

The Gospel of Matthew as an Exhortation for the Gentile Mission

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I. Prolegomena

In the Gospel of Matthew, the tension between universalism and particularism has been the subject of much discussion.¹⁾ The most distinctive example of this discrepancy is the tension between the exclusive Jewish mission mandate in 10:5b-6 and the universal mission command in 28:19-20. In 10:5b-6 the Matthean Jesus prohibits his disciples from going to the Gentiles, whereas in 29:19-20 the risen Christ supersedes this earlier restriction by commanding them to carry out the universal mission. This inconsistency ostensibly appears to be contradictory to modern readers. However, since the Gospel of Matthew is the most well-organized of the canonical Gospels, an obvious contradiction indicates not that it is erroneous but that there was an

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1) Guido Tisera, *Universalism according to the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 1-11.

inevitable or even an intended reason for this conflict. It, then, gives rise to a question as to how this incongruity can be accounted for within the First Gospel. There have been various attempts to reconcile this seeming inconsistency, but there is no unanimous consensus among the Matthean scholars. This article will introduce the three most common interpretations of the reasoning behind it, and then will propose an alternative approach that the Gospel of Matthew is an edifying rhetoric to persuade the conservatives in the Matthew's community to participate in the Gentile Mission.

II. Previous Solutions²⁾

A. Matthew 10:5-6 as a Regional Restriction?

Given that the region of Galilee was surrounded by Samaria and Gentile territories like Syro-Phoenicia, Decapolis and Gaulanitis, R. Gundry, C. Keener and R. T. France claim that the missional instruction of 10:5-6 'do not go to the way of the Gentiles and a city of the Samaritans'—is not an ethnic so much as a regional restriction.³⁾ As Jesus' public ministry is limited geographically to Galilee, the scope of the disciples' mission is also confined to that region during his lifetime. If this explanation is justifiable, it can serve to palliate the tension between the two conflicting imperatives(10:5-42; 28:19-20).⁴⁾

2) This section is a summary based on my Ph.D dissertation. For a detailed discussion, see Tae Sub Kim, "Israel and the Universal Mission in the Gospel of Matthew" (University of Cambridge: Ph.D. diss., 2012), 86-99.

3) Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1994), 185; Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 315-316; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007), 381-82. cf. Joel Willitts, *Matthew's Messianic Shepherd-king: in Search of 'the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel'* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 181-202.

However, this way out of dilemma is untenable not least for three reasons. First, if the missional instruction of 10:5-6 is not an ethnic but a regional restriction, this mission would be directed to the people residing in Galilee no matter what their ethnic background. If this is the case, it would be very odd semantically, since ‘the lost sheep of the house of Israel’ in 10:6 should include not only the Jews but also the Gentiles of Galilee in its parameters. However, there is no such case in the Old Testament where the Galilean Gentiles are referred to as ‘the house of Israel(οἴκου Ἰσραήλ).’⁵⁾ Second, it is not legitimate to argue that Jesus’ ministry is limited to the people in Galilee during his lifetime. The first summary passage of Jesus’ ministry in Matthew(4:25) depicts the provenance of the Jewish crowds coming to him: “And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.” It is clear from this report that the geographical scope of Jesus’ ministry extends far beyond the region of Galilee. This fact certainly undermines the claim that the disciples’ mission object is limited to the people in Galilee as is the Jesus’ ministry. Third, it is difficult to understand why Matthew uses such a circumlocution as ‘no way of the Gentiles and no town of the Samaritans’ to speak of the region of Galilee. Since ‘Galilee’ is mentioned directly elsewhere in the Gospel (2:22; 3:13; 4:12, 15, 18, 23, 25; 15:29; 17:22; 19:1; 21:11; 26:32, 69; 27:55; 28:7, 10, 16), there is no compelling reason for describing Galilee in such an indirect manner at this juncture. Accordingly, it is not legitimate to argue that the missional instruction of 10:5-6 is not an ethnic but a regional restriction.

B. Salvation-History Scheme? (Missional Development from Jews to the Gentiles)

4) Keener, *Matthew*, 718-20.

5) The phrase ‘the house of Israel’(οἴκου Ἰσραήλ) always refers to the people of Israel alone. cf. Lev 17:8, 10; 1 Kgs 20:31; Isa 46:3; 63:7; Jer 2:4; 11:10; 23:8; 31:31; 48:13; Hos 6:10

In Acts 1:8 the risen Christ promises, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”⁶⁾ This verse assumes the so called salvation-history scheme, the sequence among mission targets: ‘first from Jews and then to the Gentiles.’ This missional scheme stands out not only in Acts but also in the Pauline epistle. In Romans 1:16, Paul says “I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, both to the Jew first and to the Greek (Τουδαίω τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι).” While it is a Lukan or a Pauline paradigm, this pattern of missionary expansion in the early church might have been familiar to Matthew as well.⁷⁾ In this regard, it has often been assumed that Matthew reflected this viewpoint also in his gospel: the mission mandate to Israel in Matthew 10:5-6 alludes to the Jewish priority in the mission fields, whereas the universal mission command in 28:19-20 shows the later expansion to the Gentiles.⁸⁾ According to this view, the ethnic restriction in the mission fields is annulled after Easter. This being so, the exclusive Jewish mission and the Gentile mission in Matthew are not in fact contradictory. Instead, they echo the expansion of the mission targets in the early church, i.e., “from Jews first and then to the Gentiles.”

Admittedly, it is true that the risen Jesus at the end of the Gospel sends out his disciples to all nations. It should not, however, be missed that the mission discourse(10:5-42) still upholds the on-going restriction upon the mission to the Gentiles even after Easter. Matthew 10:23, in

6) This geographical expansion of the missional scope is reflected in the overall structure of Acts. cf. Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary of Acts of Apostles*, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 7.

7) J. P. Meier, “Law and History in Matthew’s Gospel: A Redactional Study of Mt 5:17-48”, *Analecta Biblica* 71 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976), 27; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew 8-18* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 168.

8) Meier, “Law”, 27; Charles H. H. Scobie, “Jesus or Paul : the Origin of the Universal Mission of the Christian Church” in *From Jesus to Paul*, ed. P. Richardson and J. Hurd (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1984), 55-56.

particular, says “When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.” There is a growing consensus among the Matthean scholars that ‘the coming of the Son of Man’ here indicates the parousia(παρουσία), i.e., the second coming of Jesus.⁹⁾ The mission discourse, then, conjures up at this juncture an eschatological vision that the exclusive Jewish mission(10:5-6) is to be retained until the end of the age! Given that Matthew 10:23 assumes the on-going restriction upon the mission to the Gentiles even during the post-Easter period, it can hardly be said with any degree of certainty that the salvation-history scheme is presupposed in Matthew as in Luke and Romans.

This observation gains further support, once the narrative of the Canaanite woman in Matthew is compared with its parallel in Mark. In Mark 7:27 Jesus replies to the Syro-phoenician woman, saying “Let the children first be fed (ἄφες πρῶτον χορτασθῆναι τὰ τέκνα).” The ‘children’ here of no doubt refer to Jews. This statement of Jesus in Mark, then, implies the priority of the Jewish mission, which is essentially similar to Romans 1:16 and Act 1:8 as seen above.¹⁰⁾ However, in the Matthean parallel (15:24), it should be noted that Matthew has altered this Markan version by replacing it with “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel(οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ).” In this verse, Matthew substituted the exclusiveness of the Jewish mission for the priority of the Jewish mission. There is no hint of the missional hierarchy between Jews and the Gentiles. It is only the exclusive Jewish mission that is singled out in Matthew’s account. Unlike the Markan parallel, then, Matthew’s alteration indicates “not to the Gentiles but to Jews alone!”¹¹⁾ If Matthew had intended to reflect the

9) David Turner, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 276-77.

10) John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2002), 233.

11) In Matthew 10:6 where Jesus commands the exclusive Jewish mission, saying “But go rather (μᾶλλον) to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” the Greek adverb μᾶλλον is used instead of πρῶτον. This μᾶλλον does not permit such a sequence as ‘first to Jews and then to the Gentiles.’ cf. Schuyler Brown, “The Two-fold

salvation-history scheme in his Gospel as Mark did, there would have been no compelling reason for him to rework the Markan parallel. Accordingly, the idea that the salvation-history scheme, i.e., the missional development from Jews to the Gentiles is drawn out in the First Gospel should be ruled out.¹²⁾

C. Annulment of the Jewish Mission?

During the public ministry of Jesus, he sent his disciples to Israel alone and prohibited them from proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles(10:5-6). After his resurrection, however, the mission to 'all the nations(πάντα τὰ ἔθνη)' is delegated to the disciples (28:19-20). Some scholars consider the latter imperative as a cancellation of the former, interpreting 'πάντα τὰ ἔθνη' to mean not 'all the nations' but 'all the Gentiles'.¹³⁾ If this is the case, only the Gentile mission mandate in 28:19-20 is left as a living command to the Matthean community, whereas the mission to Israel itself(10:6) is annulled after Easter.¹⁴⁾

As mentioned above, however, this view gets nowhere, once Matthew 10:23 is taken into consideration: "When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes." From the logic embedded in this verse, the mission to Israel will not reach its

Representation of the Mission in Matthew's Gospel," *Studia Theologica* 31 (1977), 22.

12) D. C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 224.

13) Douglas R. A. Hare and Daniel J. Harrington, "Make Disciples of All the Gentiles," *CBQ* 37 (1975) 363-69; Wolfgang Trilling, *Das wahre Israel: Studien zur Theologie des Matthäusevangeliums* (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1964), 103. For arguments against Hare and Harrington, see John P. Meier, "Nations or Gentiles in Matthew 28:19?," *CBQ* 39 (1977), 95-102.

14) Eung Chun Park, *The Mission Discourse in Matthew's Interpretation* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1995), 178-86; Ulich Luz, *Matthew 8-20* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 74; D. Hare, *Matthew* (Louisville, Ky.: John Knox Press, 1993), 111.

consummation before the end time. Besides, Matthew 10:17-23 as a whole envisages perilous situations that the Jewish missionaries would encounter during the post-Easter period rather than before the time of Jesus' death.¹⁵⁾ Accordingly, the Jewish mission is not so much a bygone or annulled command after Easter, but still a living message to its audience. Thus, both the exclusive Jewish and the Gentile mission mandates at the same time claim to be effective to the current Matthean community. Therefore, the tension between the two conflicting mission commands remains unresolved.

III. An Alternative Approach from Redaction Criticism.

Redaction criticism, which has been one of the predominant methodologies in synoptic studies since World War II, focuses on the collection, arrangement, editing, and modification of source materials and composition of new elements.¹⁶⁾ The basic idea which forms the nucleus of the redaction criticism is a presupposition that a Christian community was standing behind the Gospel's composition and its modifications of the source materials are attributed to its unique social situation.¹⁷⁾ While it

15) Brown, "Two-fold", 23. cf. Adela Yarbro Collins, *The Beginning of the Gospel: Probing of Mark in Context* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1992), 83.

16) Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 1-3. 'Redaction Criticism' is an English translation of *Redaktionsgeschichte* which Willi Marxsen proposed as a designation for this new methodology. cf. Willi Marxsen, *Der Evangelist Markus: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959), 11. Though its origin may go back to the second half of the nineteenth century when Matthew's literary dependence on the Gospel of Mark was widely accepted, it is German scholars such as Günther Bornkamm, Hans Conzelmann, and Willi Marxsen who gave prominence to this methodology. Though Bornkamm did not use the term *Redaktionsgeschichte* which was first introduced by Willi Marxsen in 1956, his article "Die Sturmstillung in Matthäusevangelium" in 1948 was a landmark in the history of redaction criticism. cf. Günther Bornkamm, "the Stilling of the Storm in Matthew 8:23-27" in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, ed. Günther Bornkamm, G. Barth, and H. J. Held (London: SCM Press, 1963), 52-57.

sounds similar to the form critics' quest for the *Sitz im Leben* of the early church, there is a major difference between them, as E. P. Sanders puts it: "whereas form criticism highlights what is general and typical in the history of tradition, redaction criticism (does) what is specific – to a time, a place and an individual."¹⁸⁾ Such a community-based approach of redaction criticism is not a new development. As M. Mitchell has recently argued, it has been in fact a long-standing hermeneutical tendency to associate the Gospels with their specific local origins since the time of patristic authors.¹⁹⁾

Recently, Matthean scholars since Kilpatrick's *The Origins of the Gospel According to St. Matthew*²⁰⁾ have undertaken to discover redactional findings to reconstruct the setting of the so-called 'Matthean community(church)'. Thus, it is now assumed to a certain degree among the redaction critics that the Gospel of Matthew was written to address the needs of a specific local Jewish Christian community which existed in Syria Antioch in the second-half of the first century C.E.²¹⁾

The community-based approach to Matthew's Gospel sheds light on the present issue—why there is a contradiction between the exclusive Jewish mission command(10:5-6) and the universal mission command(28:19-20) in Matthew. As noted above, both of the two conflicting mission mandates at the same time claim to be effective to the Matthean community. Thus, it is probable that there were two different groups of Jewish Christians within the Matthean community divided by their mission perspectives: while the conservative Jewish members

17) Graham N. Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993, c1992), 23-4.

18) E. P. Sanders and Margaret Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (London: SCM, 1989), 203.

19) Margaret M. Mitchell, "Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim that 'The Gospels Were Written for All Christians'," *NTS* 51 (2005), 36-79.

20) G. D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), 124-34.

21) cf. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew 1-7* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 138-47.

opposed to the Gentile mission, the other Jews took the initiative in this matter. To this issue, it is illuminating to note that within the first-century Judaism, there was a heated debate between the School of Hillel and that of the Shamai Pharisees on the issue of the proselytism—converting the Gentiles into Judaism.²²⁾ Even in the third century, Origen witnessed Jewish Christians(allegedly Ebionites) who abstained themselves from evangelizing the Gentiles(de princ. 4.3.8). Then, no one could be so certain that the Matthean community with a close Jewish affinity unequivocally carried out the Gentile mission in the first century.²³⁾ Rather, it is reasonable to assume that there was a separation of Jewish Christians in the Matthean community on the issue of the Gentile mission.²⁴⁾ This being so, the two conflicting mission mandates in Matthew(10:5–6; 28:19–20) reflect the strife-ridden setting of the Matthean community: while the exclusive Jewish mission mandate(10:5–6) echoes the conservatives’ voice in the community, the universal mission command(28:19–20) represents the idea of the progressive members evangelizing the Gentiles.

Given that the Gospel of Matthew was written in Syria Antioch, the information based on Acts and Galatians gives us an important clue for understanding the Matthean community’s division by their mission perspectives.

22) Adolf Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity: in the First Three Centuries*, translated and edited by James Moffatt (Harper & Brothers: New York, 1962), 17–8.

23) The Ebionites whom Origen mentions here could have been an entity distinct from the Irenaeus’s Ebionites, since Origen seems to expand the meaning of the term, Ebionites, so far as to call all Jewish believers who kept the law in his times (Oskar Skarsaune, “The Ebionites” in *Jewish Believers in Jesus*, ed. Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik [Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007], 442–45). Nevertheless, it does not undermine the fact that there were Jewish Christians with exclusive missiology at the time of Origen.

24) Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew’s Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 74; J. Andrew Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis: The Gospel according to Matthew* (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1996), 230–32; Sim, *Judaism*, 236–46.

“Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus.”

(Acts 11:19-20)

Jewish Christians in Syria Antioch	
Acts 11:19	Acts 11:20
the Exclusive Jewish Mission	Mission to Greeks (the Gentile Mission)
Traditional Mission Stance	New Mission Perspective
Matthew 10:5b-6	Matthew 28:19-20

After the martyrdom of Stephen in Jerusalem, Jewish Christians were dispersed to Antioch in Syria. As Acts 11:19 reports, most of these Diaspora Christians conducted missions to Jews alone. It seems that this group of Jewish Christians was under the strong influence of the Jerusalem church, many members of whom still felt uncomfortable about associating with the Gentiles(cf. Galatians 2:11-13).²⁵⁾ This exclusive attitude was the traditional position of the conservative Jewish Christians in the first century.²⁶⁾ Apart from the conservative Jewish Christians who devoted to the exclusive mission to Jews, however, there were others in Antioch who as appears in Acts 11:20 took the initiative to evangelize the Gentiles(Greeks). Compared to the former traditional position, this movement was seen as a new(or even dangerous) attempt to the Jews in the first century, which brought about an inevitable tension among Jewish Christians in Antioch. For example, when the apostle Peter was in Antioch of Syria(Galatians 2:12), he withdrew from the table fellowship with the Gentiles because he was afraid of the ‘Jews from James.’ These Jews must have criticized Peter because he broke the terms of Jerusalem

25) Rudolf Schnackenburg, translated by Robert R. Barr, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 5.

26) Gerd Theissen, *Sociology of Early Palestinian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 77-87.

agreement as stated in Galatians 2:9, which assigned him to the exclusive Jewish mission.²⁷⁾ On the other hand, Paul, the leader of the Gentile mission, also criticized Peter by denouncing his behavior as an act of hypocrisy. From these evidences, it can be inferred that there was a division and controversy among the Jewish Christians in Antioch of Syria on the issue of the Gentile mission. This strife-ridden milieu of the Antiochian Christianity makes it probable that in the Matthean community, presumably located in Antioch, there might also have been Jewish Christians faithful to the traditional stance which opposed to the Gentile mission as well as other Jewish members in favor of the new mission perspective to evangelize the Gentiles.

The fact that Matthew retain both the old and the new mission perspectives in his Gospel implies that he does not refuse one side or the other,²⁸⁾ but attempts to bring about reconciliation of the divided mission perspectives within his community. A hint for the Matthean solution to this matter can be found in 13:52 where there is a reference to “the heavenly scribe(γραμματεὺς)” who is like a householder bringing out of his treasure what is new and old(καὶνὰ καὶ παλαιά). Whether the identity of the heavenly scribe is Matthew himself alone or all the Christian scribes,²⁹⁾ this heavenly scribe does not abandon the old things to bring out new things(cf.23:23). As far as ‘what is old’ was given by God, it is still as valid as what is new.

This interpretation of the heavenly scribe is often associated with Jesus’ attitude to the law in Matthew.³⁰⁾ The law in Matthew is what God said(15:4), whereas in the Markan parallel(7:10) it is what Moses said. To Matthew, the law is not so much from human authorities as from God.³¹⁾

27) H. Betz, *Galatians: a Commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 108-09.

28) Brown, “Two-fold”, 21-5.

29) Hare, *Matthew*, 159.

30) Saldarini, *Matthew’s*, 163.

31) Gerhard Barth, “Matthew’s Understanding of the Law” in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, ed. Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth and Heinz Joachim Held, trans. Percy Scott (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963),

Accordingly, the Matthean Jesus came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it(5:17). Even though the law belongs to 'what is old,' it is valid as far as it is granted by God.³²⁾ Then, it is also plausible to associate this interpretation with the mission charges in Matthew. When Jesus in 15:24 says "I was not sent(ἀπεστάλην) except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" which is reminiscent of the exclusive Jewish mission charge(10:5b-6), it should be stressed that the voice of 'ἀπεστάλην' is the divine passive(15:24). It means that the real actor of this mission charge is God himself. The exclusive Jewish mission mandate, then, is intended by the divine will as well as the Gentile mission at the end of the Gospel. In other words, Matthew approves the legitimacy of both the exclusive Jewish mission and the Gentile mission with the divine authority. Therefore, as the heavenly scribe, Matthew's stance on the mission perspectives is to preserve both the old and the new voices in his Gospel: the former traditional position is reflected in Matthew 10:5b-6 on behalf of the conservative Jewish Christian members whereas the new position is later juxtaposed in 28:19-20.

Nonetheless, the gravity of these mission mandates is not equal to Matthew. It is more probable than not that he was well informed of the early Christian church which experienced the success of the Gentile mission, while the Jewish mission was by and large rejected in Jewish synagogues.³³⁾ Moreover, the separation of Jewish Christians from Judaism had been accelerated since the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., and they were gradually expelled from Jewish synagogues influenced by the council of Yavneh(Jamnia) which condemned them as heretics at around 85 C.E.³⁴⁾ These historical situations might have made Matthew

86-9.

32) However, not all the laws or the traditions are approved by Matthew. As in the dispute over the purity law(15:1-20), Matthew seems to make a distinction between the laws given by God and the rules from the human traditions.

33) Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 192.

34) Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary Volume 33A: Matthew 1-13* (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), lxvii-lxix.

inclined to put more emphasis on the Gentile mission rather than the exclusive Jewish mission. Accordingly, an increased emphasis on the Gentile mission is found in the last pericope of Matthew(28:16-20). Compared to the other canonical Gospels, the risen Jesus appears only once in Matthew to the eleven disciples and does only one thing, that is, giving them the mission mandate to all nations. There is not even a reference to the ascension of Jesus to heaven as in Mark or Luke. Thus, Matthew leaves a strong impression to his readers by concluding his Gospel with the universal mission command alone. As will be discussed below, the Gospel of Matthew, proceeding to this culmination, gradually leads his readers — especially, the conservative Jewish members — to overcome the ethnic limitation and to join the Gentile mission.

IV. Exhortation for Joining the Gentile Mission

A. Quotation of Isaiah 42:1-4 in 12:18-21

Among the four canonical Gospels, it is the Gospel of Matthew in which the Old Testament is explicitly and most frequently quoted (not counting a great number of allusions), especially regarding the messiahship of Jesus.³⁵⁾ This high frequency suggests that the citation of the Old Testament must have been a very effective method for Matthew to convince his Jewish community that Jesus was the Messiah foretold by the prophets. It was effective because the Old Testament had divine authority to its Jewish members. Likewise if Matthew intended to persuade the conservative Jewish members to change their exclusive attitude about the Gentile Mission, he might well have appealed to the Scripture by arguing that the Gentile mission was the fulfillment of the Old Testament.³⁶⁾ The

35) Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, liv-lvi.

36) Jerome, H. Neyrey, "Decision Making in the Early Church: The Case of the Canaanite Woman (Mt 15:21-28)," *Science et Esprit* 33 (1981), 366-67.

most critical instance of this kind is the quotation of Isaiah 42:1-4 in Matthew 12:18-21.

In order to find out how the Isaiah's quotation works toward the Gentile mission in Matthew, it is necessary to analyze the points of contact made by this citation with the context around it. According to B. Lindars, the messianic secret motif of 12:16 is the only bridge with the Isaiah's quotation(12:19).³⁷⁾ But if there is only one reference of the citation with the surrounding context, Isaiah 42:1-4 would be too superfluous a quotation.³⁸⁾ This is because Matthew always quotes only as much as he needs from the Old Testament.³⁹⁾ On the other hand, Menken, even though he finds many linkages for each line of the quotation, confines these points of contact to 12:14-16 which immediately precedes the quotation.⁴⁰⁾ However, it makes more sense if the quotation in 12:18-21 is taken as being woven into the subsequent contexts as well as the preceding ones.⁴¹⁾ Especially the bestowal of the Holy Spirit in 12:18 is not only linked with the previous baptism scene of Jesus(3:13-17) in a macro-narrative view⁴²⁾ but also linked with the subsequent context

37) B. Lindars, *New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations* (London: SCM, 1961), 151.

38) Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 323-24.

39) Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 14; Richard S. McConnell, *Law and Prophecy in Matthew's Gospel: The Authority and Use of the Old Testament in the Gospel of St. Matthew* (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt Kommissionsverlag, 1969), 120: For example, in Matthew 8:17 he quotes a few individual words from Isaiah 53:4 even though the whole Isaiah 53:3-5 section is thematically in one piece denoting 'the Suffering Servant of God.' But the necessary element for Matthew at this juncture is not the vicarious suffering role of Jesus but the healing power of him. Thus, Matthew borrowed only a few words from Isaiah 53:3-5, which were relevant to his purpose.

40) Maarten J. J. Menken, *Matthew's Bible: the Old Testament Text of the Evangelist* (Leuven; Paris; Dudley, MA: University Press; Peeters, 2004), 59-65. In some cases, however, the point of contact can be found not only before but also after the quotation. One example is the quotation of Psalm 78:2 in Matthew 13:35, which is fulfilled by the way of Jesus' teaching in parables. However, it should be noted that parables not only precede the quotation but also follow it in chapter 13.

41) Jerome. H. Neyrey, "The Thematic Use of Isaiah 42:1-4 in Matthew 12," *Biblica* 63 (1982), 457-73.

in chapter 12. In 12:18 Jesus' divine authority is affirmed as one with God's Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμά μου). And the subsequent Beelzebul controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees (12:22-37) renders a heated debate over the source of Jesus' exorcism, which Jesus ascribes to the God's Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμά μου). Then, τὸ πνεῦμά creates a verbal connection between the quotation and the Beelzebul controversy that follows it.⁴³⁾ The fact that the current quotation relates to the following contexts makes it probable that the mention of the Gentiles in the quotation (12:18d, 21) can also be associated with the subsequent context, namely, the sign of Jonah and Solomon in 12:41-42, and 'the Great Commission' (28:19-20) in a macro-narrative sense.⁴⁴⁾

In 12:18d which says "κρίσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἀπαγγελεῖ (he proclaims the justice to the Gentiles)", Matthew diverges from the LXX Isaiah 42:1 by substituting ἀπαγγέλλω (proclaim) for ἐκφέρω (bring out). This is a meaningful variation because ἀπαγγέλλω is frequently employed to proclaim the good news about Jesus in Matthew (2:8; 8:33; 11:4; 28:8, 10, 11).⁴⁵⁾ Thus, the ἀπαγγέλλω of the Servant is associated with the preaching ministry of Jesus.⁴⁶⁾ As the double mention of the Gentiles in the quotation indicates (12:18d, 21), this preaching ministry of Jesus is involved in the Gentiles. The point of contact between this quotation and the surrounding context, then, can be found in 12:41-42.⁴⁷⁾ In 12:41-42, Ninevites and the Queen of the South accepted the κήρυγμα (teaching) of Jonah and σοφία (wisdom) of Solomon respectively. Since both Ninevites and the pagan Queen are fine examples of the Gentiles, the works of Jonah and Solomon can be taken as the evangelization of the Gentiles.⁴⁸⁾

42) Hare, *Matthew*, 135-37.

43) Neyrey, "Isaiah 42:1-4," 457-73.

44) O. L. Cope, *Matthew, a Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven* (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 1976), 38-40.

45) Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 325.

46) Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and Its Use of the Old Testament* (Uppsala: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1954), 111.

47) Cope, *Matthew*, 40-43.

Given that *πλεῖον*(greater) in vv. 41-42 implies the ministry of Jesus which surpasses that of Jonah and Solomon,⁴⁹⁾ it alludes to Jesus' involvement in the Gentile mission on even a greater scale, namely, to all nations. Accordingly, in the last chapter of the Gospel, the risen Jesus proclaims the mission to all nations, which completely fulfills the Isaiah's oracle.⁵⁰⁾ This O.T. prophecy is, then, very significant to the contemporary Matthean community, which is living in the time of its realization. By arguing that the Gentile mission is a fulfillment of the Old Testament, Matthew exhorts the Jewish audience who greatly esteems the scriptural proof to participate in it. Therefore, the fulfillment of the Old Testament is an effective way that Matthew encourages the conservative members to join the Gentile mission.

B. The Canaanite Woman (15:21-28)

Harrington, to name but one scholar, assumes that the Canaanite woman's story implies the contemporary situation of the "Matthean community" where relations between Jews and the Gentiles were a very sensitive issue.⁵¹⁾ Thus one can expect that Matthew's missiological intention for its readers can be found in this pericope. Against this argument, Sim⁵²⁾ and Levine⁵³⁾ opine that this story does not suggest anything meaningful to the Gentile mission of the community, but at best means that they should sometimes have compassion on the Gentiles in need.

48) Neyrey, "Isaiah 42:1-4," 462.

49) Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 192.

50) McConnell, *Law*, 124-25.

51) Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 236.

52) Sim, *Judaism*, 224.

53) Amy-Jill Levine, "Matthew's Advice to a Divided Readership" in *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in Memory of William G. Thompson ed. David E. Aune* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 33.

In 15:24, however, Jesus says “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Since it is clearly reminiscent of the exclusive mission charge in 10:6, it is not legitimate to argue that the Canaanite woman’s story is irrelevant to the community’s mission perspective. Given that the ‘bread(ἄρτος)’ in Jesus’ words stands for salvation,⁵⁴⁾ giving this or its crumbs to the woman has a connotation of missionary work as well. Moreover, because of the woman’s identity as a Gentile and her encounter with Jesus, a Jew who was the role-model for Matthew’s community to imitate, this story is significant enough to those who deliberated on the Gentile mission issue. Accordingly, the Canaanite woman’s story functions as a model for its Jewish readers in the community on that matter.

Redaction criticism and the two-source hypothesis presuppose that this narrative in Matthew draws upon its parallel in Mark. Thus, if there is an alteration from Mark to Matthew, this change is attributed to Matthew’s own theology. A comparison of the two narratives in question discloses a major difference between them. As mentioned earlier, Matthew added an eye-catching phrase to the Markan parallel: “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” This phrase of no doubt resonates with the hard-liners in Matthew’s community since it repeats the exclusive Jewish mission charge in Matthew 10:5.⁵⁵⁾ By putting the verbatim phrase—“the lost sheep of the house of Israel”—in Jesus’ lips, then, Matthew portrays him as representing the conservatives in his community who abide by the exclusive mission to Israel. Thus Matthew drives them to pay close attention to how the chauvinistic dealing of Jesus with a Gentile woman would be concluded in the end.

At first, the exclusive mission to Israel is affirmed as was done by Jesus. If Matthew had wanted to leave his conservative members faithful to the exclusive Jewish mission, the Matthean Jesus might have rejected

54) Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 553.

55) Daniel Patte, “The Canaanite Woman and Jesus: Surprising Models of Discipleship (Matt 15:21-28)”, in *Transformative Encounters: Jesus and Women Re-viewed*, ed. Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 49-50.

the Canaanite woman's request to the end. There is, however, a dramatic turning point in Jesus' exclusive attitude at the end of the story. Touched by the woman's great faith, the Matthean Jesus at last allows her to transform his mission perspective by granting her request: "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish!"(15:28).⁵⁶⁾

As mentioned above, if Matthew makes Jesus represent the exclusive position of the conservative Jewish members, what would the sudden change of his exclusive attitude mean to them? As Jesus changed his exclusive attitude about the Gentile mission, Matthew inspires his readers to abandon their rigid exclusivism as well.⁵⁷⁾ Therefore, the Canaanite woman's story is a buffer zone for the transition of the missiology in the Matthean community.⁵⁸⁾

C. Eschatological Discourse (24:3-14)

It is widely accepted that the Matthean church was an eschatological community whose members expected the end time to come, even in their own lifetime.⁵⁹⁾ The imminent end expectation is conspicuous especially in the exclusive mission discourse(10:17-23 cf. 16:27-28; 24:4-14). After listing a series of the tribulations that his disciples would encounter in the course of their mission to Israel(10:17-21), Jesus consoles them with the forthcoming eschaton which will put an end to the persecution(10:22-23). Since all the sufferings will eventually be terminated at the end of this

56) Patte, "Canaanite", 49.

57) Paul Foster, *Community, Law and Mission in Matthew's Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 229-30: Foster argues "Matthew preserves the story not for its initial limited perspective on the house of Israel, but rather because even the Matthean Jesus who declares this boundary to be operative both in 10:6 and 15:24, is himself the one who removes this rejection of Gentiles by responding positively to the woman (not simply acquiescing) ... it is this alteration of perspective that is celebrated in this pericope."

58) Park, *Mission*, 182.

59) David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 148-75.

age, if there is any means to hasten the end time and thus shorten the time of tribulation, it will be a task of utmost importance to Matthew's community. In this regard, it needs to be stressed that Mt 24:14 presents the universal mission as the catalyst which heralds the end time: "And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come(καὶ τότε ἔξει τὸ τέλος)." The Matthean redaction of the Markan parallel(Mark 13:4-13) highlights the importance the Gentile mission has to fulfill the imminent end expectation of Matthew's community.

In Mark 13:10, Jesus says "and the gospel must first(πρῶτον) be proclaimed to all nations." Given that 13:10 is the answer to the disciples' question about the signs of the end time(13:4), it is true that the Gentile mission in Mark plays a role for the coming of the end.⁶⁰⁾ Yet, as the Greek adverb πρῶτον(first) implies, the completion of the Gentile mission in Mark is not a decisive factor that heralds the end time. It is in fact presented simply as one of many eschatological signs which will precede the eschaton(13:11-13).

Unlike Mark, an explicit connection between the completion of the world-wide mission and the arrival of the end time is found in Matthew. In Matthew 24:14, Jesus says "this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in the whole world, for a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come(καὶ τότε ἔξει τὸ τέλος)." It should be stressed that Matthew appended an eye-catching phrase 'καὶ τότε ἔξει τὸ τέλος' to the Markan parallel. As a result, the Gentile mission and the coming of the end time are closely related in Matthew, compared to their relatively loose connection in Mark. Therefore, the completion of the Gentile mission in Matthew becomes the decisive sign which leads to the end time: the more gentile nations to whom the gospel is proclaimed, the closer the end time will come!⁶¹⁾

60) Craig A. Evans, *Word Biblical Commentary 34B: Mark 8:27-16:20* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 310.

61) W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew 19-28* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 343-44.

As mentioned above, the Matthean community was an eschatological community. Its members looked forward to seeing the coming of Christ and the eschaton in their lifetime. Accordingly, if there was any act that could bring the end time near, it would become the most important task for the community. In Matthew, it is the Gentile mission that leads to such an eschatological consequence. Therefore, the Gentile mission is the most urgent and pressing duty for Matthew's community and becomes the mandate surpassing the exclusive Jewish mission: unless the conservative members change their exclusive attitude to the Gentile mission, the end time which they long for will be delayed. As seen thus far, the Gospel of Matthew is an edifying rhetoric to exhort the community members to participate in the Gentile mission.

V. Conclusion

In the Gospel of Matthew, the obvious tension between the exclusive Jewish mission and the Gentile mission mandates has raised a vexing question as to how to reconcile this inconsistency in one Gospel. Scholars have come up with many answers for it, but they are insufficient in solving this problem holistically. The present article approached this question suggesting that there was a division of the Jewish members in the first-century Matthean community on the issue of the Gentile mission. Some of Jewish members supposedly adhered to the traditional stance which opposed to the Gentile mission(10:5-6), whereas other members were in favor of it(28:19-20). Even though Matthew's theological conviction was the universal mission including both Jews and the Gentiles, he did not recklessly discard the traditional exclusivism. Instead, as the Gospel proceeds to the Great Commission(28:16-20), Matthew gradually persuades his conservative members to overcome the ethnic limitation and to join the Gentile mission. For this purpose, Matthew presents the Gentile mission as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy(12:18-21). Jesus is

also set as a model who changes the exclusive attitude about the Gentile mission(15:21-28). Most importantly, the completion of the world-wide mission is described as having the eschatological significance that brings about the eschaton(24:14), which is the most urgent and pressing duty to Matthew's community under persecution. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Gospel of Matthew is an edifying rhetoric to persuade its conservative Jewish members to be open towards the Gentile Mission.

Key Words: Gentile, mission, redaction criticism, community-based approach

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<Abstract>

The Gospel of Matthew as an Exhortation for the Gentile Mission

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This research aims to resolve the vexing question about the contradiction between the exclusive Jewish mission command in Matt 10:5b-6 and the Great Commission in Matt 28:19-20. In 10:5b-6, the Matthean Jesus prohibits his disciples from approaching the Gentiles, whereas in 28:19-20 the risen Christ supersedes this earlier restriction by commanding them to carry out the Gentile mission. This inconsistency appears contradictory to many modern readers.

The present article approaches this question suggesting that the two conflicting mission commands in fact reflect a division of Jewish Christian members in the first-century Matthean community on the issue of the Gentile mission. While conservative Jewish members in the community opposed to the Gentile mission(10:5-6), others took the initiative to evangelize the Gentiles(28:19-20). Even though Matthew's theological conviction was the universal mission aiming to both Jews and the Gentiles, he did not recklessly discard the traditional exclusivism. While acknowledging both the old and the new stances, Matthew gradually puts more emphasis on the necessity of the Gentile mission as the Gospel proceeds to the end.

First, Matthew 12:18-21 shows the conservatives who respect divine authority of the Old Testament that the Gentile mission is the fulfillment of the Isaiah's prophecy(Isa 42:1-4). Second, Jesus, being depicted as the

one persuaded by the faith of the Canaanite woman, is set as a model who changes the exclusive attitude about the Gentile mission(15:21-28). Third, the completion of the world-wide mission is presented as having the eschatological significance that brings about the eschaton(24:14), which is the most urgent and pressing duty to Matthew's community under persecution. These evidences suggest that the Gospel of Matthew, with respect to the mission perspective, is an edifying rhetoric to persuade its conservative Jewish members to overcome their ethnic prejudice and to join the Gentile mission.

Key Words: Gentile, mission, redaction criticism, community-based approach