

THE VERB ΑΝΑΧΩΡΕΩ IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

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The motif of "withdrawal" is a feature of Matthew's gospel that has been observed by scholars but never independently researched. In Matthew's gospel, "withdrawing" is something Jesus does occasionally. This motif however is part of a three-fold pattern of hostility/withdrawal/prophetic fulfilment Matthew seems to have created. The function of this pattern throughout the gospel is to move the narrative along, specifically by having Joseph or Jesus go from one region to another. In the last instance of the pattern, Judas goes to his death. Possible reasons for the creation of this material by Matthew will be given at the conclusion of the essay.

The seven instances of the three-fold pattern, hostility/withdrawal/prophetic fulfilment, are, with a single exception, found in material unique to Matthew's gospel. It is thus probable that this pattern indicates Matthean redactional activity.¹ The seven passages are as follows:-

1) Mt 2:12-15 "And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, (the mages) departed (ἀνεχώρησαν) to their own country by another way." (For fear of Herod, Joseph) "rose and took the child and his mother by night and withdrew (ἀνεχώρησεν) to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod to fulfil the word of the Lord through the prophet saying 'Out of Egypt have I called my son.' "

The hostile intentions of Herod towards Jesus are so evident in chapter two that some scholars have seen this story as a proleptic

¹ G Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus* (Göttingen Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962) agrees in the case of 2 13-15a (p 57), 4 12-14 (p 64-65), 15 21 (p 107), 27 3-10 (p 76-79) C T Davis, "Tradition and Redaction in Matthew 1-2" *JBL* 90 (1971) 404-421 agrees in the case of 2 22-23 and 4 12-17 (p 408-9)

passion narrative.² The hostility of Herod anticipates the hostility of political powers to Jesus and his followers (described in detail in chapter ten). The mages' recognition of Jesus anticipates receptivity on the part of foreign peoples. Their safe conduct out of Herod's domain is guaranteed by the warning of a dream, and, like Joseph, they withdraw intentionally. In the Greek, this is reflected by the use of the preposition εἰς (into) and the accusative case. The mages withdraw into their own country and Joseph withdraws into Egypt, hence the prophecy of Hosea is fulfilled. The departure of both Joseph and the mages is confirmed by the occurrence of the verb in vv 12, 13, and 14.

2) Mt 2:22-23 "But when (Joseph) heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there and being warned in a dream, withdrew (ἀνεχώρησεν) to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth. Thus was fulfilled the word of the prophets that he would be called a Nazarene."

Herod's policy of hostility toward Jesus is continued by his son Archelaus in the face of which Joseph, warned in a dream, withdraws intentionally into the city of Nazareth. Thus is an unidentifiable prophecy fulfilled (2:23). As in the case of 2:12 and 2:14, the intentionality of the withdrawal is signalled by the use of εἰς and the accusative case as the object of the verb.

In chapter two, the triple use of the verb ἀναχωρέω and the preposition εἰς moves the mages and the holy family away from Herod in Jerusalem either to a foreign country or to Egypt and thence to Galilee. Prophetic fulfilment sanctions these acts of withdrawal.

3) Mt 4:12-18 "Hearing that John had been arrested, (Jesus) withdrew (ἀνεχώρησεν) to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali so as to fulfil the word of Isaiah the prophet, 'The land of Zebulun and Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people sitting in darkness have seen a great light, and on those sitting in the land and in a shadow of death, light has shone.' "

² M Bourke, "The Literary Genus of Matthew 1-2" *CBQ* 22 (1960) 160-175, R Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah* (Garden City, N J Doubleday, 1976) 53, J P Meier, *The Vision of Matthew* (New York Paulist, 1979) 52-57

What has been observed about the intentional use of ἀναχωρέω by Matthew in chapter two can also be observed here. In the face of hostile activity (the arrest of John), Jesus removes himself to Galilee. His movement is anticipated by that of Joseph to the same place in 2:22. Unlike Joseph, however, Jesus “leaves Nazareth” and goes to Capernaum “in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali”—the specific location that fulfills the prophecy cited subsequently. Jesus now resides in the place of his ministry. He has moved from the place of Davidic associations (Bethlehem) to “Galilee of the Gentiles.” This is the movement of salvation history.³ The gospel then records the forms of Jesus’ ministry in and around Capernaum: the Sermon on the Mount (5-7) and healings in Capernaum (8:5, 14).

4) Mt 12:15-21 “But the Pharisees went out and took counsel against him, how to destroy him. Jesus, knowing this, withdrew (ἀνεχώρησεν) from there and many followed him. He healed them all and ordered them not to make him known, in order to fulfil the word of Isaiah the prophet, ‘Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well-pleased. I will put my spirit upon him and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; he will not break a bruised reed or quench a smouldering wick, till he brings justice to victory and in his name will the Gentiles hope.’ ”

In this passage, Jesus’ withdrawal is neither from a specific place nor to a specific place. This is reflected in the use of the verb and the adverb ἐκεῖθεν. Whether the unspecific geography reflects Marcan influence will be discussed later. The new element in this section is that “many followed” his withdrawal. If the preceding three sections are taken together, one can observe the following movement in Matthew’s story. In the infancy narratives of the opening chapters, Joseph withdraws from hostile political forces into Galilee. Jesus himself does the same in chapter four. Then follows the first major proclamation of his message in the Sermon on the Mount. In chapter ten, Jesus warns his followers about persecution and political hostility. In chapter eleven the question about his identity is specifically raised and the answer given in vv 16-19 (John the Baptist and Jesus perform Wisdom’s deeds). The chapter con-

³ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthaus I* (Zürich: Benziger, 1985) 25, 85, 132.

cludes with the invitation of Jesus as Wisdom to rest (11:28-30). 12:14 is the first overt statement of the opposition the reader has been expecting from a reading of chapter two. In response to the opposition, and as the reader would expect on the basis of previous examples, Jesus withdraws. Unlike on previous occasions, however, he is not alone. This same feature occurs in the next instance of Jesus' withdrawal.

5) Mt 14:12-14 "And his disciples came and took (John's) body and buried it; and they went and told Jesus. Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew (*ἀνεχώρησεν*) from there in a boat to a lonely place apart. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns."

As in the previous instance, the withdrawal of Jesus is unspecific (*ἀναχωρέω* and *ἐκείθεν*). The opposition is not so overtly hostile, but it occasions the same response. Lacking in this instance is the third element, fulfilment of prophecy. But it would not be hard to understand the following feeding of the five thousand as a fulfilment of prophecy by implication. This is exactly the understanding of John 6:15. After the Johannine version of the feeding of the five thousand, the people perceive it to be a sign of prophetic activity. In response to the desire of the people to make him king Jesus "withdrew (*ἀνεχώρησεν*) to the mountain by himself."

6) Mt 15:21-28 (After the controversy with some Pharisees and scribes over the conduct of Jesus' disciples) "Jesus went away from there and withdrew (*ἀνεχώρησεν*) to the district of Tyre and Sidon."

In this passage, Jesus' withdrawal is intentional once more. This time it is not to Galilee but beyond the borders of Israel. The conversation with the Canaanite woman which follows can be seen as fulfilment of the prophecy of 12:18 and 12:21. To be sure, the specifically Matthean formula of fulfilment is absent. Perhaps that is because the passage makes articulate the previous promise of the location of Jesus' ministry in "Galilee of the Gentiles" (4:15). Here, a Gentile recognises Jesus' ministry. Luz distinguishes two sections that begin at 13:53 and 14:34 in which the *Stichwort* *ἀναχωρέω* marks the point where, out of the concern with Israel, the first sight of the community of disciples is given (14:13; 15:21).⁴

7) Mt 27:5-10 "And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, (Judas) departed (*ἀνεχώρησεν*); and he went and hanged

⁴ U. Luz, *Das Evangelium* 25.

himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.' So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.' "

The seventh and last instance of ἀναχωρέω in Matthew's gospel is ironic. Judas' death, consequent on his withdrawal, is self-inflicted. He withdraws into a place of death. One could argue that his death is the indirect consequence of hostile opposition. This opposition, as has been intimated from chapter two, will eventually result in Jesus' death.

Apart from these seven instances of Matthew's use of the verb ἀναχωρέω, there is only one other place in the gospel where this verb occurs. At 9:24, Jesus commands the noisy crowd of mourners "Depart! For the girl is not dead but sleeping." Only here in the gospel is the verb found on the lips of Jesus. It is thus not part of the pattern of Matthean redactional activity this essay is concerned with.

Previous Research

Of the modern works on Matthew's gospel, only that of Gundry highlights the theme of withdrawal in Matthew by treating it as a topic under the heading "Flight from Persecution."⁵ By withdrawing in the face of opposition, Gundry maintains that Matthew's Jesus "exemplifies his command to flee persecution (10:23)"⁶ Gundry does not identify any specific persecution as the background to the writing of the gospel but thinks that it was written before 70,⁷ and that Matthew's attack on Jewish leaders (for example, in chapter twenty-three) was because they instigated the persecution.

⁵ R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Eerdmans, Michigan, 1979). See the "Topical Index" p. 649.

⁶ Gundry, *Matthew* 59, 228, 310. So too D. Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 172 (on 12:15).

⁷ Gundry, *Matthew* 607.

Klostermann suggests, with regard to Mt 4:12, that the verb ἀναχωρέω in Matthew usually means deviation in the face of danger.⁸ Strecker agrees, but suggests that the verb can also contain a neutral significance as it does in 4:12 and in 2:13; 9:24; 15:21; 27:5. This nuance is reflected in the English translation “depart(ed)” which is found in the RSV translation of 2:12 and 27:5.⁹

Derivation of the Pattern: 1) Hostile Foreign Powers

a) Israelite history

Matthean scholars have observed the conservative way in which Matthew creates material and attributes it to Jesus.¹⁰ The same observation might be made about Matthean creation of the pattern investigated here. There are several passages in the LXX which contain the first and second elements of Matthew’s pattern: hostility followed by withdrawal. The first is Exodus 2:15 where in response to Pharaoh’s hostile intentions, Moses “withdrew (ἀνεχώρησεν) from Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian.” This withdrawal has propitious results: in Midian Moses acquires a wife and encounters God in the burning bush.¹¹

The verb ἀναχωρέω occurs several times in I and II Maccabees. In I Maccabees 9:62; (12:28); 2 Macc 4:33; 5:27; 12:7; 13:16, 22 the verb is used to describe various military maneuvers on the part of Jewish or enemy armies. For example, in 2Maccabees 5:27, Apollonius, a commander of Antiochus Epiphanes, kills loyal Jews. Judas Maccabaeus and ten followers withdraw (ἀναχωρήσας) into a wild desert place to hide. Not long after, they defeat the army of Antiochus Epiphanes.

It is certainly true that in these instances the third element of the pattern, namely, prophetic fulfilment, is lacking. This third element however is exactly the element scholars have attributed to Matthean redactional interests—the fulfilment of prophecy. This

⁸ E Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium* (Mohr/Siebeck Tubingen, 1971) 29 -“Meint *anechoresen*, wie gewöhnlich bei Mt, ein Ausweichen vor Gefahr ” So too Patte, *Matthew* 209 (on 14 13)

⁹ Strecker, *Der Weg* 65

¹⁰ G Stanton, “Matthew as Creative Interpreter of the Sayings of Jesus” in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien* ed P Stuhlmacher (Tubingen Mohr, 1983) 273-287

¹¹ E Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium* discusses this text on p 17

feature can exist in its own right elsewhere in the gospel as it does in the first two chapters.¹²

If Matthew has drawn the first two elements in his three-fold pattern of hostility/withdrawal/prophetic fulfilment from his reading of these passages in the LXX, it follows that the occurrence of this pattern does not necessarily reflect the historical situation behind his gospel.¹³

b) The picture of Jesus in Mark

The first two elements of Matthew's pattern may have more immediately been derived from Mark 3:7-12. In response to the hostility of the Pharisees and the Herodians, Jesus and his disciples withdrew (*ἀνεχώρησεν*) to the sea. He heals great numbers and then calls the twelve. Robinson thinks that this withdrawal is for the sake of teaching.¹⁴ Scholars differ over the question of whether 3:6 is to be assigned to a pre-Markan source¹⁵ or to Mark himself.¹⁶ As the text of the gospel currently stands, however, the hostility of 3:6 is directly followed by the withdrawal of Jesus.

It is quite possible that Matthew derived his three-fold pattern from a reading of these texts.

2) *Wisdom Literature*

There is another possible derivation for Matthew's withdrawal motif which accords with what has been asserted by some scholars, namely, that parts of Matthew's gospel show influence of wisdom literature and wisdom motifs.¹⁷

¹² K. Stendahl, "Quis et Unde? An Analysis of Mt. 1-2" in *Judentum, Urchristentum, Kirche. Festschrift für Joachim Jeremias* Ed. W. Eltester. BZNW 26 (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1964) 94-105; K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use Of The Old Testament* ASNU 20 (Lund: Gleerup, 1968); R. H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel* NTSup. 18 (Leiden: Brill, 1967).

¹³ On whether the context of Mt 4:12 accurately depicts political opposition from Herod Antipas, see Strecker, *Der Weg* 65 n. 3. On the influence of the LXX in Matthew, see U. Luz, *Das Evangelium* 32.

¹⁴ J. M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark* (London: SCM, 1957) 80. U. Luz agrees that *ἀναχωρέω* derives from Mark. See his *Das Evangelium*, 56-57.

¹⁵ E. Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1983) 105-108, 129.

¹⁶ J. Dewey, *Markan Public Debate*, SBL Dissertation Series 48 (Chico, Ca: Scholars Press, 1980).

¹⁷ M. J. Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology, Law in Matthew's Gospel* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University, 1970); F. Burnett, *The Testament of Jesus Sophia* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1979); C. Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy*

The presence of Wisdom with God at creation is an assertion of wisdom texts such as Prov 8:22-31, but late Israelite wisdom literature develops the idea that Wisdom searches for a place on earth in which to dwell (Sir 24; Bar 3:9-4:4). In these texts, Wisdom takes up residence in Jerusalem as the Torah. But alongside this idea, there emerged the theme of the withdrawal of wisdom from earth—an idea reflected in 1 Enoch 42.

Wisdom could not find a place in which she could dwell;
 But a place was found (for her) in the heavens.
 Then Wisdom went out to dwell with the children of the people
 But she found no dwelling place.
 (So) Wisdom returned to her place
 And she settled permanently among the angels.
 Then Iniquity went out of her rooms
 And found whom she did not expect.
 And she dwelt with them like rain in a desert,
 Like dew on a thirsty land.

This passage is difficult to date since it seems out of place in its present context of I Enoch. As a discrete section, however, it maintained that Wisdom did not stay on earth but returned to her divine

Yoke. Wisdom, Torah and Discipleship in Matthew 11:25-30 JSNT Supplement Series 18 (JSOT Press: Sheffield, 1987). For a contrary position, see M. D. Johnson, "Reflections on a Wisdom Approach to Matthew's Christology" *CBQ* 36 (1974) 44-64; G. Stanton, "Matthew 11:28-30: Comfortable Words?" *Expository Times* 94 (1983) 3-9. Some of Johnson's observations are quite telling but the arguments of Stanton are not. For instance, it is an argument from silence to state that Wisdom in Proverbs "calls in a rather arrogant manner," and then to contrast such arrogance with the meekness of Jesus in Matthew. The text of Proverbs does not describe her state of mind. The fact that she is not being listened to (1:24-25), however, does not suggest that she is arrogant. Common to both authors is the assumption that because Wisdom is female and addresses men, "she" cannot have been seen by Matthew as "the incarnate Son" (cf. Matt 11:27). The issue is rather more complicated than this. In late wisdom writings, the issue of the relation of Wisdom to women and men was specifically addressed. Sirach 24, for example, likens her to a tree whose fruit is available to whoever desires her (Sir 24:19); Wis 7:24 describes Wisdom as "more mobile than any motion; because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things." It is against this background that the invitation to "all who labour" in Matt 11:28 is issued. In a future study, I hope to demonstrate the influence of Wisdom christology on Christian iconography in the course of which early Christian texts such as Matthew's gospel will be discussed. In the meantime, there is some evidence that in texts containing a Wisdom Christology, such as the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus can be described as "Son (of Man)" and, at the same time, not identical to male disciples in the text (Gos. Thom. 114).

abode having found no suitable dwelling on earth.¹⁸ While there is no extant version of the Greek text of I Enoch 42, the Ethiopic text allows one to see the motif of withdrawal connected to Wisdom in this passage.

Although I Enoch 42 seems to be an anomaly within the Similitudes (I Enoch 37-71), the recurrence of the theme of withdrawal can be found in 84:3 and 94:5. In 84:3 "Wisdom does not depart from the place of (God's) throne, nor turn away from (God's) presence." In 94:5, there is an implication that Wisdom has withdrawn: "I know that sinners will tempt men to perform evil Wisdom, so that no place will receive her, and no manner of temptation may diminish." The theme reflected in these texts probably goes back to Proverbs 1:28 in which Sophia says about her intended audience, "Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me."¹⁹ It recurs specifically in apocalyptic literature such as 2 Esdras (4 Ezra) 5:9, where, in the wider context of an apocalyptic vision of the end, the seer is warned about chaos everywhere. "Then shall reason hide itself, and wisdom withdraw into its chamber, and it shall be sought by many but shall not be found."²⁰ Likewise 2 Baruch 48:36 records the words of many in the final days, "Where did the multitude of intelligence hide itself, and where did the multitude of Wisdom depart?"²¹

Several of the wisdom passages cited above refer to opposition encountered by Wisdom herself in the course of her proclamation

¹⁸ I Enoch 42. Text in *The OT Pseudepigrapha* I ed. J. H. Charlesworth (Garden City, New Jersey: Doubleday, 1983) p. 33.

¹⁹ J. M. Robinson, "Jesus as Sophos and Sophia: Wisdom Tradition and the Gospels" in *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity* ed. R. L. Wilken (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1975) 1-16, esp. p. 12-13; O. H. Steck, *Israel und das Gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1967) 235.

²⁰ 4 Ezra in *The OT Pseudepigrapha* I p. 532. Only the Latin text for the entire document is extant. It reads:—"et abscondetur tunc sensus, et intellectus separabitur in promptuarium suum. Et queretur a multis et non inveniatur." *The Fourth Book of Ezra* ed. R. L. Bensly, *Texts and Studies* 3,2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1895 rpr. Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus, 1967) 16; A. F. J. Klijn, *Der Lateinische Text der Apokalypse des Esra* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1983) 34. See also J. E. Breech, "These Fragments I Have Shored Against My Ruins": The Form and Function of 4 Ezra" *JBL* 92, 2 (1973) 267-274, 270.

²¹ The text of 2 Baruch is extant in Syriac. See S. Dederling, *Apocalypse of Baruch* Peshitta Institute, part IV, fasc. 3 (Brill: Leiden, 1973). English translation in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* I p. 637.

or her brief visit to earth (Prov 1:24-5; Bar 3:12; Enoch 42:2). Thus it is possible that Matthew derived the motifs of hostility and withdrawal from a reading of several wisdom passages.

Conclusion

While Matthew may have been influenced by the LXX account of the withdrawal of Moses in Exodus 2:15, or passages in I and II Maccabees describing the withdrawal of Jewish forces that are ultimately victorious, it is quite likely that the theme of the withdrawal of Wisdom in apocalyptic sources is the more immediate background for the hostility/withdrawal/fulfilment of prophecy pattern in Matthew especially when the subject of the pattern is Jesus. This is in part because wisdom influence in Matthew has been detected by previous research to the extent that one can speak of the Wisdom Christology of Matthew, particularly with regard to chapters 11 and 23.²² Even if one acknowledges the influence of the LXX on Matthew, one cannot say the same about extensive use of Maccabees or Exodus in the gospel.

Chapter 11 specifically refers to the opposition and even hostility encountered by John the Baptist and Jesus from “this generation.” According to Matthew’s Jesus, as a consequence of this opposition, “Wisdom is justified by her deeds.” (11:16-19). Here we see a variant of hostility/withdrawal/prophetic fulfilment in the shape of hostility (from “this generation”), reflection on the rejection of two prophets, and the verb, to justify or make right, which in 3:15 is associated with prophecy. Similarly, the motif of Jesus as “the Just One” is now recognised to be an influence that shapes Matthean Christology. Deriving from the Wisdom of Solomon 1-3, this motif contains the elements of hostility, withdrawal (to the degree that the opponents of the just one meet no resistance), and fulfilment (the just one is a “son of God”, and this means that his death is not the end of life).

On the assumption that the withdrawal of Wisdom is connected to the withdrawal motif in Matthew’s gospel, when used in reference to Jesus, Jesus’s withdrawal can be seen as both real and metaphorical.²³ If Matthew is familiar with this theme from

²² See the literature cited in n 14

²³ This observation confirms the argument of e g C Deutsch that the use of οὐκ ἐπίσται in Mt’s citation of Isaiah 42 1-4 in 12 15-21 contrasts the action of Jesus

apocalyptic literature, he seems to be amending it by the addition of the third element in the three-fold scheme—the fulfilment of prophecy. Contrary to the inference of 2 Esdras or 2 Baruch that the absence of Wisdom is a sign of the end, or the assertion of I Enoch 42 that the departure of Wisdom leaves Iniquity on earth, Matthew seems to be asserting that the withdrawal of Jesus (or Joseph or Judas) means that lands such as Egypt or events such as Judas' death are brought within the purview of salvation history and sanctioned by way of prophetic fulfilment. Yet the inclusion of Joseph and Judas in this pattern means that the pattern is not intended to emphasize a specific christology so much as to present a repeated theme. Matthew has turned the apocalyptic language of hostility to Wisdom and her subsequent withdrawal (reflected in I Enoch, 2 Baruch and 2 Esdras) into a literary pattern the repetition of which enhances the development of his gospel.

One interesting consequence of this is a subtle shift in Matthew's portrait of Jesus. On the one hand, through this pattern Matthew asserts the overriding providence of God in the face of what appears to be retreat. By means of the motif, good news is brought to the Gentiles. On the other hand, the Jesus who withdraws in chapters four, twelve and fourteen, and who thus implicitly acts as model for the conduct of his disciples (10:14, 23), is one who is aware of alternatives. Just before the first instance of Jesus' withdrawal in chapter four, the devil proposes that Jesus take advantage of his divine sonship declared at baptism and perform superhuman acts. Jesus refuses. Then, at the precise point of greatest hostility in the betrayal of Judas, Jesus takes the initiative by declaring "Friend, do that for which you have come!"²⁴—a text in no other gospel—and then insists that corresponding violence (a sword that cuts off the ear of the High Priest's slave) be sheathed (26:52) since "all who take the sword will perish by the sword." Then, in verses unique to Matthew, Jesus asks rhetorically, "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the scriptures be

with those of his contentious opponents in 12:1-8, 9-14. See her book, *Hidden Wisdom and Easy Yoke*, 45. See also the earlier work of K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. ASNU 20 (Lund: Gleerup, 1968) 111-112.

²⁴ The text is difficult here (cf. the alternative RSV translation, "Friend, Why are you here?") The Greek reads —'Ἐταίρε, ἐφ' ὃ πάρεαι

fulfilled, that it must be so?" (26:53-54) Jesus' withdrawal, seen in the wider context of chapters three and twenty-six, is an alternative to meeting hostility with opposition in order that scripture might be fulfilled. This wider context complements the seven instances of the pattern in Matthew's gospel, and ensures that the reader understands the withdrawal of Jesus as Wisdom to be part of the larger pattern of God's design. After all, those who oppose Jesus participate in salvation-history. So it is not *retreat from* hostility but rather *withdrawal for* the fulfilment of prophecy that demonstrates Matthew's intention in his creation of this pattern.²⁵

Finally, one small observation about the edition of texts. There is an unfortunate tendency to edit the Matthean text in such a way that the occurrence of the pattern hostility/withdrawal/prophetic fulfilment is obscured. This is true of the UBS and the Nestle-Aland editions of the Greek text at 12:15 and 14:13; and of the RSV and NEB texts at the same places. In these editions, the withdrawal motif serves to introduce a paragraph and thus the occasion for withdrawal is obscured, namely, the hostility of a political or religious power. One might speculate that reasons for such paragraph divisions have to do with editorial preconceptions about a Jesus who should be seen to initiate action rather than a Jesus who withdraws. If the argument of this paper is thought to have any merit, future revisions of the Greek and English texts might take these observations into account.

²⁵ One might contrast the withdrawal of Jesus with another Matthean emphasis: the presence of Jesus as described in 8:23-7; 14:22-23; 18:20; 28:20. See J. A. Ziesler, "Matthew and the Presence of Jesus" *Epworth Review* 11, 1 (1984) 55-63. I would like to thank Mark Kiley and John Koenig for their helpful comments during the preparation of this article.



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