

STEVEN JAMES STILES

Jesus' Fulfilment of the Torah and Prophets

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe*

594

Mohr Siebeck

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Steven James Stiles

Jesus' Fulfilment of the Torah and Prophets

Inherited Strategies and Torah Interpretation
in Matthew's Gospel

Mohr Siebeck

Steven James Stiles, born 1987; 2011 MA in Biblical and Theological Studies, Western Seminary; 2013 ThM, Western Seminary; 2018 PhD in New Testament Language, Literature, and Theology, University of Edinburgh; adjunct professor at Western Seminary in San Jose, CA.

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*Dedicated to Monica, my joy,
and our three children, whom I dearly love,
Madeline, Levi, and Charles.*

Preface

This book is a slightly revised version of my doctoral thesis researched and written at the University of Edinburgh. The origin of the project was an investigation of what made Matthew's presentation of Jesus' teaching about the Torah (especially in the controversial antheses) a viable interpretation of the Torah in the context of first-century Judaism. Although Jesus' teaching about the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount and throughout the Gospel of Matthew is now considered by scholarship to fit within the possible bounds of first-century Torah interpretation, I sought to discover how and why Matthew joined this larger phenomenon of Second Temple/first-century Torah interpretation and the writing of texts concerning the Torah. Did Matthew share many of the same concerns and goals as other Jews who wrote about the Torah and its interpretation? Moreover, why might a Jew find one writing or interpretation valid or worth following as opposed to another? What was at stake for following the right teaching and interpreter? I hope to show in this book that Matthew's presentation of the life and teaching of Jesus fits within the larger phenomenon of Torah interpretation so prevalent in Second Temple Judaism. To put it plainly, Matthew's discussion of the Torah participates in a larger set of Jewish traditions, concerns, and hopes. His significant difference from other Torah interpreting groups, of course, is his presentation of Jesus as the key figure in which Torah interpretation and practice is taught and modeled. Indeed, according to Matthew, Jesus is Israel's long anticipated Messiah who not only forgives his people of their sins with his blood but also whose teaching is the God of Israel's authorized way to practice the righteousness of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The areas of strength in this book owe much to people other than me. First and foremost, many thanks are due to my doctoral supervisor, Professor Paul Foster. His comments and guidance throughout the thesis process were ever challenging and eye-opening. The project simply never could have happened without him. Thank you again, Paul, and thank you for your patience; it is much appreciated. Many thanks also to my secondary supervisor Professor Helen Bond. In particular, her deep knowledge of ancient biography opened countless new ways to think about the Gospel of Matthew. My sincere appreciation also goes out to Dr. Matthew Novenson and Professor Markus Bockmuehl, both of whom served as readers for my thesis defence. These gentlemen both offered priceless critiques that greatly improved the strength of this book.

A very special thanks is due to Hindy Najman, the Oriel and Laing Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at the University of Oxford. I stumbled upon Professor Najman's work and found it very illuminating to my work on Matthew's Gospel, and I heavily draw on her scholarship in this book. When a mere PhD candidate, I reached out to Professor Najman to ask her some questions about her work. Although I attended a different university and was not her own student, she went well out of her way to converse with me and to share ideas with me that greatly improved this book. On numerous occasions she invited me down to Oxford and met with me to discuss my work. I learned so much from Professor Najman in these meetings. These acts of kindness have filled me with gratitude and awe ever since. Thank you, Professor Najman; I appreciate it so much.

This book has also benefited from the comments, feedback, and editing of numerous people. Among these are Maureen Stiles, Ryan Tafilowski, Qui Pardue, Andrew Kelly, Eric and Jamie Beck, Kurtis Peters, Will Kelly, Zach Cole, Mark Lamas, and all the Semplings (that includes Simeon Burke). Thank you as well to Thomas Breimaier, your kindness to others is unmatched. Thanks as well to Dr. Gary Tuck, my mentor and friend, who also added invaluable editing and comments to various chapters. Special thanks are also in order for Kengo Akiyama, whose relentless support and encouragement has brought this book to fruition. I'm grateful to call him my friend. Finally, many thanks to my wonderful sister-in-law, Emily O'Daniels. Thank you for carrying me across the finish line. Much love to you.

Finally, this book is in large part the product of my family's support. Special thanks to my Mom, my Dad, and my brothers for their encouragement. My Dad also helped greatly with the early stages of editing. As for my wife and kids, their patience ultimately allowed me to work on and finish this book. To you Monica, and our children, I offer my many thanks and even more so my love.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of primary and secondary sources in this book adhere to the conventions of the Society of Biblical Literature, *The SBL Handbook of Style*, second edition, Atlanta: SBL, 2014.

Chapter 1

Introduction

To Sh. Vul

The words said by Christ are not important and quotable simply because they were said by Christ. On the contrary, they were said by Christ because they are true and inscribed in the heart of every human being.

Lev Tolstoy

March 7, 1910 - Yasnaya Poliana¹

The letter above is a reply from Leo Tolstoy to a young Samuel Wohl (in Russian, Shmuel Vul), who eventually immigrated from Russia to Cincinnati, Ohio where he grew up to become Rabbi Wohl. Samuel had written to Tolstoy admiring his work, but asking how he, a Jew, could take to heart words that depended so much on Jesus Christ. Tolstoy famously practised Christian Anarchism, a philosophical perspective heavily influenced by Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, and published many of these ideas in books like *The Kingdom of God is within You*.² Although Tolstoy and Samuel found common ground over many of these ideas, the connection with Jesus was a persistent point of tension between Samuel and the author he admired. Tolstoy's letter offered a solution to this dissonance for Samuel, and indeed its effectiveness in doing so is attested by Samuel's careful preservation of the letter for the entirety of his life. Similarly, the tension between Samuel's Jewish identity and his reluctance concerning the teachings of Jesus Christ provides an excellent analogy for prominent aspects of Matthean studies. One of the fundamental issues in Matthean scholarship is the relationship between Matthew's traditional Jewish identity and his newfound identity as a follower of Christ, especially as it concerns the Torah.

¹ My gratitude and many thanks to Professor Irwin Weil, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature at Northwestern University, for providing me with a copy and translation of this letter as well as an explanation of its origin. The letter is currently in Rabbi Wohl's archive at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio.

² Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* (Radford, VA: Wilder, 2008). Although Tolstoy bases many of his ideas on Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, the book's title derives from Luke 17:21.

However, if Samuel Wohl had posed his question for Tolstoy to Matthew himself, the answer he received would have been categorically different. After all, for Matthew, there is no tension between Jesus' teaching and the faith of Israel. In a similar vein, the purpose of the following study is to examine the writing strategies that Matthew uses to address and create continuity between the faith of Israel and Jesus' obvious interpretations of Israel's traditions. I will focus specifically on Matthew's effort to create continuity between Israel's Torah and the Matthean Jesus' interpretation of the same.

A. Problem and History of Scholarship

Modern biblical scholarship has spilt considerable ink on Matthew's presentation of Jesus' attitude towards the Torah; however, Jesus' relationship with the Torah continues to be a vexing issue in Matthean scholarship. Indeed, one of the greatest difficulties surrounding this issue is the interpretation of πληρόω in Matthew's programmatic statement about the Torah (Matt 5:17–20).³ Although there is essential agreement that Matthew 5:17 serves a programmatic function in the Gospel, that is, it provides a key to understanding the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah, scholars radically diverge on precisely what is meant by the ambiguous verb πληρόω.⁴ As a result, scholars have put forth nearly every possible explanation imaginable of how Jesus fulfils the Torah, from the interpretation that Jesus fulfils the Torah by legislating a new law that

³ David C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 126–127, expresses the programmatic function of versus 5:17–20 well as he states, “it is important to note the significance of the evangelist's placement of these logia. They appear towards the beginning of the first Matthean discourse, and are the first words of the Matthean Jesus about the Jewish law. This placement is no coincidence. As the initial statements of Jesus on this crucial subject, these logia are intended to serve a programmatic function. They set the standard by which all the other references to the law in the Gospel must be interpreted. In other words, the later references to the law in the Gospel must be read in the light of these programmatic statements.”

⁴ See the list of scholars who conclude that Matthew believed his followers ought to observe the Torah and the list of scholars who disagree in Matthew Thiessen, “Abolishers of the Law in Early Judaism and Matthew 5,17–20,” *Bib* 93/4 (2012): 543n2, 3. Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Matthew's Understanding of the Law,” *Int* 46/4 (1992): 368, as well, states, “scholars approach Matthew's understanding of the law with varied and unacceptable biases. The result is a virtual circus of views, some expressing the very opposite of Matthew's intention.” For a summary of the many views on Matthew's understanding of the Torah; see Klyne R. Snodgrass, “Matthew and the Law,” in *Society of Biblical Literature 1988 Seminar Papers*, ed. David J. Lull (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988), 536–554; and Phillip Sigal, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth According to the Gospel of Matthew*, SBLStBL 18 (Atlanta: SBL, 2007), 13–14.

transcends and even annuls parts of the old law,⁵ to the interpretation that Jesus fulfils the Torah by both preserving it entirely and by bringing out its definitive interpretation.⁶

The interpretation of Matthew 5:17 is further complicated by the apparent tension between Jesus' conservative statements of complete Torah observance (cf. Matt 5:18 and 19)⁷ and his surpassing and overthrowing of the commandments in the antitheses (cf. Matt 5:21–48).⁸ Numerous explanations have been offered by scholars to account for this tension. Some of the representative explanations are as follows:

Matthew was a Gentile, rather than a Jew, so the conservative Palestinian logia in the text belong to a past that is now distant for Matthew and, therefore, they do not override the abrogating elements of his Gentile Christian redaction.⁹

Matthew simply chose to live with the inherent tension in his sources.¹⁰

Matthew did try to reconcile the radical position of his primary source (i.e., Mark) with the continuing validity of the Torah, but he did so inconsistently.¹¹

⁵ William D. Davies, *Christian Origins and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 33–34.

⁶ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew*, WBC 33A (Dallas, TX: Word, 1993), 1:106.

⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1963), 138, championed the idea that verses 5:17–19 derive from a conservative Palestinian community that was debating law-free Hellenists. Building on Bultmann's argument, Gerhard Barth believes Matthew probably inherited 5:18 and 5:19 as a unit of conservative logia and then added 5:17 (most likely Matthew's own construction) in order to give his interpretation of the inherited 5:18, see 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, NTL (London: SCM, 1963), 66–67.

⁸ So Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 135–136, who influentially argued that the prohibitions in 5:21, 27, 33 are "not abolished, but surpassed" and that "in the three other formulations [i.e., 5:31, 38, 43] there is no prohibition, but an instruction (or a concession 5:31) which is not surpassed, but overthrown." It should be noted, however, that scholars do not agree over which antitheses revoke the Torah and which only surpass it. As a case in point, see John P. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew's Gospel: A Redactional Study of Mt. 5:17–48*, AnBib 71 (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1976), 135–139. Furthermore, verses 16:11–12 and 23:2–3 have also been seen as points of tension and inconsistency in the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah.

⁹ Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit: Untersuchungen zur Theologie des Matthäus*, 3rd ed., FRLANT 82 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 16, 34; and Francis W. Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 448.

¹⁰ Hans Hübner, *Das Gesetz in Der Synoptischen Tradition*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 196.

¹¹ Michael D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, The Speaker's Lectures in Biblical Studies 1969–71 (London: SPCK, 1974), 19.

Matthew deliberately exploited these tensions to appease various divisions within his community.¹²

Although meaning only to radicalise the commandments, Matthew was “unaware” of the inconsistency he created between 5:18–19 and the antitheses.¹³

Similarly, Matthew inadvertently contradicts some commands of the Torah in attempt to argue for the correct interpretation over and against the Rabbinate.¹⁴

Matthew’s eschatology and Christology account for the tension created by the Torah’s continuing validity and elements of change in the antitheses.¹⁵

All of these explanations, however, have inherent weaknesses, and no single approach accounts satisfactorily for the apparent tensions in the text.¹⁶ Matthew, it seems, wants to preserve the Torah while also modifying it.

Now, advances in the research of Second Temple Judaism during the twentieth century have caused “fundamental changes” in the way in which Matthew’s Gospel is interpreted, which in sum help alleviate many of the tensions traditionally associated with Matthew’s programmatic statement and the antitheses.¹⁷ William R. G. Loader notes three changes, in particular, that seem to have shifted the way in which the Matthean Jesus’ attitude towards the Torah is now interpreted.¹⁸

The first fundamental change concerns the centrality of the temple in Judaism. Previously under-emphasised in discussions of the Torah in Matthean scholarship, the temple’s fundamental status in Jewish thought and religion, even after it was destroyed,¹⁹ is now better appreciated. The Torah, therefore, can no longer be discussed as an entity separate from the temple.²⁰ This makes

¹² Kun-Chun Wong, *Interkulturelle Theologie und multikulturelle Gemeinde im Matthäusevangelium: Zum Verhältnis von Juden- und Heidenchristen im Matthäusevangelium*, NTOA 22 (Freiburg, Switzerland; Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 42.

¹³ Günther Bornkamm, “End-Expectation and Church in Matthew,” in Bornkamm, Barth, and Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, 25.

¹⁴ Barth, “Matthew’s Understanding of the Law,” 95.

¹⁵ Robert A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding* (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 267; and Meier, *Law and History in Matthew’s Gospel*, 63–65.

¹⁶ For an analysis and critique of these views, see the reviews in Graham Stanton, *Studies in Matthew and Early Christianity*, ed. Markus N. A. Bockmuehl and David Lincicum, WUNT 309 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 56–60; and William R. G. Loader, *Jesus’ Attitude towards the Law: A Study of the Gospels*, WUNT II/97 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 137–154.

¹⁷ Loader, *Jesus’ Attitude towards the Law*, 270–271.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Matthew’s Gospel is a testament to this fact as well (cf. Matt 5:23–24).

²⁰ Loader, *Jesus’ Attitude towards the Law*, 271. Likewise, E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985), 251, states, “Jesus’ attitude towards the temple cannot be dissociated from his attitude towards Torah, nor can his attitude towards law be studied without

it difficult to maintain an interpretation that sees Jesus confirming the Torah's validity while also abrogating the temple.²¹ Moreover, it renders anachronistic the traditionally common distinction between ritual and moral law.²²

The second change addresses the monolithic view of Judaism set against a change in understanding the relationship between Christianity and (rabbinic) Judaism.²³ As J. Andrew Overman states, "one of the most important insights from the last generation of scholarship on early Christianity and Judaism has been the recognition that both of these terms are anachronistic when applied to the early Roman period."²⁴ Scholarship formerly viewed these religious systems in terms of a mother-child relationship. Christianity (the child) came from, and even superseded, Judaism (the mother). Alan F. Segal, however, has argued that "fraternal twins" better articulates the relationship between Christianity and Judaism.²⁵ In this model, Christianity and Judaism share a common mother and, therefore, both developed from the womb of Second Temple Judaism along with numerous other sectarian groups. Matthew, therefore, is now read as a text that represents a sectarian²⁶ Jewish group, one which shares the

dealing with the traditions on the temple; for the temple rites were based on the Torah." Although speaking specifically about the historical Jesus, Sanders' point is also relevant to the topic of the Matthean Jesus.

²¹ So Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 271; contra Amy-Jill Levine, *The Social and Ethnic Dimensions of Matthean Salvation History*. "Go Nowhere among the Gentiles ..." (*Matt 10:5b*), *Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity* 14 (Lewiston: Mellen, 1988), 100, 168.

²² Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 249. For the explanation that Jesus abolishes the Torah's ceremonial laws while upholding its moral legislation, see Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Matthew – Mark*, vol. 1 of *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman, 1930), 43.

²³ Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 271.

²⁴ J. Andrew Overman, "Problems with Pluralism in Second Temple Judaism: Matthew, James, and the Didache in Their Jewish-Roman Milieu," in *Matthew, James, and Didache: Three Related Documents in Their Jewish and Christian Settings*, ed. Huub van de Sandt and Jürgen K. Zangenberg, SBLSymS 45 (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 259.

²⁵ Alan F. Segal, *Rebecca's Children: Judaism and Christianity in the Roman World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 179. Likewise, Daniel Marguerat "L'évangile de Matthieu et le judaïsme: un conflit de frères ennemis," in *La croisée des chemins revisitée: Quand l'Église et la "Synagogue" se sont-elles distinguées? Actes du colloque de Tours, 18–19 juin 2010*, ed. Simon Claude Mimouni and Bernard Pouderon (Paris: Cerf, 2012), 52, states, "Ma thèse est que la rivalité qui se noue entre le judaïsme pharisen et le judéo-christianisme de Matthieu ne met pas aux prises deux entités hétérogènes l'une à l'autre, mais deux frères ennemis."

²⁶ I am intentionally using the term "sectarian" very broadly in this instance. This complex term has stirred much discussion over its use, especially when applied to ancient communities. It has also attracted much debate in Qumranology. For a helpful overview of the complexities surrounding this term, see Jutta Jokiranta, "Sociological Approaches to Qumran Sectarianism," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. John J. Collins and

thought world of Second Temple Judaism. This suggests that even though the ideas, issues, hopes, and traditions exhibited in Matthew's Gospel are contextualised around Jesus, their origin is best traced and understood in a Second Temple context.²⁷

The third fundamental change concerns the possibilities of Torah interpretation during the time when Matthew's Gospel was written.²⁸ The implications for understanding Matthew's interpretation of the Torah are many. This change reflects significantly the discovery of numerous new manuscripts, particularly the Dead Sea Scrolls, in the twentieth century.²⁹ Many of these newly discovered texts evidence a range of possible models for Torah interpretation and offer example after example of augmentations to various commandments of the Torah, significant adaptations to pentateuchal narratives, and even the institutionalisation of commandments that never occur in the Pentateuch in its now canonised form. In light of this variegated material, the Matthean Jesus'

Timothy H. Lim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 201–226. Anders Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew: The Narrative World of the First Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 90n123, notes, however, that the fact that non-Jews can be considered righteous on account of acting positively towards Jesus' followers (Matt 25:31–46) "speaks against a socio-historical reconstruction in which the Mattheans are described too narrowly as a sect with a salvation-exclusive worldview."

²⁷ As Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, SP 1 (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1991), 1, argues, "the community for which Matthew wrote was largely (though not exclusively) Jewish Christian. For such an audience Matthew could use Jewish rhetoric and themes without explanation." Although Harrington may be exaggerating about Matthew's audience not needing an explanation, he is right to note that Matthew would use rhetoric and themes that would be intelligible to a first-century Jewish audience. That the author of Matthew is indeed Jewish and informed of the ways of first century Jewish discourse, see Paul Foster, "Why Did Matthew Get the Shema Wrong? A Study of Matthew 22:37," *JBL* 122/2 (2003): 333, who rightly notes, "[Matthew's] redactional reworking of the sources shows a sophisticated editor who attempted to produce greater conformity with existing biblical tradition but also did not wish to deviate from this well-known Jesus saying [i.e., Matt 22:37; cf. Deut 6:5] in too radical a fashion. Surely this is the work of a highly trained Jewish scribe." Likewise, Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, CSHJ (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 126, states, "[Matthew's] arguments are detailed and sophisticated, showing that he knows the status questionis in first-century Judaism and is debating with his equals according to the assumptions and norms governing discourse in most of the Jewish community." For discussion of the commonalities and distinctions between Matthew's scribalism and other forms of Jewish scribalism, see Lawrence M. Wills, "Scribal Methods in Matthew and Mishnah Abot," in *Biblical Interpretation in Early Christian Gospels: The Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Thomas R. Hatina, LNTS (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2008), 2:183–197.

²⁸ Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 270.

²⁹ Moshe J. Bernstein, "The Contribution of the Qumran Discoveries," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman, JSJSup 83 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 221.

activity in the antitheses is no longer viewed as breaking the Torah, but rather as fitting within the possible bounds of Second Temple Judaism and Torah interpretation.³⁰ Jesus' antitheses are even viewed as constituting a fence around the Torah to prevent accidental transgressions.³¹ The tension, therefore, that was seen between Matthew 5:18–19 and the antitheses has become largely a moot issue. Indeed, several texts in the Second Temple period purport to represent the Torah, and at the same time, alter it significantly (e.g. Jubilees, Temple Scroll, Damascus Document; even the Pentateuch itself: Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation alter sections of Exodus).³² Moreover, it has been demonstrated that Matthew has inherited many of the exegetical techniques concerning Torah interpretation that are found in these texts and actively participates in this Second Temple Jewish practice.³³ This commonality with other Second Temple texts warrants their careful comparison with Matthew. If other Second Temple texts interpret and develop tradition while purporting to give

³⁰ Loader, *Jesus' Attitude towards the Law*, 270.

³¹ Thomas R. Blanton, "Saved by Obedience: Matthew 1:21 in Light of Jesus' Teaching on the Torah," *JBL* 132/2 (2013): 407; see also Reinhard Neudecker, *Moses Interpreted by the Pharisees and Jesus: Matthew's Antitheses in the Light of Early Rabbinic Literature*, SubBi 44 (Roma: Gregorain and Biblical Press, 2014), 47–48.

³² As Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 197, states, "Second Temple Jewish documents, such as the Book of Jubilees, the Temple Scroll, and the Covenant of Damascus, as well as the early strata of the Mishnah, show that Jewish sects and reform movements disagreed concerning many points of interpretation. They argued over tithing duties, the validity and suspension of oaths and vows, the conditions for divorce, the exact requirements of the Sabbath and the interpretation of purity and dietary laws. Matthew joins in this debate as a serious defender and teacher of his group's understanding of how one should live Judaism according to the teachings of Jesus." Likewise, John P. Meier, *Law and Love*, vol. 4 of *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, AYBRL (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 31, states, "various religious groups within Palestinian Judaism around the turn of the era obviously did not think that veneration for the Pentateuch excluded rewriting its stories and laws ... to make them coincide with a group's own beliefs ... or with a group's expectations for a utopian future temple." For various examples and examinations of the way in which these Palestinian groups both venerated and reworked authoritative texts like the Pentateuch, see the essays in Sarianna Metso, Hindy Najman, and Eileen Schuller, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Transmission of Traditions and Production of Texts*, STDJ 92 (Leiden: Brill, 2010); and Matthias Henze, ed., *Biblical Interpretation at Qumran, Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005). Concerning interpretations within the Pentateuch, see Jeffrey Stackert, *Rewriting the Torah: Literary Revision in Deuteronomy and the Holiness Legislation*, FAT 52 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007).

³³ Serge Ruzer, *Mapping the New Testament: Early Christian Writings as a Witness for Jewish Biblical Exegesis*, Jewish and Christian Perspectives Series 13 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 3, 31–32.

the genuine Torah, it is possible that Matthew felt he could do so also.³⁴ Thus, the Matthean Jesus' departure from older halakah, norms, or traditions of the Torah are now viewed as participating in a larger Second Temple and late first-century Jewish practice rather than viewed as abolishing the Torah.³⁵ We will return to this point below.

Following the above fundamental changes, the majority of scholars now view Matthew's programmatic statement in terms of Jesus fulfilling (πληρώω) the Torah by living according to the Torah and offering an authoritative, albeit a strict or radical,³⁶ interpretation for his disciples to follow.³⁷ This, likewise, will be the operative interpretation of πληρώω in Matthew 5:17 in this book. Thus, rather than abandoning the Torah's precepts, the Matthean Jesus has a favourable attitude towards the Torah, but, of course, a favourable attitude

³⁴ George J. Brooke, "Aspects of Matthew's Use of Scripture in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *A Teacher for All Generations: Essays in Honor of James C. VanderKam*, ed. Eric F. Mason et al., JSJSup 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 2:823, notes that the rewriting of foundational narratives in Second Temple literature may have given Matthew permission to do his own rewriting of Mark (and Q). Concerning Matthew's motives for rewriting Mark, compare David C. Sim, "Matthew's Use of Mark: Did Matthew Intend to Supplement or to Replace His Primary Source?," NTS 57/2 (2011): 176–192, who thinks Matthew rewrote intending to replace Mark because he viewed it as a fundamentally flawed document, with J. Andrew Doole, *What Was Mark for Matthew? An Examination of Matthew's Relationship and Attitude to His Primary Source*, WUNT II/344 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 174, who suggests Matthew revered Mark.

³⁵ Sigal, *The Halakah of Jesus of Nazareth*, 25, notes "But this assurance that what [the Matthean Jesus] wants is fulfillment or observance, albeit on his terms, does not preclude changing individual items, precisely in order to have these particulars meet his terms. The nomos is an archaeological tell possessing a variety of strata. Ezekiel's departures from Leviticus do not abolish Leviticus. Jesus' soon-to-be pronounced departures from older norms are declared similarly as not intended to signal an abolition of the extant corpus (5:17–19)."

³⁶ As Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 260, states, the idea of Jesus radicalising rather than abrogating the law "catches the spirit of the antitheses, whether one isolates two or three or takes them in their present context." He further elaborates, "it is not against the law to be stricter than the law requires."

³⁷ Martin Vahrenhorst, appealing especially to Rabbinic material, notes that πληρώω conveys the idea of fulfilling/doing a requirement or religious obligation. Thus, by using πληρώω in Matthew 5:17, Vahrenhorst suggests that the Matthean Jesus is connecting teaching with doing; see Martin Vahrenhorst, "*Ihr sollt überhaupt nicht schwören*": *Matthäus im halachischen Diskurs*, WMANT 95 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2002), 234–243. Similarly, Sigal, *The Halakah of Jesus of Nazareth*, 24–25, states, that πληρώω has "the sense of living according to [the Torah]. A paraphrased meaning of the saying at Matt 5:17 as I see it, would be, 'Do not think that I have come to annul (or abrogate) the extant corpus of Judaism (the nomos and prophetic sayings). I have not come to abolish it but to fulfill it.' That is to say, what he is about to teach (5:21–48) is the correct interpretation for those aspiring to enter the kingdom." See also Charles E. Carlston and Craig A. Evans, *From Synagogue to Ecclesia: Matthew's Community at the Crossroads* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 99; and Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 177.

towards his rendition/interpretation of the Torah.³⁸ Jesus, therefore, in the Sermon on the Mount is portrayed as an authoritative, even Mosaic,³⁹ lawgiver, teaching the fulfilment of the Torah and throughout the rest of the Gospel Jesus is presented as the teacher *par excellence* – the ultimate authority on the Torah, even over the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees (Matt 7:28–29; 22:46).⁴⁰

Setting Matthew's Gospel within the context of Second Temple Judaism has paid dividends in reconstructing the Gospel's socio-historical milieu and, therefore, has normalised much of the perceived tension in the Matthean Jesus' attitude towards the Torah. Mapping the Gospel text onto the Second Temple world, however, has also led to a highly contested debate concerning the Matthean community's sectarian status in regard to the rest of Judaism. Much is at stake for scholars since the position one takes "influences the interpretation both of many individual passages and also of the sweep of the whole story."⁴¹ More importantly, however, this debate warrants our consideration since it has also influenced the topic of Jesus and the Torah in Matthew's Gospel. Within this debate, scholars take numerous positions, many of which differ only at the level of slight nuance,⁴² describing the Matthean community as taking its stand within (*intra muros*) or outside/over against Judaism (*extra muros*; commonly described as a "parting of the ways").

³⁸ See Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew*, 64; Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," 158; Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 124; David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, SNTSMS 88 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 190; and J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 78–79.

³⁹ For the most comprehensive exposition of Mosaic motifs in Matthew's Gospel, see Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993).

⁴⁰ See Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 177–179; and Donald A. Hagner, "Matthew: Apostate, Reformer, Revolutionary?," NTS 49/2 (2003): 202.

⁴¹ Stanton, *Studies in Matthew and Early Christianity*, 123.

⁴² Anders Runesson, "Rethinking Early Jewish-Christian Relations: Matthean Community History as Pharisaic Intragroup Conflict," JBL 127/1 (2008): 96–97n3, n4, also attests to the abundance of views and their only slight variations. In attempting to categorise the various scholarly views into the *intra* or *extra muros* camps, he actually takes a moment to apologise to scholars that he may be misrepresenting. He rightly notes that the difficulty of accurately categorising the view of many scholars probably stems from their failure to clarify from whose perspective (e.g., the Matthean community's or the parent group's) the Matthean community stands *intra* or *extra muros*. For a similar observation, see Boris Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories in the Gospel of Matthew: Their Redaction, Form Und [sic] Relevance for the Relationship Between the Matthean Community and Formative Judaism*, FRLANT 189 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 346.

B. Matthew and Judaism

Determining Matthew's *Sitz im Leben* is difficult given that knowledge of "Judaism" during the end of the first century CE is sparse. Can we assume "formative Judaism"⁴³ had enough cohesion and power, when Matthew's Gospel was written, so that the Matthean community could stand within or outside? Some scholars, aware of this issue, clarify that the parent group of the Matthean community was a localised force of formative Judaism. In other words, the nascent group of formative Judaism that Matthew's community stands in relation to was another sectarian group that was also vying for control in the local region (wherever it may be that the Matthean community existed)⁴⁴ trying to assimilate other groups into their own.⁴⁵ If this is the case, however, then it still leaves unexplained which larger Jewish parent group this localised form of "formative Judaism" derives from. Anders Runesson has suggested using E. P. Sanders' concept of "common Judaism"⁴⁶ as a reference point for deciphering the Matthean community and its rival sect of formative Judaism's relation with the rest

⁴³ Jacob Neusner has written extensively on the idea of "formative Judaism," see, for example, Jacob Neusner, *From Politics to Piety: The Emergence of Pharisaic Judaism* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973); Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70*, SFSHJ 202–204 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1999); Jacob Neusner, *Midrash in Context: Exegesis in Formative Judaism*, BJS 141 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988); Jacob Neusner, *Major Trends in Formative Judaism*, BJS 99 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985); Jacob Neusner, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981). However, it should be noted that Phillip Sigal has challenged the long-standing presupposition in Matthean scholarship that the Pharisees, with whom Jesus debates in Matthew's narrative, were the predecessors of the later rabbis and, therefore, are associated with later rabbinic Judaism. Rather, Sigal suggests the Pharisees of Matthew's Gospel, and in the greater New Testament, "represent a complex, inchoate mass of pietists and separatists;" see Sigal, *The Halakhah of Jesus of Nazareth*, 5, for a full discussion on the matter see pages 3–8. Moreover, it should be noted that Sigal's suggestion also further complicates determining Matthew's *Sitz im Leben*, since it makes identifying the Pharisees with a generalised and unified historical group problematic.

⁴⁴ Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism*, 115, suggests that formative Judaism "was certainly cohesive enough and sufficiently influential in the society of the Matthean community (no matter where we place it) to stand as the parent body with which the evangelist and his group were in dispute." It seems a bit bold, however, to assume knowledge of every possible place and time that Matthew could have been written. Although Sim could certainly be right, I wish to be more tentative on the issue than he is.

⁴⁵ See *ibid.*; and Anthony J. Saldarini, "Delegitimation of Leaders in Matthew 23," CBQ 54/4 (1992): 663–664.

⁴⁶ E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE–66 CE* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity, 1992), 47. For a critique of Sanders' concept of "common Judaism," see Martin Hengel and Roland Deines, "E. P. Sanders' 'Common Judaism,' Jesus, and the Pharisees," JTS 46 (1995): 1–70.

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