

Matt 28:16–20 and the Course of Mission
in the Apostolic and Postapostolic Age¹

by

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For Ulrich Luz on his 60th birthday on February 23, 1998

The end of the Gospel of Matthew is a fascinating text. It is not just “the key” to the Gospel of Matthew² but also is of eminent importance for the understanding of the mission to the Gentiles (in the period) between the Exaltation and Parousia (Second Coming) of Jesus Christ. It is therefore regrettable that critical exegesis still has not yet gained any clear picture concerning the message, redactional function, and significance of this meaningful text for the course of mission in the apostolic and postapostolic age. It still vacillates between two possible explanations which Annette Merz and Gerd Theißen compare in their textbook “Der historische Jesus”³ as follows: If one reckons with a “strong anti-Jewish attitude of the Evangelist Matthew”, then his portrayal of the Easter event becomes “*an indictment against Judaism* (and a defense against the theory circulating among the Jews that the body of Jesus was stolen). Easter is the ‘sign of Jonah’ which is given (27:63 refers back to 12:40) to this ‘evil and adulterous generation’”, and “*it is here that mission efforts begin to turn to the Gentiles*. The command to missionize, heretofore restricted to Israel, is expanded universally and is now valid for all peoples (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, 28:19f.).” Or, one reckons with no such attitude of the Evangelist. Then “the Risen One appears as *ruler of the universe*, to whom all authority in heaven and on earth is

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² OTTO MICHEL, “Der Abschluß des Matthäusevangeliums,” *EvT* 10 (1950/51) 21 (16–26).

³ Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2nd ed., 1997.

given"; his "superior power is apparent in the fact that the conspiracy of the powerful *from the Jews and from the Gentiles* (the high priests and Roman soldiers) cannot harm him"; from 28:20 it can even be said: "The Gospel of Matthew wishes to make the *Jewish Torah* as interpreted by Jesus binding in the form of his commandments for all peoples, Jews and Gentiles."⁴ In view of the synchronic and diachronic dimensions of Matt 28:16–20, the alternative could also be described as follows: In order to interpret the text as the conclusion of Matthew's Gospel, its individual statements appear to have to be critically questioned and interpreted anew, and if one lets the individual statements stand unaltered, then essential elements of Matthean interpretation start to totter, together with the picture which biblical scholarship has drawn of the history of the early Christian mission.

To illustrate the dilemma and, if possible, to surmount some difficulties of the interpretation of the text, four steps are to be taken: First the text with its problems will be discussed in detail, then, we will ask questions concerning the framework of the tradition in which it is to be understood; after this, we will come back once again to the message of Matt 28:16–20, and finally, this message will be connected to the development of the Jewish and Gentile missions as it is attested to in the Pauline letters and in Acts.

1. The Text and its Problems

Matt 28:16–20 does not present any great *text critical* problems. The text of the 27th edition of Nestle-Aland offers the best available version at present. This is also true for v. 19, where the aorist is not to be read as in B and D, but, rather, the present tense form βαπτίζοντες, and all major sources present the reading of the triadic formula "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit".

The *translation* is much more difficult because philological questions and interpretive problems overlap here. For example, should one render οἱ δέ in v. 17b with "but they" or with "some of them"? Matthew uses οἱ δέ very often and mostly combines it with a change of subjects (cf. 2:5,9; 4:22; 8:12,27 etc.). Because such a change is not present in 28:17, it is likely that οἱ δέ refers to all eleven disciples and one could think that all of them doubted (cf. Luke 24:37).⁵ However, with οἱ δέ, the Evangelist can also distinguish within a group between the one and the other (cf. 26:67). According to this linguistic usage he would differentiate in 28:17 (similar to John 20:24–25) between some disciples

⁴ Ibid. (cf. n. 3) 429, italics in the original.

⁵ Cf. DONALD A. HAGNER, *Matthew 14–28* (WBC 33B; Dallas: Word Books, 1995) 884. He cites a whole list of exegetes who hold the same view as he.

who doubt and others who do not.⁶ This understanding is chosen by, e.g., Eduard Schweizer⁷ and Robert H. Gundry⁸. The verb διατάζειν, which appears in the entire NT only in 14:31 and here (Matt 28:17), means "to doubt", or, "to be uncertain". If one refers this "doubt" to the appearance of the Risen One, which Luke 24:38 and John 20:25–27 suggest, then the overcoming of doubt only by Jesus' words in v. 18 identifies our text as a late appearance story.⁹ But if the doubt (as in Matt 14:31) signals a weakness of faith of all eleven disciples (see below), there is no reason for a late date (of the tradition) of our passage. – Verses 18b and 19b are best understood as a fulfillment of Dan 7:13–14.¹⁰ But some have also tried to keep the thought of Daniel 7 away from the text because Daniel has a theocratic understanding of power, whereas Matthew has one which is based on a theological understanding of creation, and mission is not to be connected with the seizure of power, but, rather, with the guarantee of salvation.¹¹ One cannot, though, use Matt 24:14 to support this view of missions. It is not by coincidence that this passage states that the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is to be passed on εἰς μαρτύριον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. That means: the peoples of the world shall be confronted with the Gospel in such a way that they cannot say on Judgment Day that they had not heard anything about this message. – According to Ulrich Luz, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in v. 19a must be rendered: "all Gentiles"¹², whereas Joachim Gnilka and Donald Hagner in their commentaries and Hans Kvalbein¹³ contradict him and include Israel in πάντα τὰ ἔθνη; they all translate this as "all nations". – Furthermore, it is disputed how the aorist imperative μαθητεύσατε is to be connected with the three participles πορευθέντες, βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες in vv. 19 and 20. Should the command to make disciples of all nations be realized in going (as a precondition) and in the baptizing and teaching (as completion) of the μαθητεύειν?¹⁴ Or, should

⁶ Cf. FRIEDRICH BLASS-ALBERT DEBRUNNER, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, bearb. von FRIEDRICH REHKOPF (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 14th ed., 1976) § 250,1 and MAX ZERWICK-MARY GROSVENOR, *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 3rd ed., 1988) 99.

⁷ *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (NTD 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 3rd ed., 1981) 345.

⁸ *Matthew. A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 594.

⁹ This view has been common since OTTO MICHEL's essay (cf. n. 2) (cf. there pp. 17 ff.).

¹⁰ Cf. OTTO MICHEL, *ibid.* (cf. n. 2) 22.

¹¹ Cf. ANTON VÖGTLE, "Das christologische und ekklesiologische Anliegen von Mt 28, 18–20" in his book: *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien*, (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1971) 255f. (253–272), and JOACHIM GNILKA, who follows him in his commentary: *Das Matthäusevangelium, II. Teil* (HTKNT; Freiburg: Herder, 1988) 508.

¹² Cf. ULRICH LUZ, *The Theology of the Gospel of Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 139f.

¹³ HANS KVALBEIN, "Has Matthew abandoned the Jews?," 54–57.

¹⁴ JOACHIM GNILKA, *op. cit.* (cf. n. 11) 508, EDUARD SCHWEIZER, *op. cit.* (cf. n. 7) 348, and DONALD A. HAGNER, *op. cit.* (cf. n. 5) 886f. argue for this understanding of the phrase.

πορευθέντες and μαθητεύσατε be seen together: "Therefore, go, and make disciples ..." and, thus, only the present participles βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες be understood as a description of μαθητεύειν?¹⁵ – Finally, does the expression συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος, which also appears in Matt 13:39–41 and in 24:3, allude to the judgment of the world and the Parousia of the Son of Man and Judge of the World, or does v. 20 intend to avoid using this majestic title together with a reference to the Parousia?¹⁶

There are also very differing opinions as to the *literary form*, or *genre* of the text. In his days Otto Michel found the enthronement of Jesus Christ described in Matt 28:16–20. However, Gerhard Friedrich pointed out that there were no reliable *religionsgeschichtliche* parallels for the Ancient Near Eastern enthronement ritual presupposed by Michel¹⁷, and Günther Bornkamm objected that, while enthronement ideas were found in the text, its peculiarity lies, however, in the connection of exaltation and mission to the peoples.¹⁸ In addition, Benjamin Jerome Hubbard showed in his dissertation that the end of Matthew is closely related to many Old Testament stories of callings, for example, the calling of Moses (cf. Exod 3:1–4:16) or the calling of Gideon (cf. Judg 6:11–24).¹⁹ In his view, a calling narrative formed along the lines of the Old Testament pattern constitutes the basis of our text, which Matthew revised and to which he added statements about baptism. Hagner is hesitant in approving this suggestion because some basic structural elements of calling narratives are lacking,²⁰ and Hubbard's view made only a "very subjective" impression upon Gnlika.²¹ Yet, he can only propose against this the assumption "that Matthew had an Easter account, in which the Resurrected One introduces himself to the disciples as the one whom all authority in heaven and on earth is given, who sends the disciples out to preach the Gospel to all peoples, to baptize in His name, (and possibly, to teach them to keep all things, which he had commanded them)".²² This line of argument does not solve the problem of determining the literary genre, but merely shifts it in the direction of a summary.

¹⁵ This is WALTER GRUNDMANN's view in his commentary: *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (THKNT; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1968) 578 f.

¹⁶ Cf. GÜNTHER BORNKAMM, "Der Auferstandene und der Irdische," in: *Zeit und Geschichte*, Dankesgabe an R. Bultmann zum 80. Geburtstag (ed. by E. Dinkler; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1964) 172, 174 (171–191).

¹⁷ Cf. GERHARD FRIEDRICH: "Die formale Struktur von Mt 28, 18–20," *ZTK* 80 (1983) 150 (137–183).

¹⁸ Op. cit. (cf. n. 16) 174 f.

¹⁹ Cf. his dissertation, written under the supervision of George W. Nickelsburg: *The Matthean Redaction of a Primitive Apostolic Commissioning: An exegesis of Matthew 28:16–20* (SBLDS 19; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1974).

²⁰ Op. cit. (cf. n. 5) 883.

²¹ Op. cit. (cf. n. 11) 502.

²² Op. cit. (cf. n. 11) 505.

Concerning the *history of the transmission* of Matt 28:16–20, the opinions of scholars once again stand diametrically opposed to one another. Many interpreters want to find a tradition in the text which grew in steps. Heinrich Balz summarizes their opinion precisely when he states that in the baptismal and missionary command of Matt 28 "the quintessence of Matthean theology, condensed in a formal and ceremonial way, converges with the accounts of a post-Easter commissioning of the disciples by the Risen One (John 20:19–23; Mark 16:14–20; Luke 24:36–49), firmly anchored in the oldest tradition."²³

Despite the unanimous text tradition of v. 19b, the question is still discussed whether or not Eusebius of Caesarea had a pre-Matthean version of the text in front of him which contained a baptismal formula including only a single element. Some refer to the phrase frequently appearing in Eusebius' quotation of Matt 28:16–20, "πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου". Yet, because Eusebius also cites Matt 28:16–20 in five cases in the form familiar to us, the assumption of a pre-Matthean baptismal tradition cannot be proven by reference to him.²⁴

Heinrich Kasting,²⁵ Jack Dean Kingsbury,²⁶ as well as Ulrich Luz²⁷ object to such considerations and point out that the end of Matthew, which is dominated by Matthean terminology and connected in many ways with the Gospel, should first and best be understood as a (purely) redactional construction of the Evangelist; Luz omits only the triadic baptismal formula from this opinion. However, for Ferdinand Hahn the Matthean character of Matt 28:16–20 is certainly no adequate occasion to doubt "that in this text of Matthew, a wider stream of tradition, which was of fundamental importance to most ancient Christendom, ... was coalesced."²⁸ Robert Gundry concurs with this opinion also.²⁹

Most modern exegetes see *no* possibility to place the text of Matthew (respectively his tradition) at the beginning of the early Christian history of missions. Like Hahn they do not consider Matt 28:16–20 "to be a piece of tradition from which can be drawn any 'historical' information in the modern sense"³⁰, and assign the verses to the period after the destruction of Jerusalem, in which

²³ HEINRICH BALZ, "Mission, Missionstheologie," *EKL* III (3rd ed.) 439 (425–444).

²⁴ The references are listed and discussed by BENJAMIN J. HUBBARD, op. cit. (cf. n. 19) 152.

²⁵ *Die Anfänge der urchristlichen Mission* (BEvT 55; Munich: Kaiser, 1969) 37.

²⁶ "The Composition and Christology of Matt 28:16–20," *JBL* 93 (1974) 573–584, and by the same author: *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) 75 f.

²⁷ Op. cit. (cf. n. 12) 139.

²⁸ FERDINAND HAHN, "Der Sendungsauftrag des Auferstandenen" in: *Fides pro mundi vita*, Festschrift for H. W. Gensichen zum 65. Geburtstag (ed. by Th. Sundermeier; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1980) 33 (28–43). The article is reprinted in: FERDINAND HAHN, *Mission in neutestamentlicher Sicht* (MWF N.F. 8; Erlangen: Erlanger Verlag für Mission und Ökumene, 1999, 11–26).

²⁹ Op. cit. (cf. n. 8) 593 ff.

³⁰ Op. cit. (cf. n. 28) 37.

the Church recognized the mission to the Gentiles as its main task. However, there is also the contrary view: Without denying the redaction of Matthew, Robert Gundry defends "the basic authenticity of the Great Commission"³¹, and, for Otto Betz, "the Great Commission of the Resurrected One, which has universal validity (Matt 28:19f.; cf. Matt 16:15f.; Luke 24:47), is in accord with the will of Jesus during his earthly existence and with the eschatological Kairos brought forth by God through the Resurrection / Exaltation (cf. Isa 52:13–53:1; Luke 24:46f.)".³² In fact, the coincidence of the phrase εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in Matt 28:19 and Luke 24:47 is quite conspicuous. The only major difference between Matt 28:16–20 and Luke 24:44–49 lies therein that the missionary instructions given by the exalted Christ occur in Galilee in the one and in Jerusalem in the other Gospel. The differing statements as to location must be explained precisely if one sees old tradition worked on in Matt 28:16–20.

Ulrich Luz would like to see Matt 28:16–20 as a *programmatic text* when he writes: "The Great Commission includes two catchwords from 10:5–6, *po-reuesthai* ('to go') and *ethnē* ('heathens'). In other words, Matthew returns to Jesus' instruction of 10:5–6 and changes and enlarges it. After Easter, he seems to be saying, the resurrected Lord no longer sends his disciples to Israel, or exclusively to Israel, but now to the heathens as well."³³ The Great Commission marks, thereby for Luz "a volte-face: from now on the disciples are to turn to the Gentiles. On the surface of the story, 'now' means Easter. But to Matthew's original readers 'now' referred to their own day, a time when the Gentile mission was apparently still a new or controversial task for the community. Having failed in Israel, the community has been assigned a new task by its Lord".³⁴ Luz also understands 24:14 in the same sense.³⁵ The missionary effort to the Gentiles propagated by Matthew, according to Luz, included, rather than excluded "obedience to the Law"; the Jewish Christian opponents of Paul in Galatia as well as Justin, in his Dialogue with Trypho, 47:2, indeed attest to a Jewish Christianity which was observant to the Torah.³⁶ Hans Kvalbein, however, objects to this entire view. In his opinion, the Evangelist did not with Matt 28:16–20 wish to fundamentally correct the tradition in Matt 10:5–6 of the sending out of the disciples, which is open up until the present, but, rather, only wanted to complete it.³⁷ Nor does Donald Hagner see in Matt 28:16–20 any proof reference for a programmatic turning away from the mission to the Jews.³⁸

³¹ Op. cit. (cf. n. 8) 596.

³² "Mission III. Neues Testament," *TRE* 23, 25 (23–31).

³³ Op. cit. (cf. n. 12) 16.

³⁴ *Ibid.* (cf. n. 12) 140.

³⁵ *Ibid.* (cf. n. 12) 140, n. 13.

³⁶ *Ibid.* (cf. n. 12) 17.

³⁷ Op. cit. (cf. n. 13) 55.

³⁸ Op. cit. (cf. n. 5) 886ff.

Hans Kvalbein, moreover, points out that Justin still attests to the continuation of an active mission to the Jews around 160 CE (cf. *Dial.* 39:1f.).³⁹ Because of the fact that in Justin prayers for the conversion of Jews can still be found (cf. *Dial.* 35:8; 96:3; 108:3; 133:6),⁴⁰ and, in addition to this, there are traces all throughout the entire second century of a mission to the Jews,⁴¹ the question is to be raised whether the position of the Evangelist and his Church suggested by Luz has a setting ('Sitz im Leben') in the history of early Christian missions at all (see below).⁴²

The *introductory verse* of our text seems to be entirely puzzling. No commentator can exactly say for certain what Jesus' announcement in Matt 26:32 (cf. with Mark 14:28) means, when he states: "After my resurrection I will go ahead of you to Galilee", and why the disciples are ordered in Matt 28:7,10 (cf. with Mark 16:7) to go to Galilee, where they would then see the Risen One. It remains open, who or what occasioned the μαθηταί to follow these instructions and to present themselves in Galilee on the mountain (of which is not yet spoken in Matt 26:32; 28:7,10, but only in 28:16). Three alternative explanations have been offered. The first is from Ernst Lohmeyer. In his monograph "Galiläa und Jerusalem"⁴³, and in the fragments of his unfinished commentary on Matthew⁴⁴, he utters the opinion that for Mark Galilee was still the place of the imminent Parousia of Christ and then was chosen by Matthew "to be the motherland of all disciples ...". Hans von Campenhausen objected to Lohmeyer in stating that ὄψεσθε in Mark 16:7 and Matt 28:7 (likewise ὄψοντα in Matt 28:10) is not to be connected with the Parousia, but, rather, with the appearance(s) of Jesus which took place in Galilee; besides this, one must reckon seriously and historically with the possibility that "the disciples really set out from Jerusalem under the leadership of Peter and travelled to Galilee".⁴⁵ There can be little objecting to this line of reasoning, if one does not hold the view that the

³⁹ Op. cit. (cf. n. 13) 56.

⁴⁰ Cf. for the context of these references GEORG KRETSCHMAR: "Das christliche Leben und die Mission in der frühen Kirche," in: *Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte*, Vol. 1: Die Alte Kirche (ed. by H. Frohnes and U. W. Knorr; Munich: Kaiser, 1974) 123 (94–128).

⁴¹ OSKAR SKARSAUNE confirms Kvalbein's view and gives still further patristic references for the continuation of the mission to the Jews; cf. his contribution to this volume: "The mission to the Jews – a closed chapter? Some patristic reflections concerning 'the Great Commission'," pp. 69–83.

⁴² In view of these references, I can no longer agree with Luz as I did earlier in my *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Vol. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2nd ed., 1997) 215 f. as well as in my essay: "Kirche nach dem Neuen Testament," *TBei* 26 (1995) 315 (301–325).

⁴³ (FRLANT, N.F. 34; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1936) 10ff.

⁴⁴ *Das Evangelium des Matthäus. Nachgelassene Ausarbeitungen und Entwürfe zur Übersetzung und Erklärung* von ERNST LOHMEYER. (Prepared for publication and edited by WERNER SCHMAUCH, KEK.S.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 4th ed., 1967); the following quote is found on p. 423.

⁴⁵ *Der Ablauf der Osterereignisse und das leere Grab* (SHAW.PH 1958, 2. Abh.; Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 3rd ed., 1966) 48.

Easter stories can or may not at all be evaluated historically. This remains true even against Luz's attempt to understand the appearance of Jesus on the mountain in Galilee from the quotation in Matt 4:15–16 (cf. with Isa 8:23–9:1 [ET: 9:1–2]). Luz sees in this quotation a redactional “signal”, which points toward the end of the Gospel: The earthly ministry of Jesus, which was concentrated upon Galilee, would, in effect, “come to benefit the Gentiles”.⁴⁶ This explanation is problematic because Galilee was a Jewish homeland during the entire first century and, before 70 CE, even a center of Zealot movements and, after the destruction of Jerusalem, the seat of important Jewish scholars.⁴⁷ Galilee is, therefore, rather poorly suited as a symbol for the Church's departure to the mission to the Gentiles. What, then, does the statement about the location mean?

We see, after all, that the end of Matthew's Gospel puzzles the exegetes in many ways, and our overview shows also that modern historical critical study of Matthew has not yet found historically and theologically satisfying solutions for these problems.

2. The Traditio-historical Framework of the Text

If we do not simply let the exegetical problems lie unsolved, we should proceed now in the direction which *Hartmut Gese* showed in the doctoral seminar on the Psalms in the New Testament, which I had the privilege of holding with him in the summer of 1997. We went into Matt 28:16–20 in one of the sessions because Gese, in his lectures on the Psalms and also in his publications, had made certain observations on the understanding of Mark 14:28 (Matt 26:32); 16:7 (Matt 28:7,10) and on the perspectives of the early Christian mission, which merit the attention of New Testament exegetes.⁴⁸ An exegetical premise for looking at our text in the way of Gese is the fact, which cannot easily be disputed, that the end of Matthew is a piece of Jewish-Christian tradition and must be seen within the perspectives of the tradition of the Old Testament which is open to the New Testament. The parts of this tradition which made up the *Feast of Tabernacles*, celebrated annually in Jerusalem until the year 70 CE, are especially interesting for the interpretation of Matt 28:16–20. This feast, connected with a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, was very popular in ancient Judaism, and its traditions were commonly known among the Jews.

⁴⁶ Op. cit. (cf. n. 12) 29.

⁴⁷ Cf. MARTIN HENGEL, “Die Ursprünge der christlichen Mission,” *NTS* 18 (1971/72) 27, n. 42 (15–28); RAINER RIESNER, “Galiläa,” *Das Große Bibellexikon*, Vol. I (1987) 406–407; GERD THEISSEN-ANNETTE MERZ, op. cit. (cf. n. 3) 156–170.

⁴⁸ ERICH SCHEURER draws on Gese's observations in the exegetical part of his dissertation: *Altes Testament und Mission* (Gießen/Basel: Brunnen, 1996) 351–411.

If one follows Gese, then the dispute concerning the *genre* of Matt 28:16–20 can be solved first. Hubbard rightly saw that it involves the calling and commissioning of the (Eleven) disciples. The Old Testament narratives of the callings of Moses, Gideon, or Jeremiah consist of three elements. At the beginning is a vision of God or His angel (cf. Exod 3:2–6; Judg 6:12) and a commission is given (cf. Exod 3:10; Judg 6:14; Jer 1:5). This order is met by objections from the ones concerned: Moses does not feel up to the task and explains that he is incapable of speaking (cf. Exod 3:11; 4:10), Gideon thinks that he cannot save Israel because his clan is the weakest in Manasseh (cf. Judg 6:15), and Jeremiah fights against his calling because he cannot speak and is too young (cf. Jer 1:6). In spite of these objections, the commission is repeated in all three cases, and reaffirmed by the phrase promising God's assistance, “I am with you” (cf. Exod 3:12; Judg 6:16 and Jer 1:8). It states that God is at work in and through the ones He has commissioned. In Matt 28:16–20, these three elements reappear: In vv. 16–17a, we find the location, vision, and worship of the Exalted Christ. The Risen One presents Himself to the hesitating disciples as the Son of Man who has been given the rights of universal lordship (vv. 17b–18), and issues them the global commission to be sent out in vv. 19–20a, and in v. 20b he reinforces it with the phrase promising assistance to them. This threefold structural parallel to the Old Testament accounts extends far enough to see in Matt 28:16–20 a *commission story*, which wants to lay the foundation for the post-Easter apostolic mission.

Moreover, *the introductory verse*, Matt 28:16, can be explained amazingly well if one considers the text from the viewpoint of the Old Testament. This view is confirmed by John 10:1–18, and it is quite possible that John, in his discourse on the Good Shepherd, intends to comment on the facts which will be referred to now. One must begin with Jesus' last prophecy concerning His death in Mark 14:26–31 (Matt 26:30–35). On His final walk to the Mount of Olives Jesus reminds His disciples of the fate of death mapped out for the Messianic Shepherd of Israel by God in Zech 13:7 and of the dispersion of the flock of sheep (i.e., Israel and the μαθηταί), which is imminent. The quotation of Zech 13:7 in Mark 14:27 (Matt 26:31) follows the Masoretic Text closely and fits as superbly with Jesus' own understanding of Himself as Messiah as with the context of suffering foreseen by Jesus, the Messianic Son of God. According to Zech 13:8–9, two-thirds of the herd will perish, but the final third will be purified through the judgment and become God's new people that call out: “Yahweh is my God” (cf. likewise also Hos 2:25 [ET: 2:23]). In Mark 14:28 (Matt 26:32), Jesus contrasts the prophecy of death and judgment with the announcement that He will go on ahead of His disciples to Galilee after His resurrection. The verb προάγειν can be applied to the notion of the Messianic Shepherd from John 10:4,27: The disciples are to follow Jesus, who goes on ahead of them (like Israel follows Yahweh in Hos 11:10). Or, as John 10:3–4 phrases it: Like the one God leads Israel as a shepherd (cf. Ps 80:2) and, as King, goes ahead of His

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people through the gate, in order to reestablish Israel (cf. Mic 2:12–13), so Jesus will do the same after His resurrection. He will go before His sheep as divine Shepherd, will gather and unite them with the other πρόβατα, which do not belong to Israel, but to the many nations, which will then once and for all form with Israel the people of God (cf. John 10:16 with Zech 2:15 [ET: 2:11], see below). Jesus' going on to Galilee is a symbolic act (as they are also otherwise characteristic for the Jesus tradition, cf. e.g., the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem and the so-called Cleansing of the Temple, Mark 11:1–11, 15–17par.).

Jesus' proceeding to Galilee involves the symbolic restoration of (Greater) Israel after the catastrophe of judgment which has come upon the shepherd and his flock. Jeremiah's Book of Consolations, Jer 30:1–31:40, as well as Ps 80 and Mic 2:12–13 speak of the reestablishment of Israel in the sense of the United Monarchy under David and Solomon. The territories of the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Benjamin, which had been separated from Judah since the end of the eighth century BCE and resettled by foreigners, will belong once again to Israel. Jer 31:10 says: "The one who scattered Israel will gather her up again and protect her as a shepherd does his sheep." Also Ps 80 speaks of the divine Shepherd: In vv. 2–3 (ET: vv. 1–2), Yahweh is implored: "Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock, you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh" (NIV), and in v. 18 (ET: v. 17), Yahweh is entreated to let His hand "rest on the man at your right hand, the son of man" (that is, the Davidic Messiah), so that He can reestablish the greater Davidic kingdom heretofore destroyed. One look at the map shows that the territories of Benjamin and Ephraim separate the tribal area of Judah from the part of Israel which we call Galilee, while Manasseh includes broad regions east of the Jordan River. When Yahweh shines forth upon Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh and the Messiah is successful in His work, then Israel will be restored to her old boundaries.⁴⁹ Jerusalem will then be rebuilt and the promise of Zech 2:14–15 (ET: 2:10–11) will be fulfilled: "'Shout and be glad, O Daughter of Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you,' declares the LORD. 'Many nations (MT: גוים רבים; LXX: ἔθνη πολλά) will be joined with the LORD (LXX: ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον) in that day and will become my people.'" (NIV) When this is related to Matt 28:16, it means that when the exalted Christ goes on before His disciples to Galilee, he is not just returning to

⁴⁹ In post-exilic times "God is really reminded of the fulfillment of the irrevocable covenant of David (Ps 89), and this Son of Man, as it is written in Ps 80:18 (ET: v. 17), i. e., this definite person, who, as is said later, sits at the right hand of God, is expected as the Restorer of all of Israel with its northern part (one may compare this with how the Risen One goes ahead of his disciples to Galilee in Mark 16:7par.), and, according to Ps 84 we find as the goal of every pilgrimage to Zion the procession around the sanctuary, where the theophany is viewed as the culmination (v. 8 [ET: v. 7]), whereupon then the prayer for this one Messiah follows (vv. 9f. [ET: vv. 8f.])" (HARTMUT GESE, "Alttestamentliche Hermeneutik und christliche Theologie," *Beiheft zur ZTK* 9 [1995] 78 [65–81]).

the country where He began His activity, but He is appearing also and especially as the representative of the divine βασιλεία in the region of the northern districts of Greater Israel, which were formerly inundated with Gentiles (cf. 2 Kgs 15:29), and, therefore called Γαλιλαία τῶν ἔθνῶν (MT: גליליה ל'גוים) in Isa 8:23 (ET: 9:1). If one sees this soteriological and eschatological context, then one can say that the exalted Christ, with his announcement of going to Galilee, and the instruction to follow and meet him there, and with his appearance on the mountain initiates the eschatological restoration of Greater Israel. Not only had post-exilic Judaism put its hope in this, but Jewish Christianity as well. Besides Acts 1:6; 3:21 (and Luke 24:21), this is also verified by old texts from the book of Revelation, especially Rev 7:4–8; 21:9–22:5.⁵⁰ The fulfillment quotation of Isa 8:23–9:1 (ET: 9:1–2)) in Matt 4:15–16 (its conformity to the Masoretic Text is not coincidental) points ahead, in my opinion, not to the mission to the Gentiles (as Ulrich Luz points out)⁵¹, but, rather, it prepares Matt 28:16–20 in a Jewish-Christian manner: Jesus' going ahead to the 'Galilee of the Gentiles', His appearance before the (eleven) disciples, and their commissioning have all to do with the setting up of the βασιλεία τῷ Ἰσραήλ (cf. Acts 1:6) by the exalted Messianic Son of Man. In the course of human history, ground must still be broken finally for God's βασιλεία, which is represented by the risen Son of Man-Messiah, and these final events shall be prepared by the preaching of the εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας (Matt 24:14) among all peoples. The disciples of Jesus shall go forth to confront all ἔθνη with the Gospel of Christ (cf. Matt 24:14), and make (the elect among) them disciples of Jesus.

It follows that the allusions to Dan 7:13–14 in Matt 28:18–19 are not coincidental. The Exalted Son of Man is the Κύριος πάντων, to whom πάντα ἔξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς is granted. All peoples of this world, without exemption, must render homage to Him. Israel is also included among these peoples (cf. the inclusive use of πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in Matt 24:9, 14; 25:32). It only still has predominance over the Gentile peoples in as far as its purified one-third (cf. Zech 13:9) will become the core of the universal people consisting of Jews and Gentiles.⁵² If one translates ἔθνη in 28:19 (with reference to the linguistic usage of the Evangelist in 6:32; 10:5, 18; 12:18, etc.) only as "Gentiles", then one improperly restricts the dominion of the exalted Son of Man.

⁵⁰ Cf. to these texts the important analyses of PETER HIRSCHBERG, *Das eschatologische Israel* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1999) 166 ff., 244 ff.

⁵¹ Cf. ULRICH LUZ, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus I* (EKKNT I/1; Zürich: Benziger and Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 3rd ed., 1992) 170f.

⁵² This relativizing of the preferred status of Israel most probably shocked the Jewish-Christian readership of the Gospel of Matthew. Cf. DONALD A. HAGNER, op. cit. (cf. n. 5) 887: "It is shocking now to find Israel thus subordinated and absorbed into the comprehensive reference to the nations. In the now completed salvific work of the Messiah, Israel has accomplished her special role in salvation history. She now too is to enjoy the fruit of that accomplishment as *primus inter pares* (cf. Rom 1:16)." (italics by H.)

According to the Evangelist, the mountain in Galilee is most probably identical to the high mountain upon which Jesus gloriously was revealed to his disciples before his death as the promised Messianic Prophet (of Deut 18:18) and – in good Old Testament style – was called “Beloved Son” by God Himself (cf. Matt 17:1–9). At that time, Jesus commanded Peter, James, and John to say nothing of their vision until after Jesus rose from the dead. Now (cf. the οὖν in Matt 28:19) the time has come, and Jesus, as exalted Son of Man, gives all His disciples the explicit (missionary) command to proclaim his kingdom to the peoples of the world. The horizons of expectation are clearly coherent with Jesus’ intention to gather, with the aid of the Twelve, the eschatological people of God, made up of the twelve tribes. Thereby, he had the Gentile world early in view (cf. Luke 11:2 with Ezek 36:16–38; Mark 4:30–32par. and Luke 13:28–29par.). Matthew emphasizes this relation to the Gentile world in a special way (cf. Matt 2:1–12; 4:24–5:1). If one takes Mark 12:1–12par. as well as Luke 22:29–30 (Matt 19:28) along with this and sees Mark 13:27par. and 14:62par. as authentic, then one can add that Jesus, after his Parousia, intends to unite the converted Jews with the elect from many nations at the eschatological thanksgiving meal on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem (cf. Zech 2:10–16 [ET: 2:6–12]⁵³), and that he has chosen the Twelve to rule the eschatological people of God together with him.

The expectation of the eschatological restoration of Israel, the conversion of the nations, and their pilgrimage to Zion was something which came into the focus of all the Jews (and Jewish Christians) every year anew, when they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem. It was the one feast of joy in the βασιλεία of God.⁵⁴ From 2 Macc 10:1–8 one can gather that the Feast of Tabernacles was, in fact, the feast of the restoration of Israel in the late Old Testament period, and Zech 14:16–19 attests to the definite connection of this feast to the expectation of the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion. The importance of the festival for ancient Judaism is brought out in Jubilees 16, in Josephus (*Ant.* VIII 100), and in the Mishna tractate Sukkah. From John 7:2 we can see that it also was of significance for the tradition of the Gospels.⁵⁵

⁵³ For the connection between Mark 13:27 and Zech 2:10–16 cf. CRAIG A. EVANS, “Aspects of Exile and Restoration in the Proclamation of Jesus and the Gospels,” in: *Exile* (ed. J. M. Scott; JSJSup 56; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 324 (299–328).

⁵⁴ Concerning the origin, significance, and content of the Fall Festival in Israel cf. HANS-JOACHIM KRAUS: *Gottesdienst in Israel* (Munich: Kaiser, 2nd ed., 1962) 79–88. The development of the Feast of Tabernacles from the Old Testament Fall Festival is surveyed by ERNST LUDWIG EHRlich: *Die Kultsymbolik im Alten Testament und im nachbiblischen Judentum* (SyR 3; ed. by F. Herrmann; Vol. III; Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1959) 52–65.

⁵⁵ HEINRICH KRAFT, *Die Entstehung des Christentums* (Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchgesellschaft, 3rd ed., 1990) 217, points out the water ritual performed at the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. *mSuk.* 4:9–10) and assumes by referring to John 7:37–39 that the first Feast of Tabernacles after Easter was the point in time at which the early Church, for the first time, “brought water from the Gihon Spring or from the Pool of Siloam for their baptism which they performed by pouring”. This assumption cannot easily be covered by referring to John 7:37–39

The details and ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles cannot be considered at present. It is merely important here to state that both Israel and the nations were encompassed within the scope of this festival, and how this happened. According to Deut 32:9, Israel was the portion, or allotted inheritance of the one God. Mount Zion in Jerusalem was the center of this allotted inheritance (cf. Ps 132:13–18). As the King of Israel who dwelled in Zion, the one God was also the King of the nations, whose territorial boundaries He Himself had set up (cf. Deut 32:8). According to Ps 82:8, the nations are His possession. With respect to the Gentiles, Israel (the Servant of God) had an enormous task: He is to be the light of the nations and is to carry forth the message of God’s πρωτο, or σωτηρία, to them (cf. Isa 49:6). In Ps 96:2–3 this is repeated: The Israelites were to preach the εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας to the peoples (the term εὐαγγέλιον was chosen precisely because Ps 96:2 talks about the πρωτο of the πρωτο) so that the peoples would learn then to glorify the one God (cf. Ps 96:7). Or, in the words of Psalm 87: The peoples who flock to Zion because of the message of Israel are to learn and find out that they all have been born in Zion. In (Deutero-)Isaiah, and in Psalms 96 and 87 we have the concept of a mission to the nations going forth from Jerusalem with the goal of leading the ἔθνη to an understanding of their spiritual origin from Zion. One can label this concept, as Hartmut Gese does, the expectation of the “Israelization of the world”. Whether or not and in what way Israel carried out the missionary task given to her, we can leave open in our context.⁵⁶

When one compares Matt 28:16–20 with all these traditions which were remembered annually at the Feast of Tabernacles, then one sees immediately that the text portrays a Christological variant of these traditions. The (Eleven) disciples form the core of the new Israel and are formally commissioned by the exalted Christ to bring the Gospel of the βασιλεία of God to all peoples (cf. Matt 24:14 with Mark 13:10). Through this apostolic mission all the ἔθνη subordinate to the Son of Man shall be confronted with the message of salvation of the βασιλεία of God represented by the Risen One already at present and looking toward its completion at the end of history: When the mission has reached its end, then the Son of Man will appear on the clouds of heaven and begin to establish the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ in spite of the opposition of all the enemies of God. The concluding words of Jesus: “And surely, I am with you always, to the

because in v. 37 Jesus is portrayed as the (Temple) spring or source, and the Giver of the water of life. Moreover, in New Testament times, the Gihon Spring and the Pool of Siloam are identified (cf. Josephus, *Bell.* V 140 among others, and RAINER RIESNER: “Siloah”, *Das Große Bibellexikon*, Vol. III (1989), 1444 (1444–1446).

⁵⁶ Cf. M. HENGEL-A. M. SCHWEMER, *Paul Between Damascus and Antioch* (London: SCM Press, 1997) 61–76; in the (enlarged) German edition: *Paulus zwischen Damaskus und Antiochien* (WUNT 108; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998) 101–132, and ERICH SCHEURER, op. cit. (cf. n. 48) 384ff.

very end of the age" (NIV), promise the disciples the effective support of the exalted Son of Man on the perilous road of the mission to the nations. They will be borne by his Spirit (cf. Mark 13:11 par.). The phrase is already looking forward to the Parousia. In Matt 23:39 the Second Coming (of the Son of Man) is referred to with a quote from Ps 118:26, and in Matt 24:29–31 the details of this event are developed further: The Son of Man will come on the clouds of heaven, set up the βασιλεία, and Zech 2:10–16 (ET: 2:6–12) will be fulfilled. Jerusalem will be built anew, and God will dwell in the midst of the collected people of God, of which many elect come from the Gentile nations.

3. The Message of Matt 28:16–20

If one considers the end of Matthew with Hartmut Gese within Old Testament perspectives, then it is quite possible to understand Matt 28:16–20 as a text which has fundamental importance for the mission of the Church.

1. Matt 28:16–20 is not "the document by which early Galilean Christendom was commissioned with the missionary task among the peoples until the end of the age", as Ernst Lohmeyer claimed, because a special Galilean Christendom dissociated from Jerusalem, in the sense Lohmeyer believes, never existed.⁵⁷ Yet, it is most certainly the *basic Jewish-Christian record of the apostolic mission to the world*. The Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός raised to eternal life by God, in going ahead to Galilee, gave symbolic expression to his office of shepherd and to his dominion over the eschatological kingdom of David. He meets the eleven disciples on the mountain as the exalted Son of Man who, according to Dan 7:13–14, is endowed with all divine ἐξουσία, and he commissions them with the task of the mission to the nations. They are to bear witness to the Gospel before the ἔθνη, as he announced earlier in 24:14, in order to thereby prepare the nations for the day of his Parousia. For the sake of their new, world-wide mission the disciples are not to stop going through the cities of Israel, which Jesus had made their duty in Matt 10:5–6. It is not an oversight that Matthew does not report a return of the disciples during Jesus' lifetime as in Luke 9:10a (cf. with Luke 10:17). He considers the operation of the disciples according to Matt 10:17–25 to be not yet completed. But, the μαθηταί assembled in Galilee before the exalted Christ must understand that, from now on, the entire world of peoples would be the recipients of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, not merely the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They are to set into play the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion which Jesus looked ahead to (cf. Matt 8:11–12 with Isa 25:6–9), and in doing so they are "fishers of men" (cf.

⁵⁷ Cf. ERNST LOHMEYER-WERNER SCHMAUCH, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus* (cf. n. 44) 423.

Matt 4:19), who actively put into practice Israel's service as messenger to the peoples (cf. Isa 49:6 and Ps 96:10). The Exalted One promises the disciples, who shied away from the greatness of His appearance and His universal commission (it makes, therefore, good sense to refer οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν to all μαθηταί and not just a part of them!), His continuous, divine assistance so that they can actively work at gathering the eschatological people of God, to which the Gentiles also belong, and so that they can also endure through all persecutions which they, as ambassadors of the βασιλεία, incur upon themselves (cf. Matt 5:11–12 and 10:16–20).

2. From Mark 16:15–16, it is, thematically and with respect to the history of tradition, quite conceivable (though not provable) that the commission to the Eleven had, from the very beginning, also included some basic instruction on baptism (cf. Mark 16:16).⁵⁸ Here, the disciples are to go and baptize the ἔθνη in the name of the exalted Christ, analogous to the baptism of John, which was not given by the authority of men, but was from heaven (cf. Mark 11:30 par.), and which Jesus Himself had also submitted to. In this way, persons baptized would receive forgiveness of their sins and would be incorporated into the new people of God led by Jesus in fulfillment of Ezek 36:25–27.

3. The Evangelist Matthew sets clear redactional accents throughout his entire gospel, and this is also true for the end of it. The Jewish-Christian traditions, which we have discovered, enable us better to grasp these accents. The redaction of Matthew indicates not only a detachment of synagogue and Church (cf., e.g., the announcement of persecution of the missionaries in "their" and "your" synagogues in 10:17; 23:34, or the distant address of the Ἰουδαίου in 28:15), but it points also clearly to the judgment which Israel must suffer because she rejected Jesus and is burdened with the blood guilt for his death (cf. 27:25).⁵⁹ As the Messiah, Jesus was sent first and foremost to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (cf. 15:24). After the tenants of the vineyard had attacked the Son of God and killed Him "outside the city gate" (cf. Heb 13:12 and Matt 21:39), their share in the βασιλεία went over to a people which bring forth the fruits of the βασιλεία, i.e., to the community of the saved, led by Jesus, and made up of Jews and Gentiles (cf. 21:41–44). The cruel pogroms which, ac-

⁵⁸ RUDOLF PESCH, *Das Markusevangelium* II. Teil (HTKNT 2/2; Freiburg: Herder, 2nd ed., 1980) 544 ff., endeavours to demonstrate that Mark 16:9–20 was originally a piece of tradition of its own.

⁵⁹ HANS KVALBEIN (op.cit. [cf. n. 13] 51) concludes that the narrative of Matt 27:25 is not simply "a case of staged dogmatics," composed by the Evangelist, as LUZ says (op.cit. [cf. n. 12] 135), but, rather the phrasing of the verse presupposes Deut 27:14–26 and illustrates "how the Jewish-Christian author of the First Gospel could conceive the condemnation of Jesus by a pragmatic Roman procurator and by Jews intending to obey the law. The crowd of Jews is only following up the judgement in the Sanhedrin: He (= Jesus, P. St.) has spoken blasphemy (26:65), and according to the law he has to die in the presence of 'all the people.' To call their solemn declaration a 'self-curse' is inadequate."

ording to Josephus (*Bell.* II 457 ff.), at the outbreak of the (first) Jewish revolt cost the lives of thousands of Jews in Caesarea, Scythopolis, and many Syrian cities, were possibly a historical commentary to Matt 27:25 for the Evangelist.⁶⁰ According to Matt 22:7 and 24:2, Matthew understood the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE and its terrible effects as a judgment event, just as Josephus did. Nonetheless, the Evangelist set a conciliatory accent throughout the entire composition of his Passion narrative. Gerhard Lohfink has pointed out that Matt 27:25 can be read in the light of Matt 26:28: Jesus' atoning death is also valid for the people who took part in condemning Jesus and by virtue of this atoning death, not only Gentiles, but also Jews who confess Jesus as Lord, have their place at the communion table of Jesus.⁶¹

4. In transforming our traditional text to the *finale* of the Gospel, the Evangelist also set plainly recognizable accents: Three times he points his readers to the event of the appearance of Jesus on the mountain (cf. Matt 26:31; 28:7; 28:10). In allowing v. 18b to echo 11:27a, he lets us understand that the exalted Son of Man is none other than the human (earthly) Jesus, whom his Heavenly Father had made to be the sole revealer of truth.⁶² With the command *μαθητεύσατε* the Evangelist defines what is most important in the mission: it is to make Jews and Gentiles *μαθηταί* of Jesus in the sense of the Matthean tradition. For Matthew, the *μαθηταί* are the special recipients of the instruction, which Jesus, the one Messianic teacher, gave them (cf. 23:8).⁶³ Matthew makes the command to baptize (which was possibly a fixed tradition already prior to him) current according to the example of the tripartite baptismal formula customary during his time in Syria (cf. v. 19b with *Did.* 7:1), without thereby wanting to make the *βάπτισμα* in the name of the triune God into a pure sacrament of the Resurrection. He had already composed the account of Jesus' baptism by the Baptist in 3:13–17 in such a way that the baptism received by Jesus appears as a model of that baptism which the disciples should perform now. The instruction of the Son of Man in v. 20a: "and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you" shows that it is very crucial for Matthew to firmly connect the *εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας* (cf. 24:14) to be preached by the apostles with the teaching of Jesus. The disciples receive in no other place clearer information concerning

⁶⁰ This reference was given to me by Martin Hengel, Tübingen.

⁶¹ Cf. GERHARD LOHFINK, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?* (Freiburg: Herder, 1998) 308: "Israel cursed itself before the judgment seat of Pilate. But God did not accept this self-curse. He did not make the cross into a sign of the curse, but, rather, into the sign of forgiveness and of new life, indeed, the renewal of the covenant with Israel. The people declared: 'May his blood come upon us and our children.' On the basis of the eucharistic tradition of the Lord's Supper, this blood can only be the blood of Jesus which gives salvation."

⁶² Cf. *ἔδόθη μοι πάντα ἐξουσία* in 28:18b with *πάντα μοι παρεδόθη* in 11:27a.

⁶³ SAMUEL BYRSKOG has pointed out the significance of this verse for the Gospel of Matthew in his book, *Jesus the Only Teacher* (CB.NT 24; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1994).

"everything" which Jesus had commanded the apostles, than in the Gospel according to Matthew itself. Judging by 28:20, the book appears to be a kind of handbook for the (Jewish-Christian) mission to the nations. The Evangelist is a typical Jewish Christian in that he connects the Gospel of the Kingdom of God smoothly with the teaching of Jesus, which he himself summarized in an exemplary fashion in the Sermon on the Mount. He also understands God's gracious care in the person, commission, and teaching of Christ as an obligation to follow the *Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός* on the "way of righteousness" taught beforehand by John the Baptist (cf. Matt 21:32). Only those *μαθηταί* who really pursue this narrow and rocky path and practice the exceeding righteousness even to the point of loving their enemies, can expect to enter the *βασιλεία* (cf. Matt 5:20 with 5:43–48 and 25:34–40). Using the Old Testamental phrase promising God's help in v. 20b, the Evangelist links the Immanuel prophecy in 1:23 (cf. Isa 7:14) with the end of his Gospel. At the same time, he gives an important soteriological signal: The exalted Christ, endowed with divine *ἐξουσία*, accompanies his disciples as the one and only God Himself, who cared for mankind in the person of his Son. He has redeemed the people of God (made up of Jews and Gentiles), now to be gathered by him, from their sins by the sacrifice of his own life. He leads them at present to the *βασιλεία*, and grants to all, who are on their way guests at his table, the forgiveness of their sins (cf. Matt 26:28). Jews, who repent and confess Jesus as Lord, are no more excluded from this forgiveness than believing Gentiles.

The tradition and redaction of Matthew seem to indicate that the Gospel of Matthew portrays the sum of that tradition of Jesus which was upheld in Jerusalem by the *apostles reputed to be pillars*. It was known to the Aramaic- as well as to the Greek-speaking members of the early Church and contained, from the very beginning, the universal missionary and baptismal commands. James (the Lord's brother), John, and Peter based their decision on this tradition, when they recognized at the apostolic council the right of Paul (and Barnabas) to evangelize the Gentiles, while they themselves took over the responsibility for the mission to the Jews (cf. Gal 2:6–10, see below). The *παράδοσις*, which they had preserved, needed to be fixed and rounded off redactionally after the Lord's brother had been stoned to death by Jewish opponents in the year 62 CE, Peter had died as a martyr, and the Church of Jerusalem, in view of the Jewish Revolt against Rome, had to retreat into exile to Pella in the territory east of the Jordan River. We have the Evangelist to thank for this rounding off and fixing, who named his book "The Gospel according to Matthew" in a typical Old Testamental-Jewish style after the apostolic source of his original tradition, the publican Matthew (cf. Matt 9:9; 10:3).

4. Matt 28:16–20 and the Way of the Early Christian Mission

The entire course of the early Christian mission cannot be recounted here. Attention can be called only to a few important points which appear in a new or different light if one understands Matt 28:16–20 as the basic Jewish-Christian record of the apostolic world mission.

1. The view sketched until now allows one to do without a number of hypotheses, which have unnecessarily complicated the understanding of the course of the early Christian mission. Among these are, firstly, the complex history of traditions and redaction of the text itself, as it has been outlined, e.g., by Günther Bornkamm⁶⁴ and by Ferdinand Hahn⁶⁵. In contrast, it suffices for us to presume one traditional text from Jerusalem which was edited by the Evangelist. Also, the assumption can be dropped that the early Church directed "her preaching at first only to Israel" and expected "the universal Kingdom of God" together with the pilgrimage of the nations only "at the end of the age".⁶⁶ This assumption led to the postulate that there were bitter conflicts between particularistic-minded Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, whose opinion is expressed in Matt 10:5–6 and 10:23, and the Hellenists around Stephen, who no longer expected the pilgrimage of the nations to Zion just to take place at the day of the Parousia, but, by their own mission efforts, wanted to set this in motion themselves.⁶⁷ It is also no longer necessary to assume that, after Easter, there was a "variety of reasons (given) for the performance" of the mission: a setting forth of the itinerant prophets who stand behind the source Q, a second by Peter and the Twelve, a third by Paul, etc.⁶⁸

2. If one leaves such hypothetical reconstructions behind, then on the basis of Matt 28:16–20 the amazing fact becomes comprehensible that never in the New Testament is the legitimacy of the mission to the Gentiles fundamentally called into question. The evangelization of the Gentiles was apparently not controversial as such, but, rather, the question if and to what extent they must accept the Ἰουδαϊσμός in order to have a share in the blessings of the covenant of Abraham in Christ. In the light of our Jewish-Christian document of the

⁶⁴ Cf. the treatise mentioned in n. 16.

⁶⁵ Cf. FERDINAND HAHN, *Mission in the New Testament* (SBT 47; London: SCM Press, 1965) 63 ff., and in his essay mentioned in n. 28.

⁶⁶ JOACHIM JEREMIAS, *Jesu Verheißung für die Völker* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2nd ed., 1959) 61.

⁶⁷ Cf. FERDINAND HAHN, *Mission in the New Testament* (cf. n. 65) 54 ff., or my own considerations in: *Das paulinische Evangelium, I. Vorgeschichte* (FRLANT 95; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968) 210 ff.

⁶⁸ Cf. CHRISTOPH BURCHARD, "Jesus für die Welt," in: *Fides pro mundi vita*, FS für H. W. Gensichen zum 65. Geburtstag (cf. n. 28) 20–23 (13–27). RUDOLF PESCH has already argued against such a position in his essay: "Voraussetzungen und Anfänge der urchristlichen Mission," in: *Mission im Neuen Testament* (ed. by Karl Kertelge; QD 93; Freiburg: Herder, 1982) 48 ff. (11–70).

mission to the nations we can, in addition, easily understand the missionary efforts of early Christianity as a consequence of the proclamation of Jesus and the risen Christ: After God endowed him with all power in heaven and on earth as the representative of the βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, the message of the Kingdom of God represented by him, the exalted Messianic Son of Man, is to be made known by the apostles in the entire world. When this missionary work is completed (and the angels have brought together the elect from the four corners of heaven to Zion, cf. 24:31), he himself will appear in glory and start to accomplish the βασιλεία of his Heavenly Father on earth as it already is acknowledged in heaven (cf. Matt 6:9–10/Luke 11:2).

3. Furthermore, Matt 28:16–20 offers us the stimulating possibility to see the ways and problems of early Christian mission not only from the standpoint of Paul, but also from the viewpoint of his partners at the apostolic council, the apostles, who were the "pillars" of the church in Jerusalem.

3.1 Peter apparently took the first crucial step in fulfilling the Commission of 28:19. After the primary appearance of Jesus was granted to him (cf. Luke 24:34 with 1 Cor 15:5) he strengthened the disciples in their faith and led them onto the mountain in Galilee (cf. Luke 22:32 with Mark 16:7). There they all saw the Risen One and received his teaching. After this Peter took up his office of being the 'rock' which Jesus had conferred upon him already during his lifetime: He occasioned the disciples to return to Jerusalem and there founded the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ intended by Jesus (cf. Matt 16:18–19). Jerusalem was, in fact, the stronghold of the Sadducean opponents of Jesus, but, at the same time, also the center of salvation history, at which the Parousia was to be expected (cf. Luke 13:34–35/Matt 23:37–39 with Joel 4:12–17 [ET: 3:12–17] and Mark 13:26–27/Matt 24:30–31 with Zech 2:10–16 [ET: 2:6–12]; 14:1–5). Here "all nations" would worship the one God in the (new, eschatological) Temple (cf. Mark 11:17 with Isa 56:7 and Mark 14:58 par. with Exod 15:17). If at any place at all, then the twelve disciples had to take up residence in Jerusalem and testify by their bold position that God had begun "to rebuild the fallen dwelling of David" (cf. Amos 9:11 with Acts 15:15–17 [see below]). As Christoph Burchard emphasizes, Peter and the Twelve are included in the early Jerusalem Creed of 1 Cor 15:3b–5 "not simply as early missionaries, but as irreplaceable representatives of the new people of God".⁶⁹ The size of the early Church at the beginning, reported by Luke in Acts 1:15 (= "about one hundred twenty persons"), is probably to be understood as a symbolic number: 12 times 10 (120) people gathered around the Twelve.

For Luke, the position of the apostles in Jerusalem is so important with respect to the history of salvation, that he concentrates entirely on Jerusalem in his portrayal of the history of the beginnings of early Christianity and suppresses the pioneering prelude of

⁶⁹ Op. cit. (cf. n. 68) 21.

Jesus' appearance before the Eleven in Galilee. By comparison, the Johannine circle considered the appearance of Jesus before the disciples in Galilee and the calling of Peter to be the shepherd of Jesus' flock to be so important that this event, at least in the form of a postscript, is recounted in John 21.⁶⁹

3.2 The bold venture of the apostles, who were assembled in Jerusalem, to begin with the mission among the Jewish festival pilgrims at the first Pentecost after Jesus' crucifixion, can quite easily be connected with the sending of the apostles to all nations according to Matt 28:19–20. According to Acts 2:14–36, 37–41, this mission was authorized by the Spirit and had a lasting success. It led to the baptism of many penitent Jews and allowed the early Church to grow quickly up to a considerable size. The way the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ is mentioned in Acts 2:38 as a matter of course is more easily explained by a (prototypical) baptismal command of the exalted Christ (see above) than by the assumption that in Acts 2:38–41 only the ecclesial view of baptism in later times is projected back by Luke into the beginnings of the Church. The early Christians' practice of assembling in the temple on Mount Zion for teaching and worship, but "here and there in the homes" (cf. Acts 2:46) for table fellowship with the exalted Christ, was in keeping with their awareness of election: They formed the core and, at the same time, the vanguard of the eschatological people of God made up of Jews and Gentiles, who confess the exalted Jesus as God's appointed Lord of the whole world.

3.3 The mission of Stephen and the Hellenists in the synagogues of Jerusalem also fits smoothly into the course laid out by the end of the Gospel of Matthew. The same is true for Peter's advance to the Jewish communities in Lydda and Joppa (cf. Acts 9:32–43).⁷⁰ Likewise, the mission of Philip among the Samaritans, his venture of converting and baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch, and his push to the Gentiles in Ashdod and Caesarea (cf. Acts 8:4–8, 26–40) become comprehensible in light of Matt 28:19. When the Church in Jerusalem, represented by Peter and John, approves of the mission of Philip, as Luke reports in Acts 8:14–25, then this does not need to be merely a later construction of Luke, who is concerned about the *una sancta ecclesia*. The mission to the Gentiles had been commanded, in fact, by the exalted Christ and was, therefore, undisputed among the Hebrews and the Hellenists, who together belonged to the Jerusalem Church. According to Acts 10, Peter also was finally moved to go to Caesarea Maritima and baptize the God-fearing, but uncircumcised, centurion Cornelius together with his house. Acting this way, he likewise paved the way for the mission to the nations intended by Jesus just as the members of the circle of Stephen did in advancing to Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (cf. Acts 11:19–21). In this metropolis on the Orontes River the Hellenists finally founded their

⁷⁰ Cf. MARTIN HENGEL, *Zur urchristlichen Geschichtsschreibung* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 2nd ed., 1984) 79 ff.

own missionary center, in order to systematically plan and carry out their mission to the ἔθνη from there. They were assured of the approval by the Jerusalem apostles through Barnabas (cf. Acts 11:22–24). But, there were problems in Jerusalem at this point. The apostles' openness for the mission to the Gentiles aroused the suspicion of the Sadducees. Herod Agrippa had James the son of Zebedee executed in the year 41/42 CE (probably at the Passover Feast) and had Peter arrested (cf. Acts 12:1–5). When Πέτρος was miraculously freed, he could no longer stay in Jerusalem, but had to leave "for another place" (cf. Acts 12:17).⁷¹ With this change of location, Peter finally stepped up onto the platform of the mission to the nations, on which he met Paul several times.

3.4 During the whole of his lifetime, Paul had to fight for the recognition of his apostleship. He had neither followed Jesus, nor met the Risen One in Galilee. He did not belong to the circle of the Twelve in Jerusalem, but had even persecuted the newly arising Church of Jesus Christ all the way to Damascus. On his way there, he experienced, later than all other apostles, the ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, which made him to be the ἀπόστολος ἔθνων (cf. Gal 1:15–16; Rom 1:5; 11:13; 15:16). For all of these reasons, he could never shake off the reputation of just being an apostolic miscarriage (ἔκτρομα) (cf. 1 Cor 15:8). The predominantly Jewish-Christian opponents of Paul saw in his infirmity (cf. Gal 4:13; 2 Cor 12:7–8) a sign of his weakness, and, possibly, even the divine rod of punishment for his deviation from the Torah.⁷² The sufferings which came upon the Apostle on his missionary journeys were for them, moreover, signs of lacking apostolic authority (cf. 2 Cor 11:23–27). Paul insisted, however, that the grace of God had led him to greater missionary successes than all other apostles (cf. 1 Cor 15:10), and, in his weakness, he found himself filled completely with the power of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 12:9). In the παθήματα which befell him, he saw the participation in the θλίψεις τοῦ Χριστοῦ, which he, as a messenger of Christ, had to endure so long until the complete number of the Gentiles entered into the ἐκκλησία Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (cf. 1 Cor 4:9–13; 2 Cor 1:4–5; Col 1:24; Eph 3:13 with Rom 11:13–32). In this, he might have had in mind words of the Lord like those in Luke 6:22; 10:16 (cf. also Matt 10:17–25).

3.4.1 Martin Hengel showed in his aforementioned essay and in (the enlarged German version of) the book he co-authored with Anna Maria Schwemer, "Paul Between Damascus and Antioch" (see above), how one should consider the missionary activity of Paul in the unknown years which lie between his calling

⁷¹ Perhaps Rome is meant here by "the other place" (Acts 12:17), cf. MARTIN HENGEL, "Die Stellung des Apostel Paulus zum Gesetz in den unbekanntenen Jahren zwischen Damaskus und Antiochien," in: *Paul and the Mosaic Law* (ed. James D. G. Dunn; WUNT 89; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996) 49 (25–51).

⁷² ERNST BAASLAND, "Persecution: A Neglected Feature in the Letter to the Galatians," *ST* 38 (1984) 141 (135–150), as well as SCOTT HAFEMANN, "Paul and the Exile of Israel in Galatians 3–4," in: *Exile* (ed. J. M. Scott [cf. n. 53]) 354–356 (329–371), refer to the interesting connections between Deut 27:26; 28:15 and Gal 3:10a; 4:13–14.

to apostleship and his involvement in the missionary work of the Hellenists in Antioch. First, he went to Arabia and Damascus (cf. Gal 1:17), that is, to territories which lay "within the area of the coming Messianic Kingdom", and in which he found Jewish settlements and also God-fearing Gentiles in the synagogues.⁷³ After a brief stay with Peter in Jerusalem (cf. Gal 1:18) he was then active as a missionary in Tarsus (Cilicia), which, though far-away, was favorably located with regard to travelling, and in Syria (cf. Gal 1:21 with Acts 9:30). By virtue of the specific knowledge of Christ opened up to him by his calling (cf. Gal 1:16 with 2 Cor 4:5-6), he was even more consistent than the Hellenists in insisting that the Gentiles did not need to be proselytized in order to become members of the new people of God. According to Isa 49:6; 66:18-23, and Matt 28:16-20, circumcision and the observance of the Torah of the ἔθνη is in fact not commanded. After Barnabas brought Paul from Tarsus to Antioch, they both worked first a year in Antioch and then they undertook the so-called First Missionary Journey. On this journey, they dispensed with circumcising the Gentiles.

3.4.2 Converted Pharisees (cf. Acts 15:5) raised such sustained objection to this programmatic renunciation of the ritual incorporation of the converted Gentiles into the body of Israel that this objection had to be dealt with at the so-called apostolic council in the year 48 CE in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 15:1-2). The insistence of these Jewish Christians upon the circumcision of the converted Gentiles could have to do with the "growing zeal for the Law", which developed in Jerusalem from 43 CE onward.⁷⁴ We only know the result of the Jerusalem consultation summarized by Paul in Gal 2:6-10 (cum ira et studio!), and, astonishingly, it can be connected well to Matt 28:19-20. There is no mention of the circumcision of the ἔθνη (and of their keeping the Law) in this text, it only speaks about preaching the Gospel to them and making them disciples of Jesus (cf. Matt 24:14 with Mark 13:10). Barnabas and Paul endeavored precisely for this, and their activity was, therefore, also given unrestricted approval by the leading apostles. Peter (and the other σὺλοι of Jerusalem) were to continue to bear responsibility for the still uncompleted mission to the Jews, and Paul (together with Barnabas) was to be in charge of the mission to the Gentiles (cf. Gal 2:6-9). The two emissaries from Antioch received approval of their mission work in Jerusalem (cf. Gal 2:10) and were only obligated to visibly affirm the orientation of the converted Gentiles to Zion with the aid of a collection for the mother Church in Jerusalem, which was to benefit the poor among her members there (cf. Rom 15:26).

3.4.3 By comparing Mark 13:10 (Matt 24:14) with 2 Thess 2:3-12 (in my opinion a genuine Pauline text) and Rom 11:13-32; 15:18-21, it becomes clear

⁷³ Op. cit. (cf. n. 56) 159, n. 638; cf. also op. cit. 87f. and HENGEL's essay mentioned in n. 71.

⁷⁴ Cf. MARTIN HENGEL, op. cit. (cf. n. 70) 50.

that Paul willingly adapted to the coordinates of world mission given by the Jerusalemites. In Rom 15:19, he writes that he had proceeded in his work of preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles "from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum". In formulating this statement, he has in mind a world which is arranged around Jerusalem as the "center of the world".⁷⁵ According to 1 Cor 9:13-18 and 2 Cor 2:14-16, the Apostle saw himself as one who was pardoned and called by the exalted Christ to be "a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles" (cf. Rom 15:16), and to work with all the authority granted to him toward gathering "all peoples" to Zion (cf. Isa 66:18-21).⁷⁶ As the Apostle of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles Paul wanted, in his own way, to be active for the eschatological salvation of all Israel through Christ. He was, so to speak, Apostle of the Gentiles for the sake of Israel.⁷⁷ QQ

3.4.4 Even after the so-called "Antiochene clash" and the separation from Barnabas (cf. Gal 2:11-21; Acts 15:36-41) the apostolic council remained important for Paul because there his missionary work had been officially integrated into the mission to the world which the exalted Christ had made obligatory for His μαθηταί. The Apostle places great importance in all of his letters to his having remained faithful to the agreement made in Jerusalem. Before he expanded his missionary work from Rome to Spain, he still wanted to bring the agreed upon collected offering to Jerusalem personally (cf. Rom 15:23-29). This was to make clear that the church in Jerusalem was the ἐκκλησία, from whom the Gentile Christians had received the Gospel, or, phrased according to Gal 4:26, the spiritual "mother" of the converted (Jews and) Gentiles and the representative of the new people of God on Mount Zion (cf. Ps 87:5 [86,5 LXX]).⁷⁸ As a consequence of this service for the mother church Paul lost first his freedom, and then also his life. Q Rom 11

3.5 Luke's parallel account of the apostolic council in Acts 15 and its relationship to Gal 2:1-10 raises difficult exegetical problems. I would like to call attention to only one more: Jostein Ådna recently tried to show that James' speech in

⁷⁵ Cf. Ezek 38:12 and JAMES M. SCOTT, "Paul's 'Imago Mundi' and Scripture," in: *Evangelium - Schriftauslegung - Kirche*, FS für Peter Stuhlmacher zum 65. Geburtstag (in cooperation with Gerlinde Feine, ed. by Jostein Ådna, Scott J. Hafemann, and Otfried Hofius; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997) 375 (366-381). ✓

⁷⁶ The importance of Isa 66:18-21 for the missions of Paul is underlined by RAINER RIESNER, *Die Frühzeit des Apostels Paulus* (WUNT 71; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994) 216-225.

⁷⁷ Cf. Rom 11:11-32 and KARL-WILHELM NIEBUHR, *Heidenapostel aus Israel* (WUNT 62; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992) 171 ff. ✓/

⁷⁸ The reference to Ps 87:5 is no coincidence: Paul related Ps 87 and the traditions of the Feast of Tabernacles to the Commission of the Exalted Christ and the ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ in the Holy City just as the Jerusalem apostles did. Cf. also in this SCOTT J. HAFEMANN, "The Spirit of the New Covenant, the Law, and the Temple of God's Presence: Five Theses on Qumran Self-Understanding and the Contours of Paul's Thought," in: *Evangelium - Schriftauslegung - Kirche* (cf. n. 75) 189 (172-189). }

Acts 15:13–21 is not “a late Lukan composition”, “but provides a historically reliable report of the decisive statement of the Lord’s brother in favor of the mission to the Gentiles without including circumcision”.⁷⁹ Although the Lukan text and the preliminary stages thereof need still further analysis, Ādna’s assumption fits very well into the Jewish-Christian perspective of missions resulting from Matt 28:16–20. When James, the Lord’s brother, refers to the Holy Scriptures and speaks of the rebuilding of the fallen dwelling of David, which gives cause to all peoples to seek the κύριος (cf. Acts 15:16–18 with Jer 12:15; Amos 9:11–12; Isa 45:21), he had in view the blossoming ἐκκλησία in Jerusalem as the core and vanguard of the eschatological people of God. In ancient Judaism Amos 9:11–12 was always interpreted with a view towards the eschatological restoration of the Kingdom of David.⁸⁰ It is, therefore, not justified to relate Acts 15:16–18 to the strengthening of Gentile Christianity.⁸¹ A reference to the establishment of the Church in Jerusalem is much more plausible.⁸² From the phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, common to Matt 28:19; Luke 24:47 and Acts 15:17, one can conclude that Acts has comparable, or even the same perspectives in view as the end of the Gospel of Matthew. Moreover, if one relates Amos 9:11–12 to the new foundation of the eschatological people of God in the shape of the Jerusalem Church, this corresponds excellently to the expectation of the βασιλεία τῶ Ἰσραὴλ (Acts 1:6) and the ἀποκατάστασις of all prophetic promises (for Israel), to which Luke refers in Acts 3:21.

3.6 One final point: After the so-called “Antiochene clash”, about which Paul reports in Gal 2:11–21 (and Luke only indirectly, cf. Acts 15:36–41), the apostle continued the work of the mission to the Gentiles on his own, and with quite amazing success (cf. 1 Cor 15:11). But his missionary efforts were constantly met with hostility, not only by unbelieving Gentiles and Jews, but also by those

⁷⁹ JOSTEIN ĀDNA, “Die Heilige Schrift als Zeuge der Heidenmission. Die Rezeption von Amos 9, 11–12 in ApG 15,16–18,” in: *Evangelium – Schriftauslegung – Kirche* (cf. n. 75) 23 (1–23).

⁸⁰ Amos 9:11 prophecies the eschatological restoration of the Davidic dynasty (cf. JÖRG JEREMIAS, *Der Prophet Amos* [ATD 24,2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995] 134); in 4Q 174 Col. III 12–13 the passage is related to the foundation of the community of Qumran (cf. SABINE NÄGELE, *Laubhütte Davids und Wolkensohn* [AGJU 24; Leiden: Brill, 1995] 34f.), and the Targumist relates it again to the eschatological restoration “of the kingdom of the house of David” (SABINE NÄGELE, op. cit., 38). Cf. also ĀDNA, op. cit., (cf. n. 79) 13–18.

⁸¹ Cf., e.g., JÜRGEN ROLOFF, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (NTD 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2nd ed., 1988) 232.

⁸² OTTO BETZ, op. cit. (cf. n. 32) 27; similarly also I. HOWARD MARSHALL, *The Acts of the Apostles* (TynNTC 5; Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980) 252, and GERHARD LOHFINK, *Die Sammlung Israels* (SANT 39; Munich: Kösel, 1975) 59, 88f., as well as his aforementioned monograph, *Braucht Gott die Kirche?* (cf. n. 61) 285. Whether James understood the Church of Jerusalem spiritually as the temple of God, as BETZ, op. cit., and ĀDNA, op. cit. (cf. n. 79) 20ff. think, is not equally sure to me. The (eschatological) Temple on Zion is, to my knowledge, nowhere in ancient Judaism called σκηνη David, and the history of reception of Amos 9:11–12 does not support this proposal in any way.

Jewish Christians who had been clearly shown their limits by the main “pillar” apostles at the apostolic council, but, after the clash, felt a new impetus and pressed anew in Galatia (and Philippi?) for the circumcision of the converted Gentiles. Other Jewish Christians (perhaps from Antioch?) also objected to the Pauline Gospel, because, in their opinion, Paul accommodated the Gospel too much to the needs of the ethically unreliable Gentiles and neglected the Torah totally (cf. Gal 1:10; Rom 3:8; 6:1,15; 7:1). In the eyes of his opponents, Paul was an ambassador of “cheap grace” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer). Ulrich Luz has pointed out that this type of opposition against Paul can superbly be explained by Matt 28:20 and the Matthean tradition in total.⁸³ If one takes this into consideration, then the protection is also understandable which James, the Lord’s brother, gave to the moderate opponents of Paul. This is expressed in the Epistle of James, insofar as one may trace back this letter to the Lord’s brother and may assess it as an anti-Pauline polemic.⁸⁴ Jesus’ commission to baptize and evangelize in the form of Matt 28:16–20 was after all not able to prevent theological tensions, and Paul only learned to endure them after long, painful conflicts (cf. Phil 1:15–18).

After the martyrdoms of Peter, Paul, and James the Lord’s brother, as well as the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the problems and chances of the early Christian mission presented themselves in a new light. In spite of this, the universal mission perspectives, oriented to Zion were held by Matthew, Luke, and the Johannine school (cf. Rev 7:4–12; 14:1–5 with John 10:3–4, 16; 11:52; 17:20; 20:21–23). Because no particular date or event in the first and second centuries can be equated with the systematic cessation of the mission to the Jews, it is questionable whether Adolf von Harnack’s attempt to combine this cessation with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE is historically valid any longer.⁸⁵ But if Harnack’s view is questionable, it becomes very difficult to find a historical setting (‘Sitz im Leben’) for the fascinating interpretation of the end of Matthew offered by Ulrich Luz. His theologically sensible exegesis is so strongly determined by projections back from the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the Matthean texts (which has unfortunately again and again been influenced by anti-Semitic tendencies in the churches), that it overlooks the crucial missionary-historical point of Matt 28:16–20.⁸⁶

⁸³ Op. cit. (cf. n. 12) 17.

⁸⁴ Cf. in this MARTIN HENGEL, “Der Jakobusbrief als antipaulinische Polemik,” in: *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament. Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis* (ed. G. F. Hawthorne with O. Betz; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1987) 248–278.

⁸⁵ Cf. ADOLF VON HARNACK: *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*, Vol. 1 (Leipzig: Hinrich’sche Buchhandlung, 4th ed., 1924) 70f.

⁸⁶ HANS KVALBEIN comments (cf. n. 13) 61: “The Gospel of Matthew no doubt contains more words of judgement and condemnation against the contemporaries of Jesus in Israel than Mark and Luke ... And many of these sayings have played a tragic and destructive role in the long and dark history of Anti-Semitism. – But in our efforts to cope with our history we should be careful not to ascribe to men and texts in the past responsibility – and thereby also

5. Prospects

In view of the many problems which we have to leave open, only a preliminary conclusion may be drawn. It comes down, especially, to the fact that we must reconsider Matt 28:16–20, the course and the legacy of early Christian missions. In fact, because the files have not yet been closed concerning the end of Matthew, and because the concept of missions present here is represented by *all* main witnesses of the New Testament, Günther Baumbach's observation should be recalled that missions according to Matthew "do not constitute merely one of the many tasks of the Church, but they are an essential characteristic of it".⁸⁷ With Martin Hengel one can add: "History and theology of early Christianity are a 'history of missions' and 'a theology of missions'. A church and theology which forgets or denies the missionary commission of the believers as messengers of salvation in a world threatened by destruction, gives up its foundation and, thereby, gives itself up, too."⁸⁸ Our analysis of Matt 28:16–20, with its tradition and redaction, makes it even more necessary to further emphasize these statements: A church, which on the basis of the Reformation is defined by the apostolic testimony of the Holy Scriptures, cannot, for Christological reasons, separate herself from the missionary Commission attested to in Matt 28:16–20. A non-committal dialogue with other religions is out of the question for her. Rather, she must all the more remain obedient to the Commission of the exalted Christ: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." Only when she remains faithful to this instruction, and withholds the testimony of the Gospel neither from Jews nor from Gentiles (cf. Matt 24:14) may she relate the promise of assistance of the exalted Son of Man: "I am with you always, to the end of the age", to her path of witness and look forward hopefully to the day of the second coming of Christ from Zion (cf. Rom 11:26).

Summary

The missionary-historical significance of Matt 28:16–20 is disputed. The text claims to stand at the beginning of all missions, but redactional criticism has placed it in a time (late after 70 CE) when the mission to the Jews was seen to have failed, and the mission to the Gentiles was viewed as being the main task

guilt – for attitudes and actions far beyond the horizon of what they actually wrote and meant. To accuse Matthew of Anti-Judaism or even Anti-Semitism would be an anachronism."

⁸⁷ GÜNTHER BAUMBACH, "Die Mission im Matthäus-Evangelium," *TLZ* 92 (1967) 892 (890–893).

⁸⁸ *Op. cit.* (cf. n. 47) 38.

of the church. If one analyzes the text diachronically and synchronically at the same time, the picture changes and it becomes clear that Matthew has taken a very old Jewish-Christian tradition and worked it out as the programmatic conclusion of his Gospel. It takes as a starting point Jesus' exaltation as the Son of Man and accepts the horizons of expectation which defined the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles: The Messianic Son of Man is to restore Greater Israel (cf. Psalm 80), and the Gentile peoples of the world are to learn to recognize Zion as their mother (cf. Psalm 87). The disciples of Jesus are sent out to prepare the way for this restoration in bearing witness to the Gospel of the βασιλεία of God to the ends of the earth (cf. Matt 24:14). Matthew took up the tradition which had been provided and transmitted faithfully in Jerusalem because this old missionary Commission was still important to him. It remains binding for the Church of Jesus Christ of all ages.

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edited by

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Preface

This book has its origin in the "Symposium on the Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles", which took place on April 28–29, 1998, at the *School of Mission and Theology* in Stavanger, Norway. As conveners of the conference and as editors of this book it is our duty and privilege to extend our thanks to the *School of Mission and Theology* for hosting the symposium and for providing the necessary facilities at its campus in Stavanger. The responsibility for the conference was shared by the *Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology* in Oslo, and we also wish to thank this institution for the financial and personal resources that it invested.

During the symposium in Stavanger eight papers were read. All of them are included in this volume in enlarged versions. We are very grateful to our colleagues Prof. Dr. Dr.h.c. PETER STUHLMACHER (University of Tübingen, Germany), Prof. Dr. OSKAR SKARSAUNE (Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology), Prof. Dr. JAMES M. SCOTT (Trinity Western University, Langley, British Columbia, Canada), Prof. Dr. SCOTT HAFEMANN (Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, USA), Prof. Dr. I. HOWARD MARSHALL (University of Aberdeen, Scotland) and Associate Prof. Dr. REIDAR HVALVIK (Norwegian Lutheran School of Theology) for their stimulating contributions to the symposium and to the present volume.

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Encouraged by the support and advice of Prof. Martin Hengel and Prof. Peter Stuhlmacher we decided to invite three new contributors who had not participated at the symposium in Stavanger. All three of them, Prof. Dr. ULRICH LUZ (University of Bern, Switzerland), Dr. HANNA STETTLER (Tübingen, Germany) and Prof. Dr. RAINER RIESNER (University of Dortmund, Germany), responded positively to the invitation, and we heartily thank them for their enrichments to the contents of this volume.

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