287.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 286-287.

The purpose of this study, as described in the research questions and hypothesis, was to determine the nature of Jesus' obedience and whether it agreed with McCabe's notion of obedience as union of minds between superior and subordinate. Situating the Matthean obedience within McCabe's worldview, this study reveals that this is the case and confirms Jesus' obedience as being a hearing or under-hearing that results in the perfect union of minds between Jesus and God. Jesus is not forced against his wish but is still following his mind freely when he merges his will with God's. The Gethsemane text does not just proffer conformity or submission to God's will but puts forth union of minds, not as the best form but, as the only authentic form of obedience which the transformed reader is presented with to appropriate.⁴⁷ We are invited to the sphere where God's values absolutely reign supreme and our complete union with his will results from our sharing common mind with him, having been convinced of his rightness and concern for our salvation.

⁴⁷ Matthew's reader is already a post-Easter Jewish *Christian* being persuaded to respond more appropriately to God through the Jesus-obedience in contrast to the standard of the Jewish religious authorities.

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