

Matthew 27:45-53 as the turning of the tide in Israel's history

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Abstract

Matthew considers both the fall of Jerusalem / the Temple and the coming of the Son of Man as being anticipated in the crucifixion/resurrection of Jesus. This article argues that Matthew places these two events within his description of the history of Israel, that the events are revealed in Scripture, and that the period of the First Testament should not be viewed as concluded time. It is also argued that the so-called tension between "imminence" and "indeterminate future" must be understood from first-century Mediterraneans' perspective on time; that the key of Matthew's understanding of time is to be found in discerning what is called the turning of the tide; and, finally, that Matthew 27:45-54 is located where, within that discourse in the plot of Matthew, this "eschatological turning of time" is reported.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the recent past, there has been a notable increase in publications on the eschatological expectations in the Gospel of Matthew.² Unfortunately, many of these works which lack the words "eschatology" or "apocalypticism" in their titles often pass researchers by unnoticed. A further problem is that researchers who occupy themselves with eschatology and/or apocalypticism in the Gospel of Matthew do not, with very few exceptions, pay attention either to one another or – by way of survey – to the insights of their predecessors. Here I do not have in mind only an occasional

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² See for instance, the works of among others Donald Hagner (1985, 1994), David Sim (1996), Ferdinand Hahn (1988), O Lamar Cope (1989), David Orton (1989), Dale Allison (1982), Jane Schaberg (1982), Wim Weren (1979) and Herman Waetjen (1976).

reference to the pioneering work of Günther Bornkamm³ (1956), but also the works of a previous generation of scholars.⁴ Donald Hagner's ([1994] 1996:174-176) contribution to the *Festschrift* for Robert H Gundry is, however, particularly significant because he provides a good survey of the relevant *textual evidence* and *theological issues*.⁵ Hagner points out that Matthew's conception of time amounts to "the end is announced as having begun", and that this "foundational complexity" is related to the *promises of the scriptures* (p 176), the *destruction of Jerusalem*, the *implied interim period* (p 175ff) and the *coming of the Son of Man* (p 174ff). In my view, the remark at the beginning of his contribution is a directive, while the finding at the end is correct:

Any attempt to describe Matthew's eschatology in a comprehensive manner will find its greatest challenge in coping with the variety of materials that must be dealt with. Matthew's eschatological perspective, like that of the other evangelists, includes statements concerning not only the future (near or more distant), but also the present, and even the past (i.e. already from the evangelist's point in time.) There are furthermore statements in Matthew concerning the imminence of eschatological events, as well as others that imply a delay of the end, and even an interim period of considerable length, and last but not least, indications of agnosticism concerning the time of the end.

(Hagner 1996:177)

For the purposes of this article, I am interested in the four matters mentioned: the *promises of the scriptures*, the *destruction of Jerusalem/the Temple*, the *interim period* and the *coming of the Son of Man*. Hagner describes the fall of Jerusalem as

³ Bornkamm points out that there is a merging (*Verklammerung*) of ecclesiology and eschatology in Matthew. He considers that the so-called expanded "sermons" of the Matthean Jesus attest to Matthew's theological view of the relationship between ecclesiology and eschatology. Chapter 13, with its seven parables about the kingdom of heaven, introduces the idea that Matthew's community is not only a collection of the chosen and the righteous, but a *corpus mixtum* going to meet the final judgment. At the parousia the "wheat" will be separated from the "chaff" (cf Van Aarde 1994:15).

⁴ See for example Strecker (1966), Walker (1967), Trilling (1969a, 1969b), Kingsbury (1973), Meier (1975) and Senior (1976). Here, too, those works which do not conspicuously include the words "eschatology", "apocalypticism" or "parousia" in their titles often pass researchers by all too easily.

⁵ My references are to the reprinted edition in the *SBL Seminar Papers 1996* (Scholars Press) (= *SBLSP* 35 [1996], pp 163-181).

imminent and the coming of the Son of Man (the Messiah of Israel) as something belonging to the *indeterminate future*. He sees the *ministry of Jesus* as the *inauguration of eschatology ... in fulfillment of certain ... promises of scriptures*. He describes the *implied interim period* in Lukan terms as forty days and, indeed, as the *open-ended period of the gentile mission*.

My thesis is that Matthew considers both the fall of Jerusalem/the Temple and the seeing of the coming of the Son of Man as being anticipated in the crucifixion/resurrection of Jesus; and that the evangelist, in an explanatory fashion, places these two events within his description of the history of Israel; that the events are revealed in Scripture (read in a midrash fashion) and that the period of the First Testament⁶ should not be viewed as concluded time; that Jesus, who is called the Christ, is the Son of Man and that the so-called tension between “imminence” and “indeterminate future” must be understood from first-century Mediterraneans’ perspective on time; that the key of Matthew’s understanding of time is to be found in discerning what I call the *turning of the tide*; and, finally, that Matthew 27:45-54 is located where, within that discourse in the plot of Matthew, this *Wende der Zeit* is reported.

2. “ESCHATOLOGY” AND “APOCALYPTICISM”

However, when Hagner describes the above-mentioned fundamental problems as questions with regard to: (i) the tension between “presently realised eschatology” and “eschatology proper” (“the eschatology of the future”), (ii) the tension between “imminence” and “delay”, and (iii) the length of the “implied interim period”, Hagner ex-

⁶ To restrict the term “First Testament” to the *Hebrew canon* is historically anachronistic prior to CE 100 (cf Charlesworth 1985:xxiv). During this period, in which the limits of the Hebrew canon were still fluid, some pseudepigrapha were composed which were not considered by either the synagogue or the church as being “outside a canon” (Charlesworth 1985:xxiii). This is specifically true with regard to the Gospel of Matthew. For example, the author of the First Gospel was familiar with traditions in, among other writings, *1 Enoch* (cf Isaac 1983:10), *2 Baruch* (cf Waetjen 1976:49-52), *The lives of the prophets* (cf Garland 1995:260; Hare 1985:393) and *Pseudo-Philo* (cf Harrington 1985:302). In these documents intertextual parallels occur, resembling each other with regard to messianic eschatological symbolism. *2 Baruch* is very important, for it shares with Matthew an intention to cope with the “eschatological meaning” of the Temple after the catastrophe of CE 70 and with the emergence of formative Judaism (cf Klijn 1983:620). In both the Gospel of Matthew and in *2 Baruch* the history of Israel is interpreted by means of apocalyptic imagery in the light of the destruction of the Temple (cf Saldarini 1994:14). However, it is difficult, almost impossible, to prove dependency on the part of the Gospel of Matthew. It is, as Klijn (1983:619) argues with respect to *2 Baruch*, a common “dependency on apocalyptic imagery”. The expression “First Testament” therefore, refers in this paper to the scriptural witnesses of Israel’s history and not to a canonical codification.

presses his good encyclopaedic contribution in *modern* theological categories which, viewed exegetically, are of an anachronistic nature. These categories are based, as Hagner (p 174) says himself, on nineteenth and twentieth century theologians who devised apocalyptic and eschatological time schemes according to which they described and explained the relationship of God with people. Usually such schemes are declared to be either based on Scripture or drawn from it. Such assumptions should, as far as their use of Scripture is concerned, be approached with great caution.⁷

The writers of the Bible also made use of schemes in order to put into words *their* understanding of God's relationship to people. It goes without saying that the perception on *time* which was current in their context and their time played a role in the establishment of *their* constructs. The mythological in the first century Mediterranean world was oriented presentistically, while our "Swiss" time in the modern Western world is *futuristic*. Why must this distinction be made? It is a fact that *apocalypticism* is often viewed in relation to *eschatology*, the end of times. Scholars even distinguish between an "apocalyptic eschatology" and a "prophetic eschatology". This is in spite of the fact that the adjective *eschatos* (ἐσχάτος) only figures according to two possible meanings in the New Testament: to be *last* or to be *least important*.⁸ Theologians have made a *theologoumenon* of a word. This fact led to Bruce J Malina (1996:179-216) and John J Pilch (1993:231-244), in studies with the titles "Christ and Time: Swiss or Mediterranean" and "Visions in Revelation and Alternate Consciousness: A Perspective from Cultural Anthropology", respectively having investigated from a cultural-anthropological perspective the phenomenon *apocalypticism* and the concept *time* as well as the notion "apocalyptic eschatology" (or "mantic wisdom" – cf Sim 1996:31-53, 53-69). Such social-scientific exegetic studies consciously

⁷ This applies with respect to New Testament scholars, to schemes like that of F C Baur's historiography of *Urchristentum* which is based on G W F Hegel's idealistic conception of time, Albert Schweitzer's consequent eschatology, Charles Dodd's realised eschatology, Oscar Cullmann's *Heilsgeschichte*, and even E P Sanders' restoration eschatology. These time schemes are constructs from modern European era and are anachronistic with regard to their use of Scripture. They are constructs which tend not to take into account the difference between the premodern Mediterranean and the modern Western conceptions of time. This does not mean that aspects of these constructs have been to a greater or lesser extent existentially meaningful to people of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. Experience confirms that this is, indeed, the case, but this does not make a particular construct, viewed exegetically, more or less legitimate.

⁸ However, both these meanings could be alluded to in an remarkable "apocalyptic" phrase in Matthew 19:28-30. Matthew's use of the word "regeneration" (παλιγγενεσία) in Mt 19:28 as a description of "the total recreation of the cosmos" (Sim 1993:11) is to be seen as a redactional preview to Mt 27:51b-53.

attempt to take seriously the distance between the ancient and the modern and the consequent cultural differences.

Malina's investigation indicates that it is an anachronistic and ethnocentric error to interpret the concept of *time* which people held in a pre-industrial, advanced agrarian Mediterranean world from a contemporary Western perspective which is oriented towards the future. As far as the Mediterranean conception of time is concerned, one may distinguish between "experienced time" and "imagined time". The latter stands in a relation of logical, *analogic* elongation relative to the former. By analogy with experience on the basis of the changing of the seasons and a farming culture, sociologists also refer to "procedure time". What is sometimes called "apocalyptic eschatology" is the expression of experiences of "imaginary time" and this is related to what Pilch calls an "altered state of consciousness": with "closed eyes" (= prayer, meditation) or with "open eyes" (= ecstatic experience by means of visions or heavenly auditions which create a trancelike condition). The nature of the "altered state of consciousness" is determined culturally and differs depending on personality types. Trances of which the Bible attests are sometimes described with the term "mantic wisdom" and are in places called "divine revelations". The Greek word ἀποκαλύπτω applies to the revelation by a prophet, a seer of those things which belong to "imaginary time" in terms of "experienced time".

David Sim's (1996:21-71)⁹ description of "apocalyptic eschatology" and David Orton's (1989:77-120)¹⁰ investigation of the "apocalyptic-eschatological" backgrounds to the appearance in Matthew of, among others, the terms *teacher of the law* and *prophet*, is also supported by the cultural-anthropological study of Kenelm Burridge ([1969] 1975), *New heaven – New earth: A study of Millenarian activities*.¹¹

⁹ Sim builds on the works of, among others, P D Hanson (1979) and J J Collins (1984).

¹⁰ Orton makes a very important contribution by placing with the aid of literature contemporary to Matthew, a key phrase, Mt 13:52 ("That's why every scholar [*scribe* — γραμματεὺς] who is schooled [*μαθητευθεὶς*] in Heaven's imperial rule [τῆ] βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν) is like some toastmaster [head of family — οἰκοδεσπότη] who produces from his cellar [ἐκ τοῦ θησαυροῦ] something mature [*παλαιά*] and something young [*καινά*] — The Jesus Seminar 1993:197), in an "apocalyptic-eschatological" context. This work deserves much more attention. Among other things, it may make a contribution towards understanding the tradition in Matthew of calling both Jesus and John the Baptist, as well as the disciples, *prophets* (cf Van Aarde 1994:66) in terms of the socio-historical context of both the rift between the synagogue and the church and the "apocalyptic-eschatological" marginalisation.

¹¹ I would like to express my gratitude towards my colleague and friend Herman Waetjen, of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, who brought Burridge's work to my attention.

Apocalyptic eschatology is attributed to a "sectarian mentality": in a crisis, a minority group becomes marginalised, tending to be aware of only two sides of a matter (dualism): the right and the wrong, the divine and the satanic, a world here and now and a world beyond.¹²

The crisis in the cultural world of Israel and the church, which gives rise to this, revolves around the pressure which heathen powers placed on the cult and the being of the church. The crisis is magnified because the presumed relation between deed and retribution is not realised. The godless are not punished and the righteous are not visibly the victors.

Experienced time is as a result of this embarrassment projected into an *imaginary time* in which God exercises control.¹³ What is "imagined" is expressed in symbolic language. "Imaginary time" is, by analogy with experience, expressed in "procedure time", for example in terms of dry and rainy seasons. At the end of this paper, we conclude by referring to the Messiah-Apocalypse of 2 Baruch 53-74, which divides the history of Israel into three epochs of fourteen seasons each and does have similarities to the genealogical record of the Messiah in the Gospel of Matthew which is also divided into three epochs of fourteen generations each.

3. RESEARCH GAPS

Willi Marxsen (1959:63f), who pointed out in his well known work on the Gospel of Mark some of the most important characteristics of the other two synoptic gospels as well, makes the following reference to the open-endedness of the Gospel of Matthew: Where Mark wrote against the background of an anticipation of Jesus' early return, Matthew began to allow for a possible delay in his return. He offered an interim solution. He enlarged upon the commission theme, which was also present in Mark

¹² As is well known, the worldview of the apocalyptic is marked on the one hand by pessimism and determinism, and on the other by hope: the present dispensation is a miserable dispensation, while the transcendent dispensation beyond this one is joyful. Such pessimism and determinism are relativised by the conviction that the course of history may be changed, for the sake of the self and others, by means of the prayers and martyrdom of the "righteous". The view of the death of the flesh and the resurrection of the body emanates from apocalypticism.

¹³ The problem of the so-called "agnosticism concerning the time of the end" (cf Hagner 1996:173) should in my view be attributed to this phenomenon. Malina (1996:192-193) puts it as follows: "As a domain that can actually impinge upon the world of experience, the imaginary world and imaginary time in an Israelite framework are the domain exclusive to God, for whom all things are possible Only God could know that imaginary period, and hence only God could reveal it through his prophets. And the same holds for the future that falls outside the purview of what comes forth from the present. This is why God alone knows what falls in imaginary time (see Mk 13:32; Mt 24:36; Ac 1:7).

(cf Mk 13:10), to make it an independent epoch with a typical Matthean function, which was to make disciples of all people (cf Mt 28:16-20).

This period of the disciples' commission follows the "time" of Jesus. It extends from Jesus' resurrection from the dead to the "time" of Matthew himself. It goes even further. It actually extends into our time. The end of Matthew's gospel is thus open-ended since, after the conclusion of the epoch of Jesus, another began which continues up to the end of time.

The above insight amounts to the plot of Matthew's story continuing after its apparent conclusion, and only being resolved in its non-explicit continuation. What is fundamental to Marxsen's theory is that a distinction has to be drawn in the Gospel of Matthew between the "time of the First Testament" and the "time of Jesus". His view basically corresponds with that of Conzelmann (1977) in regard to Luke-Acts. According to this view the "time of Jesus" forms a central point between the "time of the First Testament" and the "time of the church". Or, as Marxsen typified it with regard to the Gospel of Matthew: the time of Jesus is an epoch between two others.

Conzelmann and Marxsen, with their viewpoints, initiated investigation into the so-called *Heilsgeschichte* in the theology of the Lukan and the Matthean gospels. Research has shown that the so-called *Heilsgeschichte*, that is the parallel between Christology and ecclesiology, forms one of the central themes, if not the most central theme, in the theology of Luke-Acts (cf Rengstorf 1969:6). This statement can to some extent also be made applicable to the Gospel of Matthew. Questions that can be disputed in this connection as far as the Gospel of Matthew is concerned, are those regarding the number of sequences that are discernible in the gospel, the articulated spot at which one sequence ends and another begins, and the place and nature of the time of the First Testament within the *heilsgeschichtliche* framework of the gospel. All three these aspects are closely integrated.

While in the Gospel of Mark there are only two occurrences (Mk 1:15; 14:49) of the prediction that the "time of Jesus" is a fulfillment of a promise, which would be the First Testament, the idea of fulfillment plays a much more prominent role in Luke and Matthew. Marxsen has shown that, just as Matthew finds a correlation between the "time of the earthly Jesus" and the "time of the evangelist and his community", there is a correlation between the "time of the earthly Jesus" and the "time of the First Testament". He, moreover, points out that the latter correlation is expressed in the fulfillment citations in particular. The conclusion of the time of Jesus also refers to a

previous beginning, namely that of the First Testament (Marxsen 1959:64). The question is that of the nature of this correlation, or continuity, which is expressed by the fulfillment citations, as well as by other First-Testament citations and First-Testament allusions. Senior (1976:670) remarks correctly in this connection: "Perhaps no evangelist performed this 'ministry of continuity' with more skill than Matthew. To study his Gospel under the rubric of 'continuity' is to discover the core of his message."

With regard to the very important point that features in this context, namely the point at which the first sequence switches over to the second, my view agrees with that of people such as Strecker (1966) and Walker (1967), as well as with that of Trilling (1969) and Meier (1976). Although both Strecker and Walker are greatly influenced by Conzelmann, they differ from each other in respect of certain finer details. Both, however, agree that three temporal phases can be distinguished in the Gospel of Matthew. Walker (1967:115) refers to these three temporal phases as the "prehistory of the Messiah", which began with Abraham, the "history of the calling of Israel" (the particular purport) which consists of the ministry of John the Baptist as the precursor of the Messiah and Jesus himself as the *Mitte der Mitte*, and finally the "history of the mission to the Gentiles" (the universal purport) which began with the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and extends to the day of judgment and thus partly coincides with the time of the evangelist. Strecker (1966:184-188) refers to these three temporal phases as the "time of the fathers and the prophets", the "time of Jesus" and the "time of the *Heidenkirche*". Like Walker (1967:115), Strecker (1966:187) regards John the Baptist as part of the "time of Jesus". After Jesus' death and resurrection the "time of the prophets and of Jesus" went over into the "eschatological time".

Unlike Strecker and Walker, Kingsbury (1973:471) does not distinguish three temporal phases in the Gospel of Matthew, but two. According to Kingsbury (1973:471), the categories "prophecy" and "fulfillment" are related to Matthew's view of the "history of salvation": there is the *time of Israel*, "which is preparatory to and prophetic of the coming of the Messiah", and there is the *time of Jesus*, "in which the time of Israel finds its fulfillment and which, from the vantage point of Matthew's day, extends from the commencement of the ministry of John and of Jesus (past) through post-Easter times (present) to the coming consummation of the age (future)." According to Kingsbury, there is, strictly speaking no *time of the church* in Matthew's per-

ception on history, “for this time” is subsumed under the “last days” inaugurated by John and Jesus.” Kingsbury differs from Strecker and Walker not with regard to the *beginning* of the “time of Jesus”, but with regard to the *end* of this “time”. He holds the opinion that there was no change in “time” at Jesus’ death and resurrection, but that the “eschatological time” coincides fully with the “time of Jesus”. This “eschatological time” begins with the commencement of John the Baptist’s work.

In this connection the three scholars mentioned above consider that Matthew 3:1, as the beginning of John the Baptist’s service, indicates the division between the “time of the First Testament” and the “time of Jesus”. According to this view, the elements *promise* (the “time of the First Testament”) and *fulfillment* (the “time of Jesus”) separate the two temporal levels of time. Kingsbury (1973:470; cf Strecker 1966:87) builds his argument chiefly on the time formula ἐν ἑκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις which appears in Matthew 3:1 and 24:19, 22, 29. He considers that this time formula has an exclusive “eschatological” connotation that refers to “that period of time which precedes the consummation of the age and the return of Jesus, Son of Man.” Matthew thus, according to Kingsbury, employs this time formula inclusively and uses it to refer to the “time of John the Baptist”, the “time of Jesus”, and the “time of the church”. And, because of this inclusiveness, the Gospel of Matthew does not, according to Kingsbury, show a separation between the “eschatological community” and the “time of Jesus”, but a separation between the “time of the First Testament” and the “time of Jesus”. The latter begins with the “time of John the Baptist”. “... Matthew, as 11:13 indicates, sees the law and the prophets, the entire OT, as ‘prophesying’, as pointing forward, to the events that mark the eschatological age of salvation” (Kingsbury 1977:83f).

Kingsbury (1973), like Strecker (1966), considers that the three stages in the “eschatological time”, that is to say the “time of John the Baptist”, the “time of Jesus” and the “time of the church”, should not be seen as a progressive increase in eschatological intensity. Although various “historical” stages are distinguishable in the “eschatological time”, these stages, according to Kingsbury and Strecker, do not represent qualitative differentiation, but rather make a qualitative whole. Strecker, unlike Kingsbury, draws a type of distinction between the “time of Jesus” and the “time of the church”. These two “times” function, according to him, alongside one other in the Gospel of Matthew. He formulates this mutual impact of the two “times” on each other by saying that the eschatological element is historicized. In other words, escha-

tology is consequently organized in immanent time, as, *vice versa*, the story of the Jesus of history cannot be understood in secular-historical categories any more, but attains an eschatological quality: "Das eschatologische Element wird historisiert, nämlich konsequent der Zeit eingeordnet, wie umgekehrt die Historie nicht mehr in profangeschichtlichen Kategorien zu erfassen ist, sondern eine eschatologische Qualität erlangt" (Strecker 1966:185).

As far as both the *beginning* and *end* of the "time of Jesus" is concerned, I do not regard Kingsbury's view as being convincing. To me, there is an analogy in the Gospel of Matthew between the pre-paschal Jesus commission and, in pursuance to this, the post-paschal disciples' commission (the time of the so-called eschatological community). Nevertheless, these two sequences do not function as exclusive compartments. They are mutually integrated by means of thematic parallels (cf Mt 4:23; 9:35 with 10:6ff), cross-references (cf Mt 16:19 with 18:18; 23:13), prospection (cf Mt 5:12 with 23:34ff) and retrospection (cf Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-39 with 16:9ff). This mutual integration of the pre-paschal Jesus commission and the post-paschal disciples' commission relates to the comment above by Strecker, that the "historical element" in the Gospel of Matthew has gained an eschatological quality and the "eschatological element" has again been historicized.

Kingsbury's use of the time formula ἐν ἐκείναις ἡμέραις in Matthew 3:1, 24:19, 22, 29, to support his point of view, does not hold water here either. Similarly, this is the main reason why I beg to differ from Kingsbury regarding the beginning of the Jesus commission. Since I do not draw a distinction between the singular form of the time formula ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ and the plural form ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις, this time formula marks both the first commission (see Mt 3:1; 7:22; 13:1; 22:23) and the end of the second commission (see Mt 24:19, 22, 29). The time formula concerned has in other words an "eschatological connotation" in the so-called eschatological discourse (chapters 23-25), but not in Matthew 3:1. Kingsbury therefore integrates the pre-paschal Jesus commission with the post-paschal disciples' commission, with the result that the continuity and analogy between them are thereby lost. Because of these differences with Kingsbury in the important matter regarding the eschatological turning point in the Gospel of Matthew, I consider that he mistakenly wishes to separate the "time of the First Testament" from the time of the *earthly* Jesus and, as far as I am concerned, also from the time of the *risen* Jesus.

4. MATTHEW'S TEMPORAL SEQUENCES

Strictly speaking, there are three temporal sequences in the Gospel of Matthew. These are the sequence of the pre-paschal events, the sequence of the post-paschal events up to the parousia and the sequence known as, *inter alia*, ἡ ζωὴ in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 7:14; 18:8; 9; 19:17) or ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος (Mt 25:46), but also, for example, ἡ ἀπόλεια (Mt 7:13), ἡ γέννα (Mt 10:28) and ἡ κόλασις αἰώνιος (Mt 25:46). Other "places" that refer to this "time" are found in Matthew 3:12; 5:22; 18:8, 9; 24:51; 25:10, 23, 30, 34, 41 and 26:28. This is the "time" that begins with the parousia, or at someone's death (Mt 22:23-33). This third sequence is only mentioned in Matthew's gospel (chiefly in parables), but not expanded upon. For this reason the poetics of the Gospel of Matthew displays only two basic temporal levels, namely the sequence of the pre-paschal events and the sequence of the post-paschal events.

The following temporal phrases mark the time that concludes with Jesus' resurrection and his appearance and commission to the disciples: ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ καιρῷ (cf Mt 11:25; 12:1; 14:1), ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐκείνῃ (cf Mt 8:13; 10:19; 18:1; 26:55), ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης (cf Mt 9:22; 15:28; 17:18), ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ (cf Mt 3:1; 7:22; 13:1; 22:23), ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας (Mt 22:46) and τότε (cf Mt 2:16; 3:13; 4:1). The participles using "time" to depict circumstances in Matthew 2:1, 13, 19 and 4:12 can be added to the above temporal phrases. The following phrases again mark the end of the post-paschal disciples' commission, that is, the parousia: τέλος (cf Mt 10:22; 24: 6, 13f), ἡ συντελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος (Mt 13:39f, 49; 24:3; 28:20) and also ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις (Mt 24:19, 22, 29) and τότε (Mt 7:23).

There is a *continuity* as well as an *analogy* between the Jesus commission (the first sequence) and the disciples' commission (the second sequence). The first temporal level is oriented towards the second. This relationship can therefore be typified as that of a "transparency". In the transmission, conversion and re-interpretation of earlier traditions (oral and written) the Jesus era is transposed to the early church era in such a way that two historical worlds are simultaneously taken up as a narrative entity

in the narrative type gospels.¹⁴ The gospel story thus concerns people and things from an earlier time while the later period in which the gospel arose and communicated is *transparent* in the text.

A particular gospel thus refers simultaneously to two “real” worlds. In the gospels the pre-paschal world of Jesus and the disciples is generally more transparent. Nevertheless, the world of the post-paschal church is more transparent in some passages. The one world is never manifested in total isolation from the other. The world of the early church and that of Jesus and the disciples are, in a dialectical sense, simultaneously taken up in the gospel as a narrative record. Matthew’s gospel relates that God came to the world from God’s domain, the kingdom of heaven. Instead of manifesting Godself in the Temple, which had been God’s dwelling place among God’s people, but which had degenerated as a result of the actions of the Temple authorities (cf Mt 21:12ff), the occupants of Moses’ cathedra (cf Mt 23:2), God became *God-with-us* in Jesus, the Messiah/Son of Man who is “greater than the Temple” (Mt 12:6). This Jesus-mission had the purpose of forgiving the sins of all people, if necessary, even outside the structures of the Temple.

These πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, sometimes referred to as ἐλαχίστοι, the marginalised nobodies who are simply labelled as the “crowds”, the “lost sheep of Israel”, including the gentiles (Mt 1:21; 3:6; 9:13 – cf Saldarini 1994:75), are the “sinners”. From Matthew’s point of view, Jesus saw them as the new “eschatological” community. Jesus did this by executing the will of the heavenly Father in an “apocalyptic prophetic” fashion, and so as to “fulfill all righteousness” (Mt 3:15) (cf Orton 1989: 159ff).

Although Jesus had already called disciples at the commencement of his work among the Israelite crowds and the gentiles, and had made them “fishers of human beings” (Mt 4:19) to assist him, their mission into the world only began with Jesus’ resurrection from the dead (cf Mt 28:19f). The disciples were commissioned to teach, and the implied content of their commission was the “law and the prophets”, which was the will of the Father as interpreted and embodied by the Messiah himself.

¹⁴ There is not only one type of gospel format, namely a narrative one, as in the case of the four canonical gospels. There are also gospels in the format of a collection of proverbs by Jesus (“sayings or aphorisms gospel”) which came into being before the narrative type. We have the latter, respectively, in the form of the Sayings Gospel Q (hidden in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke), and in the gnostically oriented Gospel of Thomas (re-covered in, respectively, Greek fragments and in a Coptic translation found under the sand at Oxyrhynchus and Nag Hammadi in Egypt).

According to Matthew, the Messiah of Israel is the vindicating Son of Man who identifies himself with the ἐλαχίστοι (cf Weren 1979:107ff). Even though Matthew does not refer to the resurrected Jesus by means of christological titles (cf Schaberg 1982:135 note 33), Jane Schaberg (1982) has in my view convincingly indicated that the triadic formula in Matthew 28:16-20 in all probability represents an “allusion to the Septuagint of Daniel 7:14”. Just as Josephus (Ant 4.326) interpreted Moses’ “final departure” in terms of Daniel 7, Matthew respectively ended and began the story of Jesus and the disciples with a “throne-theophany commission” (Schaberg 1982:189) by means of his editorial adaptation of a tradition. This point of view is based on the theory that “some NT triadic texts,¹⁵ of which Matthew 28:19b is one, developed out of an originally Jewish apocalyptic triad”¹⁶ (Schaberg 1982:45). Matthew’s perception on time, namely that the “the end is announced as having begun” bears reference to the coming of the Son of Man and the mission of the church. In the light of the question as to the justification of the death of martyrs, Daniel 7 is interpreted as a “statement of belief in the transcendence of death”. This resurrection faith is packaged in Daniel in terms of an old mythological idea of a “transfer of power from one divinity to another” (cf Schaberg 1982:187ff). Matthew 28:19f is a midrash type apocalyptic allusion with verbatim similarities to Daniel [LXX] 7:13-14:

ἔθεώρουν ἐν ὀράματι τῆς νυκτός
καὶ ἶδου ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ

ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἦρχετο
καὶ ὡς παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν παρήν
καὶ οἱ παρεστηκότες παρήσαν αὐτῷ

καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία καὶ τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς κατὰ γένη

καὶ πᾶσα δόξα αὐτῷ λατρεύουσα·
καὶ ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτοῦ ἐξουσία αἰώνιος

¹⁵ See, for example, Mk 8:38; 13:32; Mt 25:31-43; 13:36-43; Lk 12:8-9; 1 Th 4:13-18; 2 Th 1:5-10; Rv 1:4-7; 5:6-7; 11:15-18 (cf Schaberg 1982:286).

¹⁶ Probably influenced by formative Christianity’s thinking with regard to the triad Father, Son and Spirit, Matthew changed the references to the Ancient of Days, Son of Man and Angels (= “those around him” [καὶ οἱ παρεστηκότες παρήσαν αὐτῷ]) in Daniel 7:13-14 but retained the triadic pattern in Mt 28:19 (cf Schaberg 1982:45).

ἥτις οὐ μὴ ἀρθῆ καὶ ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ
ἥτις οὐ μὴ φθαρῆ.

(Dn 7:13-14)

καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς πάντα λέγων·

ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ πάντα ἔθνη.

Βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ
καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,
διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν·
καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς
συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.

(Mt 28:18-20)

Both Daniel 7:13-14 and Matthew 28:18-20 is to be read as referring to an eschatological event, namely “the beginning of the end of the final kingdom” (Schaberg 1982:115). It is not clear in Daniel 7 whether the period of the “evil beasts”, the lives of whom (according to verse 12) have been lengthened, will expire when the authority of him “who looks like the Son of Man” will be transferred, or whether everybody, according to verse 14, will serve him immediately.¹⁷ In other words, even in Daniel 7 the final moment of “imagined” vindication is not seen as something that would completely be “experienced”.

It is displaced to the realm where God alone exercises control. This element agrees with the so-called agnosticism in Matthew's eschatology. In Matthew 28:16-20, the *final* parousia of the vindicating Son of Man is also displaced to the “close of the age”. However, Robert Gundry (1982:545) is right in that the “mental seeing of

¹⁷ Dn 7:14 exhibits a resemblance to Mt 28:17. In this last reference to the disciples in the Gospel of Matthew, an *open-endedness* is reported in that some disciples do glorify the resurrected Jesus (καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν), while others do not (οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν) (cf Van Aarde 1994:102). In the Theodotion edition of Dn [LXX] 7:14, the words τιμῆ and δουλεύουσιν are respectively used in place of ἐξουσία and λατρεύουσα.

the Son of Man sitting at God's right hand" commences, according to Matthew, immediately with the events of which we read in Matthew 27:51b-53.¹⁸

The reference to the resurrection of πολλὰ σώματα τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων ("many bodies of sleeping saints") in verse 53 forms the culminating point of Matthew 27:51b-53 and verses 51-54, in their turn, the climax of the literary structure of Matthew 27 (cf Witherup 1987:578). The First Testament background and the apocalyptic imagery of this passage are well recognised (cf Kratz 1973; Riebl 1978). Some scholars have tried to show how the reference to the raising of the saints after Jesus' resurrection should be understood against the description of the death of the divine man (cf Fascher 1941), or the death of the cosmic deity (cf Kratz 1973), or as a mythological descent into hell to liberate the holy ones (cf Crossan 1988). It seems that traditions like those in 2 Maccabees 7, 1 Enoch 51:2 (now contained in 1 Enoch 37-71, the book usually called *The similitudes of Enoch*), Ezekiel 37:7, 12 as well as the Gospel of Peter 9:35-10:42 could have assisted Matthew in the composition of Matthew 27:52-53 (cf Crossan 1988:392-393). In 2 Maccabees 7 the martyrs repeatedly assert their resurrectional victory as a reward for their martyred fidelity. In 1 Enoch 51:1-2 we specifically read, "In those days, Sheol will return all the deposits which she has received and hell will give back all that it owes. And he shall choose the righteous and the holy ones from among (the risen dead), for the day when they shall be selected and saved has arrived!" (translation according to Crossan).

In Ezekiel 37:7, 12, just as in Matthew 27:51b-53 (cf also Senior 1974:321), a sequence of earthquakes, opening of the graves, and resurrection of the buried ones is mentioned. In the Gospel of Peter we have the description of the "escorted and communal resurrection". Matthew was either unaware of or unconcerned about the awkward conjunction of verse 52 and 53 in Matthew 27. "He wanted to mention the resurrection of the saints, and this could only happen after the Resurrection of Jesus" (Crossan 1988:392). What is at stake here is the faith of the Christians among the Israelites in the communal resurrection. Although firmly based on post-exile concepts, resurrection in the New Testament is divorced from its originating context. The Christian image of resurrection, because a new age was seen as having begun with

¹⁸ Saldarini (1994:192) describes the resemblance in apocalyptic imagery between Mt 27:51ff and Mt 28:16ff as follows: "Finally, Jesus' triumph over death is revealed by miraculous phenomena (earthquake and light, 28:2-3) and a heavenly messenger. He reappears as apocalyptic ruler and Son of God (28:16-20, 9-10), as he said he would in chapters 24-25."

Jesus, initiated a metaphoric shift within the symbolic patterns of the apocalyptic code. Apocalypticism locates divine victory over evil and the renewal of creation in the future. Christianity locates this in the transcendence of death by resurrection within the Christ event, therefore already accomplished, and at the same time sees it in the future at the parousia (Kaplan 1988:127).

5. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL TURNING OF THE TIDE

It is important to realize that the shift between Jesus' ministry and the disciples' commission in Matthew takes place at Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Trilling (1969a, 1969b), in two separate articles, has convincingly shown that the *Wende der Zeit* takes place at this point in the Gospel of Matthew (cf Meier 1975:207). He writes in the first article that Matthew 27:51ff is highly remarkable, since the death of Jesus not only causes the veil to tear – which signifies, according to *The lives of the prophets* [Habakkuk] 12:11-12, God's judgment of the Temple cult (Garland 1995: 260), the end of the old cultic order – but also causes earthquakes (see Zechariah 14:4) and the resurrection of the dead (see Ezekiel 37:13-14 and 1 Enoch 51:1-2). These are eschatological “woes” (Sim 1996:104): The earthquake belongs to the apocalyptic elements; it marks the beginning of the end and the rearrangement of the world (Trilling 1969a:195; Allison 1982:80-103). “All these cosmic signs ... act as the prelude to the arrival of the Son of Man” (Sim 1996:104). The same point of view is expressed in the second article of Trilling when he states that, in regard to Matthew 27:51ff, these verses can only be seen as an announcement, through the death of Jesus, of the beginning of the new aeon, a change that encloses the whole cosmos. It is a dramatic anticipation of Jesus' resurrection in the story of Jesus' death. It announces the destruction of the old and the dawning of the new time (Trilling 1969b:221f; cf Waetjen 1976: 248).

Meier (1975:207; 1976:30-35) also considers that the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus introduce the *Wende der Zeit*. He however holds the view that there is a radical distinction between the “old time” and the “new time”. He equates the “old time” with the “time of the First Testament” and thus with the demand for obedience to the Mosaic law and the time of particularism. He equates the “new time” with the period of the universal purport, which began with the death and resurrection of Jesus and was foreshadowed during the “old time”, as it can be seen in texts such as Matthew 8:5-13 and 15:21-28. Meier builds his argument chiefly on the baptismal

command to the disciples with regard to the πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (Mt 28:19). According to him baptism replaces circumcision, which symbolized the "old time". Just as the particular purport went over into the universal, the demand for obedience to the Mosaic law, according to Meier, falls away with Jesus death and resurrection.

What scholars often do not take into account is that the use of the First Testament in the Gospel of Matthew can be seen as an important directive to read the narrative as the evangelist intended it to be read. The introductory formula of the fulfillment citations is referred to by Graham Stanton (1992: 348) as "*asides* of the evangelist" which "are not placed on the lips of Jesus or of other participants in the evangelist's story." By means of scriptural proof and fulfillment citation the First Testament functions in the Gospel of Matthew as the narrator's commentary, on which he bases the continuity and analogy between the pre-paschal Jesus commission and the post-paschal disciples' commission.

This continuity and analogy lies in the presence of Jesus as *God-with-us* on both temporal levels. And Jesus' Immanuel nature is manifested in his absolute obedience to the will of the Father (the "law and the prophets"). Senior (1976:672f) also considers that Matthew uses the First Testament to build a continuity and analogy between his Jesus-image and his disciple/church-image. Herman Waetjen puts it as follows: "The death of Jesus is also the death of Israel" (Waetjen 1976:248) and "(T)he promises of the Old Testament have been fulfilled and cancelled at the same time" (Waetjen 1976:244).

Waetjen (1976:46-53) indicates how the eschatological turning of the tide in Israel's history is already narrated at the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew in the composition of Jesus' genealogical record as the Messiah of Israel.

This differentiation of position between the time of Jesus and the time of the evangelist is inherently supported by the gospel's eschatology, especially as it is conceived by the introductory genealogy. Israel's history which begins with Abraham is culminated and concluded in its third epoch by the death of Jesus the Messiah. The end also marks the termination of the authority of the scribes and Pharisees. The new Israel which establishes with his disciples after his resurrection from the dead (18:16-20) is discontinuous with the old and therefore is no longer subordinate to the former occupants of Moses' cathedra.

(Waetjen 1976:218)

Earlier in this paper I referred to "procedure time" and mentioned the Messiah-Apocalypse of 2 Baruch 53-74 which divides the history of Israel into three epochs of fourteen seasons each and which concurs with the genealogical record of the Messiah in the Gospel of Matthew also being divided into three epochs of fourteen generations each.¹⁹ In Matthew 1:17 both the periods of David and the Babylonian exile mark both the *end* of a previous epoch and the *commencement* of a further one in the history of Israel. Both these transitions are related to the presence or absence of the Temple in Jerusalem. Both periods are constructed in such a way as to consist of fourteen generations. The third epoch, which marks the commencement of the second Temple period, ends with the unlucky number *thirteen* when Matthew refers to the birth of ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ λεγόμενος χριστός. However, Matthew (1:17) states categorically that this last phase too is made up of *fourteen* generations. In terms of the period of the previous two epochs in the history of Israel, one can expect that the period of the Messiah, like that of David and the Babylonian exile, is also related both to the end of a period which concludes with the destruction of the Temple, and to the commencement of a *new* Temple period. The transition from the thirteenth period to the unstated fourteenth in this history, I call the "eschatological turning of the tide". The thirteenth is concerned with the high point of Temple corruption which passes into the *experience* of the final destruction of the Temple cult of Jerusalem in the midst of cosmic catastrophes. The fourteenth is concerned with the construction of a Temple which is not built by human hands. Matthew projects the death of the righteous Jesus, which he experiences as the *result* of extra-ordinary Temple corruption, into the *imaginary time* of the vision of the coming of the Son of Man.

Looking back to the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, Matthew describes both the death of the Messiah and the vision of the coming of the Son of Man. This view of the history of Israel leads Matthew to a specific adaptation of the traditions concerning the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus. Both events are seen by Matthew as having been anticipated when he, in Matthew 27:45-53, adapts apocalyp-

¹⁹ Waetjen (1976:63 note 9) mentions that this insight may be found probably for the first time in 1841-44 in Hoffmann, and that it was afterwards taken over by T Zahn en K Stendahl. Matthew's apocalyptic model of the history of Israel which culminates in the messianic period concurs with the Messiah-Apocalypse of 2 Baruch 53-54. In this Apocalypse we also find three epochs of fourteen periods each which are portrayed in terms of the "procedure time" of the rainy seasons. Here too the presence or absence of the Temple in Jerusalem is an indication of good and bad periods in the history of Israel. The messianic empire forms the *Grand Finale*.

tic traditions. From his present experience of the *ecclesia pressa*, against the background of the rift with the synagogue, he leaves his readers in the hands of God who alone decides the close of the age (συντελεία τοῦ αἰῶνος) so that the church, in the mission to the πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, experience that Jesus is *God-with-us*, for Christians have seen the Son of Man come.

6. CONCLUSION

In this article I have indicated that Matthew describes both the fall of Jerusalem / the destruction of the Temple and the vision of the coming of the Son of Man as having been anticipated in the crucifixion/resurrection of Jesus, and that the evangelist places these two events in explanatory fashion within his description of the history of Israel; that these are events which are revealed in Scripture and that, for the church, the validity of the First Testament is not something in the past; that Jesus, who is called the Christ, is the Son of Man and that the tension between “imminence” and “indeterminate future” must be understood from the perspective of Matthew’s perception on time; that the key to this understanding is located in recognising what I call the *turning of the tide*; and, finally, that Matthew 27:45-54 is that discourse within the plot of Matthew as narration where this *Wende der Zeit* is reported.

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