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**A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PHRASE “WEEPING
AND GNASHING OF TEETH” IN THE GOSPEL OF
MATTHEW**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of *Master in
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ABSTRACT

Title: A Narrative Analysis of the Phrase “Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth” in the Gospel of Matthew

Although historical criticism has briefly analyzed the Matthean phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24: 51; 25:30) using different methodological approaches, a comprehensive and exclusive study of the phrase has not yet been carried out. However, while it is still possible to find historical critical studies analyzing the expression, one cannot say the same about narrative criticism. Moreover, despite the fact that there are tangential narrative comments dealing with the phrase in some literary studies, a study dealing exclusively with the phrase from a narrative critical methodology has not yet been undertaken.

In view of this, the intention of my investigation is to examine the six phrases “weeping and gnashing of teeth” that appear in the Gospel of Matthew using a narrative critical approach, with the purpose of understanding its literary meaning. This analysis examines the integration of every occurrence of the phrase in its own narrative context as well as ascertains whether there are narrative connections between these pericopes and the Gospel of Matthew as a whole.

My purpose, however, is not theological. Rather, it is to explore how narrative criticism works and which conclusions are possible to obtain using it. This means that I am not seeking a “theological meaning” of the phrase, but only to see if it is possible to find narrative connections between the passages where the phrase is located.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
AMP	The Amplified Bible
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentary
<i>AsTJ</i>	<i>Asbury Theological Journal</i>
ASV	American Standard Version
AT	American Translation
<i>AthR</i>	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
<i>BAR</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 2000
<i>BeO</i>	<i>Bibbia e oriente</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca sacra</i>
<i>BT</i>	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
<i>BTG</i>	<i>Bangalore Theological Forum</i>
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CEV	The Contemporary English Version (1995)
<i>ConJ</i>	<i>Concordia Journal</i>
<i>DJG</i>	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and Gospels</i>
EBC	The Expositor's Bible Commentary
<i>EDNT</i>	<i>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>EstEcl</i>	<i>Estudios Eclesiásticos</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
GBS	Guides to Biblical Scholarship
<i>HeyJ</i>	<i>Heythrop Journal</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HvTSt</i>	<i>Hervormde teologiese studies</i>
<i>IB</i>	The Interpreter's Bible
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
<i>Int</i>	Interpretation
<i>IRM</i>	<i>International Review of Mission</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>The Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
L&N	<i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains</i> . 2 vols. Edited by J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida. 2d ed., 1989
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., R. Scott, H. S. Jones, A Greek-English Lexicon. 9th ed. with revised supplement. 1996
LTPM	Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs

LXX	Septuagint
MBI	Methods in Biblical Interpretation
MdB	Le Monde de la Bible
MESSAGE	The Message: The New Testament in Contemporary Language
MT	Masoretic Text
NA ²⁵	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle-Aland, 25 th ed.
NA ²⁷	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle-Aland, 27 th ed.
NAB	The New American Bible
NASB	New American Standard Bible
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NET	The NET Bible
<i>NIB</i>	<i>New Interpreter's Bible</i>
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
<i>NIDB</i>	<i>The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIV	The New International Version
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTOA	Novum Testamentum at Orbis Antiquus
<i>NTS</i>	New Testament Studies
PBM	Paternoster Biblical Monographs
REB	Revised English Bible
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review & Expositor</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
<i>Sal</i>	<i>Salmanticensis</i>
SBLSP	Society for Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>ScEccl</i>	<i>Sciences ecclésiastiques</i>
<i>Semeia</i>	<i>Semeia</i>
SNTSMS	Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TEV	Today's English Version
TNIV	Today's New International Version
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
<i>TS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
UBS ⁴	<i>The Greek New Testament</i> , United Bible Societies, 4 th ed.
<i>VR</i>	<i>Vox Reformata</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The following study is an investigation of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” in the Gospel of Matthew.¹ Although the saying appears once in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 13:28), my intention is only to analyze the phrase in its Matthean context. To perform this, I examine the six pericopes where the expression is mentioned (Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24: 51; 25:30).² The first use of this formula occurs in a healing context where Jesus, alluding to the faith of the centurion, concludes with this phrase (8:5-13). The remaining five sayings are located in a parabolic framework, setting each of them in various contexts internal to the parable (13:24-30, 47-50; 22:1-14; 24: 45-51; 25:14-30).

Taking into consideration the above, in this chapter, before undertaking the analysis of these pericopes, I initially describe the reason why this study was carried out. To do that, I discuss how the Matthean phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” has been interpreted from different methodological approaches. This review evidences the nonexistence of an exclusive narrative study about the phrase, revealing the need to fill this space. Finally, I describe methodologically how this task was conducted from a narrative viewpoint.

¹ According to the critical apparatus of NA²⁷ the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” does not present textual problems in the Greek text. Cf. UBS⁴ and Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2d ed.; Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 2000), 17, 28, 47, 52, 53.

² In each one of these mentions not only is the Greek identical, ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων, but also these statements are always related to Jesus. In Matt 8:12; 13:42, 50 and 24:51 the phrase comes directly from Jesus. In Matt 22:13 and 25:30 although the saying comes from the characters of the parable, these finally come from Jesus who is telling the parables.

Review of Literature

Interpreters have understood the expression from different angles, which can be partially explained considering the different methodologies employed in the process of exegesis. From this point of view, a literature review containing every commentary related to the Matthean saying “weeping and gnashing of teeth” would be enormous. Due to this and taking into consideration that for this study narrative criticism will be the methodology proposed to study this phrase, only three exegetical approaches will be reviewed besides this one. These are: source criticism, form criticism and redaction criticism, which have dominated the field of biblical studies for many years. Nevertheless, the decision to include only these exegetical methods besides narrative criticism has been made basically not only because of its academic or historical influence, but also because many times these approaches are used together operationally, working as complements.³

The evaluation of how the expression has been analyzed will evidence, firstly, the differences and similarities present in the meanings proposed for each one of these methods. And secondly, it will show that there is no specific study that has examined

³ See, for instance, how Johannes Floss analyzes the direct relationship among form, source and redaction criticism. Johannes P. Floss, “Form, Source, and Redaction Criticism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* (ed. J. W. Rogerson and Judith M. Lieu; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 608. Likewise, Manfred Oeming says that redaction criticism “builds on literary criticism and the history of oral transmission,” Manfred Oeming, *Contemporary Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (trans. Joachim F. Vette; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 36. David Wenham claims that the “form critic in fact needs the insights of source criticism, since he must trace the literary history of the traditions as far back as he can before speculating about the oral period; and so does the redaction critic, since he can comment reliably on an author’s editorial tendencies only if he knows what sources the author was using,” see David Wenham, “Source Criticism,” in *The New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods* (ed. I. Howard Marshall; Exeter: Paternoster, 1985), 139-140. Viviano, for instance, uses redaction criticism assuming the existence of two primary sources (*Logien-Quelle* and Mark) in one of his studies about Matthew. See Benedict T. Viviano, *Matthew and his World: The Gospel of the Open Jewish Christians Studies in Biblical Theology* (NTOA 61; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2007), 4-5.

exclusively, from a narrative approach, the term “weeping and gnashing of teeth” in its various narrative contexts. This is significant as it demonstrates the need for this study.

Initially I examine how some proponents of the source, form and redaction criticism have interpreted the expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth”. I have arranged these methodologies under the approach of Historical Criticism, which interrelate these and others exegetical approaches.⁴ After that, I analyze how some narrative critics have interpreted the Matthean phrase. This will include those who have used a narrative approach along with different methodologies, like for example redaction criticism, among others.⁵

Historical criticism

W. D. Davies and Dale Allison, in their important and vast commentary about Matthew, whose main methodological emphasis is a combination of form, source and redactions criticism, do not provide an extensive study of the expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” They argue that possibly the text would be a Q redaction, that Matthew has made his own (Matt 8:12). Firstly, for them κλαυθμὸς (weeping) is the opposite state of those that neither mourn nor weep any longer after the judgment

⁴ Richard Soulen and R. Kendall Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (3d ed.; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001), 18.

⁵ Many times redaction criticism operates together with narrative criticism, because both approach the gospels as a whole literary work. Some Matthean works that have interrelated redaction criticism, along with narrative criticism are, for example, Daniel M. Gurtner, *The Torn Veil: Matthew's Exposition of the Death of Jesus* (SNTSMS 139; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 24-28; Margaret Hannan, *The Nature and Demands of the Sovereign Rule of God in the Gospel of Matthew* (LNTS 308; New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 5-17; Richard Beaton, *Isaiah's Christ in Matthew's Gospel* (SNTSMS 123; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 11-13; J. R. C. Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew* (NovTSup 102; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 23; and Elaine Mary Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew* (BZNW 60; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 59-60, 155-156.

(Matt 5:5; Rev 21:4). Secondly, βρυγμὸς (gnashing) indicates anger resulting in gnashing or chattering (Matt 8:12).⁶

In the same concise analysis that Davies and Allison revealed, Henry Wansbrough, in the *New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, notices that this preferred Matthean formula was added as a conclusion to each one of the parables where the expression appears (13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30). To Wansbrough, gnashing of teeth is a characteristic attitude of the wicked who face the just man (8:12) expressed, for example, either in his fury (Job 16:9) or envy (Ps 112 [111]: 10).⁷

From a form critics' perspective, Joachim Jeremias in his study of the parables of Jesus asserts that "weeping and gnashing of teeth" is a symbolic expression of desperation, caused by "a salvation forfeited by one's own fault" (Matt 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).⁸ Following an identical critical perspective, Eta Linnemann, commenting on the parable contained in Matt 22:1-14, affirms concisely that the phrase is a saying that the Evangelist uses regularly to communicate eternal destruction (22:13; cf. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 24:51; 25:30).⁹

Using the same methodological line as Jeremias and Linnemann, George Buttrick asserts that the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" along with the "outer darkness" in Jesus' time operated as a description of Gehenna (8:12).¹⁰ For him it is

⁶ W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (3 vols.; London: T & T Clark, 2004), 2:31.

⁷ Henry Wansbrough, "St. Matthew," in *A New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (ed. Reginald C. Fuller; London: Thomas Nelson, 1969), 918.

⁸ Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (trans. S. H. Hooke; London: SCM, 1963), 105.

⁹ Eta Linnemann, *Parables of Jesus: Introduction and Exposition* (London: SPCK, 1973), 97.

¹⁰ George A. Buttrick, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew," *IB* 7:341

not only a customary phrase added by Matthew (24:51; 25:30),¹¹ but also reflects, in the context of those that are righteous, the faith and hope that the early church had when it was living “in an evil time”.¹² Likewise, Otto Betz attributed the elaboration of the phrase to the earliest church as a description of the torment of hell.¹³ In his opinion the expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is parallel with “the portion with the hypocrites” in the passage of Matt 24:51, describing it as a place of eternal suffering, namely, hell.¹⁴

M. Eugene Boring, who used source, form and a redaction critical approaches in his commentary, notes that this is a very common Matthean phrase taken from Q and annexed as a conclusion to each parable, whose main emphasis is the eschatological and terrific judgment of the condemned (13:42; 22:13).¹⁵ For Boring, it is a traditional image of Jewish eschatology, which Matthew used against the unbelieving Jews (8:12).¹⁶ Similarly, Daniel Harrington supports the idea that the same expression occurs always in an apocalyptic context (13: 42; cf. 8:12; 13:50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30),¹⁷ being a Matthean edition of the Q version (24:51).¹⁸ It refers to the condemnation and sadness of the end (24:51)¹⁹ describing the frustration of those excluded from the master’s joy (25:30).²⁰ On the other hand, Frederick Bruner concludes that the formula points “to deep and self-recrimination” but also “self-hate” and unhappiness, exemplified in those who have received in vain the grace of God

¹¹ Ibid, 555, 562.

¹² Ibid, 419.

¹³ Otto Betz, “Dichotomized Servant and the End of Judas Iscariot (Light on the Dark Passages: Matthew 24:51 and Parallel: Acts 1:18),” *RevQ* 5 (1964): 57.

¹⁴ Ibid., 45.

¹⁵ M. Eugene Boring, “The Gospel of Matthew,” *NIB* 8: 311, 418

¹⁶ Ibid., 8:226.

¹⁷ Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (SP 1; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), 206.

¹⁸ Ibid., 344

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., 353.

(8:12).²¹

Studies, which have exclusively used redaction criticism have interpreted the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” variously. For instance, Jack Kingsbury, in an adaptation of his doctoral thesis on the Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13, argues that the whole expression describes distress and regret.²² For Kingsbury, who affirms that Matt 13 “must be interpreted within the context of Matthew's community and his narrative,”²³ “weeping” insinuates severe pain that the godless must suffer in the hell of fire; meanwhile “gnashing” indicates the sadness and rage that these same godless feel when suffering in Gehenna.²⁴

On the other hand, for Robert Gundry, the phrase is a Matthean redaction, as is evident by “his usual drive for consistent parallelism.”²⁵ This meaning, however, is a little different than another provided by himself in his earliest work where he examined the use of the Old Testament in Matthew’s Gospel. In this latter, Gundry connects the verses of Psalm 112:10 (LXX) with the “weeping and gnashing of teeth”, claiming that its sense points out grief rather than anger (Matt 8:12).²⁶

The book *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew* deserves special attention as its author David Sim provides a redactional analysis of the expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” His book is a revised edition of his doctoral

²¹ Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary* (2 vols. rev. and enl. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 1:383-384.

²² J. D. Kingsbury, *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13* (London: SPCK, 1969), 107-108.

²³ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 107-108.

²⁵ Robert Horton Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 146-147. Cf. Robert Horton Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 146-147.

²⁶ Robert Horton Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel: With Special Reference to the Messianic Hope* (NovTSup; Leiden: Brill, 1967), 77.

research,²⁷ which originally was called *There will be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth: Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*.²⁸ In his book Sim claims that the phrase expresses the response of the wicked to their condition of having lost their salvation (Matt 8:12).²⁹ The phrase originally belonged to Q (8:12; Lk 13:28; cf. Mt 22:13b), which according to Sim finds not many equivalents in the contemporary apocalyptic-eschatological tradition, overstepping “a boundary which few of his contemporaries had crossed”.³⁰ For Sim, on the one hand, the expulsion to the outer darkness and the resultant “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is addressed to both Jews (8:12) and Christians (22:13).³¹ Nonetheless, on the other hand, in the parable of the good and wicked servant (24:45-51), the phrase is applied to those leaders of the Matthean community, who as the wicked servant, are abusing “their positions of authority because they mistakenly believe that the return of Jesus is delayed.”³²

Likewise, Benedikt Schwank made an important contribution to an understanding of the phrase with the publication of his article “Dort wird Heulen und Zähneknirschen sein”.³³ From a redaction viewpoint, he holds that the phrase probably is part of the tradition that Matthew had access to.³⁴ Schwank postulates that the expression means “self reproach,” because according to him it was discovered

²⁷ D. C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew* (SNTSMS 88; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), xiii.

²⁸ David Sim, “There will be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth: Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew” (Ph.D. diss., King’s College London, 1993).

²⁹ Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, 140. Cf. Sim, “There will be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth,” 137, which does not say that they are “weeping and gnashing” their teeth because of “the salvation they have lost”.

³⁰ Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, 140.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 230.

³² *Ibid.*, 237-238.

³³ Benedikt Schwank, “Dort wird Heulen und Zähneknirschen sein,” *BZ* 16 (1972): 121-22

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

that among the Bedouins of the Eastern Sinai the phrase has that function.³⁵

Summary

Historical criticism has mostly understood the phrase as a Matthean redaction (Davies, Wansbrough, Boring, Harrington, Gundry, Sim), which was probably taken from Q (Davies, Harrington, Boring, Sim). In view of this, the saying would be seen as a description of the conflict within the Matthean community when the Gospel was redacted (Buttrick, Betz, Boring, Sim, Kingsbury), which would imply that the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” must be studied in its own *Sitz im Leben*. Thus, the phrase would express different negative characteristics, such as desperation for the salvation forfeited, fury, envy, sadness, destruction, condemnation, self-reproach or anger (Davies, Wansbrough, Harrington, Sim, Linnemann, Jeremias, Boring, Kingsbury, Schwank).

Narrative Criticism

A simple example that narrative criticism has not provided an extensive discussion of the phrase is David Garland, who in his book entitled *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary* says nothing about the Matthean formula.³⁶ Like Garland, Jack Kingsbury in his *Matthew as Story* does not provide any analysis of the phrase.³⁷ However, in another of his writings, he notes that Matthew points out that when someone has an encounter with Jesus that person needs to make a decision, either to enter into the “gracious sphere” of God or enter under the power of Satan. In the final days those that make the second choice, will experience “eternal

³⁵ Ibid., 122.

³⁶ David E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 1999), 224.

³⁷ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

punishment”, such as the “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (8:12; 13:42, 50).³⁸ This understanding is repeated by Richard Edwards, who in his *Matthew’s Story of Jesus* asserts briefly that each of the six times that the phrase appears it illustrates the certainty of God’s punishment.³⁹

An important interpretation of the Matthean expression is provided by Janice Capel Anderson, who from a narrative and reader-response critical perspective⁴⁰ analyzes how Matthew’s story uses verbal repetition during the narrative process.⁴¹ She shows that the Jewish leaders in the story are described repeatedly as hypocrites, being the first candidates for judgment and, for that reason, will be with those who are “weeping and gnashing their teeth” (8:12; 22:13).⁴² Besides this, she explores how these verbal repetitions are connected with the plot of the story. To do that, she analyzes literary devices such as “anticipation and retrospection”, which in relation to the Matthean formula point to an eschatological prediction of those who will be “weeping and gnashing” (8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).⁴³

Barbara Reid, who analyzes the violent endings of eight Matthean parables,

³⁸ Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 148.

³⁹ Richard A. Edwards, *Matthew’s Story of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 76.

⁴⁰ Janice Capel Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again* (JSNTSup 91; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 25-43. Reader-response criticism differs from narrative criticism in that it focuses more on the reader (audience) than on the text [James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 30-31.]. In her analysis Anderson integrates both approaches taking different literary features from each: “from narrative criticism I will take the categories of narrative rhetoric, character, and plot with an emphasis on the interrelationship of textual elements. From reader-response I will draw on discussions of the reading process.” See Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web*, 43.

⁴¹ Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web*, 43-45.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 103-104.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 153.

offers another important contribution.⁴⁴ In five of these eight parables the phrase “weeping and gnashing” appears, and although she does not analyze the phrase explicitly, it is interesting to consider her final explanation about the purpose of these violent endings. According to Reid, there is a practical difference between these aggressive endings and other Matthean nonviolent teaching.⁴⁵ To resolve this dilemma she offers four possible solutions, arguing that the last one is the most satisfactory.⁴⁶ In this last solution, she declares that these parables describe, “what happens when the time for conversion is past and the moment of final reckoning has arrived.”⁴⁷

Donald Hagner, who used narrative criticism among other methodologies in his Matthean commentary, suggests the phrase describes the experience of eschatological judgment (8:12; cf. 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30), arguing along with Benedikt Schwank, that “weeping and gnashing of teeth” denotes anguish and self-reproach rather than anger as Davies and Allison proposed.⁴⁸ On the other hand, John Nolland’s opinion is different. He says that although the expression is often a hostile assertion of anger, a better meaning is vexation (8:12), because of its relation to Psalm 112:10 that says that the wicked will “be vexed” (Ps 112:10; TNVI).⁴⁹

⁴⁴ (1) 13:40-43, (2) 49-50; (3) 18:23-35; (4) 21:33-46; (5) 22:1-14; (6) 24:45-51; (7) 25:14-30 and (8) 25:31-46, see Barbara E. Reid, “Violent Endings in Matthew’s Parables and Christian Nonviolence,” *CBQ* 66 (2004): 237-255. According to her only four of these parables are exclusive to Matthew (13:40-43, 49-50; 18:23-35; 25:31-46), while the others belong to Mark or Q (21:33-46; 22:1-14; 24:45-51; 25:14-30). See *Ibid.*, 247-248.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁴⁶ These three are: (1) Differing strands of tradition, (2) Ethics for beginners and (3) Misinterpreting violent male characters in the parables as representing God. See *Ibid.*, 250-252.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁴⁸ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (2 vols.; WBC 33a; Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 206.

⁴⁹ John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 357-358.

Equally, Wesley Olmstead, from a redaction and narrative perspective does not give a specific interpretation of the formula (22:13) in his doctoral thesis about Matt 21:28-22:14. He only affirms succinctly that this is in a final condemnation context.⁵⁰ On the other hand, and from a similar methodological angle, Donald Senior alleges that the expression is a common Matthean metaphor (8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30),⁵¹ which evokes the hopeless disgrace of those who experience God's judgment.⁵²

William Herzog provides another interesting interpretation of 25:30 from a redaction and narrative critical viewpoint. According to Herzog, the text was edited to serve as a picture of the last judgment; however, paradoxically it "remains a description of the life of the poor" (25:30).⁵³ Thus "gnashing of teeth" could allude either to the sound of chattering teeth produced because of insufficient covering in the cold or to the sound of pain and anguish. As claimed by Herzog, who follows the Greek Lexicon of Walter Bauer, when "weeping" appears with a definite article as in 25:30 its meaning points out an extreme behavior,⁵⁴ which alongside the significance given to "gnashing of the teeth" describes those instants "that tear life apart and change it forever."⁵⁵

Finally, Blaine Charette made another important analysis of the phrase in his dissertation entitled *The Theme of Recompense in Matthew's Gospel*. Using

⁵⁰ Wesley G. Olmstead, *Matthew's Trilogy of Parables: The Nation, the Nations and the Reader in Matthew 21:28-22:14* (SNTSMS 127; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 126.

⁵¹ Donald Senior, *Matthew* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 99, 157, 246

⁵² *Ibid.*, 274.

⁵³ William R. Herzog II, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 166.

⁵⁴ Cf. BDAG, 546.

⁵⁵ Herzog II, *Parables as Subversive Speech*, 166.

composition criticism,⁵⁶ which incorporates some narrative critical devices,⁵⁷ Charette examined not only the motif of rewarding in the Gospel of Matthew but also its counterpart, namely, the punishment. The objective of his study was to demonstrate that Matthew's conception of recompense can be "understood fully in terms of his understanding of the Old Testament."⁵⁸ With regard to the phrases "weeping and gnashing of teeth," Charette examines them separately, underlining their Old Testament background and this deserves special attention. For him the saying represents an image of negative recompense.⁵⁹ The noun "weeping" describes the "sorrow experienced by those who, following the judgment, realize what they have lost".⁶⁰ For him this is a terrifying sentence as God has rejected them.⁶¹ It is significant that Charette declares that the only time that the noun "weeping" had appeared before the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" was at the beginning of the Gospel (2:18), which is a quotation of Jeremiah describing the sorrow that "attended the exile of the Jewish people from the land of Israel, since the eschatological expulsion which befalls those who are condemned is tantamount of a perpetual exile from the land of God."⁶² On the other hand, Charette says that linking the noun "weeping" with the expression "gnashing of teeth" the complete phrase

⁵⁶ Blaine Charette, *The Theme of Recompense in Matthew's Gospel* (JSNTSup 79; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 16-19.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 19. See, for instance, Joel Willitts, *Matthew's Messianic Shepherd-King: In Search of 'the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel'* (BZNTW 147; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 38-39, who uses "narrative criticism" along with "composition criticism" in his Matthean analysis. Sometimes redaction critical scholars call themselves composition critics. Nevertheless, technically while composition criticism deals with the whole, redaction criticism deals with parts. In relation to this distinction Soulen and Soulen claim that the "distinction, however, has been thought to be too closely drawn". See Soulen and Soulen, *Handbook*, 38, 160.

⁵⁸ Charette, *The Theme of Recompense in Matthew's Gospel*, 16-20.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 140-155. For Charette, for instance, Matt 8:11-12 evokes Isa 8:22; 9:1 and Ps 107:10-11.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 140.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid, 140-141.

would denote an anxious repentance and self-reproach, which “causes the whole body to tremor”.⁶³

Summary

The phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” has not received much attention from an exclusively narrative critical perspective (Kingsbury, 1988; Garland), unless a brief connection of it with the punishment of God (Kingsbury, 1975; Edwards). Others, using narrative criticism as a secondary methodological tool, have understood the phrase as a reference to the judgment (Reid, Senior, Hagner), often linking it with an undefined eschatological time (Kingsbury, 1975; Anderson, Hagner). On the other hand, other authors have comprehended the saying as an expression of anguish, self-reproach, condemnation, sorrow, vexation (Anderson, Nolland, Charette, Olmstead, Hagner) or even it has been interpreted as having implications for the present, representing the emotional anguish of those who are suffering (Herzog).

Statement of the problem

In this review of scholarship, it is evident initially that none of the scholars undertook an exclusive narrative study of each one of the pericopes where the phrase appears within the context of an unfolding narrative. Though Janice Capel Anderson tangentially analyzed the expression from a literary perspective, her purpose was not to study specifically this Matthean expression in relation to every pericope, but to analyze how “weeping and gnashing” was used over and over during the story. Besides, her study was a systematic presentation of her research, not a detailed analysis of pericopes.

Likewise, although Barbara Reid gave attention to the five parables where the

⁶³ Ibid., 141.

phrase appears as a whole, her study was focused on responding to the differences between violence and nonviolence in Matthew, not supplying a narrative analysis of the phrase “weeping and gnashing”. Even despite the fact that she linked the eschatological context of these phrases with the message of nonviolence in the Gospel of Matthew, her conclusions were not oriented to answering how these Matthean expressions operate literarily in relation to the gospel of Matthew as story. Finally, in spite of Blaine Charette analyzing the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” using narrative criticism as a methodological tool, his leading method was a redaction and inter-textual critical viewpoint. Thus, narrative criticism was just one more of the methodologies used in his dissertation.

Purpose of the Research

The intention of this research is to analyze the six occurrences of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” that appear in the Gospel of Matthew from a narrative critical perspective. This analysis seeks to analyze every phrase in its own narrative context as well as ascertain whether there are narrative connections between these pericopes in relation to Matthew’s story as a whole.

Methodology

The methodology that I use in this study is a narrative criticism, which implies a synchronic analysis of the text.⁶⁴ Taking this into consideration, I analyze narratively every pericope where the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” occurs. To carry out this task, it is necessary to delineate, firstly, which narrative device will be used to examine each pericope and, secondly, it is indispensable to set up every phrase in its

⁶⁴ Petri Merenlahati and Raimo Hakola, “Reconceiving Narrative Criticism,” in *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism* (ed. David M. Rhoads and Kari Syreeni; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2004), 18; Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?* (GBS; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 7.

specific narrative context. The first task, explaining the meaning of the narratives devices used in this work, is done in the next section. The second one, which delineates the boundaries of every pericope where the phrase is located, is undertaken at the end of this chapter.

Having done that, I establish the possible narrative connections that exist among the pericopes in relation to the book as a whole, with the purpose of establishing the narrative meaning of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Narrative Devices

Narrative criticism, unlike either source or form criticism,⁶⁵ approaches the gospels from a text-oriented perspective.⁶⁶ This means a focus on the characters, events and settings in the narrative.⁶⁷ From this perspective, the study of the narrative process involves considering the story from different literary angles, which must take account of two aspects: (1) story and (2) discourse.⁶⁸ The first defines the settings, the events and the characters, and entails examining how these elements work together in the developing of the plot. The second is related to the study of the rhetorical devices within the story that show “how the story is told”.⁶⁹

The delineation of “how the story is told” is intimately related to the process of communication between the author and the reader. However, in terms of narrative criticism, author and reader are not understood as real and historical characters but as

⁶⁵ For an analytical distinction between historical-critical method and narrative criticism, see Mark Allan Powell, “Toward a Narrative-Critical Understanding of Matthew,” *Int* 46 (1992): 341-346.

⁶⁶ Mark Allan Powell, *Chasing the Eastern Star: Adventures in Biblical Reader-Response Criticism* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2001), 67.

⁶⁷ David Rhoads, “Narrative Criticism,” *NIDB* 4:222.

⁶⁸ Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism* (trans. John Bowden; London: SCM, 1999), 20-21.

⁶⁹ Mark Allan Powell, “Literary Approaches and the Gospel of Matthew,” in *Methods for Matthew* (MBI; ed. Mark Allan Powell; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 47.

those that can be inferred from the text itself.⁷⁰ In the development of this study, I suppose that the implied reader is an “informed” reader, which means that he or she is able to read and understand the Greek text as well as is capable of recognizing historical aspects of the story.⁷¹

Taking into consideration the above, the act of reading implies firstly, to observe those minimal details that are present in the text;⁷² and secondly, to know everything that the story presupposes the reader knows and to eliminate “everything that the text does not assume the reader knows”.⁷³ To achieve this literary goal, narrative critics have determined several literary devices, which would serve to uncover the narrative meaning. Accordingly, in the process of this study I consider the following narrative devices: (1) settings, (2) characters, (3) events and plot and (4) rhetoric.

Definitions of Terms

Firstly I analyze the technical explanation of (1) settings, (2) characters, (3) events and plot and (4) rhetoric. A definition of these literary resources is much wider. It is not my intention to provide a rigorous description of them, but to describe concisely how they will be understood and used in this study. Finally, I describe how the narrative world of each parable functions metaphorically within the narrative

⁷⁰ Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980), 147-151; Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (3d ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 166.

⁷¹ Mark Allan Powell, “Expected and Unexpected Readings of Matthew: What the Reader Knows,” *AsTJ* 48 (1993): 31-51. Cf. Dale C. Allison, “Anticipating the Passion: The Literary Reach of Matthew 26:47-27:56,” *CBQ* 56 (1994): 703, who assumes that the informed readers (hearers) are those who (1) were familiar with the LXX and (2) heard and reheard Matthew. Cf. Warren Carter, “An Audience-Oriented Approach to Matthew’s Parables,” in *Matthew’s Parables* (CBQMS 30; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1998), 11-12.

⁷² Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (2d ed.; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006), 155.

⁷³ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 20.

world of the Gospels.

Setting

The term ‘setting’ depicts the context within which the narrative action takes place,⁷⁴ which imparts a literary environment for the performances of the characters.⁷⁵ The settings in each pericope can be spatial, temporal and social.⁷⁶ The first one describes the physical context where the action occurs.⁷⁷ The second refers to either the moment when the action happens (“human time”) or when this goes beyond the history within the narrative (“monumental time”).⁷⁸ Finally, the third one indicates the historic context of the story,⁷⁹ assuming the value of the information provided by diachronic historical studies.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, although throughout this study I discuss the spatial and temporal setting of each parable, I have preferred to relegate my analysis of the social setting of the Gospel to the footnotes. The reason of this consideration is because my intention is more literary than historical.

⁷⁴ Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 87.

⁷⁵ Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 160; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 69.

⁷⁶ Abrams and Harpham claim that “the overall setting of a narrative or dramatic work is the general locale, historical time and social circumstances in which its action occurs.” See M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (9 ed.; Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009), 284. However, I have preferred to use the same names that Powell uses in his book, see Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 69. On the other hand, Resseguie says that *setting* can be of six types: (1) topographical, (2) architectural, (3) props, (4) temporal, (5) social and cultural; and (6) religious, see Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 94-114. See an analysis of various settings in Matthew in Warren Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (rev. ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2004), 154-165.

⁷⁷ This include not only the geographical and architectural locations but also, as Powell affirms, “the ‘props’ and ‘furniture’ (articles of clothing, modes of transportation, etc.) that make up this environment”, Powell, “Literary Approaches,” 51.

⁷⁸ Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read*, 79-80.

⁷⁹ Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 74-75.

⁸⁰ According to Powell, social settings include “political institutions, class structure, economic system, social customs, and the general cultural context assumed to be operative in the narrative,” Powell, “Literary Approach,” 51.

Characters

Characters are the people that function as actors in a narrative work,⁸¹ who can be understood not only as an individual person but also as a group of people that work as a single personality.⁸² Theoretically responsible for this is the implied author, who through a process called characterization⁸³ communicates to the implied reader, directly or indirectly,⁸⁴ what is required to infer characters from the narrative.⁸⁵ In this process, the implied reader can perceive different points of view. The term “point of view” means “the position from which a story is told,”⁸⁶ which indicates the intricate correlation that exists between the narrative world and the way that is communicated.⁸⁷ Its presence is seen particularly in assessing how the implied author constructed, among other things, the characters of the story.⁸⁸ In regard to this last, the point of view can be expressed in first or second person, showing a participatory or an omniscient narrator.⁸⁹

⁸¹ Abrams and Harpham, *A Glossary*, 42.

⁸² Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 51.

⁸³ *Characterization* has also been called *Character Development*, see X. J. Kennedy, Dana Gioia and Mark Bauerlein, *Handbook of Literary Terms: Literature, Language, Theory* (2d ed.; New York: Pearson, 2008), 22.

⁸⁴ There are two ways to communicate techniques of characterization. The first one is called ‘showing’ or indirect presentation, where the implied reader must infer the motives and disposition of the characters. The second one is named ‘telling’ or direct presentation, where the narrator intervenes and comments directly to the reader what he thinks about the character. See, Resegguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 126-130

⁸⁵ Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 159-160.

⁸⁶ John Fletcher, “Point of View,” in *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* (ed. Peter Childs and Roger Fowler; London: Routledge, 2006), 182. Cf. Abrams and Harpham, *A Glossary*, 271.

⁸⁷ Stephen D. Moore, *Literary Criticism and the Gospels: The Theoretical Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 25-26.

⁸⁸ Carter, *Matthew: Storyteller*, 105-106; John A. Beck, *God as Storyteller: Seeking Meaning in Biblical Narrative* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008), 61.

⁸⁹ Kennedy, Gioia and Bauerlein, *Handbook of Literary*, 119; Quinn, *A Dictionary of Literary*, 325-326.

Events and Plot

Events are the occurrences that take place in the interior of the story, making it impossible for the story to function without them.⁹⁰ The sequence of these events makes up the plot,⁹¹ which along with the settings and characters constitute the story itself.⁹²

However, not all of the events are necessarily significant for the plot. Because of that, literary criticism has classified them as kernels and satellites.⁹³ Kernels are indispensable to understanding the narrative logic of the story,⁹⁴ such that if some of them are deleted, the story would not be the same.⁹⁵ On the other hand, satellites are supplementary⁹⁶ events, which can be removed without affecting the plot.⁹⁷

Events must be examined according to the way in which they are presented by the implied author to define the narrative world of the story, determining its specific plot.⁹⁸ This means, for example, paying attention to the order, duration and frequency of each event as well as identifying elements of causality in “terms of conflict

⁹⁰ Ibid, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 35; Ibid, “Literary Approaches,” 47.

⁹¹ Walter C. Kaiser and Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 72-73; Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read*, 40; Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 197.

⁹² Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 158.

⁹³ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 53-56.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 53.

⁹⁵ David Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Malden, Mass: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 27.

⁹⁶ H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 20.

⁹⁷ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 54. However, it is a complex and subjective decision, see Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 36. For examples of this literary classification see, Frank J. Matera, “The Plot of Matthew’s Gospels,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 233-253. Cf. Mark Allan Powell, “The Plot and Subplots of Matthew’s Gospel,” *NTS* 38 (1992): 187-204; Warren Carter, “Kernels and Narrative Blocks: The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel,” *CBQ* 54 (1992): 463-481; Ibid, *Matthew: Storyteller*, 132-152.

⁹⁸ Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 158.

analysis”⁹⁹ within the story.¹⁰⁰

Rhetoric

To carry out the presentation of the events, the implied author uses rhetorical elements in the story,¹⁰¹ which the implied reader can discover focusing basically on aspects of language.¹⁰² These can be, for instance,¹⁰³ rhetorical figures, ironies and question.¹⁰⁴ A rhetorical figure refers to the organization of words to attain a specific effect as, for example, in the existence of outlines, chiasmus,¹⁰⁵ contrast and repetitions.¹⁰⁶ Secondly, irony implies that the connotation of what is said is different than its obvious meaning.¹⁰⁷ Finally rhetorical questions, which also can be considered as a form of irony, signify to ask a question which is not expected to be answered because “the answer itself is implied in the question.”¹⁰⁸

The metaphoric world of the parables

Because five of the six pericopes where the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” appears are parables (13:24-30, 47-50; 22:1-14; 24:45-51; 25:14-30), it is

⁹⁹ For an analysis of the plot from a conflict perspective, see Jack Dean Kingsbury, “The Plot of Matthew’s Story,” *Int* 46 (1992): 347-356. Cf. Powell, “The Plot,” 196-204.

¹⁰⁰ Matera, “The Plot,” 239-240; Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, 36-44.

¹⁰¹ Rhetoric is “the art of eloquence and persuasion.” See Kennedy, Gioia and Bauerlein, *Handbook of Literary*, 131.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁰³ For a more detailed analysis of these devices see, for instance, Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 200-218. Cf. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism*, 41-86; Beck, *God as Storyteller*, 81-94.

¹⁰⁴ See J. A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (4d ed.; Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998), 748.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web*, 25-43

¹⁰⁷ Edward Quinn, *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms* (2d ed.; New York: Checkmark Books, 2006), 222. From a biblical perspective, see the analysis of the meaning of irony in Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 7-27.

¹⁰⁸ James Phelan, “Rhetorical Question,” in *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition* (ed. Theresa Enos; New York: Garland, 1996), 608.

necessary to give specific attention as to how they function within the broader Matthean narrative. The first is that in this study the parables are considered as stories within the story of the Matthew's Gospel. This means that the examination of every parable is done taking into consideration the narrative framework in which each of them is situated.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, both the parables as well as their respective contexts are analyzed from a narrative perspective. Nevertheless, each one of these analyses is performed separately in this study. Firstly, the external context where the parable is located will be analyzed, and, secondly, the narrative story presented by the parable will be examined.

Secondly, in this study the parables are considered as depicting a “fictional world,” while the external context would represent the “world” where these are told.”¹¹⁰ This would imply that each parable is comprehended as a pedagogical illustration,¹¹¹ whose purpose seeks to underscore at least one point in the development of its story.¹¹² In this manner, although the analysis of the settings, characters and events of every parable are taken as “metaphorical,” this does not mean that they are not connected with the “real” context of the story and the development of it. Moreover, while the world of the parable is fictitious, from a narrative point of view its “metaphorical intention” is to generate a response from the

¹⁰⁹ A narrative approach implies understanding the text synchronically, not diachronically. This means that the narrative critic pays attention to the literary context where the parable appears in the Gospel. See Charles W. Hedrick, “Parable,” *NIDB* 4:370; and William Warren, “Interpreting New Testament Narrative: The Gospels and Acts,” in *Biblical Hermeneuticis: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture* (2d ed.; ed. Bruce Corley et al; Nashville: Holman, 2002), 327.

¹¹⁰ In this study the “fictional world” of the parable is called “metaphoric.”

¹¹¹ Although there are several definitions of parable [e.g., J. Dominic Crossan, “Parable,” *ABD* 5:146-150; Hedrick, “Parable,” 4:373-374], I have preferred to underline its pedagogical purpose.

¹¹² Parables may make more than one point. See Crossan, “Parable,” 5:146-147; Klyne Snodgrass, “Parable,” *DJG* 591.

reader.¹¹³ Therefore, the purpose of this study will be to discover each one of these metaphorical intentions where the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is located.

Boundaries of “Weeping and Gnashing of teeth”

The phrases “weeping and gnashing of teeth” are located in six different narrative frameworks. Every one of them needs to be located in particular pericopes, for the purpose of a specific narrative analysis of each usage.

To accomplish this I will list those smaller units separately, pointing out their particular textual indicators.

The centurion and his petition (Matthew 8:5-13)

The narrative unit is situated after the miracle of a man with leprosy (8:1-4) and before the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (8:14-15). Its location is within the collection of Matthews’s healing stories of chapter 8 and 9. The narrative unit begins when Jesus enters Capernaum (8:5), and ends with a statement that the centurion’s petition has been fulfilled (8:13).

The parable of the weeds explained (Matthew 13:36-43; cf. 13:24-30)

The setting for this pericope is Jesus leaving the crowd and going into the house (13:36) where the disciples ask him to explain to them the parable of the weeds that he had told them previously (13:24-30). This detail is very important to understand the explanation of the parable. For that reason it will be necessary to connect the parable (13:24-30) with its explanation (13:36-46). Finally, once the explanation has finished, Jesus tells another parable (13:44), which operates as a natural boundary of

¹¹³ Cf. Madeleine I. Boucher, *The Parables* (New Testament Message 7; Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1981), 16.

the unit.

The parable of the net
(Matthew 13:47-50)

This parable is located immediately after another parable (13:45-46). An important phrase that is used at the beginning of the pericope to set up the starting point of the unit is ὁμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (“the kingdom of heaven may be compared to”), which is also used to begin others parables (13:24, 31, 44, 45). Finally, once the parable of the net was told, the next group of verses containing a conversation between Jesus and his disciples (13:51-52) helps to delimitate this narrative portion.

The parable of the weeding banquet
(Matthew 22:1-14)

The narrator begins this section by referring to Jesus telling a new parable (22:1). Once it was told, the next verse declares that the Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus in his words (22:15), determining the end of the parabolic unit.

The parable of the wise or wicked servant
(Matthew 24:45-51)

The next narrative portion containing the focal phrase of this study starts with the interrogative pronoun τίς, indicating that the unit begins as a question (24:45). When the parable was told, the next unit starts with another parable (25:1), framing the parable of the wise or wicked servant in its own individual delimitation.

The parable of the Talents
(Matthew 25:14-30)

This final pericope, that follows the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13), begins with the Greek conjunction Ὡσπερ, indicating a new beginning (25:14). At the same

time, this narrative section ends (25:30) when the next and final parable of the chapter starts (25:31), establishing it as a specific portion.

Summary

Across this chapter I have established the necessity of carrying out a narrative study of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth”. Initially, I reviewed the expression from a historical critical viewpoint as well as from a narrative perspective. The lack of a narrative study exclusively analyzing this expression was made evident and provided me with the purpose of this study, which examines the expression from a narrative viewpoint. Finally, the last section of the chapter outlined the methodological approach that will be used.

CHAPTER 2

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PHRASE “WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH” (PART 1: GALILEE)

Within this chapter I will analyze the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” as it occurs in Jesus’ Galilean ministry (cf. 4:23; 19:1). I give an overview of each pericope and then undertake the analysis outlined in the previous chapter with the intention of understanding the phrase in its literary context.

Narrative Analysis of Matthew 8:5-13: The Centurion’s Πᾶς

Overview

Although the order of the events within the pericope (8:5-13) has been arranged sequentially,¹ this does not prevent the reader recognizing it is being structured in three parts (See Figure 1):² (1) an introduction (8:5a), (2) four speeches (8:5b-13a) and (3) a conclusion (8:13b). In the first, the implied author provides the setting of the pericope (8:5). In the second the two main characters appear, Jesus and the centurion, who are the authors of the four speeches pronounced in the text (8:6-13b). It is in the last one of these speeches where the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” occurs (8:12). Finally, in the third part, the implied author concludes the story (8:13b).

¹ For the reader, this sequence is quite clear: (1) Jesus enters to Capernaum (8:5a), (2) the centurion comes to him asking for help (8:5b-6), (3) Jesus says that he will go (8:7), (4) the centurion replies (8:8-9), (5) Jesus is astonished and delivers his eschatological speech (8:10-12) and (7) Jesus heals the πᾶς (8:13).

² See Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2:17.

- I. Introduction (8:5a)
- II. Four Speeches (8:5b-13a)
 - a. Speech of centurion (8:6)
 - b. Speech of Jesus (8:7)
 - c. Speech of centurion (8:8-9)
 - d. Speech of Jesus (8:10-13a)
- III. Conclusion (8:13b)

Fig. 1. An outline of Matt 8:5-15

Introduction: the setting of the pericope (8:5)

The account starts by locating the scene in Capernaum (8:5). This is the main spatial setting of the pericope and where the narrative events will take place. The implied reader knows about the city because it was mentioned before (4:13), not only as the place where Jesus established his new home, after leaving Nazareth (4:13),³ but also that it is located by the sea,⁴ in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, namely, in “Galilee of the Gentiles” (4:13-15).⁵

For the reader, before entering Capernaum Jesus had healed a man with leprosy (8:1-5). This healing occurred after Jesus had descended from the mountain where he had been teaching (8:1; cf. 5:1). This means that the reader perceives a

³ The Greek text is very clear to determine this point. Matt 4:13 declares literally that Jesus κατόκησεν εἰς Καφαρναοῦμ (went and settled in Capernaum; NJB). The same expression is used in Matt 2:33, where Matthew claims that Jesus, along with his family, κατόκησεν εἰς πόλιν λεγομένην Ναζαρέτ (settled in a town called Nazareth; NJB). On both occasions the verb κατοικέω is used to describe the place where Jesus lived. Cf. NRSV, TNIV, NAB, NET.

⁴ Archaeologically it has been demonstrated that Capernaum was located next to the lake, establishing that this was a fishing community, with agriculture as also being one of its primary economic sources. So, for the reader, this θάλασσα (sea) would refer specifically to the lake where Capernaum is located. See Mark A. Chancey, “Capernaum,” in *Encyclopedia of the Historical Jesus* (ed. Craig A. Evans; New York: Routledge, 2008), 91-92; John C. H. Laughlin, “Capernaum,” *NIDB* 1:566.

⁵ The mention of “the district of Galilee” (2:22; NRSV. cf. 3:13; 4:12) allows the reader to establish that Galilee is not a town as Capernaum but a region that includes this and other cities.

spatial change of events and scenarios prior to Jesus' entering into the town, a movement that goes from a mountain to a place at sea level (8:1, 5).⁶

Four speeches: Jesus and the centurion (8:5b-13a)

For the reader there are four speeches between Matt 8:5b and 13b. The first three prepare the moment when Jesus (8:5b-9), amazed because of the centurion's faith (8:10), pronounces the last short segment that contains the saying "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (8:10-13a). Taking into consideration the above, firstly, I discuss the first three speeches. Then, I examine the last one, paying attention to the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The first three speeches: the centurion's petition (8:5b-9)

When Jesus enters Capernaum a centurion comes to him requesting healing for his παῖς who was suffering at home (8:5-6). This means that Jesus is being characterized implicitly as a healer. Nevertheless, for the reader this designation is not only because of the centurion's petition (8:5-6) but also due to the fact that Jesus had healed a leper before entering Capernaum (8:1-4). On the other hand, the fact that the narrative says that the centurion "comes" (προσῆλθεν) to Jesus would imply that Jesus is the main character of the pericope. This is because every time that the verb προσέρχομαι occurs in the healings chapter (8-9) it is describing people that come to Jesus (8:2, 5, 19, 25; 9:14, 20, 28). Thus the implied author is positioning Jesus at the centre⁷ of the pericope and showing that the centurion's request for his παῖς is the

⁶ For Thompson between 8:1 and 8:16 there is a thematic unity, providing "a coherent setting for this first group of miracles." See William Thompson, "Reflections on the Composition of Mt 8:1-9:34," *CBQ* 33 (1971): 370.

⁷ See Kingsbury, who says, "with the aid of the verb *akolouthein* Matthew depicts Jesus in chaps. 8-9 as being in the midst of Israel (8:1, 10)," see Jack Dean Kingsbury, "Observations on the 'Miracle Chapters' of Matthew 8-9," *CBQ* 40 (1978): 568.

causative event that triggers the subsequent incidents of the pericope. Furthermore, taking into consideration that the pericope can be sorted as a chiasmus (See Figure 2), the reader would also perceive that Jesus' astonishment is the result of the centurion's petition, which leads Jesus to deliver his eschatological words (8:8-12).⁸

Accordingly, the centurion's petition of faith is the kernel that finally leads to the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" saying (8:9-12).

- A. Παῖς at home: Sick (centurion's petition) (8:5-6)
 - B. Jesus to the Centurion: I will go and heal him! (8:7)
 - C. Centurion's words (8:8-9)
 - D. Jesus: Astonished (8:10a)
 - C.' Jesus' words (8:10b-12)
 - B.' Jesus to the Centurion: Go!, he is healed (8:13a)
 - A.' Παῖς at home: Healed (centurion's petition is accomplished) (8:13b)

Fig. 2. Chiasmus of Matt 8:5-13

For the reader, the fact that the centurion is seeking healing for his παῖς (8:6, 8), describes him as a man who takes cares of those who work for him, namely, a good master. This last consideration, nevertheless, is related to how the noun παῖς is understood, as it can mean boy or servant.⁹ The implied reader considers that clearly

⁸ Moreover, the chiasmus's outer frame demonstrates that the centurion's petition was carried out by Jesus (A/A'). In addition, despite the fact that it is not Jesus who is taking the initiative, his response is positive, which can be seen when Jesus says that he can go and cure the centurion's παῖς and when Jesus himself tells him that his παῖς has been healed (8:7, 13).

⁹ Semantically the word can be translated as child or servant, which in turn, depending on its article or adjective attributes, would determine if it is feminine or masculine (cf. Lk 8:51, 54; Matt 26:69), see L&N, 1:110, 741. Some scholars have preferred translating παῖς as boy. See, for instance, Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20* (2 vols. Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2001), 10; Joaquín González Echegaray, "Los esclavos en la Palestina del tiempo de Jesús," *Salm* 56 (2009): 108; H. F. D. Starks, "The Centurion's παῖς," *JTS* 42 (1941): 179-180; and G. Zuntz, "The 'Centurion' of Capernaum and His Authority (Matt 8:5-13)," *JTS* 46 (1945): 188. Recently Theodore Jennings and Tat-siong Benny Liew have claimed that παῖς refers to a boy-lover. If that is so, it means that the centurion had a pederastic relationship with the παῖς. See Theodore Jennings, W. and Tat-siong Benny Liew, "Mistaken Identities but Model Faith: Rereading the Centurion, the Chap, and the Christ in

three times *παῖς* refers to boys i.e. boy child or son (2:16; 17:18; 21:15) and in two occasions to servants (12:18; 14:2). In the first three uses *παῖς* always is in parallel with another word that means child and that works as synonym of it. In Matt 2:16, it is *τέκνον* (2:18), in Matt 17:18 *υἱὸς* (17:15) and in Matt 21:15 *νήπιος* (21:16). Therefore, in these cases *παῖς* is a boy. The second meaning, servant, occurs in Matt 12:18 with reference to the messianic fulfillment of Isaiah 42:1-4. This last reference says that God has chosen his servant (Isa 42:1). The Hebrew word for servant in Isa 42:1 is *עַבְדִּי* (Is 42:1; MT). This word is translated by the LXX as a *παῖς* (Isa 42:1; LXX), which in turn, is the same word that the implied author used to quote the verse of Isaiah in Matt 12:18. Finally, in Matt 14:2 Herod tells his *παῖσιν* that John the Baptist had risen from the dead (Matt 14:2). The plural form of the word, linked to the fact that Herod is called tetrarch (14:1), enables the reader to understand that these cannot be sons but servants. Moreover, for the implied reader probably the words *παῖσιν* evokes the way the LXX refers to those who work with authorities, which as in the previous case, is a translation of the same noun *עַבְדִּי* (cf. LXX Gen 41:10, 37-38; Jer 43:31 [36:31; MT], 44:2 [37:32; MT]).

Thus, every time that *παῖς* is understood as boy it is because its immediate context defines it that way. In the specific case of the centurion's *παῖς* the only internal synonym provided by the centurion himself is the word *δοῦλος* (8:9), which

Matthew 8:5-13,” *JBL* 123 (2004): 467-494. Cf. Donald Mader, “The Entimos Pais of Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10,” in *Homosexuality and Religion and Philosophy* (eds. Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson; New York: Garland, 1992), 223-235. For a reply to this proposal see D B. Saddington, “The Centurion in Matthew 8:5-13: Consideration of the Proposal of Theodore W Jennings, Jr, and Tat-Siong Benny Liew,” *JBL* 125 (2006): 140-142. On the other hand, some have translated *παῖς* as servant. See, for example, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 354; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 311-312; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 192; and Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2: 20-21.

along with *παῖς* is presented grammatically as a possession of the centurion (*ὁ παῖς μου / τῷ δούλῳ μου*). This narrative detail may indicate that both words are synonyms, allowing the reader to establish that the centurion's *παῖς* is not only a servant but also specifically a slave. However, the implied reader does not know whether he is Gentile or Jewish.¹⁰ Similarly, the reader does not know about his sickness, since his medical condition is not declared. The reader only discerns that he is suffering a paralysis that prevents him from walking (cf. 9:2, 6),¹¹ which is explained in terms of extreme and constant torture.¹²

For the reader the centurion goes to Jesus asking for help regardless of his different social status (8:5-6). However, that is not an impediment to the centurion who addresses Jesus as *κύριος* (lord; 8:6, 8), which is a term that in this narrative context would involve an explicit sign of respect.¹³ The social difference, between Jesus and the centurion may be observed by paying attention to the fact that he is actually called “centurion.” According to the information known to the reader, the

¹⁰ The reader knows about the existence of both Jewish and Gentiles slaves in Palestine. See Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1969), 312-316; González, “Los esclavos,” 86.

¹¹ L&N, 1:273.

¹² BDAG, 215. For the reader the meaning of the verb *βασανίζω* would include a constant torture. It can be seen further when the implied author uses the same word to inform how a boat is being “buffeted [*βασανιζόμενον*] by the waves” because of the wind (14:24; TNIV).

¹³ Cf. J. A. Fitzmyer, “*κύριος*,” *EDNT* 2 329. From a narrative perspective, Kingsbury has affirmed that when the centurion calls Jesus *κύριος* he is recognizing the “divine authority with which the Messiah, the Son of God, heals.” However, in my opinion the evidence is not strong enough to confirm his conclusion. See Jack Dean Kingsbury, “Title Kyrios in Matthew’s Gospel,” *JBL* 94 (1975): 254; Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure*, 175-176. Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 198, 205; cf. also with Bornkamm who says that the term does not involve just an expression of human respect, “but is intended as a term of Majesty.” See Günter Bornkamm, “End-Expectation and Church in Matthew,” in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (ed. Günter Bornkamm; London: SCM Press, 1963), 42.

centurion may be considered a gentile¹⁴ of Roman nationality,¹⁵ concretely a ranking officer who commands at least 100 soldiers,¹⁶ who, under his orders (cf. 8:9), serve as security patrol or execution squadron (cf. 27:27; 28:12).¹⁷ The implied reader perceives his gentile origin, when he refuses to allow Jesus to go to his home (8:8),

¹⁴ In Bruce Malina's opinion, the centurion is not a Gentile but an Israelite because many Jews were soldiers under the Roman Empire, and this centurion may be one of them. However, according to Shimon Applebaum the Roman authorities in the first century were reluctant to conscript Jews because of the rise of the revolutionary Zealot movement. Emil Schürer claims that though there is not specific information about the troops stationed in Judea, it is probable that between A.D 6-41 many of them were soldiers recruited in and around Sebaste or Samaria, namely, not Jews, working in the service of Rome. Moreover, M. Speidel affirms that in spite of the fact that many of them came from Sebaste and Samaria, there were others that came from Rome, as well. On the other hand, although Andrew Schoenfeld and Shimon Applebaum have documented the existence of Jews in the Roman army, they only have been able to prove that in the first century, at least before A.D 69, these Jews worked not in Israel but in a foreign land (e.g., Egypt and Sardinia). Taking the above into consideration, in my opinion, for the implied reader the centurion is not a Jew but a Gentile. But, as there was no Roman military presence in Galilee before A.D. 44, the reference to a centurion would be to one of Herod Antipas's troops, which would have included Roman soldiers. See Bruce J. Malina, "Social-Scientific Approaches and the Gospel of Matthew," *Methods for Matthew* (MBI; ed. Mark Allan Powell; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 182, 188; Shimon Applebaum, "Jews and Service in the Roman Army," in *Roman Frontier Studies 1967: The Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress Held at Tel Aviv* (ed. Shimon Applebaum; Tel-Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1971); Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D.135)* (3 vols.; rev. ed. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1973), 1: 363; M. Speidel, "Roman Army in Judaea under the Procurators," *Ancient Society* 13/14 (1982/83): 233-240; and Andrew J. Schoenfeld, "Sons of Israel in Caesar's Service: Jewish Soldiers in the Roman Military," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 24 (2006): 115-126. Cf. A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 124; Chancey, "Capernaum," 92.

¹⁵ Roman citizenship was necessary to become a Roman soldier, though non-citizen soldiers served as "auxiliaries" (implying thereby that they would not become centurions). See John E. Stambaugh and David L. Balch, *The New Testament in Its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 30-31. Cf. James L. Jones, "The Roman Army," in *The Catacombs and the Colosseum* (eds. Stephen Benko and John J. O'Rourke; Valley Forge: Judson, 1971), 204-205. Shimon Applebaum affirms that there was at least a Jewish centurion recorded in the first century, but in Egypt not in Israel. See Applebaum, "Jews and Service in the Roman Army," 181.

¹⁶ Earl S. Johnson, "Centurion," *NIDB* 1:579. The noun ἑκατοντάρχης means literally "leader of a hundred," see LSJ, 500.

¹⁷ Johnson, "Centurion," 580.

when Jesus had manifested his intention to go with him (8:7).¹⁸ Nonetheless, according to the centurion this is not an impediment for Jesus can heal his παῖς at a distance (8:8-9), something not yet alluded to in the Matthean narrative.

The last speech: The eschatological reward and punishment (8:10-13a)

According to the implied author Jesus is astonished because of the words of the centurion, which motivates Jesus to state that he has found no one in Israel having such faith (8:10). Stating this, Jesus would be acting as someone that has the ability to judge that Israel has less faith than the centurion (8:10), which implicitly is established when Jesus says ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν (truly I tell you, 8:10; NRSV). This saying, which is repeated several times in the Gospel (e.g., 5:18, 26; 6:2, 5, 16; 10:15),¹⁹ was used previously by Jesus to make mention of the reward that the hypocrites have already obtained (6:2, 5, 16). For the reader this connection is important, because before Jesus used the phrase previously, he describes the wrong attitudes of the hypocrites, affirming that they love to be praised by others when they

¹⁸ Although some scholars have interpreted the words of Jesus in v. 7 as a question I have preferred translating it as a statement. The argument that the emphatic position of the pronoun ἐγὼ would show that Jesus is asking a question is not absolutely consistent. The implied author uses many times specific grammatical markers to indicate a question such as τίς (e.g., 3:7; 5:13; 46, 47; 6:27, 28, 31) or πῶς (7:4; 8:27; 12:26, 29, 34), for example. Therefore syntactically the possibility of understanding it as a question is not completely definitive. For those that see the text as a question, see, for example, Douglas R. A. Hare, *Matthew* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1993), 90-91; Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000), 201-202; Dale C. Allison, "Matthew," in *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (eds. John Barton and John Muddiman; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 857; Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading*, 113; and France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 312-313. For a discussion about the topic from a perspective that considers that the phrase should be translated as a statement and not as a question, see Jennings and Liew, "Mistaken Identities but Model Faith: Rereading the Centurion," 478-479.

¹⁹ The phrase sometimes appears with the postpositive conjunction γάρ (ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν). See 5:18; 10:23; 13:17; 17:20. However, mostly the phrase is quoted as in Matt 8:10. See 5:26; 6:2, 5, 16; 8:10; 10:15, 42; 11:11; 16:28; 18:3, 13, 18-19; 19:23, 28; 21:21, 31; 23:36; 24:2, 34, 47; 25:12, 40, 45; 26:13, 21, 34.

give alms, fast or pray (6:1-6, 16-18). Doing this, for the implied reader, Jesus is showing that he has the authority, as in Matt 8:10, to claim that Israel's faith is less than the centurion's faith (8:10).

On the other hand, the phrase ἄμῃν λέγω ὑμῖν (8:10) also entails that Jesus has the capacity to anticipate the future (e.g. 10:23; 16:28; 24:34). After all he is predicting that "many" (πολλοὶ) will be gathered in the kingdom of heaven (8:11-12). These "many," whose main description is intimately related to their universal and Gentile origin (8:11), are a representation of the centurion (cf. 8:10-11).²⁰ This is because for the reader, from a narrative perspective, the reference to those "many" (πολλοὶ) coming from "east and west" is describing a metaphoric origin (8:11). Earlier the reader had been informed about "east" because the μάγοι (magi; TNIV) had visited Jesus from there when he was a child (cf. 2:1, 11). The Greek phrase utilized by the implied author to show this it is ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν (2:1; cf. 8:11), which describes the provenance of those who come "from a country that is in the direction where the sun rises."²¹ In addition, Jesus mentions also that many will come from the δυσμῆ (8:11), a word whose meaning describes the direction where the sun sets.²² Hence, taking into consideration these two opposite geographical perspectives, the implied reader is able to understand that using east and west the implied author wants to indicate that those "many" (πολλοὶ) will come "from all over the world" (8:11; cf. 24:27).²³ Accordingly, the provenance of those "many" does not involve a local

²⁰ Newman and Stine propose to read Matt 8:11 as saying "many others who trust in God as this man does" will come from east and west. This means that those who are coming from there are as the centurion, namely, gentiles, that like him will have the privilege to be along with Abraham in the "kingdom of heaven." See Barclay Moon Newman and Philip C. Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1992), 230.

²¹ Ibid., 33.

²² See BDAG, 265.

²³ Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 230.

space but, on the contrary, the whole world.

Thus, for the reader, these “many” (πολλοὶ), like the centurion, will recline (ἀνακλιθήσονται) in the “kingdom of heaven” along with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (8:11), whom to the reader it is not unusual that these appear together (cf. 22:32). For the implied reader the act of reclining conveys commonly the idea of a meal (cf. 14:19),²⁴ which would evoke in the reader's mind an eschatological banquet that the righteous will enjoy in the future Messianic kingdom,²⁵ an eschatological feast where both Jews and gentiles will be gathered²⁶ in fulfillment to the promise given to Abraham that in his seed all the nations around the world would be blessed (cf. Gen 22:18; Gen 12:3; 17:16; 18:18; Gal 3:16).²⁷ That reminds the reader, as was mentioned before, that at the beginning of the story certain gentiles visited Jesus after he was born (Matt 2:1),²⁸ anticipating not just the universal scope of Jesus' message²⁹ but also the inclusion of gentiles into the community of God.³⁰

This last is intimately related to those who are hearing this comparison, namely,

²⁴ L&N, 1:219; R. T. France, “Sit,” *NIDNTT* 3:589.

²⁵ Nancy Calvert, “Abraham,” *DJG* 5; BDAG, 65. For a list of different sources addressing the eschatological banquet in Jesus' times, see Peter-Ben Smit, *Fellowship and Food in the Kingdom: Eschatological Meals and Scenes of Utopian Abundance in the New Testament* (WUNT 234; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 22-23.

²⁶ A topic that in some level is clear in the reader's mind, considering that Abraham was not only the first proselyte (cf. Gen 12:1-4; Jos 24:2) but also, considering that in his seed all the nations around the world would be blessed, the first missionary of Israel (cf. Gen 22:18). Cf. Michael F. Bird, “Who Comes From the East and the West? Luke 13.28-29/Matt 8.11-12 and the Historical Jesus,” *NTS* 52 (2006): 453-457; and Robert Hayward, “Abraham as Proselytizer at Beer-Sheba in the Targum of the Pentateuch,” *JJS* 49 (1988): 24-37. Cf. Jacob Neusner and William Scott Green, *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period: 450 B.C.E. to 600 C.E.* (2 vols.; New York: Macmillan, 1996), 1:7.

²⁷ David Bauer, “The Major Characters of Matthew's Story,” *Int* 46 (1992): 358.

²⁸ They are clearly gentiles because they arrived asking for “the king of the Jews” not for “their” king (2:2).

²⁹ Donald Senior, “Matthew 2:1-12,” *Int* 46 (1992): 396-397; Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2: 18, 19.

³⁰ Bauer, “The Major Characters,” 358.

those who are following Jesus (8:10). In the pericope, the verb that describes them is ἀκολουθέω, which has been used before by the implied author to describe the way the first four disciples responded to Jesus' call (4:20, 22). Narratively, these followers are connected to the crowd that have been following Jesus from the mountain (8:1).³¹ For the reader it is not clear if they are Jewish. The only previous connection between the crowd and the Jewish people was in Matt 4:25, where the implied author informs that many crowds (ὄχλοι) from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and beyond the Jordan have been followed Jesus (4:25). For the reader the fact that Decapolis has been also mentioned shows that not only Jews had been following Jesus but also Gentiles, considering that the Decapolis was not a Jewish region.³² From this perspective, the reader judges that many of those who are following Jesus can be considered Gentiles and recipients of the promise of being part of the meal along with the Jewish patriarchs (8:10-11).

According to the account those “many” will recline along with Abraham, Isaac

³¹ The meaning of the crowds is a contentious issue in Matthean studies. Some have affirmed that the crowds are a symbol of Israel but not the disciples. See, for example, Warren Carter, “The Crowds in Matthew’s Gospel,” *CBQ* 55 (1993): 59; Michael J. Wilkins, *Discipleship in the ancient world and Matthew’s Gospel* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 137-141, 148-150, 157-158. For a different opinion see Sjef van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 164; and V. L. Nofoaiga, “Crowds as Jesus’ Disciples in the Matthean Gospel” (Mh.T. diss., University of Auckland, 2006), 55-63, 94. On the other hand, some biblical narrative scholars have said that those who are described in Matt 8:10 are not accompanying Jesus in the sense of discipleship, but only “experiencing the benefits of his ministry.” See Jack Dean Kingsbury, “Verb Akolouthein (”to Follow”) as an Index of Matthew’s view of His Community,” *JBL* 97 (1978): 58; and Bauer, “The Major Characters of Matthew’s Story,” 364. For a different opinion see Paul Minear, who argues that those that are following Jesus represent a specialized group, namely, those “chosen and trained as successors to Jesus in his role as exorcist, healer, prophet, and teacher”. See Paul Minear, “Disciples and the Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew,” *ATHR* 3 (1974): 31. In this study I have preferred to avoid a definitive conclusion because it doesn’t immediately impact on my topic.

³² Cousland, *The Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew*, 58-61. Cousland suggest that the reference to Decapolis could indicate that Matthew portrays the crowds as partly gentile. See *Ibid.*, 60-61.

and Jacob in the “kingdom of heaven” (8:11). The first to make mention of the “kingdom of heaven” was John the Baptist, who said that it had “come near” (3:2; NRSV). Then Jesus, at the beginning of his ministry, repeated the same proclamation (4:17).³³ However, for the reader the presence of the “kingdom of heaven” is paradoxical,³⁴ because despite the fact that Jesus affirms the certainty of it as a present reality (5:3, 10, 19), on the other hand, he also locates its presence in the future (5:20: 7:21). This conceptual perception of the kingdom of heaven, which is reiterated through Matthew’s story (10:7; 11:11–12; 16:19; 18:1, 3–4, 23; 19:12, 14, 23; 23:13), allows the reader to identify it, at least in this specific context (8:11), as a future perspective.

In contrast to those “many” who are going to participate in the banquet are the “sons of the kingdom” (8:12). The only reference that the implied reader has about them is Matt 13:38, that is to say, the reader needs to go further into the narrative to understand its meaning properly. In Matt 13:38, however, they are presented in a positive way, symbolizing those who will be saved from the “fiery furnace” (cf. 13:37-43). This specific aspect prevents the reader from thinking that these represent Israel as a whole. Because, as well as those “many” not personifying all the gentiles who will come to the banquet, similarly the “sons of the kingdom” do not typify Israel ethnically. The point, however, that the implied author wants to highlight is that in this instance, the “sons of the kingdom” will not be in the feast along with Abraham but outside in the darkness. Their emotions will not be joy, but, as Jesus has described, “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (8:12). Thus, in this pericope the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” works as a demonstrative indication of the “sons of

³³ The Greek expression is identical in both cases: μετανοεῖτε ἥγγικεν γὰρ ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (3:2; 4:17).

³⁴ Cf. B. Klappert, “King, Kingdom” *NIDNTT* 2: 381-389.

the kingdom” for having been left out of the banquet.

According to the narrative, the “sons of the kingdom” will be thrown into τὸ σκότος τὸ ἑξώτερον (8:12). The word ἑξώτερον is an adjective that in connection to the noun σκότος means the “outer darkness” (cf. NRSV). Despite the implied author having already presented the word ‘darkness’ in a negative way (4:16; 6:23), for the reader the reference to the “outer darkness” has not been mentioned yet in the gospel. It shall, however, appear again twice (22:13; 25:30). In each of these repetitions the word that follows τὸ σκότος τὸ ἑξώτερον is the adverb of place ἐκεῖ, which connects the outer darkness to the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (cf. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). The adverb itself entails a directional perspective,³⁵ locating the scene relatively far from the viewpoint of the reader.³⁶ In this sense ἐκεῖ works as an internal separator, dividing the “outer darkness” where the “sons of the kingdom” will be thrown from the “kingdom of heaven” where those that come from the east and west will be (8:11-12). Accordingly, the presence of this adverb would imply that “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is not a metaphoric scenario, but an emotional exhibition of the “sons of the kingdom” for being in the “outer darkness,” (8:12).

When the implied reader considers the eschatological words of Jesus, it is possible to distinguish the rhetorical contrast that exists between them, in particular to note that one group is inside the banquet, whereas the other one is outside. (See Figure 3).

³⁵ See BDAG, 301.

³⁶ L&N, 1:713.

Matt 8:11	Matt 8:12
Many from east and west (πολλοὶ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν)	Sons of the kingdom (υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας)
Will Come (ἔξουσιν)	Will be Thrown (ἐκβληθήσονται)
Into the Kingdom of heaven (ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν)	Into the Outer darkness (εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον)
Will recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob (ἀνακλιθήσονται μετὰ Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ)	Will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων)

Fig. 3. Contrast Between Matt 8:11 and Matt 8:12

The first consideration about these parallels is that while on the one hand, Jesus says that many will come; on the other hand, Jesus affirms that others will be thrown outside. In the first case, people freely come. In the second, people are thrown out against their will.

The second consideration is the implicit presence of the joy of those that are in the banquet.³⁷ A feature that the implied reader establishes rhetorically is the comparison between the darkness and the light that tacitly is surrounding the meal. Taking this into account, “weeping and gnashing of teeth” would be implicitly contrasting the rhetorical joy of those “many” (πολλοὶ) at the feast, the same way that the ‘implicit’ light of the feast would be contrasting the darkness of those who are outside. Thus, the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” in Matt 8:12 is an emotional expression of sadness for being outside the joy of the banquet, which reminds the reader that the first time that noun “weeping” (κλαυθμὸς) appears is at the beginning of the Gospel (2:18), describing the sorrow of Rachel for having lost

³⁷ According to Allen the metaphor of meals symbolizes the joys of the kingdom, see Allen C. Willoughby, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1912), 77.

her children.³⁸ However, this rhetorical significance possibly is only describing the word “weeping,” not necessarily the concept of “gnashing of teeth.” This latter may be explained bearing in mind that implicitly the “sons of the kingdom” were thrown outside by force, which would imply that they are “gnashing” their teeth because of the anger that they are feeling for having been expelled, against their will, from the Messianic feast.

In the reader’s mind, these contrasts work ironically within the pericope. That the “sons of the kingdom” are in the darkness while “many” (πολλοὶ) are in the banquet with Abraham (8:11-12) reminds the reader that earlier John the Baptist had assured the Pharisees and Sadducees that not because they were sons of Abraham would they escape the coming wrath (cf. 3:7-10). In other words, John the Baptist was attacking the idea that Israel, by the fact that it descended from Abraham, was not only superior to the gentiles but also they could not be lost.³⁹ Conversely Jesus ironically says that while the descendants of Abraham (i.e., Israel) are left out of the kingdom of heaven, many of the gentiles that are outside (i.e., east and west) are incorporated into it.⁴⁰ This means that those who are “weeping and gnashing” their teeth are those who thought that just because they are the offspring of Abraham they would gain entry into the banquet.⁴¹

³⁸ Cf. Charette, *The Theme of Recompense in Matthew’s Gospel*, 140-141.

³⁹ See Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus’ Promise to the Nation* (SBT 24; London: SCM Press, 1958), 48.

⁴⁰ It is possible that the reader can notice another glimpse of irony between Jesus and the centurion. The reader observes that the centurion says to Jesus that he is not worthy to receive him under his roof (8:8). If the reader is a Jew unconsciously he or she will agree with him about his lack of worth. However, Jesus reacts saying the contrary, i.e., that he is worthy, along with “many,” to be received into the banquet in the kingdom of heaven (8:10). Cf. Samuel Henry Hooke, “Jesus and the Centurion: Matthew 8:5-10,” *ExpTim* 69 (1957): 80.

⁴¹ For Dupont in this particular contrast lies the paradox of the event. See Jacques Dupont, “Beaucoup viendront du levant et du couchant: (Matt 8:11-12; Lk 13:28-29),” *ScEcll* 19 (1967): 159.

The conclusion of the pericope: the servant is healed (8:13b)

Chronologically, the encounter between Jesus and the centurion happens in a “human time,” specifically in a “locative” one, which can be seen when the implied author concludes saying that the centurion’s *παῖς* was healed “at that very hour” (8:13). However, the account of those who comes from “east and west” as well as of those who are thrown into the “outer darkness” occurs in a future time (8:11-12). In this case, the temporal setting illustrates a “monumental time” that transcends the present reality of the story. Therefore, the pericope has two temporal settings. One takes place in the present of the story (cf. 8:1, 5), whilst the second occurs within an unspecified future time (8:11-12). It is in relation to the latter temporal setting that the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is mentioned (8:11-12).

Finally, whereas the implied author ends the story saying that the centurion’s servant was healed without any physical intervention, for the reader this would mean that Jesus never goes to the centurion’s house (8:5-13). Therefore, for the reader, the events of the pericope occur outdoors, probably on one of the streets of Capernaum, and therefore, the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” shares this outdoor setting.

Summary

The plot of the pericope is basically the positive reaction of Jesus to a gentile request for healing, which leads Jesus to affirm that the gentiles will be part of the eschatological messianic meal in the “kingdom of heaven,” while the “sons of the kingdom” will not.⁴² In this manner Jesus is presenting two groups of people with two

⁴² About this point, there are differences between some scholars. For some of them the phrase “many will come from east and west” is describing the return of the Jews from the Diaspora. See, for instance, Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2: 27-29; and Brian Han Gregg, *The Historical Jesus and the Final Judgment Sayings in Q* (WUNT 207; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 229-232. For others, however, the phrase is related

different fates: negative and positive. For the reader, an important point in the interpretation of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is related to that future banquet. The reader understands that being left out of that feast means being in the “outer darkness,” namely, rhetorically outside of the light and joy of it. Furthermore, when Jesus says that the “sons of the kingdom” will be thrown into that darkness, for the reader this means that they are there not by their will, therefore, in this specific context the meaning of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (8:12) would indicate the irritation of the “sons of the kingdom” for having been forced to be out of the banquet. Accordingly, the meaning of the phrase must be contrasted with the fate of those who rhetorically are freely enjoying the eschatological meal in the kingdom of heaven.

Narrative Analysis of Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43: The Parables of the Weeds and its Explanation

Since the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” appears in the explanation of the parable of the weeds in the field (13:36; cf. 13:24-30), it is necessary to analyze both pericopes. However, due to the fact that both are narratively separated they are examined independently. The first to be analyzed is the parable of the weeds. Then, having done that, its explanation is examined, considering the metaphoric connections

to the gentiles, which, however, does not exclude the Jews. See, for example, Bird, “Who Comes From the East and the West?,” 453-457; Dupont, “Beaucoup viendront du levant et du couchant,” 159-160, 162, 166-167; Barbara E. Reid, *The Gospel according to Matthew* (The New Collegeville Bible Commentary; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 51; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 269; Boring, “The Gospel of Matthew,” 226; Ralph P. Martin, “The Pericope of the Healing of the ‘Centurion’s’ Servant/Son (Matt 8:5-13 Par. Luke 7:1-10): Some Exegetical Notes,” in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George E. Ladd* (ed. Robert A. Guelich; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 18; and Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 356-357. The pericope itself does not say anything about the Jews, which does not mean that they are excluded. I have preferred to omit this point, considering that the narrative text only is foreshadowing the inclusion of the gentiles.

made by Jesus.

The parable of the weeds

Narrative context

The pericope starts with the statement that Jesus told them another parable (13:24). This would imply that previously Jesus had pronounced others. For the reader that moment is clearly established when Jesus, after having left the house, went to the sea and got into a boat and told “many things in parables” to the crowd on that same day (cf. 13:1-3, 34; NRSV). From this viewpoint the parable of the weeds is delivered from the sea on a boat while the crowd is listening on the shore (13:1-3, 24-30). Therefore, the boat, the sea and the shore work as explicit spatial settings, which would separate Jesus physically from the crowd.⁴³

For the reader the mention of the “sea” probably would make reference to the lake that is located in the region of Galilee where Jesus has been teaching and preaching (cf. 11:1).⁴⁴ Nevertheless, for the reader, the allusion to the sea would have a more specific meaning within the narrative, i.e., it functions narratively as a separator between Jesus and the Crowd. The fact that the Gospel of Matthew only informs that the people stood on the shore listening to Jesus, while omitting the location of the disciples, may allow the reader to think that the disciples could be with Jesus into the boat.⁴⁵ However, the reader notices that the narrative context is unclear;

⁴³ Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 501.

⁴⁴ This θάλασσα (sea) that appears several times in the narrative (Matt 4:15; 8:24, 26–27, 32; 13:1, 47; 14:25–26; 17:27; 18:6; 21:21; 23:15) would imply in the reader’s mind not only the ocean but also the lake. See L&N, 1: 14.

⁴⁵ For the reader the vessel would have the necessary size for his disciples and for him (13:2, 10), as previously different boats with the capacity to transport more than one person have been mentioned (4:21-22; 8:23; 9:1). The discovery of the “Galilean Boat” in 1986 has given detailed information about the capacity of such a vessel in the first century [See Shelley Wachsmann, “The Galilee Boat: 2000-year-old Hull Recovered Intact,” *BAR* 14, no. 5 (September/October 1988): 32; *Ibid.*, “Ships and

therefore, it is impossible to establish that the disciples were with Jesus in the boat. On the other hand, probably the shore where the crowd is gathered does not imply that the people are standing on the sandy beach but properly on the border or near the water,⁴⁶ which allows the reader to appreciate that though the crowd is not inside the boat with Jesus they at least are close enough to hear him (13:2). Consequently, while the boat and the shore describe two specific spatial settings where Jesus and the crowd are situated, the sea functions as a divider element between them.⁴⁷

Overview

In the parable of the weeds the order of events is presented sequentially.⁴⁸ These, in turn, are divided in two parts: (1) the actions (13:24-26) and (2) the dialogues (13:27-30) (See Figure 4).⁴⁹ In relation to actions, the pericope describes both the sowing of weeds by an enemy (13:24-25), and the growth of both seeds and

Sailing in the NT,” *NIDB* 5: 237-239]. According to this some boats in Jesus’ time could carry at least fifteen people. Moreover, earlier the reader has read about James and his brother John mending their nets in the boat (4:21-22) which at least would have the size to transport three people. Likewise, considering that before Matt 10 narratively Jesus has only called Simon, Andrew, James and John (cf. 4:18-22), he used a boat with four disciples to cross the lake (8:23; cf. 9:1). However, as the story unfolds, the reader will appreciate that the boats have the capacity to carry Jesus and his twelve disciples (cf. 14:22; 15:39). Therefore, clearly the boat in Matt 13:1 may have had Jesus with his twelve disciples on board.

⁴⁶ See L&N, 1:12; Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 400.

⁴⁷ The implied author describes the crowd as numerous (ὄχλοι πολλοί; 13:2-3). Narratively this numeric factor enables the reader to connect these with the “many crowds” that had been following Jesus previously after he had withdrawn from an unknown place where the Pharisees had plotted to kill him (12:14-15; NRSV). This is the same crowd that is astonished when they see Jesus heal a demon-possessed person (12:23) and, probably, is not different from the multitude that was listening to Jesus before he goes to the sea to pronounce his parables (12:46-13:3).

⁴⁸ John Welch has discovered an interesting chiasmus in the parable of the weeds. However, due to the fact that the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is located in the explanation of the parable, I think it is not necessary to include it here. See John W. Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Provo, Utah: Research Press, 1999), 238.

⁴⁹ Cf. Paul Simpson Duke, *The Parables: A Preaching Commentary* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 71; and Donald A. Hagner, “Matthew’s Parables of the Kingdom,” (ed. Richard N. Longenecker; Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2000), 109.

weeds (13:26). In the dialogues, the reader encounters the conversation between the householder and his slaves, which reflects three questions and two answers (13:27-30). The first two queries receive only one response, which is related to the origin of the weeds (13:27-28a). Finally, the third inquiry and the second reply explain how the problem will be solved (13:28b-30).

The kingdom of heaven is like:

I. Actions (13:24-26):

- A. A man sows good seed (13:24)
- B. An enemy sows weeds (13:25)
- C. Both grow together (13:26)

II. Dialogues (13:27-30):

- A. The slaves ask: Who sowed the weeds (13:27)
 - B. The householder replies (13:28a)
- A. ' The slaves ask: How to eliminate the weeds (13:28b)
 - B. ' The householder replies (13:29-30)

Fig. 4. Narrative Structure: Parable of the weeds (13:24-30)

Actions: the master and the enemy (13:24-26)

Jesus starts his parable mentioning the “kingdom of heaven”: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field” (13:24; NRSV). Grammatically this is introduced by the aorist passive of the verb ὁμοιόω (13:24), which functions as comparison between the kingdom and the parable itself.⁵⁰ The past tense of the verb, in its passive construction, allows the reader to understand that the events that happen in the metaphor of the kingdom occur in the present of the

⁵⁰ Therefore, the comparison is not with the man of the parable, but to all that is narrated about the weeds and the wheat. See Kingsbury, *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13*, 67; Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* (Bible in its world; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 295-296.

fictional world of the parable.⁵¹

The first character portrayed by Jesus is the man who sowed his own field (13:24). For the reader this “field” signifies either where the plants grow (6:28, 30) or a “land put under cultivation” (cf. 13:31).⁵² In the parable this is sowed not only by the man but also by the enemy (13:24-25), being the place where the wheat and the weeds grow together (13:24-27). In this sense the field operates as a spatial background in which the events of the parable are situated. The detail that says that the man sowed his own field (13:24) implies that this man is not a simple worker but the owner of the place where the events are going to take place. This is clear, when a little further on the man receives the title of “householder” (NRSV, NAB), who is presented as the owner of the slaves (13:27).⁵³ Hence, for the reader, the man and the householder are the same person. In opposition to the man is the enemy (13:25). In spite of the fact that his characterization is also vague, the implied reader notices that he is the one responsible for the conflict described at the heart of the parable (13: 26-29). This is due to the fact that he is the one who has sows the ζιζάνια (weeds; NRSV) in the man’s field (13:25).

In view of the above, the description of the enemy sowing the weeds is the

⁵¹ Donald A. Carson, “The Homoiōs Word-Group as Introduction to Some Matthean Parables,” *NTS* 31 (1985): 278-279; Kingsbury, *The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13*, 67; and Robert K. McIver, “The Parable of the Weeds Among the Wheat (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43) and the Relationship between the Kingdom and the Church as Portrayed in the Gospel of Matthew,” *JBL* 114 (1995): 658. The aorist of the verb will be used again in Matt 18:23 and 22:2.

⁵² BDAG, 16. The field in the Gospel of Matthew also represents either the place where the people work (cf. 24:18, 40) or a valuable property (cf. 13:44; 19:29; 22:5; 27:7, 8, 10). In the case of the parable these meanings can also be applied to the text, considering that the field is where the slaves are working as well as the property belonging to man/householder that has sowed it (13:24-30).

⁵³ “Householder” (13:27; NRSV; NAB) is the translation of the noun οἰκοδεσπότης, which in the Gospel of Matthew describes one who owns and manages a household (10:25; 13:52; 21:33; 24:43), including workers (20:1) and slaves (13:27). Cf. L&N, 1:558.

kernel of the parable, acting as causation of the plot and the conflict of the story.

Without this action neither the questions of the slaves nor the explanation of the parable would make sense. Therefore, the man is not the one who starts the conflict proper but the enemy when he sows the weeds (13:24-25), which in the reader's mind is not an unrealistic event but, on the contrary, a genuine scene, despite the fact that it occurs in the metaphoric narrative of a parable.⁵⁴

The dialogues: the householder and his slaves (13:27-30)

The parable informs that the servants came to the master with two questions (13:27). The first one was whether he had sown good seed in his field (13:27). The second relates to the origin of the weeds that had appeared along with the good seed (13:26-27). The reader perceives that the slaves' first question begins with the Greek particle οὐχί, which would indicate that they are waiting for a positive answer about the quality of the sowed' seed.⁵⁵ The householder does not answer the first question but he goes directly to the problem, given that his intention is to clarify only who sowed the weeds.⁵⁶ According to the narrative the enemy sowed the weed during the night when everybody was sleeping (13:35) unlike the man that did it presumably in the day (cf. 13:24). This temporal characteristic may imply rhetorically that the

⁵⁴ Kerr has shown that in spite of the fact that in New Testament times there is no evidence of poisonous plants in Palestine, the problem was present in the empire in the same era. From this viewpoint, it is possible to say that for the reader the event registered in Matt 13:25 is not unrealistic, because the problem at least was common in those times. See Alastair James Kerr, "Matthew 13:25: Sowing Zizania Among Another's Wheat: Realistic or Artificial?" *JTS* 48 (1997): 108-109. Cf. Snodgrass who provides evidence that points to a real event. See Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 200-202. Cf. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 224; and Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2: 413.

⁵⁵ BDAG, 742. Cf. Mark L. Bailey, "The Kingdom in the Parables of Matthew 13," *BSac* 155 (1998): 271.

⁵⁶ William G. Doty, "An Interpretation: Parable of the Weeds and Wheat," *Int* 25 (1971): 188.

enemy is trying to pass unnoticed in the hope that the blame for the weeds falls back on the householder (cf. 13:27).⁵⁷ Nonetheless, the householder knows that some enemy has done this (13:28a), which is communicated to his slaves, evidencing that the strategy of the latter has failed.

In the third question the slaves (δοῦλοι) ask the master if they have to go and pull the weeds up (13:28b). These slaves who are characterized twice in the parable, and in each instance asking questions, suggest to the reader that their decisions are under the will of his master, i.e., the householder of the parable (cf. 13: 27, 28). Narratively this detail is quite clear. They address the householder as κύριος, indicating a respectful way to address their master (13:27).⁵⁸ The answer of the householder is negative, because the harvester (θεριστής) will do the separating in the moment of the harvest (13:29-30), which for the implied reader may mean that the task of separating both plants must be carried out by specialists, not by slaves. Therefore, those responsible for the harvest are the reapers, who on the one hand, collect and bind the weeds to be burned (13:30) and, on the other hand, gather the wheat taking it into the barn of the householder (13:30; cf. 3:12; 6:12).

Summary

The plot of the pericope is essentially the description of two groups of plants, one good and one bad, in the metaphoric scenario designating what the kingdom of heaven is like, and the solution employed to solve the problem of their separation.

⁵⁷ This detail sometimes is unnoticed by the interpreters. However, Jeremias underlines the point when he says “the whole of the introductory vv. 24-28a are intended simply to make it clear that the owner is not to blame for the quantity of tares.” See, Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 224-225. Moreover, according to the chiasmus presented by Welch, the centre of it would underline the doubts that the slaves would have about who sowed the weeds. See Welch, *Chiasmus in antiquity*, 238.

⁵⁸ See Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 296. Cf. Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2: 413; and Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 384.

The first group, which is described initially as the good seed, is named as the wheat; whereas the implied author, the slaves and the householder call the second one weeds. In view of the presence of both in the field, the householder explains that to prevent the destruction of the wheat it is necessary to wait until the harvest, that is the moment when the two will be separated by the harvesters.

The explanation of the parable of the weeds (13:36-43)

Narrative context

The explanation of the parable is carried out inside a house (13:36). In this case, contrary to the setting for the parable of 13:24-30 itself, there is no sea between Jesus and his listeners (13:1-3, 36). The identification of the house is not clear for the reader.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the reader figures out that this place, as a spatial setting, has a more important meaning than just identified by its owner. This is because the reader discerns that while the parable of the weeds is told out of the house (13:1, 24) its interpretation is delivered inside of it (13:36). Thus, this acts as a separator between the crowd and the disciples inasmuch as only the latter receives, inside the house, the clear meaning of the parable (cf. 13:1-3, 36).⁶⁰ Moreover, this detail helps the reader notice that the parable itself is uttered publicly, namely, outdoors, while its

⁵⁹ Until now, inside Matthew's story, Jesus has entered at least three houses: Peter's house; the house where he had dinner with tax collectors; and the leader's house (8:12; 9:10, 23; cf. 4:13). Therefore, the house in Matt 13:1 could be any of these or another one (cf. 9:28). Some scholars think that this house is implicitly related to Matt 12:46-50, where the implied author says that Jesus' family is "outside" (See, for instance, Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 523; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 501; and Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 367-368). However, narratively it is not possible to strongly sustain that. This is because the implied author is saying that Jesus is "outside" of the crowd, not necessarily "outside" of a house.

⁶⁰ This separation, nonetheless, occurs a little before when Jesus, surrounded by the crowd, points to his disciples saying that these latter are their real mother and brothers (12:46-50). From this perspective, when the disciples receive the explanation of the parable of the weeds privately (13:36), the implied reader discerns that the difference between the crowd and the disciples, at least in this context, is distinct.

explanation is made privately, that is to say, indoors.

Overview

For the reader the events registered in the explanation of the parable are organized in three parts (See Figure 5). The first establishes the referents for the settings and the characters of the parable (13:37-39). The second one determines the actions and fate of those referents (13:40-43). Finally, the last one includes an admonition made by Jesus that is identical to the one that appears at the end of the parable of the sower (13:9).

I. Referents: Settings and Characters (13:37-39)

- A. Character (13:37):
 - 1. Man (Householder)/Son of Man
- B. Spatial setting (13:38a):
 - 1. Field/World
- A.' Characters (13:38b-39a):
 - 1. Good Seed/Sons of the Kingdom
 - 2. Weeds/Sons of the evil one
 - 3. The enemy/The devil
- B.' Temporal setting (13:39b):
 - 1. Harvest/The end of the world
- A.'' Character (13:39c):
 - 1. Harvesters/Angels

II. Referents: “the end of the age” (13:40-43a)

- A. Gather out the weeds (13:40-42)
 - B. Setting: Fiery Furnace
- A.' The righteous will shine (13:43a)
 - B.' Setting: Kingdom of their Father

III. Admonition (13:43b)

Fig. 5. Narrative Structure: Explanation of the parable of the weeds (13:37-43)

Referents: Settings and Characters (13:37-39)

The man who sows is said to refer to the Son of Man (13:24, 37). Within Jesus' explanation of the parable, the Son of Man sends his angels to collect out the weeds

(13:40-41), just as the householder sends his harvesters to do the same (13:30).

Throughout the Gospel of Matthew the title Son of Man is directly related to Jesus (e.g., 8:20; 11:19; 12:32; 16:13), and is used by Jesus himself to describe his death (e.g., 17:12; 20:18; 26:2), resurrection (12:40; 17:9) and his parousia (10:23; 16:27, 28; 19:28; 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:64).⁶¹ Additionally, the implied reader notices that the Son of Man is described as a Judge, in that he determines who is left outside of the kingdom (13:41; cf. 7:21-23), which will be also repeated in the future of the narration (25:31-46).⁶²

In opposition to the Son of Man in the explanation of the parable is the enemy whom Jesus identifies as the διάβολος (devil; 13:25, 39).⁶³ For the implied reader the presence of the latter is not a surprise, inasmuch as it was the διάβολος who tempted Jesus in the desert (4:1, 5, 8, 11). The reader has also noticed his existence tacitly a little early when in the explication of the parable of the sower Jesus says that it is the “evil one” who “comes and snatches away” the seed sown by the sower (13:19; NRSV). Another designation in the explanation of the parable is the “good seed,” which Jesus symbolizes as the “sons of the kingdom” (13:38; cf. 13:24, 27). The reader knows that despite their being mentioned before in a similar eschatological context, their fate in this metaphoric framework is quite distinct (8:12). Here, unlike in Matt 8:12, the “sons of the kingdom” will shine “like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (13:43; NRSV). However, in this last passage these are not named as

⁶¹ Cf. Jack Dean Kingsbury, “The Title Son of Man in Matthew’s Gospel,” *CBQ* 37 (1975): 193-200.

⁶² Cf. Agustín del Agua, “Eclesiología como discurso narrado: Mt 13,2-52: Teoría y práctica del análisis de discursos narrados en los evangelios,” *EstEcl* 72 (1997): 247.

⁶³ In the Gospel of Matthew the διάβολος is not an impersonal force, but a personal character because he tempts Jesus in person (cf. 4:3, 11), receiving the rejection of Jesus as if it were someone able to be refused (cf. 4:10). Moreover, he can talk to Jesus (cf. 4:3, 5-6, 9), he can take and transport him (4:5, 8) and he is able to know and cite the scripture (4:6). Likewise, Jesus teaches in the sermon on the mountain to pray to be delivered from the temptation of the “evil one” (6:13).

“the sons of the kingdom” but as the δίκαιοι (righteous; 13:43). This is not an impediment for the implied reader to be able to identify them as belonging to the same group because in the Gospel of Matthew the δίκαιοι not only are related to people that have evidenced living in accordance with God’s requirements (e.g., 1:19; 5:45; 13:17; 23:25),⁶⁴ including Jesus himself (cf. 27:19), but essentially due to the fact that in the same chapter 13 of Matthew, in another parable (13:47-50), Jesus says that “at the end of the age” angels will come out and separate the evil from the δίκαιοι (13:49). This meaning becomes even clearer for the implied reader who a little later in the story is informed that the δίκαιοι will receive eternal life (25:37, 46).⁶⁵

In contrast with the “good seed” is the ζιζάνιον (weed; NRSV)⁶⁶, which, in Jesus’ explanation, represents the “sons of the evil one” (13:38; cf. 13:25). For the reader the simple fact that they are depicted as πονηρός (evil) implies that their behavior is characterized by evil actions (cf. 9:4; 12:34–35, 39, 45; 13:19).⁶⁷ This is clear for the implied reader when Jesus affirms that the Son of Man commands the weeding out of his kingdom all those causing σκάνδαλα and those responsible for τὴν ἀνομίαν (13:41). Jesus is not just explaining why the “sons of the evil one” will be thrown into the “fiery furnace” (13:42) but also providing to the reader two

⁶⁴ Cf. BDAG, 246; L&N, 1:743.

⁶⁵ Likewise the fact that Jesus calls the seed as καλός (good) narratively contributes not only as a comparison with the bad seeds, namely, the weeds (13:25, 27) but also generates a sympathetic connection to the reader. This good seed in the parable becomes the wheat, not the weed (13:25, 29), which is the physical evidence that the sowed seed was really καλός. Another narrative detail that also contributes to see this distinction is the fact that in Greek the “good seed” appears always in singular (13:24, 27, 37-38), while the weed is mentioned in plural (13:25-27, 29-30, 36, 38, 40).

⁶⁶ For the implied reader this is one of the several species of weeds that continually causes problems to the farmers. See Victor H. Matthews, “Weeds,” *NIDB* 5:828

⁶⁷ For the reader this feature will be evident when in the course of Matthew’s story, the word πονηρός only describes bad behaviors. See 13:49; 15:19; 16:4; 18:32; 20:15; 22:10; 25:26. Cf. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 559.

specific personal characteristics of them. The plural noun σκάνδαλα is the same word that Jesus uses to describe the action of Peter when a little further in the story he said to Jesus that he must not be killed (16:21-23). In the reader's mind the word involves a "trap or snare laid for an enemy"⁶⁸ that in this context would describe a person who is guilty of making another commit a sin (cf. 18:7).⁶⁹ The second expression is ποιούντας τὴν ἀνομίαν (13:41). For the implied reader the noun ἀνομία appears for the first time when Jesus excluded from the kingdom those who practice it (7:23), which in turn is in contrast to those who do the will of the Father (7:21).⁷⁰ The word itself conveys the idea of either the absence of law or non-observance of it,⁷¹ namely, those who "live as though there were no laws."⁷² From this perspective, the "sons of the evil one" are in opposition to those who will enjoy the kingdom (13:43), considering that the former will be gathered to be burned into the "fiery furnace" (13:30, 40).

Those responsible for the eschatological harvest are the angels (13:39, 41) who in the explanation of the parable refer to the reapers (13:30). Here, as in the parable, the angels are those who weed out from the kingdom the "sons of the evil one" (13:38, 40-42). For the implied reader, however, the presence of angels is not something strange because, as the reader will notice further, these are mentioned in

⁶⁸ LSJ, 1604.

⁶⁹ Cf. NRSV (all causes of sin), NAB (all who cause others to sin), NASB (all stumbling blocks), NET (everything that causes sin), TEV (all those who cause people to sin) and TNIV (everything that causes sin). See Gustav Stählin, "σκάνδαλον," *TDNT* 7:345; L&N, 1:774.

⁷⁰ According to Limbeck only Matthew, among the evangelist (Mark, Luke and John), "speaks of human ἀνομία." See Meinrad Limbeck, "ἀνομία," *EDNT* 1:106.

⁷¹ W. Gutbrod, "ἀνομία," *TDNT* 4:1085.

⁷² In spite of the fact that the word has been translated differently, this has always preserved either a negative meaning or one that is in opposition with the law. See, for instance, NRSV (all evildoers), NAB (all evildoers), NASB (those who commit lawlessness), NET (all lawbreakers), TEV (who do evil things), AMP (who do iniquity and act wickedly), NJB (who do evil) and TNIV (all who do evil), Cf. L&N, 1:757.

the Gospel of Matthew either collecting his elect (24:31) or accompanying the Son of Man in his parousia (16:27; 25:31). Nonetheless, the more important relationship is established with the parable of the net in Matt 13, where the angels will separate the “bad” from the “good,” throwing the wicked into the “fiery furnace,” where also will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (13:49).

Jesus also mentions that the “field” where both seeds were sown (13:24, 27) represents the world (κόσμος; 13:38). Narratively this “world,” as the “field” in the parable, functions as a fictional background where the events happen. For the reader the world, which has been mentioned before three times, semantically means the inhabited world (4:8, 5:14; 13:35),⁷³ permitting the implied reader to realize that the scope of this “world” goes beyond the border of the cities mentioned in the narrative.

The “end of the age” (13:40-43a)

Initially, Jesus deals with the explanation of the characters and the settings of the parable of the weeds, now, however, he focuses on describing the events of the “end of the age” (13:39). So, this last part focuses on the actions of the harvesters, which functions as the kernel of the pericope. Thus, the explanation is a prolepsis (13:39-43), namely, an eschatological time that goes beyond the story of Matthew’s Gospel.

According to the parable, the “sons of the evil one” are thrown into the “fiery furnace” (13:42; cf. 13:38). The Greek phrase that describes the “fiery furnace” is τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός; (13:42), which will appear again in Matt 13:50 repeating the same idea of destruction of the wicked. On both occasions the adverb that follows them is ἐκεῖ, which similar to the case of Matt 8:12 links the “fiery furnace” to the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (13:42, 50) in contrast to the fate of those

⁷³ Cf. H. Sasse, “κόσμος,” *TDNT* 3: 883-895.

who will shine in the kingdom of their Father (13:42-43). Therefore for the implied reader “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is a graphic description of what those who are cast into the “fiery furnace” are experiencing.

On the other hand, however, the reader notices that the righteous will shine in the “kingdom of their Father” (13:43). For the reader the connection between the kingdom and the Father is related either to those who do the will of the latter (7:21) or to those who are blessed by him (25:34), which allows them entrance into the “kingdom of heaven” (7:21; 25:34).⁷⁴ Jesus reiterates this eschatological perspective when he says that he will drink again the fruit of the vine, along with the disciples, in his Father’s kingdom (26:29). Hence, the mention of the “kingdom of their Father” allows the implied reader to contrast the destiny of those who are cast into the “fiery furnace.”

Taking into consideration the above, the reader sees a notorious difference between “the sons of the evil one” and “the sons of the kingdom” (See Figure 6): while the former are burning in the “fiery furnace,” the second shine in the kingdom. However, as in Matt 8:12, there is not an explicit narrative connection to the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” which does not mean that the implied reader does not recognize a rhetorical explanation for this absence.

⁷⁴ The reader can also perceive that the mention of the “kingdom of God” has the same characteristics (present and future) as the “kingdom of Heaven” (6:33; 12:28; 19:24; 21:31, 43). From this viewpoint it is possible that the implied reader understands both “the kingdom of God” and “the kingdom of the father” as the same thing.

Sons of the evil one Matt 13:38, 40-41	Sons of the kingdom Matt 13:38, 42-43
υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ (Sons of the evil one; 13:38)	υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας (Sons of the kingdom; 13:38)
σκάνδαλα καὶ τοὺς ποιοῦντας τὴν ἀνομίαν (all causes of sin and all evildoers; 13:41 [NRSV])	οἱ δίκαιοι (the righteous; 13:43 [NRSV])
πυρὶ [κατα]καίεται (burned up with fire; 13:40 [NRSV]) ⁷⁵	ἐκλάμπουσιν ὡς ὁ ἥλιος (will shine like the sun; 13:42)
τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός (the fiery furnace; 13:41)	ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν (in the kingdom of their Father; 13:42)
ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων (weeping and gnashing of teeth; 13:41)	

Fig. 6. Contrast between the “sons of the evil one” and the “sons of the kingdom” (13:38, 40-42)

To supply the absence of a counterpart of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” this reader has considered some rhetorical features. Initially Jesus says, “just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age” (13:40). In this way, Jesus is comparing the destiny of the weeds of the parable with the fate of the “sons of the evil one” of the explanation (13:40-41). For the implied reader both have the same final destination in that each one of them will be burned (13:30, 40, 42). For the reader the presence of τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός (the fiery furnace) is essentially rhetorical, since κάμινος (furnace) carries in itself the meaning

⁷⁵ There is a textual problem with [κατα]καίεται. Although κατα is absent in some Greek manuscripts, on the other hand it is strongly attested by, for instance, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Due to this NA²⁷ and UBS⁴ have preferred to keep it as a whole word (though in brackets) not only καίεται (cf. 3:12; 13:30). In my case I have preferred to keep it as NA²⁷ and UBS⁴ suggest.

of fire.⁷⁶ The πῦρ (fire), for its part, in the Gospel of Matthew is used to indicate the fate of those who are rejected (3:10, 12; 7:19; 18:8; 25:41) and to describe the γέεννα (5:22; 18:9), which in the story entails a meaning of punishment and judgment (5:29–30; 10:28; 23:15, 33).⁷⁷

This concept of annihilation by fire involves seeing that the weeds are taken by force by the harvesters, who collect and tie them in bundles to be burned (13:30) with the purpose of using them as a fuel for the furnace (cf. 6:30).⁷⁸ For the reader the act of “tying” involves an act against the will of the affected (cf. 12:29; 21:2), considering that in Matthew’s story the word is related to the arrest of John and Jesus (14:3; 27:2) as well as being associated with the action to perform authority (16:19; 18:18). Likewise, in the explication of the parable, the angels weed out “the sons of the evil one” from the kingdom of the Son of Man, throwing them into the “fiery furnace” (13:40–42).⁷⁹

From this viewpoint the implied reader understands that those who are “weeping and gnashing” their teeth are not necessarily suffering pain owing to the fire

⁷⁶ For the reader κῶμινος is used either for baking or melting metals or even for burning bricks [LSJ, 872]. Therefore, the fact that this is described along with the fire, in the reader’s mind stressed its capacity to burn. Some scholars [e.g., Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 561; Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 2:431; Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 394; and Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 433] believe that τὴν κῶμινον τοῦ πυρός is related to the fiery furnace registered in the Book of Daniel (both expressions are identical; cf. Dan 3:6; LXX; Matt 13:42), which probably, in my opinion, would evidence at least that the phrase was common for the implied reader.

⁷⁷ L&N, 1:5.

⁷⁸ Cf. Dean R. Wickes, “Note on Matthew 13:20 and Matt. 6:30 = Luke 12:28,” *JBL* 42 (1923): 251; and Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 225.

⁷⁹ The reader possibly also perceives that in the parable although the harvesters gather the wheat into the householder’s barn (13:30), in the explanation there are no angels taking the “sons of the kingdom” to the kingdom. This does not mean that they will not be gathered by the angels, who are rhetorically implicit (cf. 24:31), but unlike of the “sons of the evil one” they simply appear enjoying themselves inside the kingdom.

but probably expressing their sadness for being destroyed, which is in tacit contrast with the happiness and peace of those who are shining in the kingdom along their Father. In other words, in this context the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” would imply, firstly, that they are experiencing the desolation of not being in the kingdom but in the “fiery furnace,” i.e., the *γέεννα*; and secondly, that they are manifesting their anger for have being thrown by force into the “fiery furnace” to be destroyed.

Summary

The plot of the pericopes is essentially the description of two groups, with opposite characteristics and fates. The first group, characterized by “the sons of the kingdom,” is described as being part of the kingdom of their Father. The second group, portrayed by the “sons of the evil one,” is depicted as being thrown into the “fiery furnace.” From a rhetorical perspective, belonging to the kingdom means joy, whilst being left out of it signifies sadness. That exclusion, however, would imply that those who are in the “fiery furnace” are there against their will. Accordingly, for the reader, those who are “weeping and gnashing” their teeth are the “sons of the evil one,” who are expressing metaphorically their unhappiness and displeasure for what they are experiencing outside the eschatological kingdom.

Narrative Analysis of Matthew 13:47-50: The Parable of the Net

After having analyzed the parable of the weeds and its explanation, in this section I examine the parable of the net. Initially I locate the parable in its own narrative context. Then I give an overview of the pericope. Finally, I analyze the parable narratively.

Narrative context

The reader knows that previously Jesus has uttered more than one parable (cf. 13:45-46), inside the house, where he explains the parable of the weeds to his disciples (13:36). Accordingly, the parable of the net is uttered inside an unknown home on the same day as the explanation of the parable of the weeds, along with many others (cf. 13:1-8, 24-34, 44-46). However, the only two differences between the explanation of the parable of the weeds and the parable of the net are: (1) Jesus is not explaining a parable but telling one, and (2) this is the last parable of the day (cf. 13: 51-53).

Overview

The parable can be divided in two parts (See Figure 7):⁸⁰ (1) the fishing story (13:47-48) and (2) the interpretation of that story (13:49-50). The fact that the second section is the explanation of the first part is quite clear, due to the adverb οὕτως which is the word that connects them (cf. 13:49). For the reader it is the same term that Jesus used, for example, to compare his resurrection with the experience of Jonah in the belly of the sea monster (12:40; cf. 16:21).⁸¹ Consequently for the reader there is not a doubt that the events and the interpretation of the second part are directly related to the fishing story and vice-versa.

⁸⁰ See Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 399, who divides his analysis of the text in the same two parts that I am proposing. Cf. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, 279-280; and Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, 279-280.

⁸¹ In Matthew the adverb can refer to either what follows (e.g., 2:5-6) or what precedes the paragraph (e.g., 5:19). Cf. L&N, 1:611. See also two similar examples in 7:16-17; 12:45, where Jesus uses the adverb οὕτως as a comparison.

- I. The fishing story (13:47-48)
 - a. A net catches different kinds of species (13:47)
 - b. The different kinds of species are separated (13:48)
 - a. First character: The “good”
 - i. Destiny: goes to containers
 - b. Second character: The “bad”
 - i. Destiny: is thrown out
- II. Connection: οὕτως it will be at the end of the age (13:49a)
- III. The interpretation of the story (13:49b-50)
 - a. Unmentioned
 - b. The different kinds of “people” are separated (13:49b-50)
 - a. First character: The “evil” (13:49b)
 - i. Destiny: is thrown into the “fiery furnace” where are “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (13:50)
 - b. Second character: The “righteous” (13:49c)
 - i. Destiny: Unmentioned

Fig. 7. Outline of the parable of the net

The fishing story: the “good” and “bad” (13:47-48)

Jesus starts his parable mentioning that the “kingdom of heaven” is like a net that was thrown into the sea (13:47). For the reader, it is not the first time that the “kingdom of heaven” is mentioned (e.g., 13:11, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45) nor the attempt of Jesus to clarify its meaning through parables (e.g., 13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45). For that reason the implied reader is not amazed when reading that Jesus says that he is going to compare it “again” (πάλιν, 13:47; cf. 13:45). In this case the comparison is made with a fishing scene.⁸²

The action begins when a σαγήνη (net) is let down into the sea (13:47). The mention of a σαγήνη (net) instead of ἀμφίβληστρον (net), as in Matt 4:18, helps the reader understand that what was cast into the sea is specifically a dragnet, namely,

⁸² As in Matt 13:24 Jesus introduced the kingdom of heaven using the phrase ὁμοία ἐστὶν (13:47), which means that he is comparing it not specifically to the net but to the whole fishing scene of the parable. Cf. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 305.

a long seine net, sufficiently huge to catch a large number of distinct species.⁸³ Once the dragnet is full it is dragged to the shore (13:47-48). The word employed by Jesus to portray that the dragnet is replete is πληρόω, which previously had been used by the implied author to describe that Jesus is the prophetic fulfillment of the Old Testament (e.g., 1:22; 2:15, 17, 23; 4:14; 8:17; 12:17; 13:35).⁸⁴ For the reader the use of this word is not incidental but shows that the dragnet had fulfilled its task of fishing (13:47),⁸⁵ allowing the unnamed fishermen to perform their mission of separating the “good” from the “bad” (13:48).⁸⁶ For the reader the latter incident is the kernel of the pericope, inasmuch as Jesus interprets only this last one in his explanation of the parable.⁸⁷

According to the pericope, the net gathered ἐκ παντὸς γένους (“of every kind,” 13:47; ASV) from the sea, which for the reader essentially means that it has captured different kinds of species. Jesus never says in the parable that these species are fish, but this does not mean that, for the reader, these could have not been included.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, that is not the main point of this part of the parable but that

⁸³ Victor H. Matthews, “Fishing,” *NIDB* 2:460. Cf. BDAG, 910.

⁸⁴ Cf. Reinier Schippers, “πληρόω,” *NIDNTT* 1:736-737.

⁸⁵ Probably the reader also remembers that in the parable of the weeds there is a similar idea. The harvesters need to wait until the time of ripening arrives. Similarly in the parable of the net the unnamed fishermen need to wait until the net is full. Cf. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 207.

⁸⁶ For the reader, probably, the word could be connected with the phrase “at the end of the age” in Matt 13:49, which would show that the word πληρόω is describing tacitly an eschatological fulfillment. Cf. Hagner, “Matthew’s Parables of the Kingdom,” 119.

⁸⁷ Cf. Erich H. Kiehl, “Why Jesus Spoke in Parables,” *ConJ* 16 (1990): 250.

⁸⁸ The only English version that I have found that does not mention the word fish in its translation is ASV, which simply says that the net “gathered of every kind” (13:47). I think there is not a problem in affirming that the fish was present in the reader’s mind, considering that is one of the purposes of fishing (cf., e.g., NRSV; TNIV; NJB; TEV; NAB; CEV; and MESSAGE). However, the fact that the Greek text says that the net has gathered ἐκ παντὸς γένους (“of every kind”) probably would be indicating, not only the several species of fish that live in the Sea of Galilee [cf. Victor H. Matthews, “Fish,” *NIDB* 2:459], but also other creatures such as eels

the “good” are separated from the “bad” (13:48). For the reader also those who cast and drag the net are the unnamed fishermen (13:47). Their presence, however, is characterized only by their actions. Like so, when the narrative says that some unrevealed people sat down on the shore to store the “good” and throw away the “bad” (13:48), the reader understands that these anonymous workers are tacitly present in the story.⁸⁹

The sea is the setting where the net is thrown for the purpose of catching ἐκ παντὸς γένους (of every kind; 13:47). For the reader, in spite of it having been mentioned before (4:15, 18; 8:24, 26–27, 32; 13:1), it is the first time that it is functioning as a setting in a parabolic context.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, despite this fact, it evokes in the reader’s mind the scene where Simon and his brother Andrew were called by Jesus, whilst they were casting a net into the sea, to be fishers of people (4:18-19). On the other hand, the “shore” is the site where the net is dragged to put the “good” into containers while the “bad” one is ξω ἔβαλον (cast away; 13:48). The allusion to the shore reminds the reader of the place where the crowd was standing while Jesus told them some parables from a boat (13:1-3). In this last case the multitude, standing on the shore (13:2), is separated from Jesus by the sea, while now it is on the shore where ἐκ παντὸς γένους (of every kind) are separated

and crustaceans [See Seaén Freyne, “Galilee, Sea of (place),” *ABD* 2:900]. After all the net is specifically a dragnet, i.e, a seine-net. Therefore, I have preferred to omit the word fish, considering that the Greek text not specify which one the sea creatures it is referring to. Cf. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 305.

⁸⁹ The construction of the Greek sentence is in the passive tense; therefore, for the reader the presence of the fishermen is tacitly included. Accordingly, in spite of the fact that the word ‘fishermen’ does not appear in the Greek text, it is correct when some English bibles include it in their translations. See TEV (13:47), TNIV (13:48), NIV (13:48), CEV (13:48) and NJB (13:48). Cf. Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 438.

⁹⁰ The sea of Mt 13:1 works as an external setting, that is to say, is located in the real world of the story not in the imaginary one of a parable. Therefore, it is not a parabolic context.

(13:48).

The interpretation of the story (13:49b-50)

In the explanation of the story, which Jesus locates in the end of the age (13:49), there is no fishing scene but only an image that describes the angels separating the *πονηροὺς* from the *δίκαιοι* (13:49). For the reader it is not clear if the unnamed fishermen of the first part of the parable are symbolically related to the angels that separate “the evil from the righteous” in the end of the age (13:49; NRSV). Even so the image evokes in the reader’s mind the parable of the weeds when the angels perform, also “in the end of the age,” the same function of separating the “good” from the “bad” (cf. 13:39-43).

For the reader both the “good” and the “bad” of the first part become metaphorical characters when Jesus says that angels, in the end of the age, will divide the *πονηροὺς* (evil) from the *δικαίων* (righteous; 13:49). The “good” are the first one of these characters (13:38). The plural word that Jesus uses to depict them is *καλός*, which is the same adjective that he utilized to identify the “good seed” in the parable of the weeds (13:24, 27, 37, 38).⁹¹ In Jesus’ explanation, the *καλός* (good) is in parallel to the *δικαίων* (righteous) whom the angels separate from the *πονηροὺς* (evil; 13:49). The word *δικαίων* (righteous) once more is related to those that in the parable of the weeds “will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (13:43; NRSV), allowing the reader to understand that the destiny of the “good” is intimately related to the positive fate of the “sons of the kingdom” of Matt 13:38. Thus it is possible to see a similar division when the unnamed fishermen put the “good” into containers whilst the “bad” are thrown away (13:48).

⁹¹ In the parabolic context of Matt 13 the adjective “good” (*καλός*) always has a positive meaning: “good” soil (13:8, 23), “good” seed (13:24, 27, 37-38) and “good” pearl (13:44).

In relation to the above view, the “bad” represent another metaphoric character set in the parable (13:47-48). The Greek word employed by Jesus to portray them is σαπρὰ (bad), which narratively is in opposition to the adjective “good” (13:48).⁹² The presence of both words reminds the reader that Jesus had previously used them to illustrate the difference between good fruits and bad trees (7:17-18; 12:33). In that moment Jesus utilized them to underline the bad actions of both the false prophets as well as the Pharisees (7:15-23; 12:24-37). In this sense σαπρὰ (bad) would depict a deeply negative human characteristic,⁹³ which in the pericope is represented clearly when σαπρὰ (bad) is put in parallel with πονηροῦς (evil; 13:49-50). Probably the word πονηροῦς (evil) evokes in the reader’s mind the parable of the weeds, where not just the “sons of the evil one (πονηροῦ)” are cast into the “fiery furnace,” as the πονηροῦς (evil) of the parable of the net (13:38, 42, 49-50), but also they are living the same negative experience, namely, “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (13:42, 50).

Nonetheless, unlike in the first part of the parable, where the “good” are put into containers and the “bad” are simply thrown out (13:48), in this part the angels only cast the πονηροῦς (evil) into the “fiery furnace” without reporting the fate of the δίκαιοι (righteous; 13:49). For the implied reader the reasons for these differences could be double. Firstly, many of them could be rhetorically explained. For instance, the physical absence of those who are classifying what was caught by the dragnet in the fishing scene is supplied by the work of angels in the second part (13:48-49). Similarly, while in the first section there is not a place where the “bad” are thrown, in

⁹² The literal translation of the word σαπρός is rotten or putrid [LSJ, 1583]. However, that meaning does not fit here, since the catch would be fresh. For that reason, the term needs to be understood figuratively. I have preferred to call it simply “bad,” which is one of the concepts that probably the implied reader has in mind. Cf. BDAG, 913; L&N, 1:624; and William Mounce, *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 411.

⁹³ The word also would have, in a moral level, a negative concept. Cf. BDAG, 913.

the second part the “bad” are expelled into the “fiery furnace” (13:48, 50). Likewise whilst there is not any destiny where the δίκαιοι of the second section are gathered, in the first part the “good” are put into containers (13:48).

Secondly, these differences could be analyzed taking into consideration the parable of the weeds and its explanation. For the implied reader there are several semantic and thematic connections among them,⁹⁴ many of them presented rhetorically (See Figure 8). Thus, the mention of the angels separating the “good” from the “bad” (13:39, 49) as well as the explicit allusion to the “sons of the evil one” and the “evil” (13:38, 49), provide to the reader explicit examples of this relationship. Hence, from a rhetorical perspective, the reader is able to recognize some implicit relations. For instance, in the first parable the field is the world and the “good seed” are the “sons of the kingdom” (13:38),⁹⁵ whereas rhetorically in the second parable the sea is acting as a representation of the world and the “good” or δίκαιοι as a symbol of the people (13:47-49). In this sense, the fact that these “good” are put into containers means that the δίκαιοι are part of the kingdom of heaven. After all in the first parable the wheat, which comes from the “good seed,” is located into a “barn,” while its parallel, namely, “the son of the kingdom,” will shine in the kingdom of their Father (13:43).

⁹⁴ There is a wide consensus about this connection. See, for example, William G. Morrice, “The Parable of the Dragnet,” *ExpTim* 95 (1984): 282; Hare, *Matthew*, 155-156; Hagner, “Matthew’s Parables of the Kingdom,” 118; Hagner., *Matthew 1–13*, 398; Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 485; and Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 207. However, the parable of the weeds differs from the parable of the net is that in the former the devil’s work is described, namely, the “Jesus’ Kingdom is a ‘mixed bag’ because the enemy is at work.” See P. Archbald, “Interpretation of the Parable of the Dragnet (Matthew 13:47-50),” *VR* 48 (1987): 10.

⁹⁵ Cf. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, 279.

Parable of the weeds and Its explanation 13:24-30; 36-43	Parable of the net 13:47-50
Seed cast down into the earth (rhetorical; 13:24)	Net Cast down into the sea (13:47)
Harvesters (13:30)	Unnamed fishermen (rhetorical; 13:47-48)
Barn (13:30)	Containers (13:48)
Bad (rhetorical) and good (καλός) seed (13:24, 27, 37-38)	Bad (rhetorical) and good (καλός; 13:48)
“Sons of the evil one” (οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ, 13:38)	Evil (πονηροῦς; 13:49)
Righteous (δίκαιος; 13:43)	Righteous (δίκαιος; 13:49)
“So it will be at the end of the age” (οὕτως ἔσται ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος; 13:40; NRSV)	“So it will be at the end of the age” (οὕτως ἔσται ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος; 13:49; NRSV)
Angels (13:39, 41)	Angels (13:49)
They will be Thrown into (βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς; 13:42)	They will be Thrown into (βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς; 13:50)
Fiery Furnace (13:42)	Fiery Furnace (13:50)
“Weeping and gnashing of teeth” (13:42)	“Weeping and gnashing of teeth” (13:50)

Fig. 8. Thematic, Rhetoric and Semantic Parallels between the Parable of the Weeds and the Parable of the net

From this standpoint, the reader understands that to analyze the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” in this parable, it is necessary to make some connections to the parable of the weeds, where the expression is also mentioned (13:42, 50). Initially the reader is amazed to notice that not only the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is mentioned verbatim but also the verb βάλλω is used in both

as is the phrase τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός.⁹⁶ Accordingly, “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” in the parable of the weeds, is associated primarily with the negative experience of not being in the kingdom (containers) but in the “fiery furnace.” In addition, due to the πονηροὺς being thrown into τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός (fiery furnace; 13:42, 50; cf. 13: 48), the expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” as is repeated in the first parable, would be showing the displeasure for having been cast by force into the “fiery furnace” to be destroyed.

Summary

The plot of the pericope lays out two distinct fates for two groups of characters at the end of the age. One group, portrayed as the “good” and the δίκαιοι, will enjoy rhetorically the same destiny as the “sons of the kingdom” of the parable of the weeds. The second one, however, characterized by the “bad” and the “evil one,” will be thrown into the “fiery furnace” to be destroyed. These are the ones who are “weeping and gnashing” their teeth. The reader notices that both the parable of the weeds and the parable of the net are in essence similar. From this perspective, therefore, the meaning of the phrase is related to the first parable, namely, that those who are “weeping and gnashing” their teeth are expressing their eschatological sorrow and anger because they are living outside of the kingdom of heaven.

⁹⁶ Cf. Matt 13:42: καὶ βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων; Matt 13:50: καὶ βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων.

CHAPTER 3

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PHRASE “WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH” (PART 2: JUDEA)

In this chapter I examine the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” in each of its additional narrative frameworks which geographically occur in the region of Judea, where Jesus was teaching (19:1; 21:1-11). To carry this out, I explore again, separately, every passage where the phrase is placed, using the narrative devices listed in chapter 1, paying special attention to the fact that the phrase appears exclusively in a parabolic context.

Narrative Analysis of Matthew 22:1-14: The Parable of the Wedding Feast

Narrative context

As Matt 22:1-14 opens, the implied author alerts readers to Jesus being in Jerusalem, a city located in the region of Judea (cf. 2:1, 22),¹ when he pronounces the parable of the wedding feast (21:23; cf. 21:10-12). For the reader this is the last time that the name of the city will appear in Matthew’s story.² According to the account,

¹ From a narrative perspective it is possible to say that Jerusalem was located in Judea by paying attention to the fact that Jerusalem was the place where the μάγοι (magi; TNIV) came in search of the “King of the Jews” (2:1). The narrative says that king Herod was disturbed and all Jerusalem with him (2:3). Thus, the implied reader notices that Jerusalem was the city where Herod reigned. Then, the reader is informed that one of Herod’s son, Archelaus, was reigning in Judea in place of his father, after Herod’s dead (2:22). Hence, for the reader Jerusalem was located in Judea, which, from a historical point of view, is correct also. See Philip J. King, “Jerusalem (Place),” *ABD* 3:751.

² The implied reader also perceives that the first time in which Jerusalem appears in Matthew’s story is when Jesus was born (2:3). In that moment Jerusalem was “frightened” (ἐταράχθη) because some μάγοι (magi; TNIV) had come to Jerusalem asking for the “King of the Jews” (2:1-3). Now, likewise, the city is in “turmoil” (ἐσεισθη; NRSV) because of the crowds receiving Jesus as the “Son of David” (21:9-11).

Jesus had entered Jerusalem the day before (21:10, 17), being received by the multitude as the son of David (21:7-11). After driving out all those who were selling and buying in the temple, he went to Bethany and spent the night there (21:12-17). The next day, Jesus returns to Jerusalem again (21:18) and enters the temple (21:23), which is where the parable of the wedding feast along with other parables was told (cf. 21:23, 28, 33; 22:1-14). Therefore, whereas Jerusalem is the general location where the parable is going to be told, it is specifically in the temple where it is uttered.³

The narrative says that Jesus had been teaching in the temple when suddenly the chief priests and the elders question him about his authority (21:23).⁴ The implied reader perceives that Jesus' message is not being well received by the Jewish authorities (cf. 21:14-15). This is because since Jesus entered Jerusalem until the parable of the wedding feast he has been the subject of a persistent opposition from different Jewish leaders: the chief priests (21:15, 23, 45), the scribes (21:15), the elders of the people (21:23) and the Pharisees (21:45). The implied reader notices that the implied author is characterizing them mainly as a character group,⁵ i.e., as the enemies of Christ, whose sole purpose is to destroy him (cf. 12:14; 16:21; 20:18;

³ Cf. Elaine Mary Wainwright, "God Wills to Invite All to the Banquet. Matthew 22:1-10," *IRM* 77 (1988): 186.

⁴ After these three parables, Jesus is questioned three times by the religious leaders (22:15-40): (1) the disciples of the Pharisees and the Herodians (22:15-16), (2) the Sadducees (22:23) and (3) the Pharisees and experts in the law (22:34-35). The implied reader notices that the purpose of their inquiries was not sincere, because the narrator informs the reader that their plans were to trap Jesus in his words (22:15).

⁵ See Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew*, 1-6; and Jack Dean Kingsbury, "The Developing Conflict between Jesus and the Jewish Leaders in Matthew's Gospel: A Literary-Critical Study," *CBQ* 49 (1987): 58. In my opinion Olmstead is correct when he declares that "in the wider Gospel story, the Jewish leaders appear as blind guides and oppressive shepherds, as the mortal enemies of Jesus..." See Olmstead, *Matthew's Trilogy of Parables*, 65-67.

26:4; 27:1).⁶ In reply Jesus delivers them three parables (21:28-22:14), which work as a narrative unity.⁷ The last one of these is the parable of the wedding feast (22:1-14), which opens with the statement that Jesus ἀποκριθεὶς (answered) to “them” πάλιν (again) in parables (22:1). For the implied reader this would mean, firstly, that Jesus is using the parable as a new response to the question regarding his authority (21:23);⁸ and, secondly, it would suggest that Jesus is addressing the parable to the Jewish leaders.⁹ Nevertheless, the implied reader also perceives that they are not the only ones who are listening to the message of the parable: the crowd (ὄχλος) also had been listening to Jesus before being interrupted by the leaders (21:23, 45-46; cf. 22:33).¹⁰ This crowd (ὄχλος) may represent the same group of people who had

⁶ The purpose of destroying Jesus is preannounced by Jesus when he says that he has to go to Jerusalem to suffer both at hands of them as well as the elders of the people (16:21; cf. 20:18; 26:3-5, 14, 65-66; 27:20).

⁷ This point has been argued, for instance, by Olmstead, *Matthew's Trilogy of Parables*, 98-130; Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 2: 369-370; Jan Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure: The Parables in the Gospel of Matthew* (LTPM 10; Louvain: Peeters Press, 1992), 136-137; Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1976), 401-402; and David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Oliphants, 1972), 297.

⁸ Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 673; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 885.

⁹ David Sim, “The Man Without the Wedding Garment (Matthew 22:11-13),” *HeyJ* 31 (1990): 168-176. See also Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, 432; and Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3:197.

¹⁰ Although the implied author does not say directly that the crowds are listening to Jesus' words, the reader may recognize their presence tacitly. This is due to the fact that previously on two occasions the Jewish leaders have said that they are afraid of the “crowd” (ὄχλος; 21:26; 21:46). In the first reference Jesus is teaching in the temple when suddenly the Jewish authorities interrupt him with a question about his authority (21:23). The answer of Jesus, however, was conditional on the response they gave about the origin of the baptism of John, which implied recognition of its “human origin” (21:24-27; TNIV). Nevertheless, because of the crowd they preferred not to reply to him (21:26). For the reader the fact that they did not want to respond to Jesus is because the multitude was hearing them. In the second reference, the motif is similar (21:45-46). Here the chief priest and the Pharisees have taken the decision to arrest Jesus, but because of the crowds, that for the implied reader implicitly are present, they do not do it (21:46).

welcomed him when he entered to Jerusalem (21:8-11), which narratively would be in contrast to the religious leaders.¹¹

Overview

For the implied reader the events of the parable can be divided into two invitations that are structured along three similar narrative-lines (See Figure 9): (1) a beginning, (2) a middle and (3) an ending.¹² For the first invitation (22:2-7), the first line (22:2-3) consists in a commissioning of slaves who are sent by a king to invite guests to his son's wedding (beginning). In the second line (22:4-6) those people reject the invitation and kill the slaves (middle). Finally, in the last line (22:7) the king punishes the rude guests, killing those who had murdered his slaves (the end). Likewise, in the second invitation (22:8-13), the first narrative-line (22:8-9a) describes another invitation, made by the slaves, addressed to "uninvited people" to attend the king's son's wedding (beginning). In the second narrative segment (22:9b) the reader notices that they accept the invitation, allowing the feast to begin (middle). Finally, in the last narrative-line (22:10-13), one of the guests is expelled from the banquet because he was not wearing a wedding garment (the end).

¹¹ Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus*, 76. Cf. Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3:187; and Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 881.

¹² See A. G. Van Aarde, "Plot as Mediated Through Point of View. Mt 22:1-14 - a Case Study," in *South African Perspective on the New Testament: Essays by South African New Testament Scholars Presented to Bruce Manning Metzger during his Visit to South Africa in 1985* (eds. J. H. Petzer and Patrick J. Hartin; Leiden: Brill, 1986), 66-67.

(1) The first invitation (22:2-7)

(1) Beginning	A king sends his slaves to request the invited persons in the city to be present at his son's wedding feast, because it is ready (22:2-3)
(2) Middle	They turn down the invitation and some grab the slaves, insult them and kill them (22:4-6)
(3) The end	The king punishes the murders by ordering his soldiers to kill them a burn down their city, for they are not suitable to take part in the wedding-banquet (22:7)

(2) The second invitation (22:8-13)

(1) Beginning	The king sends his slaves to request "uninvited people" to be present at his son's wedding feast, because it is ready (22:8-9a)
(2) Middle	They accept the invitation and the wedding feast begins (becomes realized) (22:9b)
(3) The end	The king inspects the participants, finds one among them who is not wearing a wedding garment and commands his servants to shut him out from the banquet (22:10-13)

Fig. 9. Narrative Outline of Matt 22:1-14: (1) Beginning, (2) Middle and (3) End.¹³

The first invitation: people say "no" (22:2-7)

Jesus begins alluding to the "kingdom of heaven," which is introduced, as in the parable of the weeds (13:24; cf. 18:23) by the aorist passive of the verb ὁμοιῶ (22:2). The verb, firstly, helps the reader to understand that the kingdom must be compared with the whole scene presented in the parable, not only with the king who gave the feast.¹⁴ Moreover, secondly, it helps the reader to notice that the parable is set in the present.¹⁵ This last, however, does not mean that the events of it do not have an eschatological sense as well. The presence of the "outer darkness" (22:13), as in Matt 8:12, and the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (8:12; cf. 13:42, 50; 22:13) probably evokes in the reader's mind an eschatological concept that goes

¹³ Ibid., 67.

¹⁴ See Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 343.

¹⁵ Cf. Carson, "The Homoiōs Word-Group as Introduction to Some Matthean Parables," 279.

beyond the time of the parable as well as reminds readers of the paradoxical sense of the “kingdom of heaven.”

The reader notices that the king sends his servants twice to call again those who had been invited previously (22:2-7). Initially the invitation only reminds them about the marriage (22:3). Then, as a result of their rejection, the king informs them that the ἄριστον (meal)¹⁶ is ready, depicting even the menu: several bulls (οἱ ταῦροι) and cattle that have been fattened (τὰ σιτιστὰ; 22:4).¹⁷ To underline the fact the banquet is ready, the implied author uses the perfect tense of the verb ἐτοιμάζω, which would indicate that the food “is even now on the table.”¹⁸ Nevertheless, the reader perceives that the answer in each one of these cases is not only negative, but also exempt of excuses or apologies (22:3, 5).¹⁹ In the first response the implied author says that οὐκ ἤθελον ἐλθεῖν (they would not come; 22:3, NRSV). The presence of the noun θέλω reminds the reader of the answer of the first son in the parable of the two sons (21:28-32),²⁰ which literally means that

¹⁶ The fact that the king uses the word ἄριστον to describe the meal, for the reader would signify that the intention of the king was held it early in the day, probably at noon. Cf. BDAG, 131; A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (6 vols.; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930), 1:174. However, from a standpoint of the narrative, as Gundry said, due to the circumstances the food was delayed until evening, as is evident in the subsequent mention of darkness (22:13). See Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, 434. Cf. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 521. Therefore, probably the reader understands the meal as a “dinner” instead of a “lunch.”

¹⁷ BDAG, 925.

¹⁸ J. Lyle Story, “All is Now Ready: An Exegesis of ‘the Great Banquet’ (Luke 14:15-24) and ‘the Marriage Feast’ (Matthew 22:1-14),” *American Theological Inquiry* 2 (2009): 69.

¹⁹ The response of the guests is not focused “on the reason” for refusal, but “on the act” of refusal. Therefore, the narrative description “dissolve into mere statements of indifference to the summons.” Cf. Paul H. Ballard, “Reasons for Refusing the Great Supper,” *JTS* 23 (1972): 349. In this context, the reader is able to perceive that the group of slaves returned to the king without “any explanation” in their report. Cf. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 344.

²⁰ Cf. Wainwright, “God Wills to Invite All to the Banquet. Matthew 22:1-10,” 188.

they did not wish to come.²¹ Moreover, the fact that in the second description, they are said to have “ignored the invitation” (ἀμελήσαντες; 22:5, NAB),²² permits the reader to understand that they are acting badly. This last point is made evident when some of these rude guests seize and kill the king’s servants (22:6), causing their own destruction at the hands of the royal army (22:7).

The first character that appears in the parable is the king who gave the feast for his son (22:2, 7, 11, 13). For the reader he is characterized as a father that wants to share his happiness on the occasion of his son’s wedding (22:3). His presence is very important, due to the fact that he is the only personage that is present throughout the development of the parable.²³ Twice he sends a reminder call to those who had been invited to the wedding that it was ready, and twice he received the same negative answer (22:3-7). The fact that he is only reminding them that everything is prepared (22:3-4), prevents the reader from thinking that the king is simply improvising. Rather it indicates that the guests had made, previously, a provisional acceptance. In the first invitation they simply refuse to participate in the feast (22:3). In the second one, however, while some of them simply do not pay attention to the summons, the rest of the invitees kill the king’s servants (22:4-6). Therefore, according to the narrative those who rejected the king’s invitation could be separated into two groups. The first are portrayed as an indifferent people, who passively ignore the invitation and then go away to their own business (22:5). The second one, on the other hand, is

²¹ The phrase would indicate a “strong refusal on the part of the invited guests.” See Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 674. In this sense a better translation could be “they refused to come.” Cf. NAB and TNIV.

²² L&N, 1:355; Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 1:174.

²³ I agree with Via when he says that the king is “the only figure who gives the parable continuity, undergoes no change of existence. Throughout the story he is the director of things, with undiminished power to dispose of others, whose existence is not questioned.” See Dan Otto Via, “Relationship of Form to Content in the Parables: The Wedding Feast,” *Int* 25 (1971): 181.

characterized as a violent group, who are able even to kill instead of accepting the wedding's invitation (22:6). It is to this last group that the king sends his troops to destroy them (22:7).

Second invitation: people say "yes" (22:8-14)

Due to the fact that both of the initial sets of guests are not worthy (ἄξιος)²⁴ as well as the fact that the wedding is ready, the king sends his servants to look for new participants (22:8). The fact that the parable as a whole is connected with the king's invitation to the wedding feast of his son, allows the reader to recognize the marriage summons as the kernel of the parable. The king gives an order to go to τὰς διεξόδους τῶν ὁδῶν (the main crossroads; NJB) with the purpose of inviting everyone to the marriage (22:9). For the reader the meaning of the noun διέξοδος suggests either a "street crossing" or "the place where a main street cuts (through) the city boundary and goes (out) into the open country."²⁵ From this perspective, the provenance of those who were collected to participate in the wedding banquet is neither related to a specific πόλις (22:7),²⁶ nor associated with a particular social class (22:5), "but the inclusiveness of all ethical types," i.e., "the bad and the good."²⁷

²⁴ The fact that they are "unworthy" in the Gospel of Matthew implies essentially that that they "have not born the fruit of repentance (3:8 [7:15-21; 12:33-37; 21:43]);" they have not received properly the emissaries of Christ (10:11, 13) and they have others interests (10:37). Cf. Wainwright, "God Wills to Invite All to the Banquet. Matthew 22:1-10," 191.

²⁵ BDAG, 244. Cf. L&N, 1:18; which says that the word possibly means "a street crossing, but more probably the place where a principal thoroughfare crosses a city boundary and extends into the open country."

²⁶ Although at the beginning of the pericope it could seem implicit, the mention of the πόλις (city) that was destroyed by the king's troops (22:7), helps the reader to recognize a specific metaphoric location. This πόλις, however, according to the parable belongs solely to those who murdered the king's servants (22:6-7). The origin of those who simply did not pay attention to the second call is not mentioned (22:5). Nevertheless, for the reader, the unmentioned provenance of those who reject the calls of the kings' servants functions as a counterpart of those who were gathered from τὰς διεξόδους τῶν ὁδῶν (the main crossroads; 22:9; NJB). After all, although the

The narrative says that the king’s servants gathered, from the streets, “all they found” (πάντας οὓς εἶρον; 22:10). This includes both “bad” (πονηρούς) and “good” (ἀγαθούς; 22:10).²⁸ The mention of the word πονηρούς (bad) would evoke in the reader’s mind both the “sons of the evil one (πονηροῦ)” of the parable of the weeds (13:38) as well as the “bad” (πονηρούς) of the parable of the net (13:49). In this parable, as in those cases, the meaning of the word continues being negative (cf. 15:19; 16:4; 18:32; 20:15), which can be contrasted with those who are called “good” (ἀγαθούς; 22:10). For the reader, however, this is not the first time that both words appear in opposition to each other (5:45; 7:11, 17, 18; 12:34, 35). In every one of these cases when ἀγαθούς is contrasted with πονηρούς (“bad”), they would contrast the moral differences that exist between the “good” and those who either are named “bad” or are described as having “bad” (πονηρούς) fruit (5:45; 7:11, 17, 18; 12:34, 35).²⁹

place where guests live is not specifically mentioned, the reader recognizes that these guests narratively live in a specific location, considering that slaves were able to announce to them the invitation to the wedding.

²⁷ Although it is possible to interpret this global gathering as a metaphoric inclusion of the Gentiles to remind the reader of those who come from east and west in Matt 8:11, I have preferred to follow Warren Carter who suggests that “the parable emphasizes not nationality or gender or primarily socio-economic level but the inclusiveness of all ethical types, ‘the bad and the good.’” Accordingly, the extent of the parable is not only ethnicity, but also morality. See Warren Carter, “The Parables in Matthew 21:28-22:14,” in *Matthew’s Parables* (CBQMS 30; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1998), 175. However, many think that the metaphor would involve a figurative inclusion of the gentiles. See, for instance, Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 215; Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 521-522; and William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew* (2 vols.; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 2:310-311.

²⁸ “Bad and Good.” This is the sequence in Greek (πονηρούς τε καὶ ἀγαθούς; cf. NJB; NAB; TNIV; NASB; ESV. Cf. NIV; NRSV and TEV, which invert the order in the text) It would seem that the implied author wants to put emphasis on the first one, namely, the bad that were chosen.

²⁹ Cf. Erick Beyreuther, “ἀγαθός,” *NIDNTT* 2:100.

The narrative says that the wedding guests, “bad” (πονηρούς) and “good” (ἀγαθούς), “sit at the marriage table” (ὁ γάμος ἀνακειμένων; 22:10).³⁰ The meaning of verb ἀνάκειμαι entails, for the implied reader, the act of reclining to have a meal (cf. 26:7, 20),³¹ which at least conceptually would evoke in the reader’s mind the moment when those who come from east and west will recline (ἀνακλιθήσονται) in the messianic banquet along with Abraham in the “kingdom of heaven” (8:11). Suddenly the reader notices that the king asks one of these new guests why he is not wearing wedding clothes (22:11-12).³² The reader observes that the question made by the king not only has to do with what the man is not wearing, but also he wants to know how this man could have entered the wedding not dressed properly (22:12). In other words, for the reader, according to the narrative, wearing

³⁰ According to the Greek text of NA²⁷ the word that accompanies the verb ἀνάκειμαι (recline at table) is the noun γάμος, which means “marriage” (cf. UBS⁴). Therefore the phrase could be translated as either “wedding banquet” or “wedding table” (22:10). However, the Greek text of NA²⁵ presents another variant. Instead of γάμος appears νυμφών, which could be translated as either “wedding hall,” “bridal chamber” or “that group of the wedding guests who stood closest to the groom and played an essential part in the wedding ceremony” [see BDAG, 681]. This last noun (νυμφών) appears in important Alexandrian witnesses, such as Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Nonetheless, probably the reading of νυμφών as “the wedding hall” is an Alexandrian correction introduced in the place of γάμος, “which may have seemed to be somewhat inappropriate with the verb “filled” (πίμπλημι; “the wedding hall was filled with guests”; NRSV). See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 47; Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, 439. Several English versions prefer to translate the text either as the “wedding hall” or simply as “hall.” See, for instance, NRSV, NAB, TNIV, NJB, RSV, TEV and ESV. I have preferred to maintain the meaning provided by NA²⁷, which does not prevent the phrase (ὁ γάμος ἀνακειμένων) conveying the idea of a place where everyone is gathered to celebrate. This is possible, when in particular, one pays attention to the fact that the implied author says that the wedding “was full” (πίμπλημι) of guests.

³¹ See F. Buüchsel, “ἀνάκειμαι,” *TDNT* 3:654

³² Some interpreters argue that the supplier of the wedding clothes was the king [e.g., W. Dawson Selwyn, “The Gate Crasher,” *ExpTim* 85 (1974): 305], which would explain the anger of the king to see that the man was not dressed appropriately. However, narratively the text does not provide such information.

wedding clothes is an important element for guests at a marriage.³³ This concept is underlined when the man, who was speechless, is subsequently tied hand and foot and thrown into the “outer darkness” (22:13). Thus, by contrast, the reader rhetorically understands that the other guests are dressed appropriately for the occasion, including those who are described, by the implied author, as “bad” (πονηρός; 22:10).³⁴ Maybe from that standpoint the reader understands the phrase “for many are called but few are chosen” (22:14). That is to say, those “many” are those who are wearing the wedding clothes, while those “few” are those who are not wearing it.³⁵

The reader perceives that when the king talks with the man without wedding garments he calls him ἑταῖρος (friend; 22:12). For the reader the word ἑταῖρος had previously appeared in the parable of the workers in the vineyard (20:13). Likewise, it is the same word that Jesus will use in the scene when he greets Judas after he has betrayed him (26:50). For the reader the word could involve either a polite form of

³³ Although the specific meaning of the wedding clothes is not the focus of this study, the fact that the man was thrown into the “outer darkness” because of the lack of it, would imply that for the reader its meaning must be important. Some interpreters think that the wedding garments would mean metaphorically, for instance, the spirit of humility, penitence and faith [W. B. Selbie, “The Parable of the Marriage Feast (Matt. xxii. 1-14),” *ExpTim* 37 (1926): 268-269]; gladness and rejoicing [J. Duncan M. Derrett, “The Parable of the Great Supper,” in *Law in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), 142]; the moral perfection [Benedetto Prete, *Vangelo secondo Matteo* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1957), 206]; participation in the joy of the feast [Richard Bauckham, “The Parable of the Royal Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14) and the Parable of the Lame Man and the Blind Man (Apocryphon of Ezekiel),” *JBL* 115 (1996): 486]; and repentance [Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 522].

³⁴ Grammatically the noun πονηρός is in the plural, which would mean that there was more than “one” bad in the banquet. For the implied reader, this may indicate that the man was not expelled for being “one” of these “bad” (πονηρός), but because, as the parable says, he was not wearing the wedding garments.

³⁵ This is a contentious issue in Matthean studies. For that reason I have preferred to omit a large discussion of it. For discussions about the text, see, for instance, Herbert Musurillo, “‘Many Are Called, But Few Are Chosen’: Matthew 22:14,” *TS* 7 (1946): 583-589; Ben F. Meyer, “Many (=All) Are Called, But Few (=Not All) Are Chosen,” *NTS* 36 (1990): 89-97; Olmstead, *Matthew's Trilogy of Parables*, 127-128; and Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3:206-207.

address³⁶ or, probably in this context, a gesture of reprimand and of distance.³⁷ The reader, however, notices that the man is ἐφιμώθη (speechless; 22:12), a verb that the implied author will use later to say that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees (22:34). Accordingly, the detail that the man was speechless would signify that he does not have any argument to respond to the king's question about his presence in the wedding.³⁸ Therefore, due to the fact that his dress is not appropriate, and also he cannot justify his presence there, the king orders to tie him hand and foot with the purpose of being thrown into the "outer darkness," where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (22:13). Those who throw the man into the "outer darkness" are called διακόνους (servants; 22:13), which narratively must be differentiated from the slaves (δοῦλοι) and from the troops (στρατεύματα) of the pericope. The slaves are responsible in the parable for the invitation to the wedding (22:3-4). On the other hand, the διακόνους are probably those who are in charge of the wedding itself, namely, in charge of serving tables.³⁹

Taking into consideration the above, the reader notices that the king, on the one hand, is acting as judge, because he has the authority to decide who is in or out of

³⁶ Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 679.

³⁷ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1009, n. 4. According to Hultgren "friend" is used here in the sense of insolence. See Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 348. Cf. Karl Heinrich Rengstorff, "ἐταῖρος," *TDNT* 2:700-701.

³⁸ Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3: 205.

³⁹ H. W. Beyer, "διακονέω," *TDNT* 2:84. It is possibly that the reader is reminded that in the parable of the weeds there are also two groups of "employees" (13:27, 28, 30): (1) the slaves (δοῦλοι) and (2) the harvesters (θερισταῖς). The reader also may notice that in the explanation of the parable of weeds the harvesters are the symbol of the angels (13:39), who weed out of the kingdom the "sons of the evil one," throwing them into the "fiery furnace" (13:40-42). Likewise, in the parable of the wedding feast they are not the slaves (δοῦλοι) who throw the man into the "outer darkness," but the διακόνους (servants; 22:13).

the banquet;⁴⁰ while, on the other hand, the analysis of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” would have to be focused in relation to the events that surrounds the expulsion of this man into the “outer darkness.”⁴¹ The reader adverts that the “outer darkness” (τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον; 22:13) was mentioned before in Matt 8:12, which as here, is followed by the adverb ἐκεῖ, which connects the “outer darkness” to the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (cf. 8:12; 22:13). For the reader, the adverb would divide the “outer darkness” where the man without a wedding garment will be thrown from the “marriage table” (ὁ γάμος ἀνακειμένων; 22:10) where those who were taken from the “main crossroads” are. From this perspective, the “outer darkness” works narratively as an image of rejection and castigation.

Accordingly, the reader considers that the meaning of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” must be analyzed in contrast to those who are tacitly enjoying the banquet. In doing so, the reader is reminded of Jesus’ eschatological words in the centurion’s story of Matt 8:5-13, where the “sons of the kingdom” are thrown into the “outer darkness” while those who are coming from east and west are rhetorically enjoying the meal (8:11-12) (See Figure 10).

⁴⁰ According to Lambrecht the διακόνους (servants) who threw out the man without wedding garments into the “outer darkness” are “executioners of the judgment.” See Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure*, 134. Also, for the reader, probably, the judgment’s motif has been previously established when the king sends his troops to destroy those who had killed his servants. Cf. Wainwright, “God Wills to Invite All to the Banquet. Matthew 22:1-10,” 191.

⁴¹ It is not easy to establish what the implied reader set out to feel about this man. Theoretically, on the one hand, this reader could feel sad for him. This is due to the fact that he is expelled from the party. On the other hand, the implied reader may feel a slight rejection. This is because he is the only one not dressed adequately for the feast.

Matt 8:11-12	Matt 22:10-13
Many will come from east and west (8:11)	People from the streets: Good and Bad (22:9-10)
ἀνακλιθήσονται (recline to eat; 8:11)	ἀνακειμένων (recline at table to eat; 22:10)
“Sons of the kingdom” (8:12)	A man without wedding garments (22:11-12)
They will Throw (ἐκβληθήσονται; 8:12)	Throw [him] (ἐκβάλετε; 22:13)
“Outer Darkness” (τὸ σκότος τὸ ἑξώτερον; 8:12)	“Outer Darkness” (τὸ σκότος τὸ ἑξώτερον; 22:13)
“Weeping and gnashing of teeth” (ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων; 8:12)	“Weeping and gnashing of teeth” (ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων; 22:13)

Fig. 10. Narrative connections between Matt 8:11-12 and Matt 22:10-13.

In both cases there is reference to a meal, while in each one of them the antagonists of the story are ἐκβάλλω (thrown) outside of it (8:11-12; 22:10-13). Nevertheless, the reader recognizes that between them there is at least one particular difference. Although it is true that both scenes describe metaphorically that the guests of the banquet are numerous (8:11; 22:10), Matt 8:12, describes tacitly those who are thrown into darkness as “many” (“sons of the kingdom”). The parable of the wedding banquet affirms that only one person (the man without a wedding garment) met the described fate (22:11-13). Thus, in this specific case the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is related to only one character, which, however, does not prevent the reader from recognizing similar elements within Jesus’ eschatological words in the centurion’s story.

In Matt 22:8-10, people freely accept the summons of the king. However, in 22:11-13, the man, because he is not properly clothed, is thrown out against his will, which is underlined when the king orders his *δουκόνους* (servants) to tie him hand and foot (22:13). The detail that the man is bound reminds the reader of the parable of the weeds (13:24-30), due to the fact that in that parable the weeds were not only tied in bundles (13:30), but also symbolized the “sons of the evil one” (13:38) who are thrown into the “fiery furnace” (13:40-42). Thus, for the reader, the man is expelled into the “outer darkness” by force, which, as in Matt 8:12,⁴² would imply that the man is “gnashing” his teeth because of the anger that he is feeling for having been thrown, against his will, from the wedding banquet.⁴³ Furthermore, the fact that the man is thrown out when the banquet had already started, allows the reader to see that the man is being publicly humiliated, which involves noticing that he is not just “gnashing” his teeth because of the situation, but also “weeping” for having been exposed to public opprobrium.

The second element, also considered rhetorically in Matt 8:11-12,⁴⁴ is the opposition that exists between the darkness and the light that tacitly is surrounding the wedding feast (22:10-13). From this perspective, the reader would be likely to contrast the joy of the marriage guests, as well as to compare the light of the banquet with the darkness of those who are outside. Hence, the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” comprehended rhetorically, would represent the emotional expression of unhappiness for being outside the joy of the wedding meal. A similar concept is also

⁴² In Matt 8:11-12 the contrast is between those who come freely from east and west and those who are thrown (the sons of the kingdom), against their will, into the “outer darkness.”

⁴³ Probably, for the reader, the anger of the man is also related to the fact that he cannot move. This is because he is tied hand and foot (22:13)

⁴⁴ In Matt 8:11-12 while the “sons of the kingdom” are into the “outer darkness,” those who came from east and west are enjoying the banquet in the kingdom of heaven.

present in the explanation of the parable of the weeds, when Jesus affirms that those who will be in the Father's kingdom will shine as the sun (13:43). There, as here, that tacit light is contrasting the sadness of those who are "weeping and gnashing" their teeth (13:42).

Summary

The plot of this pericope is essentially the responses of two groups of people to the invitation of a king to his son's wedding. The first group rejects the invitation twice, without giving any explanations (22:2-9). The attitude of the second group, however, is quite different; given that they accept immediately the king's invitation (22:8-10). So, due to the positive response of this second group, the wedding feast begins (22:10-11). Nevertheless, this is interrupted when the king expels a man who was not dressed appropriately for the occasion (22:11-13). For the reader this is the man who is "weeping and gnashing" his teeth in the "outer darkness" (22:11-13). Therefore, the meaning of the phrase must be analyzed taking into consideration the narrative elements that surround the scene. Accordingly, rhetorically the "outer darkness," where the man was thrown, would imply that he is outside of the light and joy of the banquet. Moreover, the expulsion of the man by the king's *διακόνους* (servants) into the darkness, would mean that the man is angry, and probably offended, for having been forced to be out of the wedding event. Consequently, for the reader the sense of the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" contrasts the merriment of those who rhetorically are freely enjoying the wedding meal with the unhappiness, humiliation and anger of the man who was thrown, by force, outside of the light and joy of it (22:10-13).

Narrative Analysis of Matthew 24:45-51: The parable of the wise or wicked servant

Narrative context

The parable of the wise or wicked servant is part of a series of several parables pronounced by Jesus on the Mount of Olives (24:3; 24: 43-25:46).⁴⁵ For the reader the Mount of Olives, which was mentioned previously by the implied author, is not only located near Jerusalem (cf. 21:1),⁴⁶ but also is the location of Gethsemane, the place where he will be betrayed (26:30, 36, 47-56).⁴⁷

Jesus after he has left the temple returns there along with his disciples, who ask him about its destruction (24:1-3). The fact that the text says that they approached Jesus “privately” with their inquiry, would suggest that only the disciples are listening to him, not the crowd (24:3).⁴⁸ According to the narrative, the crowd had heard, along with the disciples, how on that same day Jesus had denounced the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (23:1-39). However, now only his disciples are hearing him (24:3), which would evoke in the reader’s mind the occasion when Jesus explained to them

⁴⁵ Although in the Gospel several times the implied author makes reference to mountains (ὄρος; 5:14; 18:12; 21:21; 24:16; 28:16), the “Mount of Olives” is the only one that is mentioned by its name. The implied author, for instance, neither provides the name of the mountain where Jesus is transfigured (17:1-3) nor the name of the mount to which Jesus directs his disciples after his resurrection (28:16). Therefore, for the reader, the fact that it is mentioned would imply that the implied author wants to locate the events geographically.

⁴⁶ For the reader this is clear when paying attention to the detail. The implied author uses the verb ἐγγίζω (near), which indicates that Jesus is quite close to Jerusalem (21:1). Cf. L&N, 1:191.

⁴⁷ See Donald Thorsen, “Gethsemane (Place),” *ABD* 2:997.

⁴⁸ For the reader, the phrase κατ’ ἰδίαν literally involves a description of being alone either with oneself (14:13, 23) or with others (17:1,19; 20:17; [cf. BDAG, 466-467]). In this case the phrase would mean that there was no one else around, therefore, the disciples were alone with him. See Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 372.

privately the parable of the weeds (13:36).⁴⁹ Jesus then utters a discourse, in which he will illustrate with several parables (24:4-26:1), one of them being the parable of the wise or wicked servant (24:45-51).

Narratively, the parable of the wise or wicked servant is preceded by another parable (24:43-44), which emphasizes being ready at any time, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when nobody is expecting him (24:44). For the reader this parable is probably illustrating a previous statement, in which Jesus recommends being awake, because nobody knows on what day the “Lord is going to come” (24:42).⁵⁰ From this perspective, the immediate context of the parable of the wise or wicked servant is an underlining of the importance of being ready in an eschatological context (cf. 24:36-41).⁵¹

Overview

For the reader the parable may be divided into three parts (See figure 11).⁵² The first one has to do with the question that rhetorically Jesus addresses to his disciples (24:45). In the second part of the parable, Jesus’ rhetorical inquiry is replied

⁴⁹ Although the scenarios of both scenes are different (house/mountain; 13:36; 24:3), the motivations are quite similar. In Matt 13 the disciples ask Jesus privately about something that he said (the parable) and they did not understand (13:24-30, 36). Likewise, in Matt 24, the disciples approach Jesus privately asking him about something that he had stated (the destruction of the temple) and they had not comprehended (24:1-3).

⁵⁰ Schweizer, *The Goods News According to Matthew*, 460.

⁵¹ Cf. John Paul Heil, “Final Parables in the Eschatological Discourse in Matthew 24-25,” (CBQMS 30; Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1998), 192; Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure*, 189-190. The reader possibly is able to notice the connection between Matt 24:36 (But about that **day** and **hour** no one knows) and the parable. The relation between the unexpected “day” and “hour,” which is also mentioned in Matt 24:42 (for you do not know on what **day** your Lord is coming) and Matt 24:44 (for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected **hour**), allows the reader to understand similar motifs and correspondences (my emphasis). This is because in each one of them Jesus is advising his disciples to be ready (cf. 24:42-44). Hence, for the reader, the parable of the wise or wicked servant is directly connected with its immediate context. Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 945.

⁵² Cf. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, 495-497, who divides his analysis of the text in the same three parts that I am proposing.

to positively (24:46-47), which shows the correct behavior of the slave (24:46). In the third part, however, the question is contested negatively (24:48-51), which is due to bad behavior of the slave.

- I. Rhetoric question (24:45)
- II. Blessed (μακάριος) servant (24:46-47)
 - a. Good behavior (24:46)
 - b. The master returns (24:46)
 - c. Reward: the slave is promoted (24:47)
- III. Wicked (κακός) servant (24:48-51)
 - a. Bad behavior (24:49)
 - b. The master returns (24:50)
 - c. Punishment: the slave is cut in pieces and put with the hypocrites (weeping and gnashing of teeth)

Fig. 11. Outline of the parable of the wise or wicked servant (24:45-51)

Rhetoric question: the master and his household (24:45)

The pericope starts when rhetorically Jesus addresses to his disciples a question (24:45). In this inquiry Jesus asks them about who is the “faithful and wise servant” of the story. According to the information provided by the question, rhetorically the “faithful and wise servant” is that one who feeds his fellow servants at the proper time (24:45),⁵³ while the master of the household is absented for an undefined period of time (cf. 24:46, 50).

For the reader the word “faithful” (πιστός), which appears adjectivally here for the first time in the Gospel of Matthew, would involve “being worthy of belief or

⁵³ For the reader the presence of the “servants” is not openly declared. This is because their mention occurs tacitly within two words: (1) οἰκετείας, which would involve the presence of others servants (24:45) [Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 760]; and (2) συνδούλους, which would describe a “fellow slave” (24:49) [LSJ, 1703].

trust.”⁵⁴ Likewise “wise” (φρόνιμος), which occurs both at the end of the sermon on the mount (7:24) as well as at the beginning of the sermon in which Jesus instructs his disciples about preaching his message to the lost sheep of Israel (10:16), would entail for the reader the necessity to be “wise” or “prudent.”⁵⁵ Accordingly, the analysis of the words πιστός and φρόνιμος would imply that both the decisions and the acts of the slave in charge of his fellow servants would have to be “wise and trustworthy” (24:45; NJB).⁵⁶

The blessed servant: the good behavior (24:46-47)

Although it would seem that the parable is describing two servants, the fact that the narration never mentions this, would permit the reader to understand that Jesus is talking about the same servant but with two different behaviors.⁵⁷ After all the presence of the “wicked servant” is introduced by the demonstrative adjective ἐκεῖνος (that), which is the same adjective used by the implied author to name the slave of the first scene (24:46, 48).⁵⁸ Therefore, probably, the use of this

⁵⁴ BDAG, 820.

⁵⁵ According to Goetzmann the term refers “to that wise, judicious behaviour which should characterize those in the kingdom of God.” See Jürgen Goetzmann, “Mind,” *NIDNTT* 2:619. Cf. BDAG, 1066.

⁵⁶ The English Bible versions render the text in a similar sense. Cf. NRSV, RSV, TNIV, ASV, TEV (faithful and wise), NAB (faithful and prudent), NASB (faithful and sensible) and AMP (faithful, thoughtful, and wise servant).

⁵⁷ Cf. Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure*, 189; Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 162-163; Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3: 386; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21-28* (2 vols.; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2005), 221; and H. Benedict Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 203. Others have preferred to interpret the text as referring to two slaves: one blessed and another wicked. See, for example, John R. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable: Metaphor, Narrative, and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 98; Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*, 460; and Donald Hagner, *Matthew 14-28* (2 vols.; WBC 33b; Dallas: Word Books, 1993), 722, 724.

⁵⁸ Cf. Green, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 203; Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 163. Cf. Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 761.

demonstrative adjective would help the reader to understand that “that” bad slave is the same as good servant but acting differently.

For the reader Jesus’ rhetorical inquiry is replied to positively (24:46-47). The reader recognizes this immediately when paying attention to the fact that the sentence starts with the adjective “blessed” (μακάριος), which would introduce the correct behavior of the slave (24:46).⁵⁹ Thus, rhetorically, the parable describes the slave who feeds at the proper time the servants that were put under his protection. An important point in the scene is the absence of the master, who when he returns rewards the slave putting him in charge of all his possessions (24:47). The fact that the parable says that the master “put (him) in charge” (καταστήσει) of all his property (24:47), reminds the reader that initially the master had “put (him) in charge” (κατέστησεν) of his household (24:45). In other words, the reader perceives that the “blessed slave” was promoted from a minor responsibility to a bigger one.⁶⁰ Therefore, for the reader, the slave is promoted because of his good behavior, which was positively manifested in spite of the absence of his master.

The wicked servant: the “bad” behavior (24:48-51)

In this part of the parable Jesus’ question is contested negatively (24:48-51). The implied author begins the description of this scene with the conjunctions “if” (ἐάν) and “but” (δὲ), which would indicate to the reader a change in relation to the previous behavior of the slave. Unlike the first scene here the slave is called “wicked” (κακός), which in the reader’s mind would involve his “being socially or morally

⁵⁹ It seems that μακάριος, in the Gospel of Matthew, involves more a positive approval than a simple human happiness [cf. Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable*, 98]. This is possible to note by paying attention to the fact that Jesus uses μακάριος to point to those who are acting correctly. Cf. 5:3-11; 11:6; 16:17.

⁶⁰ Cf. Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure*, 190.

reprehensible.”⁶¹ For the implied reader, this is evident when it is stated that the slave is not behaving correctly with his fellow servants (24:48-49). The reader perceives a sad change in the slave’s behavior. Whereas his master had commanded him to feed his fellow servants, the wicked slave prefers to eat and drink with drunkards, and beat the servants (24:49). In other words, his acts are totally in opposition to the master’s order. The reader also notices that the element that motivates the bad behavior of the slave is the absence of the master, who, once he has returned and seen the bad comportment of his slave (24:50), he will “cut him in pieces” (διχοτομήσει), i.e., he will punish him severely (24:51).⁶² From this perspective, the reader realizes that the

⁶¹ BDAG, 501.

⁶² In terms of interpretation, the verb διχοτομήσει is not simple to translate. The word means literally “cut in two.” See BDAG, 253. Some interpreters have understood it verbatim, which would entail that the slave was literally cut in two parts [e.g., Timothy Friedrichsen, A., “A Note on Kai Dichotomesei Auton (Luke 12:46 and the Parallel in Matthew 24:51),” *CBQ* 63 (2001): 258-264; John P. Meier, *Matthew* (Dublin: Veritas, 1980), 293; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 225; D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” (EBC 8; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 511; and cf. Kathleen Weber, “Is There a Qumran Parallel to Matthew 24,51//Luke 12,46,” *RevQ* 16 (1995): 657-663]. Thus, the narration would say that the slave is dead [Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, 497]. On the other hand, others have comprehended it either as a mistranslation from the Aramaic [e.g., Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 57, n. 31; J. C. Fenton, *The Gospel of St. Matthew* (The Pelican Gospel Commentaries; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), 395] or as a language expression [e.g., Léopold Sabourin, “Il discorso sulla parousia e le parabole della vigilanza (Matteo 24-25),” *BeO* 20 (1978): 208-209; Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable*, 100; Paul Ellingworth, “Luke 12.46-Is There an Anticlimax Here?,” *BT* 31 (1980): 242-243; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1000; and Betz, “Dichotomized Servant and the End of Judas Iscariot,” 43-58], which implies that the slave was punished severely, but not split into two. Cf. Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 763. I have preferred to omit any discussion about the topic, because it seems to me that in view of the metaphoric world of the parable, the implied author wants to underline the severe punishment received by the slave rather than describe it. On the other hand, the reader is not surprised by the severity of the punishment. This is because in the parables of Matthew’s Gospel the slaves, as Glancy says [Jennifer Glancy, “Slaves and Slavery in the Matthean Parables,” *JBL* 119 (2000): 80-81], are seized (18:28; 21:35; 22:6), imprisoned (18:30); treated with dishonor (22:6), beaten (21:35; 24:49), handed over to torturers (18:34), killed (21:35; 22:6) and stoned (21:35). Against my opinion, see David C. Sim, “The Dissection of the Wicked Servant in Matthew 24:51,” *HvTSt* 58 (2002): 172-184.

kernel of the parable is the absence of the master.⁶³ This is because this is the element that causes the good or bad behavior of the slave, occasioning thus the positive or negative reward from the master when he comes back.⁶⁴

The fact that the master gives either a reward for the good behavior of the slave or a punishment for his wrong comportment (24:47, 51), would indicate that, for the reader, the master would be acting as a judge, recompensing the good actions and castigating the bad ones.⁶⁵ In this last case, the master put the slave with the hypocrites (24:51). In the Gospel of Matthew the word “hypocrite” has been previously repeated several times, having in each one of these cases a really negative meaning (e.g., 7:5; 15:7; 22:18).⁶⁶ For instance, the hypocrites are either those who love to do things to be seen by others (6:2, 5, 16) or those who honor God with their lips, but their heart are far from him (15:7-8).⁶⁷ Hence, for the reader, the significance of the word would imply pretending to be other than one really is,⁶⁸ namely, an “actor” who has the responsibility to interpret a role in a play.⁶⁹ An important detail that the reader notices is that the only ones that are called hypocrites in the story are the Pharisees, the Scribes and the Herodians (22:15-18; 23:13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29). However, while the Herodians are named in that way just once (22:15-18), on the

⁶³ Cf. Bernard Brandon Scott, *Hear then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 211.

⁶⁴ Cf. Harry Fleddermann, “The Householder and the Servant Left in Charge,” (SBLSP 16; Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1986), 26; who argues that the parable (Matthew, Luke and Q) affirms that the parousia has been delayed, giving thus the opportunity to show who is faithful.

⁶⁵ Cf. Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure*, 191; who declares that the actions of the master emphasizes the theme of the judgment. Cf. Alistair I. Wilson, *When will these Things Happen?: A Study of Jesus as Judge in Matthew 21-25* (PBM; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004), 232.

⁶⁶ In the Matthew’s story the word is mentioned 13 times, and in every case it has a very negative meaning. See 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 15:7; 22:18; 23:13–15, 23, 25, 27, 29.

⁶⁷ Moreover, according to Matthew the hypocrites are also those who only notice the bad actions of their neighbor, but not their own wrong actions (7:3-5).

⁶⁸ Cf. L&N, 1:765.

⁶⁹ See U. Wilckens, “ὕποκριτής,” *TDNT* 8: 560.

other hand, the Pharisees and the Scribes are described at least seven times by this same expression (23:13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29). Therefore, in the narrative the reader might assume that the Pharisees and Scribes would neither act honestly nor sincerely,⁷⁰ which would suggest that the hypocrites of the parable have the same negative connotation.⁷¹

Taking into consideration the above, the reader recognizes several connections between the second (24:46-47) and third scene (24: 48-51). These correspondences, however, are in opposition to each other, which would imply that the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” ought to be analyzed in function of these contrasts.⁷² However, as was noticed before, for the reader the parable is not portraying two slaves, but the same one acting differently. Hence, the contrast is not between two people, but between the recompense that the same person lost for not have followed the master’s commands completely.⁷³ Accordingly, the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” would need to be analyzed in relation to the contrast that exists between the reward of the second scene and the castigation received by the slave in the last one (See figure 12).

⁷⁰ According to Giesen the hypocrites, in the Gospel of Matthew, refers to godless people. See H. Giesen, “ὕποκριτής,” *EDNT* 3:404.

⁷¹ Cf. Schuyler Brown, “The Matthean Apocalypse,” *JSNT* (1979): 17; who argues that the expression “put him with the hypocrites” (24:51) “recalls the Woes, in which the Pharisees were repeatedly attacked as hypocrites” (e.g., 23:12, 15). Cf. Hare, *Matthew*, 284; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1000.

⁷² Hartin affirms that there are several “oppositions” in the parable (e.g., master/servant; faithful/unfaithful; responsibility/irresponsibility), of which I have only chosen that related to the end of it. Although Hartin’s study is focused on Luke (and also from a deconstructive perspective), the contrasts are quite similar in Matthew. See P. J. Hartin, “Angst in the Household: A Deconstructive Reading of the Parable of the Supervising Servant (Lk 12:41-48),” *Neot* 22 (1988): 381.

⁷³ Thus, whereas in the second scene the slave is called “blessed,” in the third one he is named “wicked.” Likewise, while in the second part he is described doing the master’s will, when his master comes back, in the third one he is depicted acting wrongly. Finally, whilst the blessed servant is recompensed by the master, the wicked one is punished and put him with the hypocrites, “where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Matt 24:46-47	Matt 24:48-51
Blessed (24:46)	Wicked (24:48)
Reward (promotion): Joy (rhetoric; 24:47)	Punishment (“Cut in two”): Sadness and Anger (rhetoric) Weeping and gnashing of teeth (24:51)
All of the master’s possession in charge (24:47)	In a “place” with the hypocrites (24:51) Weeping and gnashing of teeth (24:51)

Fig. 12. Contrast between the reward and punishment of the slave (24:46-51)

An examination of both fates, namely, reward and punishment, involves understanding them rhetorically. On the one hand, the slave, due to his correct behavior, is put in charge of all the properties of the master. For the reader, this reward not only would mean that the slave is being promoted, but this is conveyed through rhetoric of joy. After all, for the reader, the master did not say anything about a reward when he put the slave in charge of his household (cf. 24:45), therefore, the recompense received by the servant is something good that neither the slave nor the reader were expecting. On the other hand, the slave is “put in a place” (NIV) with the hypocrites after failing his master (24:51). For the reader this sentence would express rhetorically sadness and anger. Sadness, because the servant not only lost his privileged position, but also the opportunity of being promoted to a better one, which would suggest that the word “weeping” may be understood in this sense. And anger, for having been sentenced to stay with the hypocrites, losing thus the opportunity of being in charge of all the master’s possessions, which would also suggest that the expression “gnashing of teeth” may be comprehended from a similar angle. Likewise, for the reader, as in previous cases where the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth”

appears (8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:14), the slave's anger may also be connected with the description that rhetorically points out that it was a third person who "cut in pieces" and "put" the slave of the parable with the hypocrites (24:51). The voice of the verb διχοτομήσει, which means "cut in two," is active, therefore, considering that the verb is also a third person singular, would suggest that it is the master who is punishing the slave of the parable.⁷⁴ Accordingly, taking into consideration that rhetorically the slave would have preferred to have the same position that he held in the past, for the reader, the phrase "gnashing of teeth" may imply rhetoric anger for having been expelled against his will by the master (24:51).

The fact that the slave is condemned to stay with the hypocrites would evoke in the reader's mind a negative image. As discussed above, in the Gospel of Matthew the word hypocrite describes those who are not sincere and honest in their actions. However, for the reader this is not the case of the slave and his second behavior.⁷⁵ Firstly, during the entire second scene his conduct remains the same, that is to say, wicked. And secondly, he is never called hypocritical (24:48-51). In fact, in Matthew's story the only ones who are continually so called in this way are the Pharisees and the Scribes (23:13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29), whom Jesus rejects for their behavior (23:1-36).⁷⁶ Thus, for the reader, the expression "a place with the hypocrites" (24:51; TNIV) does not necessarily entail that the slave is hypocritical, but simply is describing the fate of those who were rejected by Jesus. From this

⁷⁴ Cf. NJB ("The master will cut him off"); NRSV ("He will cut him in pieces"); TNIV; NIV ("He will cut him to pieces"); TEV ("the master will cut him in pieces"); CJB ("he will cut him in two"); and REB ("He will cut him in pieces").

⁷⁵ Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 945-946.

⁷⁶ In Edwards' opinion the mention of the hypocrites in Matt 24:51 "helps to bind the condemnation stated so emphatically in chap. 23 to 'this generation' and the symbolic language of chap. 24." See Edwards, *Matthew's Story of Jesus*, 83.

perspective, for the reader, the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” would also function as an image of rejection and condemnation.

Summary

The plot of the parable is that of a slave who demonstrates two behaviors while he is waiting the return of his master. On the one hand, his first performance is in accordance with the will of his master, who when he comes back determines that now his “blessed servant” will manage all their properties (24:45-47). On the other hand, his second conduct violates the order of his master, who when he returns, finds him doing wrongly, which brings a severe punishment (24:48-51). For the reader, this is the occasion when the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” appears (24:51), which would be in direct opposition to the rhetoric of joy manifested in relation to the same slave when he is recompensed positively by his master (24:47). Hence, the meaning of the phrase must be examined in function of this contrast. Accordingly, rhetorically the slave is angry for having lost his position as administrator of the possessions of his master. Similarly, he is angry for have being put with the hypocrites, preventing him from being put in charge of all the master’s properties. Thus, whereas in the Gospel of Matthew the hypocrites represent those who have been rejected by Jesus, the fact that the slave is put among them would allow the reader to understand that he is “weeping and gnashing of teeth” because he has been rejected by his master. Furthermore, the meaning of the phrase would describe the eschatological negative emotion of those who have been condemned for not doing the will of their master.

Narrative Analysis of Matthew 25:14-30: The Parable of the Talents

Narrative context

For the implied reader the parable of the talents (25:14-30), as the parable of the wise or wicked servant (24:45-51), is one of several parables that Jesus pronounced on the Mount of Olives (24:3, 43-25:46). For the reader, the immediate context of the parable of the talents would point out the seriousness of being ready when unexpectedly the Lord appears (cf. 24:36-25:13).⁷⁷ This is clear when the reader pays attention to the fact that the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13), which is the pericope that precedes the parable of the talents, ends saying that the disciples need to keep watch, because they “do not know the day or the hour” (25:13).⁷⁸ At the same time, while the parable of the ten virgins is describing the meaning of the “kingdom of heaven” (25:1), the purpose of the parable of the talents would be the same (cf. 25:14), but approached from another perspective. For the reader, this is evident because of the phrase ὅσπερ γὰρ (24:14), which would connect the “kingdom of heaven,” of the previous parable, with the events of the parable of the talents.

Overview

For the reader, the parable appears in three acts (See figure 13).⁷⁹ In the first act, the master entrusts his property to his slaves because he is going to make a trip

⁷⁷ See R T. France, “On Being Ready (Matthew 25:1-46),” in *The Challenge of Jesus’ Parables* (ed. Richard N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 178-180. Cf. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 996, who titled his analysis of the three parables of Matt 24:45-25:30 as: “Three Parables about Being Ready to Meet the Master.” In Nolland’s opinion the “readiness for the coming of the Son of Man, the need for which has been highlighted in 24:37–44, is now given content in the set of three parables which Matthew joins together in 24:51–25:30.”

⁷⁸ Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 274.

⁷⁹ For a similar outline (though different in some points) see Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3:401.

(25:14-15). In the second act, the parable shows the actions of each slave in relation to the talents that they had received (25:16-18). In the third and last act, the pericope describes the returns of the master, who summons his slaves to settle account with them (25:19-30).⁸⁰

- I. The master entrust his money to his slaves (25:14-15)
 - a. Master entrusts his money
 - i. Five talents
 - ii. Two talents
 - iii. One talent
 - b. Master departs to his journey
- II. The slaves carry out their business (25:16-18)
 - a. The slave with five earns five
 - b. The slave with two earns two
 - c. The slave with one hides it in the ground
- III. The master returns and settles account with his slaves (25:19-30)
 - a. The master returns
 - b. The master settles account with his slaves
 - i. Two Slaves “good and trustworthy”
 1. The slave with five has five more
 2. The slave with two has two more
 3. Recompense:
 - a. Promotion: in charge of many things
 - b. They are invited to enter into the joy of his master
 - ii. One slave “wicked and lazy”
 1. The slave with one has only one
 2. Punishment:
 - a. He lost his talent
 - b. He is thrown into the outer darkness,
 - c. He will be in a place where there will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth”

Fig. 13. Outline of the parable of the talents (25:14-30)

⁸⁰ For the reader the verb *συνάψω* (settling accounts) occurs three times in the Matthew’s story. Twice the word appears in the parable of the unmerciful servant (18:23, 24) and one time in the parable of the talents (25:19). On both occasions it is mentioned in parables about slaves, where either a king or a master wanted to settle accounts with them.

The master entrusts his money to his slaves: talents (25:14-15)

The fact that the parable starts saying ὡσπερ γὰρ (“For it is as”; NRSV) would imply that Jesus is going to illustrate again the theme of the “kingdom of heaven” commenced in Matt 25:1 (25:14).⁸¹ The reader also notices that Matt 25:13 is a warning about the ignorance regardless the day or the hour, which would evoke in the reader’s mind not only the parable of the ten virgins, but also the context of the parable of the wise or wicked servant, where Jesus alerts his disciples to be ready “for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour” (24:44; cf. 24:36, 42; NRSV).⁸² In consequence, for the reader, the story told by the parable of the talents would be another eschatological metaphor for the “kingdom of heaven.”⁸³

Jesus says that a man entrusts his property to his slaves before going on a trip (25:14-15).⁸⁴ For the reader the property mainly consists in talents, which are

⁸¹ The literal translation of ὡσπερ γὰρ is “for just as,” without the pronoun “it” such as NRSV and others have included in the text (e.g., TNIV, NIV, NAB, AMP and NJB). The inclusion of the pronoun “it” in the translation has the intention to connect the parable of the talents with the “kingdom of heaven” of Matt 25:1. In my opinion its inclusion is correct. This is because the parable of the talents is similar in many aspects to the parable of the ten virgins (e.g., delay, return, exclusion), therefore, both would be describing the same theme, but from different perspectives. Cf. Heil, “Final Parables in the Eschatological Discourse in Matthew 24-25,” 196; Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 226-227; Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3: 404; and Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 274.

⁸² Markus Locker, “Reading and Re-Reading Matthew’s Parable of the Talents in Context,” *BZ* 49 (2005): 163; and Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 990. For the implied reader both the “parable of the wise or wicked servant” and the “parable of the talents” have similarities: (1) slaves, (2) master, (3) absence of the master, (4) properties in charge, (5) bad and good behavior and (6) reward and punishment (cf. 24:45-51; 25:14-30). Cf. Lambrecht, *Out of the Treasure*, 240-243; and Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 526.

⁸³ Accordingly, the “kingdom of heaven” is not only like a man, but like a man who goes on journey and trusts his property to his slaves.

⁸⁴ For the reader, it is not surprising that this man had entrusted his property to his slaves, because in previous parables other slaves had been also commissioned with the same task (cf. 24:45-51; 18:23-35). See Glancy, “Slaves and Slavery in the Matthean Parables,” 72-75, who analyzes the work of managerial slaves in the Gospel of Matthew.

distributed differently by the master according to the personal abilities of his slaves (25:15).⁸⁵ The first slave receives five talents, the second two and the third only one (25:15). After doing this, the master undertakes his journey (25:15). According to the implied author this man is the κύριος (master) of the slaves (25:19, 26), which is clear by paying attention not only to the fact that the slaves themselves refer to him as “master” (25:20-24), but also noting that this title is even used by the man himself when, after having congratulated two of his slaves (25:20-23), invites them to enter “into” (εἰς) his joy (25:21, 23). From the point of view of the reader, the master is a rich man. This is due to the fact that the master altogether entrusts eight “talents” to his slaves (25:15), which in the parable are considered “money” (ἀργύριον; 25:18, 27).⁸⁶ Narratively this is not the first time that Matthew’s story mentions “talents” in a parabolic context. In the parable of the unmerciful servant (18:21-35), a king forgave a debt of 10,000 talents to one of his servants (18:23-27), a figure which would contrast with the 100 denarii that the same servant did not want to forgive for one of his fellow servants (18:28-30). Accordingly, for the reader, in the Gospel of Matthew the value of one “talent” would be in contrast with the cost of one “denarius.” Therefore, considering that in the Gospel of Matthew the daily wage of

⁸⁵ According to Derrett, the “servants are not slaves. But they are dependants” [See J. Duncan M. Derrett, “The Parable Talent and two Logia,” in *Law in the New Testament* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), 18]. However, this semantic differentiation, in my opinion, does not exist in the narrative. In fact the text does not show that difference. Even, in relation to the Gospel of Matthew, the presence of the slaves in charge of properties was in fact visible in the parable of the wise or wicked servant. (24:46, 48, 50)

⁸⁶ In modern English the word τάλαντον (talent) has lost its original meaning. Nowadays the word refers to a mental endowment or an ability to perform something. For that reason it is important to underline the fact that τάλαντον is in parallel with the word ἀργύριον, which although literally means either “a piece of silver” or “a silver coin,” for the reader would also involve the meaning of “money.” Cf. LSJ, 236; and BDAG, 128.

the laborers is one denarius (20:2, 13), for the reader, the eight talents commissioned to the slaves, would be a large sum of money.⁸⁷

The slaves carry out their business (25:16-18)

For the reader both the slave who had received five talents as well as the one who had received two have increased the master's property by one hundred percent (25:16-17). However, unlike them, the slave who had received only one talent goes and digs a hole in the ground and hides it (25:18). Hence, for the reader, it is not a surprise that this last slave had hidden the talent underground. After all, in a previous parable, a man had found a hidden treasure in a field (cf. 13:44). What is a surprise is the fact that the actions of this last slave are in complete opposition to those shown by his fellow servants.

The master returns and settles account with his slaves (25:19-30): Rewards and punishment

After an undefined time of absence the master returns and summons his slaves to settle account with them (25:19-30).⁸⁸ The first two slaves are complimented by the master for having doubled his money (25:20, 22), which generates the promises to

⁸⁷ Probably, for the reader, the word *τάλαντον* (talent) would involve itself the idea of a large amount of money [See J. Naegele, "Translation of Talanton 'Talent,'" *BT* 37 (1986): 441-443]. In Harl's opinion in the first century every talent would be equivalent to about 6,000 denarii [Kenneth W. Harl, *Coinage in the Roman economy, 300 B.C. to A.D. 700* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 482; cf. Marvin A. Powell, "Weights and Measures," *ABD* 6:907-908]. If so, every talent would be equivalent to about 6,000 working days. In accordance with this meaning some Bible translations have attempted to update the meaning of the word talent: TEV, CEV (thousand coins); REB (bags of gold) and MESSAGE (thousand dollars). It is interesting that the master calls the talents his "moneys" (in plural; ἄργύριά; 25:27), which narratively would imply that the talent means more than only "one coin."

⁸⁸ For the reader the verb *συνάίρω* (settling accounts) occurs three times in Matthew's story. Two times the word appears in the parable of the unmerciful servant (18:23, 24) and one time in the parable of the talents (25:19). On both occasions, there are references in parables about slaves, where either a king or a master wanted to settle accounts with them.

put them “in charge of many things,” inviting them also to enter “into” his joy (25:21, 23). Although in many points they have similarities between them, their main difference is based on the amount that they received. The first slave is given five talents, while the latter just two (25:15). Moreover, only the first of them receives the talent of the slave who is rejected by the master (25:28). Nevertheless, despite these differences, they have evident correspondences. Both multiplied by one hundred percent the gift received (25:16-17, 20, 22) and both are praised by their master with the same words: “Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master” (25:21, 23; NRSV). The fact that the master calls them “trustworthy” (πιστός) would remind the reader of the parable of the wise or wicked servant (24:45-51), where the slave is also called “trustworthy” (πιστός; 24:45). Likewise, as in the same parable already mentioned, both slaves receive the promise that they will put in charge (καθήστημι) of many things (25:21, 23; cf. 24:47).⁸⁹ Although the text does not say that they will administrate the master’s properties, it is possible that the reader understands the reward in that way, in particular by paying attention to the fact that in the parable of the wise or wicked servant the slave is put in charge of the all possessions of his master (24:47).

In contrast to the first two slaves, is the fate of the third servant (25:24-30).⁹⁰ He is the slave who after having received just one talent (24:15) went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid the master’s talent (25:18, 25). According to the text he

⁸⁹ Although the phrase “many things” does not appear in the Greek text, in terms of translation its presence is very important, because it allows the reader to understand the master’s property as something tangible.

⁹⁰ Bruner points out that “the three recessive verbs in this sentence contrast with the previous verse’s three outgoing verbs: the lazy servant ‘went away’ (apelthon) rather than moving out; ‘digging a hole’ in contrast to ‘going to work’; and “hiding” instead of ‘winning’ talents.” See Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 2:556.

was afraid of his master (25:24). For that reason, he, unlike his fellow servants (25:20-23), was not able to multiply it (25:24-25). In fact, the slave tries to justify himself accusing his master of severity (25:24-25).⁹¹ The master's answer is quite different from the way that he treats the other slaves (25:21, 23). Firstly, he calls him "wicked" (πονηρός; 25:26). This designation would evoke in the reader's mind the explanation of the parable of the weeds (13:37-43), in which "the son of the evil one" (υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ) are thrown into the "fiery furnace," where there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (13:38, 40-42). In this case, the "wicked" slave is thrown into "the outer darkness," where there will be also "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (25:30). On the other hand, the master calls the slave ὀκνηρός (25:26), which, for the reader, would imply that the slave is either "lazy"⁹² or "negligent".⁹³ This

⁹¹ Cf. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 735. The reason given by the "wicked and lazy" slave is that he was afraid (25:25), because in the slave's opinion his master was a "harsh man" (σκληρός εἶ ἄνθρωπος; 25:24). For the reader the meaning of the word σκληρός is quite strong. This is due to the fact that σκληρός can mean hard, strict, harsh, cruel or even merciless [BDGA, 930]. However, as Donahue affirms, there is nothing in the account that indicates the harshness of the master. On the contrary, the fact the master had entrusted him one talent would show that he is a man with "considerable magnanimity," because, after all, the talent given was to a slave [Donahue, *The Gospel in Parable*, 107-108]. For the reader, the master never says that the slave was right in his appreciation about his harsh character. The Greek text of NA²⁷ renders the phrase as a question, which would entail that the master's point is "that the servant, believing as he did that it was true, ought to have been all the more concerned to see that he had something more to bring to him on his return from abroad than the one bag of gold he has received" [R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary* (TNTC; London: The Tyndale Press, 1966), 237]. Cf. NRSV, which as translated the text following the NA²⁷ punctuation ["You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers..." (25:26-27)]. See, also, TNIV, NIV, TEV, NJB and AMP. However, in my opinion the Greek text may be interpreted better as a statement rather than as a rhetorical question [cf. Newman and Stine, *Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 778. See, for instance, NASB and CEV], which does not imply that the phrase means that the master agrees with the slave about his harshness. Cf. Keener, who translated the phrase as following: "On the assumption that I am hard and merciless, you should have been all the more diligent." See Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 601

⁹² See BDAG, 702.

⁹³ See F. Hauck, "ὀκνηρός," *TDNT* 5:166-167.

offensive and negative nomination is evident for the reader. This is because the slave preferred to hide the talent in a hole rather than make an investment (25:8, 25, 27), which is in opposition to the attitude of their fellow servants' behavior.⁹⁴ Narratively, for instance, when the master undertook his journey, the slave who had received five talents "immediately" (εὐθέως)⁹⁵ took on the task of "trade" (ἐργάζομαι)⁹⁶, showing thus his willingness to work (25:15-16). It is because of the lack of commitment of the slave who has only one talent (25:26) that the master calls him "lazy" or "negligent".⁹⁷ After all, as the master points out, the slave did not even bother to put the money with the bankers to receive some interest from it (25:27).⁹⁸ Hence, in financial terms, he failed "to make a good investment" and for that reason the master calls him also "worthless" (25:30).⁹⁹ Finally, the master commands that he be thrown into "the outer darkness." Therefore, for the reader, it is this "wicked," "lazy" and "worthless" slave who is "weeping and gnashing" his teeth in the "outer darkness."

⁹⁴ Cf. Heil, "Final Parables in the Eschatological Discourse in Matthew 24-25," 198; and Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 329.

⁹⁵ Every time that the adverb εὐθέως is used in the Gospel of Matthew this implies an immediate act. See Metzger, who affirms that when εὐθέως appears it "invariably belongs to what follows." Cf. 4:20, 22; 8:3; 13:5; 14:22, 31; 20:34; 21:2; 24:29; 25:15; 26:49, 74; 27:48. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 53. Cf. L&N, 1:635; and Carson, "Matthew," 516. Cf. Newman and Stine, *A Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 773, who say that the adverb "emphasizes the immediacy with which the servant acted."

⁹⁶ BDAG, 389. The Greek text says literally that the slave "worked with them," which would mean that he "went into business with the money" (AT). Cf. Newman and Stine, *Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 773.

⁹⁷ Cf. Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1018. As Hultgren affirms correctly, the gist of the scene is the fidelity of "the two to their respective tasks, not the amount gained..." After all, the master calls the amount entrusted as "little." See Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 276.

⁹⁸ In fact, for the master, the bankers not only guarantee the return of the money, but also pay interest. Cf. E. Carson Brisson, "Matthew 25:14-30," *Int* 56 (2002): 309; and David Steinmetz, "Matthew 25:14-30," *Int* 34 (1980): 174.

⁹⁹ BDAG, 160. Cf. Hare, *Matthew*, 287.

Taking into consideration the above, the absence of the master is the motif that generates the events of the parable. The absence of the master would evoke in the reader's mind both the parable of the wise or wicked servant (24:45-51) as well as the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13). In the two previous cases, one master and one new groom appear after an indefinite period (24:46, 50; 25:5-6), resulting in the development of consecutive events of each parable (24:47, 51; 25:7-13).¹⁰⁰ Hence, for the reader, the absence of the master would be an important detail in the development of the parable of the talents. Firstly, it is because of the master's journey that the slaves received the talents. Secondly, the congratulations and the reward received by two of them, as well as the punishment received by the last one, is due to the actions while their master was absent. Accordingly, for the reader, the prolonged absence of the master would function as the kernel of the parable, which would show, on the one hand, which of them is "good and trustworthy" (25:20-23), while, on the other hand, also would show who is "wicked and lazy," and for that reason, worthy of being with those who are "weeping and gnashing" their teeth (25:24-30).

Therefore, an analysis of the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" would imply considering the contrast between the recompense of those who were "trustworthy" and that slave who was "lazy" when his master was absent (See figure 14).¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Schweizer, *The Goods News According to Matthew*, 471.

¹⁰¹ According to Hultgren the "words 'wicked and lazy' in 25:26 stand in antithesis to 'good and faithful' in 25:21, 23." See Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus*, 276. Cf. Senior, *Matthew*, 279.

Matt 25:20-23 Recompense	Matt 25:24-30 Punishment
Good and Trustworthy (25:21, 23)	Wicked and lazy (25:26) Worthless (25:30)
Promotion to many things (25:21, 23)	Expulsion (25:30)
Enter “into” the joy of his master (25:21-23)	Thrown into the outer darkness (25:30)
Joy (25:21, 23)	Weeping and gnashing of teeth (25:30)

Fig. 14. The contrast between the recompense of those who traded the master’s property and the slave who is “wicked and lazy”

In the first case the master rewards his two “good and trustworthy” slaves with the promise of putting them in charge of more responsibilities (25:21, 23). Moreover, the master invites them to “enter into” his χαρά (joy; 25:21, 23). For the reader the word χαρά would imply a great happiness,¹⁰² which, according to the account, would function as a response to the faithfulness of the slaves for the good administration of their master’s properties (25:20-23). However, for the reader, the fact that the master invites his slaves to “enter into” (εἰσελθε εἰς) his “joy” (χαρά; 25:21, 23), would involve determining what the master meant. On the one hand, the phrase could be a reference to the master’s desire to share his joy with his slaves.¹⁰³ In that case, the expression would entail a metaphoric meaning, which would be in accordance with the metaphorical world of the parable. On the other hand, the phrase could also be an invitation to “enter” a metaphorical banquet, which the master has prepared to share

¹⁰² L&N, 1: 301-302.

¹⁰³ See, for instance, Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 629; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 955. Cf. NIV, TNIV and CEV.

his happiness with his slaves.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, although many times in the Gospel of Matthew the expression εἰσελθε εἰς (enter into) refers mainly to entering into “places” such, for example, rooms (6:6), houses (12:4, 29), cities (27:53) or even, metaphorically speaking, the “kingdom of heaven” (5:20; 7:21; 18:3; 19:23, 24); this is not the only meaning that the phrase has. For instance, Jesus encourages three of his disciples to “not enter into temptation” (μὴ εἰσελθητε εἰς πειρασμόν), which is clearly a metaphorical expression (26:41; NASB). Likewise, Jesus says that not “what goes into the mouth defiles a person” (οὐ τὸ εἰσερχόμενον εἰς τὸ στόμα κοινοῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον; 15:11; NRSV), but what comes out from the heart defiles the person (15:11, 18-20), which also would function clearly in a metaphorical sense. Accordingly, when the master summons his slaves to “enter into” his “joy” this could suggest that he is not necessarily inviting them to “enter” into a place, but probably to participate in his personal happiness.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, given the eschatological context where the parable is located, for the reader it means the master’s joy would particularly have an eschatological sense.¹⁰⁶

Rhetorically the “joy” of the master would be in contrast with the anger of the master. The rhetorical presence of the master’s anger is clear when he calls his slave

¹⁰⁴ For those who think that the “joy” of the master would imply a banquet, see, for instance, France, “On Being Ready (Matthew 25:1-46),” 188; Hare, *Matthew*, 287; Fenton, *The Gospel of St. Matthew*, 399; Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 600; Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art*, 506; Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 2:558; Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1017; and Joel R. Wohlgenut, “Entrusted Money (Matthew 25:14-28),” in *Jesus and his Parables: Interpreting the Parables of Jesus Today* (ed. V. George Shillington; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 108.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Newman and Stine, *Handbook on the Gospel of Matthew*, 775. Cf. BDAG, 1077, who rhetorically questioned the interpretation of the text as referring to a banquet.

¹⁰⁶ See Duke, *The Parables: A Preaching Commentary*, 52, who argues that the phrase, “exuberant and mysterious, has a startling ring of eschatological glory.”

“wicked,”¹⁰⁷ “lazy” and “worthless,” which is evidence, for the reader, of the master’s displeasure (25:26, 30). The reader also is capable of seeing the master’s anger when paying attention to the fact that the master does not accept either excuse or explanation from the slave (25:26-27), ordering even to take his talents and give it to the one who has ten (25:28). For the reader, the master’s anger is an ironic element. According to the narrative, rhetorically the slave did not want to anger his master and for that reason he went and hid the talent in the ground (25:24-25). However, ironically, his fear and laziness is what causes the anger of his master (25:26-30).¹⁰⁸

In view of above, the reader is not surprised to read that this “wicked” slave is thrown into “the outer darkness,” where, unlike his fellow servants, he is not enjoying the happiness of his master, but “weeping and gnashing” his teeth (25:30). In narrative terms the slave would be fulfilling the previous words of the master when he said even “what he had would be taken” (25:29). Literally, the master is taking away from him everything. Accordingly, for the reader, the slave is “weeping” because of his sadness for having lost it all. Furthermore, due to the fact that he has lost his right to be in charge of the properties of the master, as well as the promotion received by his companions, the slave would feel not only sadness, but also anger.¹⁰⁹ For the reader, that anger would also be rhetorically exemplified by the fact that he is “gnashing” his teeth because he had been expelled by force into “the outer darkness”

¹⁰⁷ The detail that the master calls him “wicked,” where the other slaves are “good,” would evoke in the reader’s mind the parable of the wedding feast (22:1-14), where the marriage banquet is filled with good (ἀγαθός), as the “good” (ἀγαθός) slaves who entered into the joy of his master (25:21), and bad (πονηρός) people (22:10), as the “wicked” (πονηρός) and “lazy” slave of the parable (25:26).

¹⁰⁸ Another ironic element, as Luz points out, it is the accusation of harshness that the slave made about his master. According to Luz, it is possible to see a little irony in the master’s answer (25:26-27): “If you really thought I was greedy and were really afraid of me, you should have taken my money to the bank, where what belongs to me (τὸ ἐμὸν) at least would have earned some interest.” Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 253.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Bruner, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 2:563.

(25:30), expressing thus his displeasure for being outside of the master's property against his will. For the reader, the imperative mode and the active voice of the verb ἐκβάλλω (to cast out) would suggest not only the violence of the passage, but also the fact that the slave was thrown out by force and against his wish (cf. 8:12; 21:12, 39; 22:13).

Summary

The plot of the parable is the depiction of two kinds of verdicts, one positive and one negative, given by a master to his slaves after he had returned from his journey. The first verdict, which is received by the first two slaves, consists in the promotion of these slaves and an invitation to enter into the joy of his master (25:20-23). However, the second verdict, which is received by the last slave, is the complete opposite to the first (25:24-30). The slave instead of being promoted is thrown into "the outer darkness," where, unlike his fellow servants who are experiencing the happiness of his master (25:20-23), is "weeping and gnashing" his teeth (25:30). Taking into consideration the opposition of both scenes, the reader understands the phrase "weeping and gnashing of teeth" as an eschatological reference of those who, as the slave, endure for having lost the opportunity of being promoted in charge of many things as well as feel anger for have being thrown into "the outer darkness" against his will (25:30).

CHAPTER 4

NARRATIVE CONNECTIONS OF THE PHRASE “WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH”

In this last chapter, I intend to establish the narrative connections that I have found through my research on the pericopes where the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” appears (8:5-13; 13:36-43, 47-50; 22:1-14; 24:45-51; 25:14-30). To perform this, I allude to those literary correspondences that I have already outlined in Chapter 2 and 3, with the idea of establishing an integrative appreciation of the phrase. Moreover, in view that the phrase is part of a larger context, I also show briefly how its meaning fits within the narrative of Matthew’s story, which indicates that the meaning of the phrase is in harmony with the entire movement of the Matthean narrative.

The temporal setting of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth”

This study has shown that the narrative framework of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” indicates a time that goes beyond Matthew’s story (8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30). The eschatological feast mentioned in the pericope of the centurion’s $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma$ (8:11) is the first example of this temporal background. Analogously, the harvest of the “world” (13:38-9) and the separation of two kinds of people in “the end of the age” (13:49) as well as two parables illustrating the indeterminate return of the Son of Man (24:36, 45-51; 25:13-30), would also suggest “monumental time.” The only apparent difference is the parable of the wedding feast (22:1-14), which seems to say nothing about it. Nonetheless, both the repetition of the “outer darkness” and the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (22:13), as in

Matt 8:12 as well as in Matt 25:30, would allow recognition of a similar eschatological aspect.

It is not strange that the narrative framework of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” transcends the story-time of the Gospel of Matthew. In fact, in Matthew’s story, there are several examples that could illustrate this.¹ For instance, in Matt 11 Jesus declares “it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on judgment day than” for Chorazin and Bethsaida (11:20-22; NJB). In a later chapter, Jesus also states that the people of Nineveh and the queen of the South will stand up at the judgment “against this generation and they will be its condemnation” (12:41-42; NJB). Similarly, in Matt 25, Jesus finalizes his last discourse telling a parable, which describes proleptically an undefined moment when all the nations will be gathered before the throne of the Son of Man to be judged by him (25:35-46). The parable describes two groups of people, which according to the account are portrayed as sheep and goats (25:31-33). The sheep are the righteous (25:37) and so inherit eternal life (25:46) while the goats, who rhetorically were not righteous (cf. 25:41-45), go away into eternal punishment (25:41, 46).

In the examples given above, a feature that stands out is the motif of judgment,² which is given in terms of acceptance and rejection.³ On the one hand,

¹ See, for instance, Eugene W. Pond, “The Background and Timing of the Judgment of the Sheep and Goats,” *BSac* 159 (2002): 201-220; Robert D Young, “Matthew 25:1-13,” *Int* 54 (2000): 419; David H. C. Read, “The Parable of the Talents,” *RevExp* 62 (1951): 373; W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew* (AB 26; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 304; 235; Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew* (NIBC 1; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991), 221, 35; John F. Walvoord, “Christ’s Olivet Discourse on the End of the Age: The Parable of the Talents,” *BSac* 129 (1972): 206; and Gnana Robinson, “The Sermon on the Mount and Eschatology,” *BTG* (1995): 30-41.

² See, for instance, John Paul Heil, “The Double Meaning of the Narrative of Universal Judgment in Matthew 25.31-46,” *JSNT* (1998): 5; and Joseph A. Comber, “Composition and Literary Characteristics of Matt 11:20-24,” *CBQ* 39 (1977): 497-504. Cf. Eugene W. Pond, “Who Are the Sheep and Goats in Matthew 25:31-46?,” *BSac* 159 (2002): 297-301. The motif of judgment has been extensively studied by

one group is accepted (Tyre, Sidon, Niniveh, the “queen of the South” and the sheep/righteous), whilst, on the other hand, another is rejected (Chorazin, Bethsaida, “this generation” and the goats/unrighteous). Additionally, the examples also show that in each pericope the referents are separated between those named positively, sometimes rewarded as in the parable of the sheep and goats (25:34), and those who are described negatively and castigated (e.g., 25:41), which is similar to the pattern shown in the framework of the expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Separation: two groups of referents

The Gospel of Matthew sometimes uses double groups to illustrate key points.⁴ In the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-8:1), for instance, Jesus affirms that no one can serve God and money at the same time (6:24; TNIV). Similarly, in the same sermon, he recommends entering through the narrow door, not the wide gate that leads to destruction (7:13), ending his discourse with a comparison between two kinds of constructions: one strong and one weak (7:24-27). It is possible to see the same format in a parabolic and eschatological context. For example, in Jesus’ last sermon he says that when the Son of Man comes one will be taken, while another will be left

Daniel Marguerat, *Le jugement dans L'évangile de Matthieu* (MdB 6; Geneve: Labor et Fides, 1981), 563-580.

³ Cf. Dan Otto Via, “Ethical Responsibility and Human Wholeness in Matthew 25:31-46,” *HTR* 80 (1987): 79-100. Cf. K. C. Hanson, “How Honorable! How Shameful! A Cultural Analysis of Matthew’s Makarisms and Reproaches,” *Semeia* (1994): 81-111.

⁴ Cf. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, 75-85, who argues a dualistic viewpoint in the Gospel. Cf. David C. Sim, “Rome in Matthew’s Eschatology,” in *The Gospel of Matthew in its Roman Imperial Context* (JSNTSS 276; London: T & T Clark, 2005), 93; and Hans Dieter Betz, “Eschatology in the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain,” (SBLSP 24; Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1985), 345-346. The presence of the number two is a literary characteristic of the Gospel of Matthew. See, for instance, the mention of (1) two blind men (9:27-30; 20:29-34), two animals (21:1-11), two masters (6:24), two tunics (10:10), two sons (21:28), two men in a field and two women at a mill (24:40-41). See Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 1:87.

(24:40-41). In the same way, in the parable of the ten virgins, five enter to the marriage feast, whilst five are left out of it (25:1-13).

The fact that every pericope containing the expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth” has also two groups of referents (See Figure 15), would suggest that an analysis of the phrase needs to take into consideration such a format.

Positive	Negative
“Many” will come from east and west to take their places at the feast (8:11)	The “sons of the kingdom” will be thrown into the “outer darkness” (8:12)
The “sons of the kingdom” will shine like the sun in the Father’s kingdom (13:38, 43)	The “sons of the evil one” will be thrown into the “fiery furnace” (13:38, 42)
The “righteous” are separate from the “wicked” (13:49)	The “wicked” are thrown into the “fiery furnace” (13:50)
“Good and Bad” people are invited to participate of the wedding feast (22:10)	The man without “wedding garment” is thrown into the “outer darkness” (22:13)
The “blessed” slave is put in charge of all the possessions of his master (24:46-47)	The “wicked” slave is “cut in pieces” and put with the hypocrites (24:51)
The “good and faithful” slaves are promoted and their master invite them to enter “into” his joy (25:19-23)	The “lazy” slave is thrown into the “outer darkness” (25:30)

Fig. 15. Two groups of referents in the context of the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth”

According to my research these referents are presented as opposite groups, which are separated in order to receive opposite recompenses. This separation, however, is not based on an arbitrary decision, but on the actions of the characters of

every pericope.⁵ In the centurion's story it is the mention of faith that leads to the discourse of Jesus on the "many" that will come from east and west to the "kingdom of heaven" (8:10). In the parables of Matt 13 the righteous are in contrast with the wicked, which determines their preservation or destruction (13:41, 43, 49). Likewise, in the parable of the wedding feast, while the guests are enjoying the feast, it is the man without a marriage garment who is expelled from the wedding (22:11-12). Subsequently, in Matt 24 it is the one who feeds his fellow servant at a proper time who obtains the promotion (24:45-47), not the one whose behavior was wrong (24:48-51). Finally, in Matt 25 the good and bad administration of the master's talents leads to the reward or expulsion of the servants of the story (25:14-15, 19-26).

Acceptation and recompense: the joy obtained

Although narratively every pericope ends with an image of rejection, I have shown that before giving a negative recompense, each account describes first a positive reward. In the centurion's story, for instance, prior to mentioning those who will be thrown into the "outer darkness" (8:12), Jesus introduces those who will come from east and west to participate in a meal with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (8:11).

Nonetheless, in every pericope the theme of acceptance can be expressed from a different viewpoint. The acceptance of those who are coming from east and west is given in terms of inclusion. Thus, the sons of Abraham, who can be raised by God from the stones (3:9), will have to "share the table" with a centurion who expressed more faith than Israel (8:10-12). In a similar way, the "good and bad" people who

⁵ See, for instance, Sigurd Grindheim, "Ignorance is Bliss: Attitudinal Aspects of the Judgment According to Works in Matthew 25:31-46," *NovT* 50 (2008): 314, who in his analysis of the parable of the sheep and the goats affirms that "the two groups in Matt 25:31-46 are distinguished not only by their works, but also by their attitudes, and that their different attitudes explain their different actions." Cf. John R. Donahue, "The 'Parable' of the Sheep and the Goats: A Challenge to Christian Ethics," *TS* 47 (1986): 29-31, who analysis ethical aspects of the parable.

were invited to the wedding feast in Matt 22, though at first they were not in the king's plans, they were finally “included” after the rejection of the first guests (22:8-10). This “inclusion,” however, although it does not permeate the entire Gospel of Matthew, is present, for instance, in the mention of the μάγοι (magi) coming from the east (2:1) as well as in the order of Jesus to make disciples of all ἔθνος (nations; 28:19; TNIV).⁶

On the other hand, such acceptance may also be manifested in relation to ethical characteristics of the referents.⁷ Both the explanation of the parable of the weeds as well as the parable of the net affirm that those who will not be thrown into the fiery furnace are named δίκαιοι (righteous; 13:43, 49). Similarly, while the “blessed” slave, whom his master found working when he arrived, is called by Jesus “faithful and wise” (24:45-46), in a similar way those servants who managed properly the talents of their master are named “good and trustworthy” (25:21, 23). Furthermore, the mention of positive characteristics along with a favorable reward may evoke, for example, the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus called “blessed” those who are “poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (5:3; TNIV).

After these characters have being accepted, each pericope describes the reward they receive. The motif of recompense is not a strange topic for Matthew’s story, but a common theme in it (cf. 5:12, 46; 6:1-2, 5, 16; 10:41-42),⁸ which can be seen early,

⁶ Cf. Senior, “Matthew 2:1-12,” 396-397.

⁷ Cf., for example, Heil, “The Double Meaning of the Narrative of Universal Judgment in Matthew 25:31-46,” 3-14; Via, “Ethical Responsibility and Human Wholeness in Matthew 25:31-46,” 95-97; and Grindheim, “Ignorance is Bliss: Attitudinal Aspects of the Judgment According to Works in Matthew 25:31-46,” 319-323.

⁸ See Charette, *The Theme of Recompense in Matthew’s Gospel*, 63-118; Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, 140-145; Grindheim, “Ignorance is Bliss: Attitudinal Aspects of the Judgment According to Works in Matthew 25:31-46,” 319-323; and Allison A. Trites, “The Blessings and Warnings of the Kingdom (Matthew 5:3-12, 7:13-27),” *RevExp* 89 (1992): 183-191.

for instance, in the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount (5:3-12). Thus, while the meek will inherit the earth (5:5), the pure in heart will see God (5:8). Similarly, in Matt 19, Jesus promises his disciples that they will sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel (19:28), also assuring them that “everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name’s sake, will receive a hundred-fold, and will inherit the eternal life” (19:20; NRSV). In a similar way, the pericopes containing the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” show the same emphasis. Initially in Matt 8, and then in Matt 22, the recompense is to participate in a meal (8:11; 22:9-10). In the first case, there is no invitation to take part in a feast in the “kingdom of heaven” (8:11). In the second one, however, the summons is clearly manifested, where those who were invited are part of the wedding of the king's son (22:9). Likewise, the slaves of the parable of the talents are also invited to “enter into” the joy of their master (25:21, 23). In this last example, nonetheless, the slaves also are promoted, as the slave of Matt 24 (24:47), to be in charge of their master’s possessions (25:21, 23). Then, in the explanation of the parable of the weeds, the “righteous” will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (13:43). Finally, in the parable of the net, the “good,” which metaphorically represent the “righteous” (13:49), will be put into containers, unlike the “wicked” who will be thrown into the “fiery furnace” (13:49).

Taking into account the above, it is possible to say that the reward received would cause a rhetoric joy.⁹ Thus, the invitations, promotions and the privilege to shine in the kingdom of the Father would produce rhetoric happiness, which narratively would be in contrast of the events that are associated with the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

⁹ The only time that “joy” is expressly manifested is in the parable of the talents, when twice the master invites his servants to enter “into his joy” (25:21, 23)

Rejection and punishment: the sadness and anger of those who are “weeping and gnashing” their teeth.

In opposition to those who are experiencing the joy and happiness of being accepted and rewarded, every pericope also shows the fate of those who are rejected and rebuked. The theme of rejection and castigation is not alien to the Gospel of Matthew.¹⁰ For instance, the story says early, in the voice of John the Baptist, that the tree that “does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire” (3:10; NRSV). Then Jesus not only repeats the same concept (7:19), but also affirms, “that every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted” (15:13). Finally, towards the end of the story, Jesus makes his rejection more evident, saying that the kingdom of God will be taken away “from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom” (21:43).¹¹

Another finding in my research is that the first three times that the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” appears in the Gospel of Matthew, geographically located in Galilee (4:12-19:1), the numeric description of those who are condemned is given in plural terms. Thus, the mention of the “sons of the kingdom” (8:12), the “sons of the evil one” (13:38, 42) and the “wicked” (πονηροὺς) of the parable of the net (13:49), would portray a numerous group. On the other hand, the other three times that the expression occurs, geographically located in Jerusalem (cf. 21:1), the reference is singular. In the parable of the wedding feast only one man is rejected by the king and condemned (22:11-12). Then, both in the parable of the wicked or wise

¹⁰ Charette, *The Theme of Recompense in Matthew's Gospel*, 119-161; Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, 129-140; Marguerat, *Le jugement dans L'évangile de Matthieu*, 303-323; and Chaim Milikowsky, “Which Gehenna: Retribution and Eschatology in the Synoptic Gospels and in Early Jewish Texts,” *NTS* 34 (1988): 238-249.

¹¹ An important moment that underlines narratively the concept of rejection is Matt 23. This is when Jesus declares after having left the temple “your house is left to you, desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’” (23:38-39).

servant as well as in the parable of the talents only one slave is rejected by the master (24:48-51; 25:30). Accordingly, the concept of refusal and castigation would be performed either to a group or to a person. In the Gospel of Matthew it is possible to see both sides. Therefore, although mostly the theme of rejection is presented as a plural description (cf. 3:7-10; 12:38-42; 23: 13-36; 25:41-46), in some cases it is also addressed individually (18:32-35; 26:24-25). Nonetheless, these characters are metaphoric referents, therefore, the real point in the narrative is not underlining a “number,” but showing how the “actions” of those individual characters lead them to be rejected. In the first three pericopes these characters were rejected because of either their lack of faith (8:10-12) or due to the negative tone with which they are portrayed (13:41-42, 49-50). However, in the last three pericopes, these three stories are portraying the reason why these characters were refused (22:11-13; 24:45-51; 25:14-30).

The punishment of those who were banned is presented, firstly, in terms of exclusion. While three of them are thrown into the “outer darkness” (8:12; 22:13; 25:30), two are cast into the “fiery furnace” (13:42; 50). Finally, only one is “put” with the hypocrites (24:51). In all of these cases, whilst they are “outside,” those who were accepted are “inside” enjoying the recompense received (8:11; 13: 43, 50; 22:10; 24: 45-47; 25:14-23). From this narrative perspective, the fact that they “are outside,” without enjoying, for example, a meal (8:11; 22:10) or a job promotion (24:45-47; 25:14-23), would serve to show that the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is an expression of sadness for not being “inside” enjoying those rewards. Accordingly, each recompense is given in terms of proximity and inclusion, therefore, the fact that the “sons of the evil one” in Matt 13 are “weeping and gnashing” their teeth” is

understood in the sense that they have lost their privilege to shine like the sun in the Father's kingdom (13:43).

Another implication of my research is the fact that the punishment is also expressed as a violent act.¹² In five cases the narrative says that the condemned were "thrown" either into the "outer darkness" or into the "fiery furnace" (8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 25:30). The only exception seems to be the slave who is "put" with the hypocrites (24:51). However, prior to having put the hypocrites "there," the parable metaphorically affirms that that slave was "cut in pieces" (24:51). Thus, from a rhetorical point of view, the way in which those condemned are "thrown," for instance, into the "outer darkness" or "put" with the hypocrites is violent. Furthermore, the violence shown in these pericopes is also visible elsewhere in the Gospel of Matthew. In Matt 18, for example, the slave who is rejected by his master is tortured until "he could pay his entire debt" (18:34). Likewise, in Matt 21, one parable says that the tenants who killed the servants and the son of the landowner will suffer a "miserable death" (21:41; NRSV).

Nonetheless, the point of every pericope is not only to underline the violence of each narrative, but also rhetorically shows that the expulsion of every condemned one is carried out by a third character. Sometimes that third character is anonymous, like the persons who threw out the "sons of the kingdom" of Matt 8 (8:12) and the lazy slave of Matt 25 (25:30). In other cases, however, the violence is performed either by angels (13:41-42, 49-50) or by the master's slaves (24:51) or also by the king's attendants (22:13). In spite of these differences, the main point is that those

¹² Cf. Reid, "Violent Endings in Matthew's Parables and Christian Nonviolence," 248-250.

who were rejected are thrown “outside” forcibly, namely, against their own will.¹³

Accordingly, from this narrative angle, the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” is an expression of anger for having been expelled by force either into the “outer darkness” or into the “fiery furnace” or for having been “put” forcibly with the hypocrites.

One of the issues that emerges from these findings is that the references provided by the narrative about the “outer darkness” (8:12; 22: 13; 25:30), the “fiery furnace” (13:42, 50) and the “place with the hypocrites” (24:51; TNIV) are metaphorical images of rejection and condemnation. This is not the first time that the Gospel of Matthew uses “images” to emphasize the same concepts. The mention, for example,¹⁴ of the “Gehenna” (5:22, 29-30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33) and the “eternal fire” (18:8; 25:41, 46) would allow the perception of a similar idea.¹⁵ From this perspective, the relation of the phrase with the “outer darkness” (8:12; 22: 13; 25:30), the “fiery furnace” (13:42, 50) and the “place with the hypocrites” (24:51; TNIV), would imply that the expression “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” in the Gospel of Matthew, would also function as an image of rejection and condemnation.

Therefore, taking into account the above, in each pericope the first part of the phrase, that is to say, “weeping,” may be understood as an eschatological reference to

¹³ It is possible to confirm this point when we read in the parable of the wedding feast the king’s order to bind the man without a marriage garment hand and foot (22:13). Likewise, we can see a similar idea in the parable of the ten virgins (25:1-13), where the five virgins who were left out of the house, wanted to enter, but without success (25:11-12).

¹⁴ Other images are the Hades (ᾗδης) mentioned in Matt 11:23; 16:8 and “the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire” (3:11).

¹⁵ I am reading the term “Gehenna” metaphorically, not as a “place of final destruction” as some scholars affirm. [e.g., France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 202; BDAG, 191; and J. Jeremias, γέεννα, *TDNT* 1:657–58]. Cf., for instance, W. J. P. Boyd, “Gehenna - According to J. Jeremias,” in *Studia Biblica 1978: Sixth International Congress on Biblical Studies, Oxford 3-7 April 1978. Papers on the Gospels* (JSNTSup 2; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 10, who affirms that the term “Gehenna” in Matthew is used in a “metaphorical and figurative way.”

the sadness of those who are condemned. This sadness may also be comprehended as an expression of self-reproach or unhappiness either for having lost the reward or for having been rejected. Then, the second part of the phrase would imply narratively that those who are “gnashing” their teeth are expressing their anger not only for having lost their reward, but also for having been expelled by force, after having been condemned.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the current study was to analyze, narratively, the six pericopes where the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” was mentioned, with the idea of establishing whether there were narrative connections between these pericopes and Matthew’s story.

The first connection found in the analysis of these pericopes is the fact that the framework of each phrase is eschatological, in keeping with other eschatological references made by the Gospel of Matthew. The second connection is the presence of two groups of referents, which in turn receive two kinds of recompense. The first recompense is always positive, which involves the motive of acceptance. This is given in terms of inclusion or in relation to ethical characteristic from the referents. On the other hand, the second one is negative, which is presented in terms of rejection and set as a violent act. From a narrative perspective, both the theme of acceptance as well as that of rejection can be found throughout Matthew’s story.

The results of this study indicate that it is in function of these two antithetical rewards that the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth” should be understood. On the one hand, some are rhetorically enjoying the positive recompense, while, on the other hand, others are “weeping and gnashing” their teeth. Consequently, the findings of this research support the idea that the narrative meaning of the phrase is related to the eschatological sadness and anger that those who were rejected and punished are experiencing.

Therefore, the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24: 51; 25:30), would function as an eschatological image of exclusion and condemnation. Firstly, the word “weeping” would suggest sadness for having lost the positive recompense or for having been

excluded. Secondly the phrase “gnashing of teeth” would insinuate anger for having lost the reward or for having been rejected by force.

Finally, I recognize the limitations of my investigation. First, my purpose was not theological, therefore, I recommend future studies that would extend the results of my research. Second, further investigation might entail using a methodology such as socio-rhetorical criticism or an explicit hermeneutical focus such as the eco-theological, with the purpose of discovering new insights regarding the phrase “weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

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