MYSTERY IN THE MATTHEAN OLIVET DISCOURSE

Matthew 24–25 vis-à-vis Danielic and Matthean Mystery

by

Jun Feng Jonathan Wu

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Jun Feng Jonathan Wu
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Abstract

Despite much secondary literature on the Olivet Discourse and the Old Testament in Matthew's Gospel, there remains a dearth of book-length research on Danielic mystery in Matthew's Gospel, and Matthew's Olivet Discourse. Our study endeavours to fill these gaps by pursuing a narrative-critical analysis of Matt 24–25 that deploys Matthew's use of Danielic mystery as a key interpretative grid.

In terms of methodology, we will adopt a narrative-critical approach complemented by Umberto Eco's theories of the cultural encyclopedia, the model reader, and texts that train the model reader. From this perspective, the Olivet Discourse is an integral component of Matthew's first-century narrative that emerged out of the Second Temple Jewish cultural encyclopedia. Also, Matthew's model reader exhibits specific encyclopedic competence, which includes knowing τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου (24:15) and its conception of mystery. Accordingly, Matt 24–25 shapes interpretation by invoking frames pertaining to Danielic and Matthean mystery, which the model reader actualises by understanding Jesus's speech as an exploration of the notion.

The focus of our investigation is, "How does attending to Danielic and Matthean mystery illuminate Matthew's Olivet Discourse?" We propose a twofold answer to this question.

Firstly, alertness to mystery, especially its form, content, and function, clarifies the main message and purpose of Matt 24–25. According to 24:4–35, the temple's destruction signals the nearness of the parousia of the Son of Man. Nevertheless, the end of the temple is simply the beginning of the (ultimate) end; only the second coming

brings the present age to its completion. 24:36–25:46 reinforces the shift in focus from the temple to the Son of Man. These verses polemically distinguish the wise from the foolish and wicked in order to encourage alignment with the former who watch for the parousia.

Secondly, Matthean mystery's inaugurated eschatology explains the echoes of Matt 24–25 in Matt 26–28 in terms of preliminary fulfilment. The tearing of the temple veil (27:51) and the appearance of Jesus in Galilee (28:18) respectively commence the temple's devastation and the Son of Man's arrival predicted in the Olivet Discourse, while pointing to their future consummation. This, in turn, reinforces the main message and purpose of Matt 24–25 by directing attention from the temple to the Son of Man, in anticipation of his coming in the fullness of power and glory as universal judge.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 The Scope of the Thesis

In his recent survey of Matthean scholarship, Rodney Reeves identifies the use of the Old Testament in Matthew's Gospel as a key area of research.[1] A cursory glance at the appendices of the UBS 5 explains this identification. The appendices list sixty-two Old Testament quotations in Matthew's Gospel, a figure rivalled only by the sixty-four in Romans. Moreover, the sixty-two in Matthew's narrative represent more than half of all quotations in the Synoptic Gospels.

As to which Old Testament texts feature in Matthew's Gospel, the UBS 5 lists only two citations from Daniel in 24:30 and 26:64, concerning τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (cf. Dan 7:13). This ostensibly suggests the relative insignificance of Daniel—apart from 7:13—for Matthew's Gospel. However, one could argue that Daniel exerts considerable influence on Matthew's narrative. Apart from the two citations of Dan 7:13, there is also τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως in Matt 24:15. While the same phrase appears in Mark 13:14, Matthew alone attributes the phrase explicitly to Δανιὴλ τῷ προφήτῃ.

Furthermore, one could argue that Matthew's Gospel demonstrates, in comparison to most of the New Testament, more dependence on Daniel. The UBS 5 detects 130 allusions and verbal parallels to Daniel in the New Testament, of which 74

[1] Rodney Reeves, "The Gospel of Matthew," in *The State of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, ed. Scot McKnight and Nijay K. Gupta (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 282–85.

appear in Revelation, followed by 20 in Matthew's narrative and only 8 in Luke's Gospel. Again, these 20 references account for more than half of all Danielic parallels and allusions in the Synoptic Gospels. Patrick Schreiner therefore concludes, "[i]t is evident that Matthew is fond of Daniel."[2] Jonathan T. Pennington describes "the widespread use of Daniel in Matthew" thus: "it is there, it is important, and there is still work to be done."[3]

Matthew's appropriation and adaptation of Daniel constitutes one of the two main topics of our study. The second area of inquiry pertains to one of the most challenging passages in Matthew's narrative, even in the Synoptic Gospels: the Olivet Discourse. Matthew 24–25 has sparked considerable controversy and has been subject to much scholarly scrutiny—but these chapters have proven resistant to consensus. In delineating the spectrum of interpretations, D. A. Carson registers that "[f]ew chapters of the Bible have elicited more disagreement among interpreters."[4] Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri assess "the last of the five discourses in Matthew" as "the most difficult to interpret."[5]

Despite the interminable stream of research on the Olivet Discourse, secondary literature overwhelmingly concentrates on Mark 13. As Victor Kossi Agbanou remarks, "[a] côté des nombreux travaux consacrés, dans ces dernières années, au discours

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[2] Patrick Schreiner, "Peter, the Rock: Matthew 16 in Light of Daniel 2," *Criswell Theological Review* 13.2 (2016): 112.

[3] Jonathan T. Pennington, "Refractions of Daniel in the Gospel of Matthew," in *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality, Volume 1: Thematic Studies*, ed. Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias, Studies in Scripture in Early Judaism and Christianity 14 (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 86.

[4] D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 9: Matthew and Mark*, ed. Tremper Longman and David E. Garland, Rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 548.

[5] Curtis Mitch and Edward Sri, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 301. As for Mark's Gospel, Mark L. Strauss likewise identifies the "background, structure, and significance of the Olivet Discourse" as "one of the most difficult issues" in the narrative. Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 564.

eschatologique de Marc et de Luc, le premier évangéliste fait figure de parent pauvre parmi les synoptiques."[6] Recently, Robbie Booth comments that "[m]ost studies of the Olivet Discourse have focused on Mark 13," and explains this "imbalance" as "likely due to the majority of New Testament scholars holding to Markan priority."[7]

While many commentaries, articles, and books inevitably refer to Matt 24–25, there remains a dearth of monographs and theses examining these chapters in detail. Fred W. Burnett's monograph *The Testament of Jesus-Sophia* (1981) mentions only one other book-length study: an unpublished dissertation by S. Vandakumpadar.[8] Two decades later, Gibbs's work *Jerusalem and Parousia* (2000) identifies only three other book-length discussions: by Vandakumpadar, Burnett, and Agbanou.[9] Another two decades later, Booth's PhD dissertation "First Jerusalem, Then the Parousia" (2021) mentions only one monograph (apart from Gibbs's) published since 1996: *The Abomination of Desolation in Matthew 24.15* by Michael P. Theophilos.[10]

The current state of research calls for further detailed work on Matthew's use of Daniel, and Matthew's Olivet Discourse. Since much scholarly ink has been spilled over the abomination of desolation and the Son of Man, our study will not devote special attention to these two synoptic appropriations of Daniel. Rather, we will focus on Matthew's adaptation of mystery according to Daniel. By analysing Matthew's

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[6] Victor Kossi Agbanou, *Le Discours Eschatologique de Matthieu 24–25: Tradition et Rédaction*, Etudes Bibliques, Nouvelle Série 2 (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre; Paris: Gabalda, 1983), 11.
[7] Robbie Booth, "First Jerusalem, Then the Parousia: A Case for a Simple Preterist-Futurist Interpretation of Matthew 24–25" (Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, PhD diss., 2021), 5. See also Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia: Jesus' Eschatological Discourse in Matthew's Gospel* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Academic, 2000), 13–14.
[8] S. Vandakumpadar, "The Parousia Discourse Mt 24–25: Tradition and Redaction" (Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1976). Cited in Fred W. Burnett, *The Testament of Jesus-Sophia: A Redaction-Critical Study of the Eschatological Discourse in Matthew* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1981), 2 n. 1; Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 22 n. 2.
[9] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 22 n. 2.
[10] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 110, 115.

Olivet Discourse through the interpretative grid of his use of Danielic mystery, we will draw together the above two topics in a single inquiry.

1.2 A Survey and Review of Secondary Literature

1.2.1 The Use of Daniel in Matthew's Gospel

Thus far, nobody appears to have analysed in detail Matthew's use of Daniel apart from the themes of the kingdom of heaven, the abomination of desolation, and the Son of Man. Our survey will focus on discussions of Matthew's allusion to Danielic mystery in articles and sections of monographs or theses exploring Daniel's influence on the Synoptic Gospels more generally.

David Wenham, "The Kingdom of God and Daniel" (1987)

Wenham posits that the "full significance of the book of Daniel as background to the New Testament," apart from "the *desolating sacrilege*" and the "heavenly *Son of Man* concept," has not always been recognised.[11] In particular, he proposes a Danielic background to Jesus's teaching about the kingdom, though he also refers in passing to "other gospel traditions," including "the revelation of 'mysteries'" in Mark 4:11 and Matt 11:25–27.[12] Wenham concedes that "perhaps … these ideas have come not directly

[11] David Wenham, "The Kingdom of God and Daniel," *The Expository Times* 98.5 (1987): 132, italics original.
[12] Wenham, "Kingdom of God," 133, 134.

from Daniel, but from the broader stream of Jewish apocalyptic thinking."[13] Nonetheless, he concludes that "it is unnecessarily complicated to make Daniel an indirect influence on New Testament thinking ... when we know that the book of Daniel itself was significant for the first Christians."[14] Subsequent scholars allude to this article, though the brevity of its analysis calls for the elaboration of its central proposal concerning synoptic dependence on Daniel.

Craig A. Evans, "Daniel in the New Testament: Visions of God's Kingdom" (2001)

Evans, citing Wenham, argues that "[t]he book of Daniel has made a significant contribution to Jesus' understanding of the kingdom of God, his suffering and rule as son of man, the co-regency of his disciples, and the day of judgement."[15] Accordingly, "much of Jesus' eschatology is influenced by themes and images found in the book of Daniel," as seen in "Jesus' unvarying proclamation of the kingdom ... [and] its mysteriousness."[16] More precisely, Evans states that "the kingdom is in some way a mystery, whose presence and nature must be revealed by God."[17] He also attributes the language of μυστήριον and παραβολή in Mark 4 to "the hermeneutic of Daniel," especially Dan 2.[18] Nevertheless, he does not extend these insights to his treatment of

[13] Wenham, "Kingdom of God," 133.
[14] Wenham, "Kingdom of God," 133.
[15] Craig A. Evans, "Daniel in the New Testament: Visions of God's Kingdom," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception, Volume 2*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 83/2 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 526. For the reference to Wenham's article, see Evans, "Daniel in the NT," 510 n. 38.
[16] Evans, "Daniel in the NT," 521.
[17] Evans, "Daniel in the NT," 512.
[18] Evans, "Daniel in the NT," 513.

the eschatology of the Olivet Discourse; neither does he discuss mystery outside of Mark 4 and Matt 11.

> Jonathan T. Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew* (2007)
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> Jonathan T. Pennington, "Refractions of Daniel in the Gospel of Matthew" (2009)
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> Jonathan T. Pennington, "Revelatory Epistemology in the Gospel according to Matthew in Dialogue with Francis Watson's 'Canonical Perspective'" (2019)

As mentioned above (1.1), Pennington's essay (2009) calls for more work on "the widespread use of Daniel in Matthew."[19] His research informs the shape of our investigation in the following three ways.

Firstly, in "Refractions of Daniel," Pennington describes these refractions as "ubiquitous" in the New Testament, consisting of not just the "most obvious connection" of the Son of Man but also "many other connections."[20] With respect to Matthew's Gospel, these other connections include the notions of heaven and earth, and divine revelation. Accordingly, one "important way that Daniel informs the themes and theology of Matthew is with the emphasis in both books on the divine revelation of mysteries, particularly mysteries concerning the future kingdom(s)."[21]

Secondly, in exploring "*the literary and theological motif of heaven and earth*," Pennington's monograph challenges the assumption that the Matthean phrase ἡ

[19] Pennington, "Refractions of Daniel," 86.
[20] Pennington, "Refractions of Daniel," 67.
[21] Pennington, "Refractions of Daniel," 74.

βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν is simply "motivated by a shared Jewish aversion to the name of God."[22] Through a detailed examination of Jewish literary contexts, he argues that Matthew adopts the juxtaposition of heaven and earth (and the concept of God's kingdom) from Daniel, which "likely explains his use of the phrase ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν."[23] This innovative and provocative thesis deserves further consideration; we will build on it by arguing that the mysteries of the (Danielic) kingdom of heaven in Matt 13:11 are most probably Danielic as well.

Thirdly, in "Revelatory Epistemology in Matthew," Pennington redresses the gap in scholarship concerning "how the Discourses [in Matthew's Gospel] relate to each other."[24] The essay proposes that a "dominant theme … found in all five of the Discourses" is "*the dual theme of Revelation and Separation*."[25] In particular, this theme emerges as "most obvious and prominent in the central third Discourse" (Matt 13) featuring the "key idea" of mystery—which Pennington identifies as "stemming from the heavy influence of Daniel on Matthew."[26] He also suggests that "Matthew 13 serves as the organizing center for all five of the Discourses, with its content being almost exclusively this theme of Revelation and Separation, and the other Discourses having this idea as their substructure."[27] From here, one could ask what light Matt 13, especially its conception of mystery, sheds on the interpretation of Matt 24–25.

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[22] Jonathan T. Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 126 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 2, 4, italics original.
[23] Pennington, *Heaven and Earth*, 8.
[24] Jonathan T. Pennington, "Revelatory Epistemology in the Gospel according to Matthew in Dialogue with Francis Watson's 'Canonical Perspective,'" in *Writing the Gospels: A Dialogue with Francis Watson*, ed. Catherine Sider Hamilton and Joel Willitts, Library of New Testament Studies 606 (London: T & T Clark, 2019), 108.
[25] Pennington, "Revelatory Epistemology in Matthew," 110, italics original.
[26] Pennington, "Revelatory Epistemology in Matthew," 110, 111.
[27] Pennington, "Revelatory Epistemology in Matthew," 111.

In short, Pennington's insights encourage further work on Matthew's use of Danielic mystery, and the relationship between Matthean mystery and the Olivet Discourse—which our study will undertake.

Reimar Vetne, "The Influence and Use of Daniel in the Synoptic Gospels" (2011)

Vetne's unpublished PhD dissertation takes "a comprehensive look at the influence and use of Daniel in Matthew, Mark, and Luke"; its distinctive accomplishment is the discussion of "all the possible allusions to Daniel in one study."[28] Of particular interest to our investigation is Vetne's analysis of μυστήριον in Matt 13:11 (and the parallel verses), where he acknowledges a scholarly consensus regarding synoptic dependence on Daniel in the use of the term.[29] He concludes that

> [a]lthough we are talking about the parallel of just a single word here ("μυστήριον"), since that word is a key theological term in both Dan 2 and in this Gospel pericope, and is used nowhere else in the OT outside Daniel, it is possible that we are correct to hear Daniel in the background of Jesus' statement.[30]

However, Vetne does not develop the implications of this Danielic reference beyond considerations of "sharpen[ing] our understanding of Jesus' statement in this verse [Matt 13:11] about the kingdom of God and about the use of parables."[31] While he devotes a chapter to Daniel's impact on synoptic eschatology, it does not explore the influence of mystery (either according to Daniel or Matt 13) on the Olivet Discourse.

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[28] Reimar Vetne, "The Influence and Use of Daniel in the Synoptic Gospels" (Andrews University, PhD diss., 2011), 2, 246.
[29] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 50. See especially nn. 68 and 69.
[30] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 51.
[31] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 51.

James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology* (2014)

Hamilton's work includes a chapter on interpretations of Daniel in the New Testament, with a section on Matthew's Gospel. He argues that Jesus's teachings in Matt 13 "reflect a profound synthesis of themes and statements from Daniel 2, 3, 4, 7 and 12," including the prediction that "the kingdoms of the world will be crushed..., and Christ will reign as King for ever."[32] This argument implies that ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν in Matt 13:11 is Danielic, which, in turn, suggests that τὰ μυστήρια likewise alludes to Daniel. However, Hamilton does not specifically address the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven in 13:11; neither does his analysis of Matthew's Olivet Discourse refer to Danielic mystery.

G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed: A Biblical Theology of Mystery* (2014)

This monograph seeks to redress "the lack of an exegetical and biblical-theological analysis of *mystery*."[33] The authors argue that mystery "not only features prominently in the book of Daniel but also in early Judaism," even that it "originates ... in the book of Daniel and ... continues to be used in a similar manner" in Second Temple Judaism.[34]

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[32] James M. Hamilton, *With the Clouds of Heaven: The Book of Daniel in Biblical Theology*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 32 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 185.
[33] G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed: A Biblical Theology of Mystery* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 26, italics original.
[34] Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 47, 56. Elsewhere, they reiterate that mystery in early Judaism is "in line with its meaning in the book of Daniel." Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 52–53.

They weave Pennington's insights into their discussion relating the Matthean mysteries of the kingdom of heaven to "the initial fulfillment of Daniel's long-awaited kingdom."[35] Contrary to Vetne's assertion that "the parallel of just a single word" links Matt 13:11 with Dan 2, Beale and Gladd discern that "the key words *mystery* (*mystērion*), *kingdom* (*basileia*) and *heaven* (*ouranos*) only occur in two passages—Matthew 13:11 and Daniel 2:28."[36] These shared lexemes reinforce the probability that the mysteries of Matt 13:11 are Danielic mysteries. Accordingly, the "main feature of the revealed mystery of the kingdom" is its inaugurated eschatology: "the kingdom ... has come 'already' but it is 'not yet' completed."[37] However, they do not develop their analysis of Matthean mystery beyond Matt 13; neither do they derive from this mystery an interpretative framework for understanding the Matthean Olivet Discourse.

> Patrick Schreiner, "Peter, the Rock: Matthew 16 in Light of Daniel 2" (2016)
>
> Patrick Schreiner, *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe: The First Gospel and Its Portrait of Jesus* (2019)

As mentioned above (1.1), Schreiner's article highlights Matthew's proclivity for Daniel.[38] While it focuses on interpreting Matt 16:17–19 in the light of Dan 2:31–45,

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[35] "In his work on the notion of heaven and earth in Matthew, Jonathan T. Pennington cogently argues that Matthew's preference for 'heavenly' language stems not from a desire to avoid the title 'God' but to draw a distinction between heaven and earth." Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 67.
[36] Compare Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 51, with Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 67, italics original.
[37] Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 75.
[38] Schreiner, "Peter, the Rock," 112.

it also catalogues other instances in Matthew's Gospel where Danielic influence is "particularly evident."[39] These include the language of μυστήριον in Matt 13:11, which "probably should be understood against the background of its use in Daniel … to translate the Aramaic *raz*."[40] Schreiner concludes thus: "[j]ust as Daniel revealed the mysteries of the kingdom of the Most High, so Jesus will reveal the mystery of the kingdom."[41] Likewise, his recent monograph—in portraying "Jesus as a teacher of wisdom," the one "revealing 'the secrets' or 'the mysteries' of the kingdom in chapter 13"—briefly mentions μυστήριον in Dan 2.[42] Our study will explore in detail the relationship between mystery in Dan 2 and Matt 13.

Daniel M. Gurtner, "Danielic Influence at the Intersection of Matthew and the Dead Sea Scrolls" (2020)

This essay begins with the "well documented" consensus that "the book of Daniel was an influential text both in the Gospel of Matthew and among the Dead Sea Scrolls."[43] Nevertheless, Gurtner concedes that "scholarly discourse on Danielic influence in Matthew is typically limited to [the] coming of [the] 'son of man' (Dan 7:13; e.g., Matt 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 25:31; 26:64) and the 'desolating sacrilege' (Dan 11:31; Matt 24:15)."[44] The essay chiefly proposes that both the Dead Sea Scrolls and Matthew's

[39] Schreiner, "Peter, the Rock," 102.
[40] Schreiner, "Peter, the Rock," 103.
[41] Schreiner, "Peter, the Rock," 103.
[42] Patrick Schreiner, *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe: The First Gospel and Its Portrait of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 19 n. 60.
[43] Daniel M. Gurtner, "Danielic Influence at the Intersection of Matthew and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Matthew within Judaism: Israel and the Nations in the First Gospel*, ed. Anders Runesson and Daniel M. Gurtner, Early Christianity and Its Literature 27 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2020), 309.
[44] Gurtner, "Danielic Influence," 309.

Gospel "draw on Daniel's apocalyptic eschatology to shape and inform their own respective eschatological outlooks."[45] In particular, Qumran leadership "is in part identified in Danielic terms," as "unique recipients and interpreters of God's eschatological mysteries."[46] However, the essay does not identify Jesus as the unique interpreter, and his disciples as distinctive recipients, of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; in fact, Gurtner's discussion of Matthew's Gospel does not refer to these mysteries.[47] Nevertheless, he cites Wenham, Evans, and Pennington's proposal that Daniel is "the most likely origin" of the Synoptic Jesus's proclamation of the kingdom, especially the Matthean kingdom of heaven.[48] This, in turn, suggests Daniel as "the most likely origin" as well of the Matthean mysteries (of the kingdom of heaven).[49]

1.2.2 The Olivet Discourse in Matthew's Gospel

George R. Beasley-Murray's *Jesus and the Last Days* extensively catalogues the secondary literature on the Olivet Discourse, especially Mark 13, up to the late twentieth century.[50] A more up-to-date discussion of research on the Markan Olivet Discourse, up to the first two decades of the twenty-first century, can be found in Paul T. Sloan's

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[45] Gurtner, "Danielic Influence," 325.
[46] Gurtner, "Danielic Influence," 325.
[47] "In Matthew, Daniel has less a role in explicitly identifying who are the beneficiaries of eschatological blessings and who are not than in depicting their respective fates." Gurtner, "Danielic Influence," 325. For a contrasting view, see the discussion of revelation, separation, and mystery in Pennington, "Revelatory Epistemology in Matthew," 110–16.
[48] Gurtner, "Danielic Influence," 320.
[49] Gurtner, "Danielic Influence," 320.
[50] George R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Last Days: The Interpretation of the Olivet Discourse* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 1–349.

Mark 13 and the Return of the Shepherd.[51] We will not rehearse these surveys but will supplement them instead by focusing on scholarly treatments of Matt 24–25.[52]

Much of the secondary literature on the Matthean Olivet Discourse consists of commentaries, or portions of monographs and theses that refer to Matt 24–25 in discussing other topics. These topics include sapiential and apocalyptic traditions,[53] eschatology,[54] judgement,[55] the story of Israel,[56] even discipleship.[57] As meaningful coverage of every such work is impossible, our survey will focus instead on book-length analyses of the Matthean Olivet Discourse as their primary subject. Thus far, there seems to be only five such monographs or theses.

In engaging different interpretative positions on the Olivet Discourse, we will borrow the following labels: preterist, futurist, and preterist-futurist.[58] A preterist reading identifies historical incidents, particularly the destruction of the temple and the fall of Jerusalem, as the referents of Matt 24–25. A futurist reading identifies future eschatological incidents, particularly the parousia of the Son of Man, universal

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[51] Paul T. Sloan, *Mark 13 and the Return of the Shepherd: The Narrative Logic of Zechariah in Mark*, Library of New Testament Studies 604 (London: T & T Clark, 2019), 119–48.
[52] For the reception history of the Matthean Olivet Discourse from the first century onwards, see Booth, "First Jerusalem," 19–83.
[53] Grant Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 115 (Leiden: Brill, 2007); David C. Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in the Gospel of Matthew*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 88 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[54] Vicky Balabanski, *Eschatology in the Making: Mark, Matthew, and the Didache*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 97 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
[55] Alastair I. Wilson, *When Will These Things Happen? A Study of Jesus as Judge in Matthew 21–25*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004).
[56] Christopher C. Johnstone, "Jesus and the Climax of Israel's Story: An Exploration of the Hermeneutic of 'Story' with Reference to Matthew 24–25, Mark 13 and Luke 21" (Murdoch University, PhD thesis, 2012).
[57] Ben Cooper, *Incorporated Servanthood: Commitment and Discipleship in the Gospel of Matthew*, Library of New Testament Studies 490 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).
[58] For the use and description of these categories, see Booth, "First Jerusalem," 7–9; David L. Turner, "The Structure and Sequence of Matthew 24:1–41: Interaction with Evangelical Treatments," *Grace Theological Journal* 10 (1989): 3–4.

judgement, and the consummation of the age as the referents of Matt 24–25. In comparison, a preterist-futurist reading identifies both historical and future eschatological events as the referents of Matt 24–25.

Fred W. Burnett, *The Testament of Jesus-Sophia: A Redaction-Critical Study of the Eschatological Discourse in Matthew* (1981)

This monograph presents itself as the first comprehensive study published on the Matthean Olivet Discourse.[59] Burnett aligns his approach with historical criticism in general and composition criticism in particular.[60]

A distinctive feature of Burnett's work is his identification of the genre of Matt 24. While the Olivet Discourse contains apocalyptic writing, he detects as its main influence the Jewish wisdom tradition of Sophia's rejection, withdrawal to heaven, and subsequent appearance as the Son of Man.[61] Burnett also maintains that a caesura separates 24:3 from the preceding material, and that Matthew redacts the disciples' enquiry in this verse into a single question regarding the parousia of the Son of Man.[62] These indicate to Burnett a decisive shift in focus from the end of the temple (prior to 24:3) to the end of the age (from 24:3 onwards). He thereby concludes that 24:3 marks a new section consisting of Jesus's testament as Wisdom and the (soon-to-be exalted)

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[59] Since it mentions only one other unpublished detailed treatment of the topic by Vandakumpadar. Burnett, *Testament of Jesus-Sophia*, 2 n. 1. Vandakumpadar's dissertation is also mentioned in Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 22 n. 2. Like Burnett and Gibbs, we were unable to access this dissertation for our study.
[60] Burnett, *Testament of Jesus-Sophia*, 2–4. In other words, the monograph is more interested in Matthew's use of sources than in his sources per se; Burnett seeks to read Matt 24 in its immediate context and relate the passage to the rest of Matthew's narrative. Burnett, *Testament of Jesus-Sophia*, 6.
[61] Burnett, *Testament of Jesus-Sophia*, 26.
[62] Burnett, *Testament of Jesus-Sophia*, 183, 207, 224–25.

Son of Man.[63] Subsequent narrative-critical discussion of the verse has perceptively critiqued this conclusion.[64]

Burnett's analysis of 24:3 prepares for his futurist interpretation of Jesus's speech. In fact, he espouses a future-oriented perspective for the whole of Matt 24. The verses that pose an acute challenge to his reading are precisely those that seem to allude to the destruction of the temple and the tribulation beginning in Judea. According to Burnett, the phrase ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ in 24:15 refers to the church, and τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως in the same verse describes something that happens to the Christian community (and not to Jerusalem or its temple).[65] In particular, he identifies τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως as recapitulating the church's experience in 24:10–12 of apostasy, betrayal, lawlessness, and lovelessness under the malignant influence of false prophets.[66] Accordingly, οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ in 24:16 refer to members of the church at large—or, more precisely, members of the Matthean community—who are exhorted to flee.[67]

However, it is not evident why the lawlessness of 24:15 should precipitate the instruction in 24:16 to seek safety in the mountains. Just a few verses before, the mention of apostasy and lawlessness (24:10–12) resulted instead in the implicit encouragement to endure and continue proclaiming the gospel (24:13–14). Moreover, 24:15 highlights the Danielic context of the phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, and Dan 9, 11, and 12 depict the abomination in relation to the invasion of Jerusalem and the devastation of the temple.[68] Matthew apparently does not equate τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς

[63] Burnett, *Testament of Jesus-Sophia*, 193.
[64] See Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 169–70, 178.
[65] Burnett, *Testament of Jesus-Sophia*, 335–36.
[66] Burnett, *Testament of Jesus-Sophia*, 335–36.
[67] Burnett, *Testament of Jesus-Sophia*, 335–36.
[68] We will seek to demonstrate this in 4.5.2.

ἐρημώσεως in 24:15 with lawlessness within the church in 24:12; contrary to Burnett, Jesus's speech retains some reference to the destruction of the temple.

Finally, Burnett's discussion of Danielic and apocalyptic influences emphasises the apocalyptic-wisdom tradition of Sophia, which functions as the key interpretative grid for his reading of Matt 24. He acknowledges that the chapter, in the light of Matt 13, can be described as a revelation of "eschatological secrets ... in private" to the disciples and, by extension, the Matthean community.[69] Nevertheless, he does not develop this insight into an analysis of Danielic mystery and its significance for the Olivet Discourse.

Victor Kossi Agbanou, *Le Discours Eschatologique de Matthieu 24–25: Tradition et Rédaction* (1983)

Agbanou's monograph, in comparison with Burnett's, adopts more thoroughly the historical-critical considerations of form, redaction, and the Sitz im Leben of Matthew's first readers, with a view to analysing the use of existing traditions in Matt 24–25.[70] He argues that these chapters, in contrast to Mark 13, were composed at least a decade or two after AD 70.[71] Accordingly, the fall of Jerusalem and its temple had already happened and therefore was of limited interest and relevance to the Matthean community who lived in the last days ("les derniers temps") after the Jewish-Roman

[69] Burnett, *Testament of Jesus-Sophia*, 33, 169.
[70] Agbanou, *Discours Eschatologique*, 12–13.
[71] Agbanou, *Discours Eschatologique*, 203.

war.[72] He concludes that Matthew's Olivet Discourse reinterprets past events from the fresh perspective of salvation history ("l'histoire du salut") concerning the last days.[73]

Agbanou's reconstruction of the situation of the Matthean community leads to a (primarily) futurist reading of Matt 24–25. While Booth categorises *Le Discours Eschatologique* as a futurist interpretation, one could arguably classify it as primarily futurist.[74] This is because Agbanou, unlike Burnett, concedes that 24:15–22 retains some reference to the devastation of Jerusalem and its temple. Nevertheless, Agbanou maintains that these verses are ultimately about "la fin des temps," whereby Matthew applies the exhortations concerning the Jewish events of AD 70 to the global tribulations of the last days.[75] In other words, 24:15–22 contains a dual reference, not just to the historic destruction of the temple but also to the sufferings preceding the consummation of the age.[76]

Therefore, while Agbanou's interpretation is not purely future-oriented, it remains primarily so. Although one could classify his reading as preterist-futurist (with dual reference), his insistence that Matthew focuses on the end of the age lands his interpretation more comfortably in the futurist category.[77] Our study will likewise argue that Matthew's Olivet Discourse directs attention from the temple's destruction to the Son of Man's coming. However, we will do so from a narrative-critical standpoint,

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[72] Agbanou, *Discours Eschatologique*, 205.
[73] Agbanou, *Discours Eschatologique*, 12, 203.
[74] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 113.
[75] Agbanou, *Discours Eschatologique*, 81.
[76] "Même l'annonce de la destruction du temple n'est pas présentée comme si Jésus voyait l'armée romaine saper la ville et son temple. Cette destruction du temple et l'utilisation de l'image daniélique de 'l'abomination désolatrice' servent à l'évangéliste à exprimer le rapport de ces événements avec l'histoire du salut, déjà en train de s'accomplir maintenant." Agbanou, *Discours Eschatologique*, 206.
[77] On the preterist-futurist interpretation with dual reference, refer to the definition of the telescopic-fulfilment position below (1.4.7).

apart from the historical-critical question of the date of Matt 24–25 relative to the Jewish-Roman war.

Finally, while *Le Discours Eschatologique* recognises Matthew's dependence on Daniel for his Olivet Discourse, it neither explores Danielic or Matthean mystery, nor derives from the notion an interpretative framework for analysing Matt 24–25.

Jeffrey A. Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia: Jesus' Eschatological Discourse in Matthew's Gospel* (2000)

This is the first monograph attempting a thorough narrative-critical study of the Matthean Olivet Discourse. According to Gibbs, prior historical-critical readings "simply do violence" to the literary integrity of Matt 24–25.[78] By adopting a different approach, Gibbs presents these chapters as Jesus's speech to his disciples in the context of Matthew's wider story to the implied reader.[79] *Jerusalem and Parousia* seeks to uncover the implied reader's understanding of the Matthean Olivet Discourse.[80]

Indeed, Gibbs's narrative-critical method generates readings that differ from those of his predecessors. In Agbanou's case, historical-critical postulations—the late dating of Matthew's Gospel and the Sitz im Leben of the Matthean community—drive the interpretation that Matt 24–25 shows little interest in the temple's destruction. As for Burnett, the (purported) redaction of 24:3 into a single question and the caesura

[78] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 14.
[79] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 14, 22.
[80] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 22, 255.

demarcating the verse from the preceding material decisively shift the focus of Jesus's speech from the end of the temple to the end of the age.

In contrast, Gibbs espouses the unity of 24:3 with the prior verses and argues that the disciples' two questions refer respectively to the destruction of the temple and the completion of the age. These "obvious and important features of the text" suggest to him that the "implied reader might reasonably expect Jesus to give a twofold answer" from 24:4 onwards.[81] Accordingly, Gibbs proposes a bipartite structure to the Olivet Discourse that divides at 24:36, with the first half of the speech focusing on the devastation of the temple and the second half addressing the parousia of the Son of Man.[82]

Many commentators acknowledge that περὶ δέ at the start of 24:36 denotes a new section. Nevertheless, what Gibbs identifies as different from this verse onwards appears more contentious. He argues that Jesus only speaks about the devastation of the temple in 24:4–35, concluding that the new topic in 24:36–25:46 is precisely the return of Jesus and the end of the age.[83] In other words, Gibbs combines a purely preterist reading of 24:4–35 with a purely futurist reading of 24:36–25:46; *Jerusalem and Parousia* can therefore be considered a (simple) preterist-futurist interpretation of Matt 24–25.[84]

According to Gibbs, the predictions of 24:15–22, 29, and 30 materialised in the Jewish-Roman war. 24:15–22 depicts a great tribulation (θλῖψις μεγάλη, 24:21) that pertains not to the end of the age but to the destruction of the temple.[85] Also, 24:29

[81] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 14, 170.
[82] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 170–71.
[83] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 173–74.
[84] On the simple preterist-futurist interpretation, refer to its definition in 1.4.7.
[85] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 185.

speaks of cosmological phenomena that signify divine judgement on Jerusalem.[86] As for 24:30, the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven stands for the exaltation and vindication of Jesus in AD 70 as a result of the fall of Jerusalem and its temple.[87]

Gibbs's preterist readings of 24:15–22, 29, and 30 advantageously sidestep problems typically associated with interpreting the two temporal statements of 24:29 and 34. The challenge of 24:29 pertains to understanding how the cosmological phenomena of the verse can be described as happening immediately after the tribulation (εὐθέως ... μετὰ τὴν θλῖψιν) of 24:15–22. However, if 24:15–22 speaks of the temple's devastation, and 24:29 refers to Jerusalem's final defeat at the very end of the Jewish-Roman war—then the latter would have followed shortly after the former.

The complexity of 24:34 pertains to understanding how the coming of the Son of Man in 24:30 forms part of "all these things" (πάντα ταῦτα) happening within the lifespan of "this generation" (ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη). However, if 24:30 refers to the exaltation and vindication of the Son of Man, not at the end of the age but at the end of the Jewish-Roman war—then this would have happened by the time "this generation" passed away.

Nevertheless, Gibbs's division of the preterist and the futurist contents of Matt 24–25 at 24:36 risks being too neat. Just a few verses before 24:36, Matthew uses ἔρχομαι in 24:30, with the Son of Man as the subject, to represent (according to Gibbs) the vindication of Jesus at the end of the Jewish-Roman war.[88] Just a few verses after 24:36, Matthew uses the same verb in 24:42, with the Son of Man as the subject, to represent instead (according to Gibbs) the second coming of Jesus at the end of the

[86] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 197.
[87] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 201.
[88] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 201.

age.[89] In the light of 24:42, one could argue that ἔρχομαι in 24:30 denotes as well the return of Jesus at the completion of the age. This, in turn, calls into question Gibbs's bifurcation of Jesus's speech into exclusively preterist and futurist halves at 24:36.

Finally, *Jerusalem and Parousia* acknowledges the importance of Daniel to Matthew's Gospel. Gibbs speaks of "the revelation of eschatological mysteries" in Matt 13, concerning "the truth that the reign of heaven is an already-present, though hidden, reality that is moving towards the time of its consummation."[90] However, he does not weave the themes of hiddenness, kingdom, and inaugurated eschatology into an analysis of Danielic mystery; neither does he explore Matthew's use of mystery as a narrative context of the Olivet Discourse.

Michael P. Theophilos, *The Abomination of Desolation in Matthew 24.15* (2012)

Published more than a decade after Gibb's study, *The Abomination of Desolation* blends a narrative-critical analysis of Matt 24 with historical insights. Like Burnett, Theophilos defines his approach in relation to composition criticism.[91] Like Gibbs, he also describes his method in terms of narrative criticism.[92]

The monograph engages the Matthean Olivet Discourse as a text emerging from the cultural and literary currents of Second Temple Judaism. In analysing the

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[89] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 208.
[90] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 81.
[91] Michael P. Theophilos, *The Abomination of Desolation in Matthew 24.15*, Library of New Testament Studies 437 (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 81.
[92] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 82. Here, Theophilos applies Gibbs's description of his (Gibb's) work—a "text based study"—to his (Theophilos's) own. Theophilos takes the quote from Gibbs's PhD dissertation, which he (Gibbs) revised for publication as *Jerusalem and Parousia*.

controversial phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, Theophilos examines the occurrence of similar words and themes in Daniel and other Jewish writings. He concludes that τὸ βδέλυγμα in Matt 24:15 refers to Israel's covenant infidelity, expressed in the people's rejection of Jesus as king.[93] The genitival τῆς ἐρημώσεως refers to the consequence of divine punishment for opposing Jesus, realised in the invasion of Jerusalem during the Jewish-Roman war.[94]

This preterist reading extends to 24:29–30, where the appellation τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου evokes the Danielic figure whose coming signals the destruction of Israel's enemies.[95] However, the allusion contains an ironic twist: the people of God, in their covenant unfaithfulness, turn out to be their own worst enemy; they are, as such, the enemy subjugated at the Son of Man's arrival.[96] Theophilos concludes that 24:30 refers to the events of AD 70: the devastation of Jerusalem and its temple by the Roman military.[97]

As far as 24:15 and 30 are concerned, Theophilos's reading of Matthew's Olivet Discourse can be classified as preterist. While he does not analyse Matt 25 in detail, his brief remarks on 25:31–46 suggest that the coming of the Son of Man in these verses refers to the final judgement of all nations.[98] This implies that Theophilos, who offers a purely preterist interpretation of Matt 24, espouses a preterist-futurist understanding of Matt 24–25 as a whole.

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[93] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 230.
[94] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 230.
[95] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 177–78.
[96] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 195.
[97] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 229–30.
[98] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 226–27.

Therefore, we can apply our critique of Gibb's interpretation of 24:30 and 42 to Theophilos's reading of 24:30 and 25:31. On the one hand, Theophilos argues that the coming of the Son of Man in 24:30 refers to the events of AD 70. On the other hand, he proposes that Matthew uses the same verb (ἔρχομαι) in 25:31, with the Son of Man as the subject, not to refer to the end of the Jewish-Roman war but to the end of the age. In the light of 25:31, one could argue that ἔρχομαι in 24:30 likewise denotes the return of Jesus at the completion of the age.

Finally, Theophilos recognises that Daniel significantly influences Matthew's Gospel, especially Matt 24.[99] Nonetheless, the Deuteronomistic framework of covenantal blessings and curses provides the dominant interpretative framework for his analysis of Matt 24.[100] The monograph does not discuss the appropriation of Danielic mystery in Matt 1–23 or acknowledge this as a key narrative context of the Olivet Discourse.

Robbie Booth, "First Jerusalem, Then the Parousia: A Case for a Simple Preterist-Futurist Interpretation of Matthew 24–25" (2021)

Booth's unpublished PhD dissertation presents the most recent detailed treatment of the entire Matthean Olivet Discourse. In terms of approach, it offers a text-focused study of Matt 24–25; it does not search for either pre-Matthean sources or the Sitz im Leben of the Matthean community.[101] In terms of contribution to existing research, it

[99] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 177.
[100] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 229–30. From this standpoint, Theophilos concludes that Matt 24 fundamentally depicts Israel's infidelity as the abomination resulting in the desolation of divine judgement through the Roman armies.
[101] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 6.

delineates the historical reception of Matt 24–25 from the first to the twenty-first centuries; it also provides text-critical and discourse analyses of these chapters.[102]

Of particular use is Booth's survey of existing readings of the Matthean Olivet Discourse under five labels, which our study will adopt. Firstly, the preterist view, as represented by N. T. Wright.[103] Secondly, the futurist interpretation, as espoused by Rudolf Schnackenburg.[104]

Thirdly, the telescopic-fulfilment preterist-futurist position, as advocated by Grant R. Osborne.[105] According to this reading, certain verses in Matt 24–25 simultaneously contain dual referents; these verses are fulfilled by the historical event of the temple's destruction as well as the future event of Jesus's second coming.[106]

Fourthly, the complex preterist-futurist view, as adopted by Ulrich Luz.[107] This interpretation of Matt 24–25 alternates in a complex or nonlinear fashion between the two events of the historical destruction of the temple and the future arrival of the Son of Man.[108]

Fifthly, the simple preterist-futurist position, as represented by R. T. France.[109] Accordingly, Matt 24–25 first addresses the historic destruction of the temple, before exploring the final coming of the Son of Man, in a simple or linear fashion.[110]

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[102] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 3.
[103] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 84–90.
[104] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 90–96.
[105] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 96–102.
[106] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 9.
[107] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 102–7.
[108] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 9–10.
[109] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 107–10.
[110] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 10.

Booth evaluates these interpretative categories, concluding that each has strengths and weaknesses.[111] Nonetheless, he prefers the simple preterist-futurist reading; his dissertation attempts to adduce further support for this position.[112]

Chapter 3 of "First Jerusalem, Then the Parousia" offers a discourse analysis of Matt 24–25. Booth interprets 24:3 as containing two questions, and reiterates Gibbs's point that "the implied reader might reasonably expect Jesus to give a twofold answer."[113] This, accordingly, illuminates the structure of Jesus's speech: he answers the first question (about the destruction of the temple) in 24:4–35 before replying to the second question (about the return of Jesus and the end of the age) in 24:36–25:46.[114] While we concur with Booth (and Gibbs) that 24:3 contains two questions, we will propose otherwise as to their significance for interpreting Jesus's speech.

According to Booth, locating the "discourse peak" is imperative for understanding the Olivet Discourse; he applies the research of Robert Longacre to his discussion of 24:32–41 as the climax of the Olivet Discourse.[115] By observing Matthew's use of temporal adverbs, rhetorical underlining, and the "attention-getter" ἀμήν, in 24:32–35, he interprets these verses as initiating the discourse peak of the entire speech.[116] While we agree with Booth that 24:32–35 are climactic, our explanation of their meaning and function for the Olivet Discourse will differ.

Booth draws on the work of Stephen H. Levinsohn and Steven E. Runge in identifying a new (topical) frame in 24:36.[117] Despite the words ἡμέρας and ὥρας,

[111] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 110.
[112] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 1.
[113] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 152.
[114] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 152.
[115] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 157.
[116] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 157–61.
[117] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 162.

Booth argues that περὶ δέ in the verse does not function as a temporal frame; rather, it commences a new subject.[118] Accordingly, the topical break in 24:36 underscores the twofold structure of Matt 24–25 that corresponds to the disciples' dual questions in 24:3.[119] While our study affirms that περὶ δέ denotes a transition in 24:36, we will diverge from Booth's specification of the old and new topics in the two halves of Jesus's speech.

Finally, while Booth recognises the influence of Daniel on the Olivet Discourse, he primarily focuses on the Danielic references in Matt 24–25. "First Jerusalem, Then the Parousia" does not analyse other Danielic notions such as mystery, or explore Matthean mystery as a framework for understanding the Olivet Discourse.

1.2.3 Reviewing the Current State of Research

We can make four observations about the existing scholarship. Firstly, commentators agree on the considerable importance of Daniel to Matthew's narrative; they also recognise as Danielic the Matthean mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Secondly, despite this acknowledgement, there remains a dearth of book-length research on Matthew's appropriation and adaptation of Danielic mystery. Thirdly, amidst numerous commentaries and sections within monographs or theses discussing Matt 24–25, there are very few comprehensive narrative-critical treatments of these chapters. Fourthly, the handful of detailed studies does not represent the entire range of major interpretative positions on the Olivet Discourse. These works espouse a futurist reading

[118] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 161–62.
[119] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 166.

(Burnett), a primarily futurist reading involving double reference (Agbanou), a preterist reading of Matt 24 and a futurist reading of Matt 25 (Theophilos), and a simple preterist-futurist reading dividing Jesus's speech at 24:36 (Gibbs and Booth). There is, for instance, no in-depth delineation of the complex preterist-futurist position.

These observations point to three gaps in the current research. Firstly, there is scope for detailed analysis of Matthew's use of Danielic mystery, not just in Matt 13 but also in the rest of the narrative. Secondly, there is room for further narrative-critical work on Matthew's Olivet Discourse yielding fresh readings. Thirdly, the above two gaps highlight the need for a narrative-critical analysis of Matt 24–25 that deploys Matthew's use of Danielic mystery as a key interpretative grid. In addressing the first two gaps, our study will ultimately endeavour to fill the third lacuna.

1.3 The Methodology of the Thesis

1.3.1 A Narrative-Critical Approach

Like Gibbs's monograph and Booth's dissertation, our study will adopt a fundamentally narrative-critical methodology.[120]

In historical-critical scholarship, the compositional history of the biblical text takes priority. Source criticism pays attention to the materials preceding the Synoptic Gospels, and redaction criticism focuses on the role of the Synoptic evangelist in

[120] For a comprehensive description of narrative criticism in biblical studies, see Mark Allan Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, Guides to Biblical Scholarship (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1990); James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005).

composing the text.[121] The historical critic tends to treat the Synoptic narratives as "compilations of loosely related pericopes" and to isolate individual units for analysis.[122] Even the traditional redaction critic tends to pay more attention to the comparison of a passage with its synoptic parallels than to the relationship between a passage and the narrative to which it belongs.[123]

In contrast, narrative-critical scholarship aims to understand the current text in its "finished form."[124] The narrative critic upholds the unity of each Synoptic Gospel and approaches a passage as a component of its wider narrative.[125] Therefore, our study will neither attempt to authenticate the historicity of the Matthean Olivet Discourse nor trace the origins of its sources. Rather, we will interpret Matt 24–25 as an integral part of Matthew's Gospel, with his appropriation and adaptation of Danielic mystery as a key narrative context of these chapters.

1.3.2 Eco's Semiotic Theories

According to Berlin, historical and narrative scholars have, over time, "drawn closer to each other," with literary critics no longer approaching scriptural texts as "independent entit[ies] divorced from [their] historical context[s]."[126] In particular, she speaks of text-centred reading strategies that conceive of biblical narratives as emerging out of "a

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[121] Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 7.
[122] Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 7.
[123] Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 7.
[124] Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 7; Adele Berlin, "Literary Approaches to the Hebrew Bible," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament*, ed. Stephen B. Chapman and Marvin A. Sweeney, Cambridge Companions to Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 165–66.
[125] Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 7.
[126] Berlin, "Literary Approaches," 166.

particular historical moment" ("the time when the text was created"), thereby interpreting them within their historical contexts.[127]

One such reading strategy involves incorporating into narrative criticism the semiotic theories of Umberto Eco. Matthew W. Bates, in his recent discussion of trends in the research on the Old Testament in the New Testament, promotes Eco's cultural encyclopedia as one of two possible ways of breaking new ground.[128] In fact, in the last decade or so, we have witnessed at least three scholarly publications on either Matthew's use of the Old Testament or Mark's Olivet Discourse that synthesise Eco's theories with narrative criticism.[129] Of particular interest is Sloan's analysis of Mark 13 through the interpretative grid of Mark's use of Zechariah. Sloan describes his monograph thus:

> [t]his study analyzes the narrative of Mark with special attention to its intertextual dynamics. Such analysis entails ... interpreting the Gospel as a unified, coherent story.... The goal of this study is not to discover the history behind the text, but to propose the meaning that the text could generate within its historical location.... Though the primary object of the study is the meaning generated by the story, the study does not ignore historical data.... [T]he meaning of the Gospel is conditioned by its location in a given historical time and place. Thus the meaning of individual words and pericopae is examined within the presumed "cultural encyclopedia" in which they were produced.[130]

Sloan's work offers a precedent for adopting such a method in our study, which undertakes a similar task of analysing Matt 24–25 through the interpretative grid of Matthew's use of Daniel.

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[127] Berlin, "Literary Approaches," 171.
[128] Matthew W. Bates, "The Old Testament in the New Testament," in *The State of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research*, ed. Scot McKnight and Nijay K. Gupta (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 100–101.
[129] Leroy Andrew Huizenga, *The New Isaac: Tradition and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 131 (Leiden: Brill, 2009); Nicholas G. Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David at the End of Exile: A Socio-Rhetorical Study of Scriptural Quotations*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 170 (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Sloan, *Mark 13*.
[130] Sloan, *Mark 13*, 6–7.

1.3.2.1 The Cultural Encyclopedia and Matthew's Gospel

The cultural encylopedia has been defined as "the theoretical storehouse of a society's knowledge—be it historical, literary (real or fictitious), social, religious, economic, etc."[131] Sloan describes it as "the conventional knowledge and shared beliefs of a given people group in a given time and place."[132] Applying this theory to Matthew's Gospel, Piotrowski speaks of the narrative as emerging out of a Second Temple Jewish worldview "greatly shaped by the proto-MT and LXX traditions as well as noncanonical Jewish literature."[133] In the Olivet Discourse, Matthew mentions τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου (24:15), which marks out Daniel as a significant component of the cultural encyclopedia undergirding the narrative.

1.3.2.2 The Model Reader and Matthew's Gospel

Closely associated with the cultural encyclopedia is Eco's theory of the model reader, which overlaps with the implied reader of narrative criticism. In *Jerusalem and Parousia*, Gibbs defines the implied reader as "the target audience of the narrative," even "a construct of the text itself," as "the one in whom the intention of the text achieves its realization."[134] In fact, Powell explains that "[t]he basic goal of narrative criticism is to discern how the implied reader of a narrative would be expected to respond to the

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[131] Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David*, 24–25, cf. Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*, First Midland book ed., Advances in Semiotics (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), 98–100. For a detailed discussion, see Umberto Eco, *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language.* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984), 68–86.
[132] Sloan, *Mark 13*, 7–8.
[133] Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David*, 19.
[134] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 17.

text."[135] Powell recognises that "scholars sometimes differ in what they mean by 'the implied reader,'" and delineates different constructions depending on whether the narrative critic is author-oriented, reader-oriented, or text-oriented.[136] From a text-oriented perspective such as Gibbs's, the implied reader is a construct of the text, whereby "the response attributable to the implied reader ... *is* what the text means," being "the intrinsically correct reading of a text."[137]

Eco's theory of the model reader, like that of the text-controlled implied reader, postulates a target audience "designed by and within the text."[138] Accordingly, the author draws on "a series of codes that assign given contents to the expressions he uses," and the model reader "deal[s] interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them."[139] As mentioned above, the implied reader is "the one in whom the intention of the text achieves its realization."[140] Huizenga likewise speaks of the model reader as "the reader that the text requires for its proper actualization," the one who "[d]iscerns ... the intention of the text."[141] Put together, the model reader and the text form "two sides of the same coin."[142]

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[135] Mark Allan Powell, "Narrative Criticism: The Emergence of a Prominent Reading Strategy," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson and Chrisopher W. Skinner, Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study 65 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 23. Powell clarifies that he is "not proposing that this is what the goal *should* be ... but claiming, descriptively, that this is what the goal actually is." That is to say, "virtually all biblical ... narrative critics try to do this," and "the principles and procedures outlined in virtually all descriptions of the method are designed to accomplish this goal." Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 23 n. 9, italics original.
[136] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 23. On the differences between author-oriented, text-oriented, and reader-oriented narrative approaches, and their different constructions of the implied reader, see Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 26–40.
[137] Powell, "Narrative Criticism," 33, italics original.
[138] Umberto Eco, *The Limits of Interpretation*, Advances in Semiotics (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 52.
[139] Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*, Advances in Semiotics (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1979), 7.
[140] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 17.
[141] Huizenga, *New Isaac*, 29.
[142] Huizenga, *New Isaac*, 29.

Finally, just as the implied reader responds "with whatever knowledge, understanding, action, or emotion" the text calls for, so the model reader demonstrates awareness of the cultural encyclopedia undergirding the text.[143] In other words, the model reader exhibits "specific encyclopedic competence."[144] In the case of Matthew's Gospel, the model reader possesses encyclopedic competence specific to Second Temple Judaism, entailing a familiarity with Daniel and its presentation of mystery.

1.3.2.3 Texts that Teach the Model Reader, and Matthew's Gospel

While narrative criticism's implied reader overlaps with Eco's model reader, the latter theory adds a sense of dynamic interaction between the text and its target audience. According to Eco, a "well-organized text" does not presuppose a static competence in its model reader.[145] Rather, such a text facilitates accurate understanding by "build[ing] up" the model reader's interpretative competence through "merely textual means."[146] As Piotrowski concludes, such texts—including Matthew's Gospel—"tell readers how to read."[147]

The "textual means" by which a "well-organized text" trains its model reader involves the use of frames.[148] Drawing on the work of Kenneth Duncan Litwak, Piotrowski speaks of frames as "conventions in the cultural encyclopedia" that function

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[143] Mark Allan Powell, "Literary Approaches and the Gospel of Matthew," in *Methods for Matthew*, ed. Mark Allan Powell, Methods in Biblical Interpretation. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 60.
[144] Eco, *Role of the Reader*, 7.
[145] Eco, *Role of the Reader*, 8.
[146] Eco, *Role of the Reader*, 8.
[147] Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David*, 27.
[148] Eco, *Role of the Reader*, 8.

as cues assisting interpretation.[149] By extension, framing is the process by which an author introduces and fashions a text using cues that inform and regulate the model reader's expectations.[150] The model reader discerns these frames and actualises them by employing the cues in reading the text.[151] In fact, early and repetitive use of frames "giv[es] orientation and definition to the rest of the story," shaping the model reader's understanding of the ensuing narrative.[152]

Along with Piotrowski, we will approach Matthew's Gospel as a text that trains its model reader. More precisely, our study seeks to analyse the way Matthew's Olivet Discourse invokes frames pertaining to mystery in Daniel and Matt 1–23 in order to inform the model reader's interpretation of Matt 24–25.

1.3.3 Summary

Our study will engage Matt 24–25 as an integral component of Matthew's Gospel and interpret these chapters using Matthew's appropriation and adaptation of Danielic mystery as a key narrative context. While our method is fundamentally narrative-critical in orientation, we will incorporate historical insights by applying Eco's theories of the cultural encyclopedia, the model reader, and texts that teach the model reader. Accordingly, Matthew's Gospel emerged out of the Second Temple Jewish cultural encyclopedia, and Matthew's model reader possesses particular awareness of Daniel and its portrayal of mystery. Matthew's Olivet Discourse invokes frames pertaining to

[149] Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David*, 25–26.
[150] Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David*, 26.
[151] Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David*, 26.
[152] Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David*, 27.

Danielic and Matthean mystery, which the model reader discerns and actualises by interpreting Matt 24–25 in the light of the notion.

1.4. The Presuppositions and Terminology of the Thesis

1.4.1 The Date of Matthew's Gospel

Allusions to Matthew's narrative in the writings of Ignatius and the Didache suggest that "the Gospel must have been written by the turn of the first century CE at the latest."[153] Matthean commentators divide over dating the narrative before or after the Jewish-Roman war, but "surprisingly little in the gospel conclusively points to a firm date."[154] While we assume that the Matthean Jesus was able to predict the events of AD 70, our study does not require a more precise date within the second half of the first century.

1.4.2 The Author of Matthew's Gospel

We will use *Matthew* to refer to the author and/or redactor of the canonical form of the New Testament text Matthew's Gospel. Our investigation assumes Matthew to be a Jewish Christian or a Christian knowledgeable about first-century Judaism, whose

[153] David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 13.
[154] Carson, "Matthew," 45.

"worldview would ... have been greatly shaped by the proto-MT and LXX traditions as well as noncanonical Jewish literature."[155]

1.4.3 The Recipients of Matthew's Gospel

Following the presupposition of a first-century date for the composition of Matthew's Gospel is the assumption of a first-century Matthean audience. Nevertheless, our thesis is interested not in Matthew's first or historical readers but his model reader: the one "designed by and within the text," whom "the text requires for its proper actualization."[156] Matthew's model reader shares his familiarity with the Second Temple Jewish cultural encyclopedia, including Daniel and its presentation of mystery.

1.4.4 The Structure of Matthew's Gospel

Despite the volume of research on the overall design of Matthew's Gospel, a consensus remains elusive apart from the recognition that the narrative contains five major discourses. Recently, Pennington, influenced by Dale C. Allison, suggests that

> Matthew has created five modules that each consists of a Discourse followed by a Narrative that flows from it and leads to the next Discourse, with the slight modification that the final unit reverses the order to conclude with the Fifth Discourse. This DN set comprises the body of the main story (4:23–25:46). This main body of the narrative is then bookended with an Introduction (1:1–4:16) and Conclusion (26:17–28:20), with two bridge passages that link the Introduction and Conclusion and the Body (4:17–22 and 26:1–16).[157]

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[155] Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David*, 19.
[156] Eco, *Limits of Interpretation*, 52; Huizenga, *New Isaac*, 29.
[157] Pennington, "Revelatory Epistemology in Matthew," 107–8.

Since the narrative "is not provided with markers to draw attention to a comprehensive outline of sections within which the author intended it to be read," France maintains that "[a]ny proposed outline ... is therefore open to discussion."[158] A discussion of different proposals falls outside the scope of our investigation; where considerations of the narrative's macrostructure impinge on our analysis, we will adopt Pennington's outline as a point of reference.

1.4.5 The Overall Agenda of Matthew's Gospel

The length and complexity of Matthew's Gospel point to its "multifaceted character," which, according to Donald A. Hagner, yields not just a "variety of options concerning ... genre" but also "several purposes."[159] In the light of this "multifaceted character," Carson cautions against "specify[ing] too precise ... [a] purpose" or "only one purpose" to Matthew's narrative.[160] He identifies instead the following agenda:

> (1) to instruct and perhaps catechize ... (2) to provide apologetic and evangelistic material, especially in winning Jews; (3) to encourage believers in their witness before a hostile world; and (4) to inspire deeper faith in Jesus the Messiah, along with a maturing understanding of his person, work, and unique place in the unfolding history of redemption.[161]

An analysis of a single overall purpose falls outside the purview of our study; where considerations of Matthew's overarching theological and pastoral agenda impinge on our analysis, we will adopt Carson's description as a point of reference.

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[158] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 2.
[159] Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, Word Biblical Commentary 33a (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 1993), lix.
[160] Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, lix; Carson, "Matthew," 46.
[161] Carson, "Matthew," 49. Hagner similarly discerns that Matthew "wrote, above all, for the Church to interpret the Christ-event but also to instruct and edify the Christians of his own and future generations." Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, lix.

1.4.6 Markan Priority and Synoptic Comparison

We will operate under the standard two-source hypothesis concerning the priority of Mark's Gospel and the existence of Q as an independent body of tradition.[162] In line with a narrative-critical approach, synoptic comparison of episodes or verses will function "to highlight [Matthew's] distinctive version" and "not to highlight tradition history."[163]

1.4.7 Terminology

Where our study—not including citations—uses *parousia*, the term refers to the second coming of Jesus at the consummation of the age, unless otherwise stated.

Existing scholarly interpretations of the Olivet Discourse fall under one of the following five categories, which Booth has helpfully catalogued.[164]

Firstly, a *preterist* reading identifies historical incidents, particularly the destruction of the temple and the fall of Jerusalem, as the referents of the Olivet Discourse.

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[162] Other scholarly works on the Synoptic Gospels operating under a similar hypothesis include Brant Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile: Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II 204 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 23–25; Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David*, 1.
[163] Elizabeth E. Shively, *Apocalyptic Imagination in the Gospel of Mark: The Literary and Theological Role of Mark 3:22–30*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 189 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 14.
[164] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 7–10.

Secondly, a *futurist* interpretation advocates future eschatological incidents, particularly the parousia of the Son of Man and the end of the age, as the referents of the Olivet Discourse.

Thirdly, a *telescopic-fulfilment* position discerns dual referents, whereby parts of the Olivet Discourse simultaneously refer to the historical event of the temple's destruction and the future event of Jesus's second coming.

Fourthly, from a *complex preterist-futurist* perspective, the Olivet Discourse alternates in a complex or nonlinear fashion between the historical destruction of the temple and the future arrival of the Son of Man.

Fifthly, from a *simple preterist-futurist* standpoint, the Olivet Discourse first addresses the historic destruction of the temple, before exploring the future arrival of the Son of Man, in a simple or linear fashion.

In engaging with different interpretative positions of Matt 24–25, we will use the above five labels.

1.5. A Preview of the Thesis

1.5.1 An Outline of the Chapters

The overall goal of our investigation is to present a narrative-critical analysis of Matthew's Olivet Discourse that deploys Matthew's use of Danielic mystery as a key interpretative grid.

Chapter 2 will explore the entry of Danielic mystery in the cultural encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism, deriving its key features from Daniel and the

Dead Sea Scrolls. Chapter 3 will examine Matthew's appropriation and adaptation of mystery in the narrative preceding the Olivet Discourse. Chapters 4 and 5 will apply the above findings to the central question of our study, "How does attending to Danielic and Matthean mystery shed light on Matthew's Olivet Discourse?" Chapter 6 will complete our narrative-critical analysis of the Matthean Olivet Discourse by addressing its echoes in Matthew's passion and resurrection account. We will discuss how Danielic and Matthean mystery illuminates the links between Matt 24–25 and 26–28, as we unpack the meaning and significance of these connections.

1.5.2 A Summary of the Conclusions

Our thesis endeavours to construct a twofold answer to the question, "How does attending to Danielic and Matthean mystery shed light on Matthew's Olivet Discourse?"

Firstly, alertness to mystery, especially its form, content, and function, clarifies the main message and purpose of Matt 24–25. According to 24:4–35, the temple's destruction signals the nearness of the parousia of the Son of Man. Nevertheless, the end of the temple is simply the beginning of the (ultimate) end; only the parousia will bring the present age to its completion. 24:36–25:46 reinforces the shift in focus from the temple to the Son of Man. These verses polemically distinguish the wise and faithful from the foolish and wicked in order to encourage alignment with the former who watch for the second coming.

Secondly, Matthean mystery's inaugurated eschatology explains the links between Matt 24–25 and 26–28 in terms of preliminary fulfilment. The tearing of the temple veil (27:51) and the appearance of Jesus in Galilee (28:18) respectively

commence the temple's devastation and the Son of Man's arrival predicted in the Olivet Discourse, while pointing to their future consummation. This, in turn, reinforces the main message and purpose of Matthew's Olivet Discourse by directing attention from the temple to the Son of Man, in anticipation of his arrival in the fullness of power and glory as universal judge.

Our study will develop and defend the above twofold conclusion, beginning with an analysis of the key features of Danielic mystery in Second Temple Judaism in our next chapter.

Chapter 2
Danielic Mystery in Second Temple Judaism

2.1 INTRODUCTION

T. J. Lang, in his recent monograph on mystery in Paul's letters, speaks of a "scholarly fixation with the ostensible 'backgrounds' to μυστήριον."[1] Gladd, in his analysis of mystery in 1 Corinthians, posits an "emerging consensus since the middle of the twentieth century" concerning the "primary background" to μυστήριον in the New Testament: the Old Testament and Second Temple Judaism.[2] Likewise, Lang acknowledges that the Christian use of μυστήριον "is most helpfully illuminated by comparison with Jewish precursors."[3]

Within the cultural encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism, the apocalyptic tradition provides a rich source of precursors for Matthean mystery. Apart from the canonical representative Daniel, other prominent apocalypses include the Enochic literature. These writings were much cherished by the Qumran community; in fact, the number of (extant) copies of 1 Enoch in the Dead Sea Scrolls exceeds that of Daniel.[4] As for the Synoptic Gospels, there is "no direct evidence ... that Jesus or the Gospel

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[1] T. J. Lang, *Mystery and the Making of a Christian Historical Consciousness: From Paul to the Second Century*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 219 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 23.
[2] Benjamin L. Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion": The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second Temple Judaism with Its Bearing on First Corinthians*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 160 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 16.
[3] Lang, *Mystery and the Making*, 23.
[4] Eugene Ulrich, "The Text of Daniel in the Qumran Scrolls," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception, Volume 2*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 83/2 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 573.

writers were directly influenced by 1 Enoch."[5] Nevertheless, one can hardly deny "that Enochian themes and concepts could have been available to Jesus either through direct reading or from oral theological discussions in the Judaism of his day."[6] If anything, the citation in Jude 14–15 attests that at least one New Testament writer was aware of, and drew on, the Enochic writings.[7]

The revelatory outlooks of Daniel and the Enochic literature noticeably overlap, which draws attention to some key apocalyptic features of the Second Temple Jewish cultural encyclopedia. Both texts portray their eponymous protagonists as exclusive recipients of mystery who share their revelations with others and make them wise (1 En 82:1; 83:1; 92:1).[8] With respect to their conceptions of mystery, both writings associate the notion with the theme of hiddenness. For example, the characters Daniel and Enoch frequently receive revelations of mysteries that remain obscure until subsequent explanations or disclosures provide further enlightenment (1 En 21:1–5; 23:4; 27:1–2; 43:3–4).[9] Also, these mysteries, Danielic and Enochian, feature the common figure of the Son of Man (1 En 45:3; 48:7; 53:3–6; 62:7; 69:27–29).[10]

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[5] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 62.
[6] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 107.
[7] For in-depth discussions of synoptic dependence on the Enochic traditions, see Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Gabriele Boccaccini, eds., *Enoch and the Synoptic Gospels: Reminiscences, Allusions, Intertextuality,* Early Judaism and Its Literature 44 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2016); James H. Charlesworth and Darrell L. Bock, eds., *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*, Jewish and Christian Texts in Contexts and Related Studies 11 (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013).
[8] Benjamin E. Reynolds and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "Introduction," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought*, ed. Benjamin E. Reynolds and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2017), 7.
[9] Priscilla Patten, "The Form and Function of Parables in Select Apocalyptic Literature and Their Significance for Parables in the Gospel of Mark," *New Testament Studies* 29 (1983): 246–58.
[10] Jonathan T. Pennington, "The Parables of Enoch and Mark 13:1–37: Apocalyptic Eschatology and the Coming Son of Man," in *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 210–16. For detailed discussions, see Charlesworth and Bock, eds., *Parables of Enoch*.

There are, however, differences—which testify to at least some diversity within the Jewish apocalyptic tradition. In contrast to the "future-oriented eschatology" of Daniel, the Enochic writings "reflect a particular interest in the revelation of heavenly mysteries."[11] These include the throne room of God (1 En 14), surveys of the cosmos (1 En 17–36), and the movements of celestial bodies (1 En 72–82).[12]

The question of what light the Jewish apocalypses shed on the formulating of New Testament thought continues to drive scholarly discourse; indeed, there remains room for more work.[13] No single thesis can comprehensively uncover the full impact of the entire Jewish apocalyptic tradition on the New Testament or even Matthew's Gospel. As part of a wider and ongoing discussion, our study will contribute a more modest, and thereby focused, analysis of τὰ μυστήρια in Matt 13:11 with reference to the mysteries in Daniel. (We will demonstrate in 3.3 that Matthew's narrative presents not just overt mention of Daniel but also discernible evocations of Danielic mystery.)

Accordingly, our current chapter will explore the Jewish background to Matthean mystery by examining Danielic mystery in the cultural encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism. We will derive its main features from Daniel (2.3) and from Second Temple Jewish literature (2.4): its mantic background, twofold form, eschatological content, and polemical function. (We will continue to unpack these features in our subsequent chapters on Matthew's use of Danielic mystery.)

In terms of method, we will adopt a narrative-critical approach. Unlike historical-critical research, our investigation will engage the finished form of Daniel as

[11] Reynolds and Stuckenbruck, "Introduction," 3–4. Though Reynolds and Stuckenbruck acknowledge that the "unveiling of heavenly secrets does not altogether do away with an interest in the end of time or the fate of the dead."
[12] Reynolds and Stuckenbruck, "Introduction," 4."
[13] Reynolds and Stuckenbruck, "Introduction," 9."

a coherent text where individual sections fit together to express an overall religious message.[15] There were, however, multiple extant versions of Daniel to which Matthew could have referred in composing his narrative: the Masoretic Tradition, the Septuagint, and the Theodotion. Since these "represent the probable texts of Daniel in existence in the first century," our study will take all of them into account.[16]

2.2 A Survey and Review of Secondary Literature

Virtually every commentary on Daniel mentions mystery in its treatment of Dan 2. As meaningful coverage of every scholarly insight into Danielic mystery is impossible, our survey will focus instead on articles and sections of monographs that specifically discuss it.

[15] Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?*, 7. Traditional critical study of Daniel, as John Goldingay contends, has concentrated on the origins of the text and the historical realities to which the text refers. However, such study has reached an "impasse" in diverging from the text's aim of conveying a religious message as opposed to historical information for its own sake. See John Goldingay, "Story, Vision, Interpretation: Literary Approaches to Daniel," in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, ed. A. S. van der Woude, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 106 (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Leuven: Peeters, 1993), 296–98.
[16] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 24.

2.2.1 Surveying the Current State of Research

Günther Bornkamm, "μυστήριον, μυέω" (1967)

Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term "Mystery" in the New Testament* (1968)

Bornkamm and Brown offer seminal discussions that identify Danielic mystery as eschatological. According to them, μυστήριον in Daniel "takes on for the first time a sense which is important for the further development of the word, namely, that of an eschatological mystery."[17] While Bornkamm analyses μυστήριον in different contexts (including Hellenistic culture), Brown states that Second Temple Judaism contained "all the raw material [the New Testament writers] needed for the use of 'mystery' without venturing into the pagan religions."[18] Subsequent scholars allude to Bornkamm and Brown, though the brevity of their analyses calls for further elaboration.

Alfred Mertens, *Das Buch Daniel im Lichte der Texte vom Toten Meer* (1971)

Mertens is one of the first to comment on the mantic background of mystery in his remark that wisdom in Daniel is predicated on "eine neue göttliche Offenbarung" rather than "Vernunft und Lebenserfahrung."[19] Like Bornkamm and Brown, he interprets

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[17] Günther Bornkamm, "μυστήριον, μυέω," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 4:814. Brown cites Bornkamm in Raymond E. Brown, *The Semitic Background of the Term "Mystery" in the New Testament*, Facet Books, Biblical Series 21 (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1968), 8.
[18] Brown, *Semitic Background of the Term "Mystery,"* 32.
[19] Alfred Mertens, *Das Buch Daniel im Lichte der Texte vom Toten Meer*, Stuttgarter biblische Monographien 12 (Würzburg: Echter, 1971), 114. He goes on to comment that mystery in the court

mystery as primarily eschatological, differentiating רָז in Daniel from the Hebrew word סוֹד. According to him, the former term denotes "das Kommen des endzeitlichen Heiles nach der gegenwärtigen Unheilszeit, also den Fortgang der menschlichen Geschichte nach dem verborgenen Plan Gottes."[20] Nevertheless, Mertens regards mystery in Dan 4 as historical rather than eschatological, since it merely concerns "das persönliche Schicksal des Königs."[21] In contrast, we will argue below (2.3.2.2) that mystery in both Dan 2 and 4 is eschatological.

G. K. Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* (1984)

Beale's monograph provides a short section on mystery according to Daniel, beginning with the recognition that רָז frequently occurs near פְּשַׁר.[22] This suggests a "twofold mystery" consisting of not just a divine vision or message but also its interpretation.[23] Like the preceding scholars, Beale perceives Danielic mystery as eschatological, envisaging not simply "the future course of history, but especially ... 'the latter days'" involving "God's defeat of the world kingdoms and the establishing of His eternal kingdom."[24] While Beale's analysis is insightful, he confines his comments to Dan 2, 4, 5, and 7.

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narrative of Daniel is "übersteigt grundsätzlich menschliche Fähigkeiten und muß deshalb *von Gott geoffenbart* sein." Mertens, *Buch Daniel*, 118, italics original.

[20] Mertens, *Buch Daniel*, 118.

[21] Mertens, *Buch Daniel*, 116.

[22] G. K. Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John.* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), 12–13.

[23] Beale, *Use of Daniel*, 13.

[24] Beale, *Use of Daniel*, 13.

Markus Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (1997)

Bockmuehl extends scholarly discussions of the mantic background of Danielic mystery. His chapter on apocalyptic literature identifies the "interaction of mantic wisdom and classical prophecy" as "a plausible origin for the apocalyptic interest in secret symbolic visions and their divinely revealed interpretation."[25] According to him, "many Jews found in the notion of revealed divine mysteries the key to a renewed understanding of God's sovereignty in history and the cosmos."[26] He proceeds to clarify that Danielic mystery consists of "secrets" that are "eschatological/historical" rather than "cosmological."[27] The monograph, however, does not deal specifically with mystery in Daniel.

Jack N. Lawson, "The God Who Reveals Secrets" (1997)

Lawson locates the antecedent for Danielic mystery in the Mesopotamian mantic tradition, classifying Daniel as a "*mantic sage*" rather than a "biblical prophet or wise man."[28] He argues that the difference between the Mesopotamian and the Judaistic traditions "is not one of kind, but *quality*": "the *identity* and *competence* of the deity doing the revealing, not any doctrine of revelation itself."[29] Accordingly, Dan 2 testifies

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[25] Markus Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 26.
[26] Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 1.
[27] Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 36.
[28] Jack N Lawson, "'The God Who Reveals Secrets': The Mesopotamian Background to Daniel 2.47," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 22.74 (1997): 74, italics original.
[29] Lawson, "'God Who Reveals Secrets,'" 75, italics original.

to how the "Mesopotamian mantic tradition has been subsumed ... and then developed within the framework of [Jewish] monotheism for its own theological purposes."[30] Michael Kenneth Wilson has recently challenged Lawson's conclusion, deeming it a "major mistake" in its analysis of Dan 2.[31] We will return to this dispute below (2.3.2.1).

Benjamin L. Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion: The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second Temple Judaism with Its Bearing on First Corinthians* (2008)

Gladd's monograph is based on his PhD research under Beale's supervision, and its chapter on mystery in Daniel offers the fullest treatment of the topic to date. The groundbreaking feature of the chapter is its discussion of the function of mystery; Gladd states that "[p]revious studies ... have sought to determine the content and form..., but as far as [he is] aware, none has developed the *function*."[32]

In terms of the background of mystery, Gladd, like Lawson, considers Daniel a mantic sage but clarifies that "the *content* of mantic wisdom portrayed in the book of Daniel ... separates it" from pagan manticism.[33] Accordingly, mantic wisdom in Daniel, unlike its Ancient Near Eastern counterparts, is "thoroughly eschatological."[34] That is, it entails "*the revelation of God's wisdom ... concerning future events; specifically, the rise and fall of Nebuchadnezzar and the ultimate establishment of God's eternal reign*."[35]

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[30] Lawson, "'God Who Reveals Secrets,'" 61.
[31] Michael Kenneth Wilson, *The Lives of the Wise in an Anti-God World: Daniel 1–6* (Eugene, OR: Resource, 2020), 56 n. 1.
[32] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 43, italics original.
[33] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 25, italics original.
[34] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 26.
[35] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 31, italics original.

As for the form of mystery, Gladd, like Beale, identifies "twofold disclosure" as a "distinctive apocalyptic mark of Daniel."[36] Nevertheless, whereas Beale unpacks this twofold pattern in terms of "*content*" and "*interpretation*," Gladd speaks instead of "symbol" and "interpretation."[37] Gladd's terminology ("symbol" rather than "*content*") advantageously highlights the fact that dreams, inscriptions, visions, even Scripture in Daniel remain "hidden or encoded until the interpretation has been provided."[38]

Finally, in terms of function, Gladd summarises the "nature of wisdom in the book of Daniel as it relates to the concept of mystery" in a single word: "polemical."[39] In Dan 2, 4, and 5, the pagan sages, despite their training and sophistication, are "incompetent, unwise, and idolatrous," while Daniel, being "truly wise," "succeeds where the Babylonians faltered."[40] More specifically, Daniel is "truly wise because his wisdom is derived from the one true God who has communicated to him both dreams and the writing on the wall."[41] We will build on Gladd's insight by unpacking further the significance of mystery's polemical function.

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[36] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 33–34.
[37] Beale, *Use of Daniel*, 13, italics original; Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 34.
[38] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 38.
[39] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 44.
[40] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 48.
[41] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 48.

Alan C. Lenzi, "Secrecy, Textual Legitimation, and Intercultural Polemics in the Book of Daniel" (2009)

Lenzi's article, which overlaps with his earlier monograph (*Secrecy and the Gods*), links secrecy in Daniel with the word רָז.[42] Like Mertens, he distinguishes רָז in Daniel from סוֹד by highlighting the former's "eschatological perspective that is absent" from the latter.[43] He does not explore the eschatological content of Danielic mystery but concentrates instead on its function as "a method of characterization" that emphasises "the revelatory abilities of the Jewish deity and the deity's mediator."[44] In particular, Daniel's characterisation as the mediator of divine secrets "legitimates the revelatory material he receives later in chaps. 7–12."[45] Like Gladd, Lenzi identifies a polemicising function in the contrast between Daniel's success and the Babylonian magicians' "utter failure ... to perceive divine secrets."[46] This, he concludes, "quite nicely fuel[s] ... an anti-imperial, ancient, postcolonial critical furnace."[47] We will engage with Lenzi's argument below (2.3.2.1), in our analysis of the effect of mystery's polemic.

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[42] Alan C. Lenzi, *Secrecy and the Gods: Secret Knowledge in Ancient Mesopotamia and Biblical Israel*, State Archives of Assyria Studies 19 (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2008).
[43] Alan C. Lenzi, "Secrecy, Textual Legitimation, and Intercultural Polemics in the Book of Daniel," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 71.2 (2009): 334.
[44] Lenzi, "Secrecy, Textual Legitimation," 330, 346.
[45] Lenzi, "Secrecy, Textual Legitimation," 330.
[46] Lenzi, "Secrecy, Textual Legitimation," 330.
[47] Lenzi, "Secrecy, Textual Legitimation," 348.

G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed: A Biblical Theology of Mystery* (2014)

The chapter on Danielic mystery in *Hidden but Now Revealed* reiterates Gladd's description of the form of mystery as twofold.[48] Nevertheless, this chapter advances the prior analysis by elucidating a "threefold pattern" of understanding in the second half of Daniel.[49] That is, an initial prophetic vision that yields little understanding is followed by an interpretation that affords partial enlightenment, which is succeeded by the fulfilment of the prophecy that brings full comprehension.[50] Nevertheless, more can be said about the implications of this threefold pattern—which we will undertake in our analysis of Dan 8–12 (2.3.5).

T. J. Lang, *Mystery and the Making of Christian Historical Consciousness: From Paul to the Second Century* (2015)

This monograph focuses on the "'once hidden, now revealed' mystery schema" underlying "the most original claims of Christian theology."[51] In his survey of the history of μυστήριον, Lang mentions that the Danielic use of the word is of "particular importance."[52] In comparison with other early Jewish references to personal secrets, Danielic mystery is political and eschatological, being an "allegory auguring the demise

[48] Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 43. On this chapter as a condensation of Gladd's earlier work, see Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 29 n. 2.
[49] Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 41.
[50] Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 41.
[51] Lang, *Mystery and the Making*, 6–7.
[52] Lang, *Mystery and the Making*, 13.

of successive empires and the ultimate triumph of God's eternal kingdom."[53] However, the monograph does not examine in much detail mystery with reference to either Daniel or Matthew's Gospel.

David P. Melvin, "There Is a God in Heaven Who Reveals Mysteries" (2019)

Melvin pays attention to the mantic background of Gen 41 and Dan 2 as a backdrop to the presentation of "the one true God, who alone reveals mysteries."[54] Like Gladd and Lenzi, he describes mystery in Dan 2 as "polemical."[55] Postulating "a diaspora background for the court tales of Dan 1–6," he argues that the "declaration of God as the only true revealer" undercuts "pagan oneiromancy," even "the broader religious world inhabited by diaspora Jews."[56] He also concludes that Daniel, "[i]n the context of the Jewish diaspora," functioned as an example "of Jewish piety under foreign rule."[57] Reading this article alongside Lenzi's raises questions concerning the chief implication(s) of mystery's polemic: does it primarily undermine "the broader religious world" and uphold "Jewish piety under foreign rule"?[58]

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[53] Lang, *Mystery and the Making*, 14.
[54] David P. Melvin, "There Is a God in Heaven Who Reveals Mysteries: Failed Divination and Divine Revelation in Daniel 2 and Genesis 41," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 29.2 (2019): 141.
[55] "The inability of *any* diviner to satisfy Nebuchadnezzar's request, highlighted both by the confession of the diviners and the affirmation of Daniel, gives the entire story a polemical tone." Melvin, "There Is a God," 148, italics original.
[56] Melvin, "There Is a God," 141, 153.
[57] Melvin, "There Is a God," 153.
[58] Melvin, "There Is a God," 153.

2.2.2 Reviewing the Current State of Research

We can make five observations about the existing research. Firstly, scholars identify a mantic background to mystery in Daniel. In contrast to the biblical sapiential tradition represented by Proverbs, where wisdom is gleaned by scrutinising the created order, wisdom in Daniel is supernaturally revealed in symbolic messages and their interpretations.

Secondly, commentators describe the content of Danielic mystery as eschatological. However, while Mertens remarks that "*[d]iese Endzeit … hat bereits begonnen*," there is little detailed consideration as to the sort of eschatology associated with mystery.[59] Macaskill has written about "inaugurated eschatology" entailing "both realised and future elements" in Second Temple Jewish texts.[60] From here, one might inquire whether a similar perspective could be adopted for mystery in Daniel.

Thirdly, researchers describe the form of Danielic mystery as twofold, consisting of an initial message and its subsequent interpretation. Accompanying this twofold mystery is a threefold pattern of understanding, whereby the initial message is succeeded by an interpretation that yields some comprehension; full enlightenment, however, is reserved for the future.

Fourthly, scholars concur that Danielic mystery functions as polemic in the light of the contrast between wise Daniel and his foolish Babylonian counterparts. However, there is little consensus on the overall effect of such polemic: whether it "legitimates the revelatory material [Daniel] receives later in chaps. 7–12," or "undercut[s] the …

[59] Mertens, *Buch Daniel*, 120, italics original.
[60] Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 24–25.

broader religious world inhabited by diaspora Jews," or upholds Daniel as a model of "Jewish piety under foreign rule."[61]

Fifthly, much of the research concentrates on selected chapters, even verses, from Daniel; in fact, some treatments focus exclusively on Dan 2. The only exception is Gladd's monograph, which refers to every chapter of the book.

These observations call for further work along three lines. Firstly, what sort of eschatology characterises Danielic mystery? Is it inaugurated? Secondly, what are the main effects of the polemical function of Danielic mystery? Thirdly, what more can be gleaned about mystery with reference to Daniel in its entirety? Our narrative-critical treatment of mystery in Daniel seeks to address these questions.

2.3 Mystery according to Daniel

The term for mystery is רָז, and its undisputed occurrences in the Masoretic Tradition appear only in Daniel, in 2:18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47, and 4:6. It is translated into Greek as μυστήριον, which is again unique to Daniel among the canonical writings in the Septuagint, occurring in 2:18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 47. In the Theodotion, the word also appears in Dan 4:9. While μυστήριον can be used to refer to a personal or secular secret, in Daniel it signifies a divine mystery.[62] As we will see below (2.3.2.1), mystery in Dan 2 entails a message from God, unveiled by God, concerning his heavenly kingdom.

[61] Compare Lenzi, "Secrecy, Textual Legitimation," 330, with Melvin, "There Is a God," 153.
[62] For instance, the word can denote a military secret. See T. Muraoka, "μυστήριον," *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* 470.

In addition to Dan 2 and 4, Dan 7 calls for particular attention, as its relationship with Dan 2 suggests that it also contains important material about mystery.[63] Furthermore, Dan 7 performs a "pivotal" function in the book, as a "hinge" joining the two overlapping halves of Daniel.[64] On the one hand, Dan 7 concludes the first half of the book written predominantly in Aramaic. On the other hand, Dan 7 commences the second half with a new temporal sequence that rewinds back to the first year of Belshazzar (7:1), the king killed in Dan 5. If Dan 2, at the start of the first half, lays the foundation for mystery in the rest of the book, then Dan 7, at the start of the second half, recapitulates and expands this foundation for mystery in the remaining chapters.

We will begin by establishing the literary context and historical background of the book in Dan 1, and then analyse Dan 2 and 4, where רָז or μυστήριον appear, before exploring mystery in Dan 3, 5, and 6. We will also examine how Dan 7 recapitulates and develops mystery according to Dan 2–6, and then discuss the notion in Dan 8–12.

2.3.1 The Context of Dan 1

The opening scene of Daniel, especially 1:1–4, paints the key historical background of the book: the invasion of the city of God, the desecration of the house of God, and the deportation of the people of God. The conclusion of the scene, 1:21, holds out a vestige

[63] Our discussion of Dan 7 (2.3.4) will delineate the parallels between Dan 2 and 7. While there are as many proposed structures of Daniel as there are commentaries on the book, scholars commonly acknowledge some correlation between the two chapters. For example, in Hamilton's survey of different outlines of Daniel, most of the proposals highlight some parallel between Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dan 2 and Daniel's vision in Dan 7. See Hamilton, *With the Clouds*, 77–83.
[64] On Dan 7 as "pivotal," see John J. Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1993), 277. On Dan 7 as a "hinge," see Tim Meadowcroft, *Like the Stars Forever: Narrative and Theology in the Book of Daniel*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 90 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2020), 51.

of hope by mentioning the first year of Cyrus. According to C. L. Seow, this verse "marked the end of the Babylonian captivity," signifying that "Daniel would outlast Nebuchadnezzar and his successors."[65] In contrast, Collins does not detect much, if any, optimism in the verse, choosing instead to attach "[n]o special importance" to the first year of Cyrus.[66] The only importance Collins ascribes to the verse is "the fact that it extends Daniel's career into the Persian era." [67]

Nevertheless, elsewhere in the Old Testament, Cyrus is repeatedly associated with the end of the Babylonian exile, even the reversal of Nebuchadnezzar's activities in 1:1–4: Cyrus decrees the rebuilding of the devastated city of God (Isa 44:28); he instructs the restoration of the house of God (Ezra 5:13); he releases the exiled people of God (Isa 45:13). Bearing in mind the significance of Cyrus, Dan 1:21 arguably expresses a subtle hope that points to the beginning of restoration from the exile.

Much of this opening scene explains the grounds for hope: God is sovereign. Goldingay clarifies that "[w]hile it was Nebuchadnezzar's idea to come to Jerusalem, it was Yahweh's idea to give it up to him"; indeed, Yahweh "is 'the Lord.'"[68] In 1:1, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, is the subject of the verbs "came" (בָּא) and "besieged" (וַיָּצַר). However, the first clause of 1:2 draws the curtain back to unveil the ultimate subject of all this activity: the Lord (אָדוֹן). The subject of the second clause in 1:2 remains ambiguous until the phrase בֵּית אֱלֹהָיו indicates that it has moved once more, back to

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[65] C. L. Seow, *Daniel*, Westminster Bible Companion (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 30. Carol A. Newsom also suggests that 1:21 "marks as a narrative horizon the end of the Judean exile, which in Jewish understanding was … the effect of God's intentions expressed through Cyrus." Carol A. Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 52.
[66] Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 145.
[67] Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 145.
[68] John Goldingay, *Daniel*, Rev. ed., Word Biblical Commentary 30 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 162.

Nebuchadnezzar. These shifts in subject, from Nebuchadnezzar to God and back to Nebuchadnezzar, imply that the king of Babylon's activities fall within God's sovereignty. God remains in control throughout the invasion of his city, the desecration of his house, and the deportation of his people.

Furthermore, God is sovereign in sustaining his people and enabling their survival. In 1:3–7, Daniel and other Jewish youths are forcibly enrolled in a comprehensive program of education, assimilation, and indoctrination. Accordingly, they learn the language and literature of the Babylonians (1:4), eat and drink the food and wine of the Babylonian king (1:5), and receive names inspired by pagan deities (1:7).[69] However, in 1:8, Daniel resolves to abstain from the king's food and wine. In 1:15, the twist in the tale is that Daniel and his friends look healthier than the youths who enjoy the king's diet. Finally, 1:17–20 discloses that God grants learning and skill to Daniel and his friends—especially understanding in all visions and dreams to Daniel—such that they surpass all the Babylonian magicians.

Therefore, Dan 1 sets the stage for the introduction of mystery in the next scene. The chapter opens with the despair of the invasion of Jerusalem, the desecration of the temple, and the deportation of Jews, but subtly concludes with the hope of reversal and survival. Central to this hope is the sovereignty of God who gives Daniel not just better health but also wisdom and understanding—especially the mantic wisdom of understanding dreams and visions. Precisely this wisdom resides at the heart of mystery in the following chapter.

[69] For instance, Belteshazzar may mean "Bel guard his life" or "Lady, protect the king" (addressing the consort of Bel), while Abednego may mean "servant of Nabu." See Ernest C. Lucas, *Daniel*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary 20 (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 53.

2.3.2 Mystery in Dan 2 and 4

2.3.2.1 Daniel 2

The opening verses of the second scene hearken back to the end of the previous chapter.[70] Just as 1:17–20 mentions dreams (חֲלוֹם) and magicians (חַרְטֻם), so in 2:2, Nebuchadnezzar summons all the magicians (חַרְטֻם) in the kingdom to tell him his dreams (חֲלוֹם). Indeed, 1:20, in stressing the protagonist's superiority, generates the expectation in Dan 2 that the Babylonian magicians will fail, and Daniel instead will succeed.

2:17–19 contains the turning point for the chapter, where Daniel appeals for mercy from God and receives revelation of the mystery in a vision. In 2:18, the key term for mystery, רָז or μυστήριον, appears for the first time in the book. The story thus far yields two observations regarding the form and background of mystery. Firstly, its form in 2:17–19 is twofold, consisting of not just the interpretation but also the dream itself (cf. 2:4–9).[71] Secondly, its background in 2:17–19 is mantic, since wisdom is disclosed not through human scrutiny of the created order but through supernatural revelation involving a symbolic dream.[72]

These yield a further, third, observation concerning the function of mystery. Mystery's twofold form is precisely what stupefies the Babylonian magicians, who

[70] For a discussion of the alleged inaccuracy of the date in 2:1 and the potential contradiction between Dan 1 and 2, see Andrew E. Steinmann, *Daniel*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2008), 111–12.
[71] Beale, *Use of Daniel*, 13.
[72] For more details on the mantic nature of wisdom in Daniel, see Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 24–26.

repeatedly request to be told the dream in order to explain it (2:4–7).[73] Unlike them, Daniel succeeds in both reproducing the dream and producing its interpretation. Therefore, the third observation, in terms of function, is that mystery polemically distinguishes Daniel from his pagan counterparts.[74]

Nevertheless, in the light of the mantic background of Daniel's wisdom, his success is not attributed to him but to his God who reveals the mystery (2:19). While Lenzi plausibly interprets "secrecy in the Book of Daniel" as "a rhetorical means to display the revelatory abilities of the Jewish deity and the deity's mediator," the emphasis in Dan 2 ultimately falls on the deity.[75] Also, while Melvin correctly describes Daniel as one of the "faithful Jews … who find success in their service to Gentile kings without compromising their loyalty to God," the focus of Dan 2 is the God to whom Daniel is loyal.[76] In fact, Daniel himself draws attention to God by describing him as the one who gives wisdom and discloses hidden things (2:20–23), and who reveals mysteries (גָּלֵא רָזִין, 2:28–29). Likewise, by the end of the chapter, Nebuchadnezzar pays homage to Daniel's God as the revealer of mysteries (גָּלֵה רָזִין, 2:47).

Gladd comments that wisdom in Daniel, while mantic, is nevertheless distinguishable from pagan manticism.[77] Lawson highlights the following difference: "the *identity* and *competence* of the deity doing the revealing," since "the effective ingredient in Daniel's dream interpretations was divinity, just as it was and always had been in the … mantic arts of Mesopotamia."[78] However, this concession of similarity

[73] Though in Dan 4, even when the Babylonian magicians are aware of the dream, they remain incapable of explaining its content.
[74] Melvin, "There Is a God," 148; Lenzi, "Secrecy, Textual Legitimation," 347–48.
[75] Lenzi, "Secrecy, Textual Legitimation," 345–46.
[76] Melvin, "There Is a God," 140, 153.
[77] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 25.
[78] Lawson, "'God Who Reveals Secrets,'" 75, italics original.

("divinity") amidst difference ("*identity*" and "*competence*") stops short of the full force of mystery's polemic in Dan 2.[79] Indeed, "[t]he bottom line" of Dan 2 is that "no Mesopotamian deity was able to reveal the dream itself."[80] Daniel's God is not just competent, even above the Ancient Near Eastern divinities; he is in fact the only one competent to disclose hidden wisdom concerning the future.

The rest of the scene sheds light on the content of mystery. In 2:28, Daniel describes the mystery with the following phrase: מָה דִּי לְהֲוָא בְּאַחֲרִית יוֹמַיָּא. The Hebrew equivalent of בְּאַחֲרִית יוֹמַיָּא occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament, and while it "nearly always has an eschatological, messianic connotation" (Isa 2:2; Hos 3:5; Mic 4:1; etc.), it can also refer to non-eschatological future events (Deut 31:29).[81] According to Seow, the phrase in Dan 2:28 means nothing more than "an unspecified time in the future."[82] In contrast, Newsom suggests that "in Dan 2 [the expression] is arguably used for the first time with an eschatological sense..., a usage repeated in the latter chapters of the book (cf. 8:19; 10:14; 12:8)."[83]

Since the phrase is "an idiomatic expression for 'future'" and not strictly "a technical eschatological term," Gerhard Pfandl recommends that "the context of a given passage ... determine[s] if the expression is being used with an eschatological nuance."[84] On this occasion, Daniel unpacks מָה דִּי לְהֲוָא בְּאַחֲרִית יוֹמַיָּא in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:36–45), which suggests that the phrase is indeed

[79] Lawson, "'God Who Reveals Secrets,'" 75, italics original.
[80] Wilson, *Lives of the Wise*, 65.
[81] Steinmann, *Daniel*, 129.
[82] Seow, *Daniel*, 43. See also Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 161.
[83] Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 74. See also Louis F. Hartman and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, The Anchor Bible 23 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), 146.
[84] Gerhard Pfandl, "Daniel's 'Time of the End,'" *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 7.1 (1996): 152.

eschatological. The events of 2:36–45, commencing with the rise and fall of Nebuchadnezzar's empire, culminate in a new and distinct reality: the God of heaven will establish a kingdom that will never be destroyed, will stand forever, will break all other empires into pieces, and will bring them to an end (2:44). In other words, mystery in Dan 2 features an eschatological revelation whereby every human empire will be decisively supplanted in the end times by the everlasting kingdom of heaven.

2.3.2.2 Daniel 4

Outside of Dan 2, the only verse where רָז (or μυστήριον) appears is 4:6 MT (or 4:9 Theo.). In Dan 4, Nebuchadnezzar experiences a terrifying dream and commands his coterie of wise men to provide an interpretation (4:2–4 MT; 4:5–7 Theo.).[85] On this occasion, Nebuchadnezzar does not withhold the dream from them, but the outcome remains the same: only Daniel can explain its contents.

This chapter reinforces the function and form of mystery presented in Dan 2. Firstly, mystery continues to draw a polemical contrast between the Babylonian magicians who fail and Daniel who succeeds. Secondly, it remains twofold in form, despite Beale's conclusion that "[i]n chap. 4 the 'mystery' is *not* twofold."[86] In Dan 4, it consists of not just a dream but also its interpretation; in fact, the meaning of the dream remains hidden until Daniel explains it. Conversely, Daniel's message to

[85] On the historical-critical issues pertaining to Dan 4, see Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 127–30. On Dan 4 as the source of the Prayer of Nabonidus, see Andrew E. Steinmann, "The Chicken and the Egg: A New Proposal for the Relationship between the Prayer of Nabonidus and the Book of Daniel," *Revue de Qumran* 20.4 (2002): 557–70.

[86] Beale, *Use of Daniel*, 14, italics original. Gladd, who shares Beale's understanding of twofold mystery, nonetheless concludes that Beale "does not take into account the parallel structure of the dreams in chs. 2 and 4 along with the overall revelatory nature of dreams and visions in the book of Daniel." Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 35 n. 92.

Nebuchadnezzar is not a standalone revelation but an interpretation of the earlier dream; there are dual components to the mystery of Dan 4.

In terms of content, Mertens states that "[d]er Traum vom Wahnsinn Nebukadnezars und seine Deutung Dan 4 ... [haben] eine *zeitgeschichtliche Bedeutung*, da sie das persönliche Schicksal des Königs betreffen."[87] Nevertheless, the personal, ostensibly non-eschatological, mystery of Dan 4 closely relates to the eschatological mystery of Dan 2. The latter emphasises God's ability to reveal the mystery of the end times while the former highlights his ability to do what he has previously revealed. More precisely, Dan 2 has promised that God will subjugate all earthly kingdoms, beginning with Babylon, and Dan 4 testifies that God indeed possesses the power to subdue Babylon's mighty king—and, by extension, his kingdom. In other words, Dan 4 anticipates the eschatological projection in Dan 2 of God's eventual overthrowing of Babylon, even the empires of all the earth.

Therefore, God's humbling of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 4, contrary to Mertens, is not simply a personal incident. 4:28–33 is not just "an immediate fulfillment of the mystery in 4:10–26" but also "an example/fulfillment of God 'removing' a king" as promised in 2:21.[88] Furthermore, the refrain in 4:25 and 32 Theo. (4:22, 29 MT)—that God gives (δίδωμι) the kingdom (ἡ βασιλεία) to whom he will—arguably looks forward to the events of Dan 7. In 7:14 and 27 (Theo.), the kingdom (ἡ βασιλεία) is finally given (δίδωμι) to one like a son of man and the people of God. In short, while Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation in Dan 4 do not, at first glance, seem

[87] Mertens, *Buch Daniel*, 116, italics original. Likewise, Newsom argues that "[u]nlike the dream in Dan 2, which described an ultimate destruction of the image and the Gentile kingdoms it represented, the limited duration of this punishment [in Dan 4] is linked to its different purpose." Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 142.
[88] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 41.

eschatological, this mystery prefigures events that constitute the end-time predictions of Dan 2 and 7.

2.3.2.3 Summary

According to Dan 2 and 4, mystery is mantic in background, twofold in form, eschatological in content, and polemical in function. Existing scholarship has catalogued these four features; our analysis discovers a more pronounced sense of mystery's polemical effect in these chapters. It distinguishes Daniel from the Babylonian sages in order to draw attention to God who alone reveals hidden wisdom concerning the end-time subordination of rulers and empires, and the establishment of an indestructible kingdom.

2.3.3 Mystery and Dan 3, 5, and 6

2.3.3.1 Daniel 5

Mystery in Dan 2 delineates the eschatological trajectory where kingdoms on earth rise and fall. In Dan 4, the focus narrows onto Babylon, the first of the empires depicted in 2:37–45. The chapter recounts God subduing Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, as a foretaste of God overthrowing the entire kingdom. The fall of Babylon transpires by the end of Dan 5, with its dominion divided and given to the Medes and the Persians (5:28; 6:1).

Therefore, if Dan 4 offers a foretaste of mystery's end-time trajectory (2:37–45), then Dan 5 marks the commencement of 2:37–45 in general and the fulfilment of 2:37–39 in particular. This suggests that the eschatology of Danielic mystery is realised.[89] However, the remainder of the trajectory—the dismantling of every earthly empire and the arrival of the heavenly kingdom—awaits future consummation. In other words (or, to borrow Macaskill's words), mystery's conception of end-time events can be better described as an "inaugurated eschatology" entailing "both realised and future elements."[90]

2.3.3.2 Daniel 3 and 6

These chapters, unlike Dan 2, 4, and 5, do not feature a twofold mystery (a divine message and its interpretation). Nevertheless, they reiterate mystery's eschatological content as per Dan 2, especially the promise that the God of heaven will set up an indestructible kingdom (מַלְכוּ דִּי לְעָלְמִין לָא תִתְחַבַּל, Dan 2:44). In 3:33, Nebuchadnezzar declares that the kingdom of God is an everlasting one (מַלְכָּוּת עָלַם).[91] In 6:27, Darius declares that the kingdom of God will never be destroyed (וּמַלְכוּתֵהּ דִּי־לָא תִתְחַבַּל).[92]

In Dan 3 and 6, the narrative emphasises that God, who reveals mystery and gives the kingdom to whom he will, also delivers his people. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel refuse to serve other gods or worship idols and face destruction

[89] "The invasion of Darius signals the fall of the Babylonians and the installment of the Medo-Persian empire—the fulfilment of 2:39.... [As such,] the events in ch. 5 are, in some manner, eschatological according to 2:28. The invasion of the Medo-Persian empire constitutes one more phase in God's timetable for the establishment of his earthly rule." Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 41.
[90] Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 24–25.
[91] The Theodotion of Dan 4:3 describes the kingdom of heaven as βασιλείαν αἰώνιον.
[92] The Theodotion of Dan 2:44 and 6:27 uses the same phrase, οὐ διαφθαρήσεται, to establish the indestructibility of the kingdom of heaven.

for their loyalty but are eventually saved by God. The outcome "is that the true worship is endorsed and promoted by the very head of the false worship, the emperor himself."[93] Indeed, by the end of these episodes, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius both declare the God of Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel as the one who rescues (3:29; 6:28 MT).[94]

The characterisation of Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and, most of all, Daniel, implies that the right response to mystery involves an unswerving service and worship of God. As mentioned above (2.3.1), Dan 1 introduces a subtle note of hope (1:21) and grounds this hope of enduring oppression in God's sovereign dispensing of wisdom and understanding. As the main recipient of divinely-given insight, Daniel knows and interprets mysteries in Dan 2, 4, and 5. In other words, the protagonist, the man of faithfulness in Dan 6, is also the man of wisdom in Dan 2, 4, and 5. The right response to grasping God's hidden wisdom is fidelity to him who alone discloses mystery, gives the kingdom to whom he will, and rescues.

2.3.3.3 Summary

Daniel 3, 5, and 6 enrich one's understanding of mystery in Dan 2 and 4, especially its eschatology, and showcase the correct response to it. In Dan 5, mystery features an inaugurated eschatology: the trajectory of 2:37–45 has begun with the defeat of Babylon and will climax in the establishment of an eternal heavenly kingdom. Dan 3 and 6 showcase, through Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, and Daniel, the exemplary response of serving and worshipping God alone, at the cost of one's life.

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[93] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 326.
[94] The Theodotion of Dan 3:96 and 6:28 uses the same verb, ῥύομαι, to describe the God who rescues.

2.3.4 Mystery and Dan 7

Although רָז or μυστήριον does not appear in Dan 7, the relationship between Dan 2 and 7 suggests that the latter also contains significant material regarding mystery. These two chapters share a similar outlook with respect to the form and content of mystery. In terms of form, both Dan 2 and 7 exhibit a twofold pattern consisting of an initial dream or vision and a subsequent interpretation.

As for content, the vision and its explanation in Dan 7 mirror the dream and its interpretation in Dan 2. Most noticeably, "[t]he four kingdoms scheme ... lies at the foundation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 and Daniel's vision in chapter 7."[95] Just as the four parts of the statue in Dan 2 allude to the kingdoms on earth, so the four beasts in Dan 7 allude to the rulers and empires of the earth. Also, just as the four kingdoms are eventually dismantled in Dan 2, so the four kings are eventually disempowered in Dan 7. In both chapters, the fall of empires and rulers sets the stage for the arrival of an indestructible kingdom. The parallels between the two chapters mean that Dan 7 brings Dan 2–7 full circle by returning to the starting point of Dan 2, with the form and content of chapter 7 echoing the mystery of chapter 2.

Nevertheless, Dan 7 does not simply reproduce the mystery of Dan 2. The chapter develops this mystery by elaborating on the predicament of the people of God in relation to the second and fourth earthly kingdoms and the final heavenly kingdom. While 7:5 and 23 reveal that God's people will suffer in the hands of earthly rulers and

[95] Michael Segal, "The Four Kingdoms and Other Chronological Conceptions in the Book of Daniel," in *Four Kingdom Motifs before and beyond the Book of Daniel*, ed. Andrew B. Perrin and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, Themes in Biblical Narrative 28 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 13.

empires, 7:27 discloses that God's people will eventually receive the everlasting heavenly kingdom—as will the one like a son of man (7:14).[96]

This suggests that the sufferings of Daniel and other like-minded Jews in Dan 2–6 do not merely constitute a historical record of their lives during the exile. Rather, this account also points forward to the tribulation experienced by subsequent generations of God's people after the fall of Babylon. In other words, Dan 2–6 and 7 together hold out a pattern of the suffering of God's people in the hands of successive kingdoms on earth.

However, Lucas posits a difference in the depictions of the fates of God's people in Dan 2–6 and 7–12, as representing "two ends of the spectrum of the experience of the godly person living in a pagan society."[97] That is, on the one hand, the possibility of "be[ing] both faithful to one's principles and fully involved in the society" (Dan 2–6), and, on the other, the prospect of "society … [being] so hostile that the principles are trampled on, and the godly may be crushed" (Dan 7–12).[98] Nevertheless, Lucas appears to overplay the distinction between Dan 2–6 and 7, at the expense of their overarching focus on the suffering of God's people. These chapters consistently portray the challenge of living under foreign rule: of the Babylonian king (Dan 3), the Medo-Persian emperor (Dan 6), and subsequent rulers (Dan 7). In other words, Dan 2–6 and 7 offer a common portrait of tribulation that the people of God undergo as subjects of the successive earthly kingdoms.

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[96] Scholarly discourses on the one like a son of man (כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ) in 7:13 and his relationship with the people of God (קַדִּישֵׁי עֶלְיוֹנִין) in 7:27 are, as J. Paul Tanner describes, both "voluminous" and "contentious." J. Paul Tanner, *Daniel*, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020), 426–41, 447–49. On כְּבַר אֱנָשׁ as messianic and קַדִּישֵׁי עֶלְיוֹנִין as the people of God, see especially Tanner, *Daniel*, 436–41, 447 n. 779, and 449.
[97] Lucas, *Daniel*, 195.
[98] Lucas, *Daniel*, 195.

Just as the suffering of Daniel and other Jews in Dan 3 and 6 points to the persecution of God's people in Dan 7, so the deliverance of the former in Dan 3 and 6 anticipates the vindication of the latter in Dan 7, where they receive the heavenly kingdom (7:27). Consequently, mystery according to Dan 2–7 is not merely relevant to Daniel and other like-minded Jews during the Babylonian exile. Rather, it contains wisdom and truth for subsequent generations of the people of God, sustaining them in their own experience of suffering until the arrival of the kingdom of heaven. Likewise, the fidelity of Daniel and his fellow Jews demonstrates to subsequent generations the right response to this wisdom and truth amidst tribulation, in anticipation of future deliverance.

2.3.5 Mystery and Dan 8–12

Having considered mystery according to the preceding chapters, we are now in a position to examine how the second half of Daniel reinforces, even develops, its form, content, and function.

2.3.5.1 The Form of Mystery in Dan 8–12

Although neither רָז nor μυστήριον occurs in Dan 8–12, these chapters, like Dan 2, 4, 5, and 7, contain twofold mysteries of divine messages and their explanations.[99] In particular, Dan 8 and 12 reiterate the pattern of 7:16–18, where Daniel enquires about

[99] While Dan 9 begins not with a dream but with Jeremiah's oracle, the chapter nevertheless subscribes to the twofold form of mystery, with a divine message followed by an interpretation.

the vision he has just seen (7:16), and receives its interpretation (7:17–18). The prophecy of 8:3–12 precipitates a question in 8:13, which elicits a brief explanation in 8:14. Likewise, the visions of 10:1–12:4 prompts an enquiry in 12:6, and the reply in 12:7 generates another question in 12:8, which results in a further interpretation in 12:9–13.

However, the answers to these questions neither entail complete revelation nor guarantee full comprehension. Lucas compares 8:27 with 7:28 and concludes that "[o]nce again [Daniel] is aware of not having fully understood the revelation."[100] Note, however, that Daniel only articulates his inability to understand the mysteries in 8:27 and 12:8 but not in 7:28.[101] In response to the questions of 12:6 and 8, 12:9–13 asserts that the words are sealed (סְתֻמִים) until the end of the time, and exhorts Daniel to simply go his way. As for 8:26, Daniel receives no further elucidation but instead the instruction to seal (סְתֹם) the vision that relates to many days from then.

Goldingay, espousing a historical-critical perspective, suggests that "[f]or an audience in the second century BC, this closing up [in 8:26–27] 'explains' why the vision has not been heard of before."[102] More, however, could be said in order to explain 8:26–27 and 12:8–13 from a literary-critical standpoint. Collins, for example, infers that Daniel's failure to understand in 12:8 (and 8:27) highlights "the mysteriousness of the revelation."[103] As mentioned above (2.2.1), twofold Danielic mystery elicits a threefold pattern of understanding.[104] That is, an initial prophetic

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[100] Lucas, *Daniel*, 221.
[101] Newsom rightly avers that "there is no indication [in Dan 7] that [Daniel] fails to grasp the import of what he has seen," and that "[t]he situation is different in ch. 8." Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 273.
[102] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 432.
[103] Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 400.
[104] Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 41.

message that yields little comprehension is followed by an interpretation that affords some understanding; full enlightenment, however, appears to be reserved for the future. While Beale and Gladd delineate this threefold pattern, they do not elaborate on its significance. We will explore the effect of deferring full disclosure and understanding in our ensuing discussion.

2.3.5.2 The Content of Mystery in Dan 8–12

The divine messages and their interpretations in Dan 8–12 develop the mystery of Dan 7, which entailed beasts and horns warring against each other, and the people of God suffering at present but eventually inheriting the everlasting heavenly kingdom. Correspondingly, Dan 8 and 10–11 vividly present beasts and horns (representing human rulers and empires) in battle.

As for the suffering of God's people, Dan 8, 9, and 11 depict their tribulation in ways that echo the portrayal of the Babylonian exile in Dan 1. Just as 1:1–4 mentions the desecration of God's house, the invasion of his city, and the deportation of his people, so 8:13, 9:26, and 11:33 speak of the trampling of the sanctuary, the destruction of the city, and the captivity of the people. In particular, 9:26 and 11:31–35 prophesy the devastation of the temple as an end-time event in close association with καιροῦ συντελείας (9:26; 11:35 LXX) or καιροῦ πέρας (11:35 Theo.).[105] 9:24–27 is a notoriously complex passage, but our study does not depend on a particular reading of these verses. Of significance to our interpretation of the Matthean Olivet Discourse is

[105] On "[t]he abomination tak[ing] place during the 'end' or at the 'time of the end'" according to Dan 9:26 and 11:35, see Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation*, 305.

simply the recognition that Dan 9 and 11 present the fall of Jerusalem and its temple in close relation to the end.[106]

As for Dan 12, Goldingay states that 12:2 is "not concerned with … eschatological restoration."[107] In contrast, Di Lella suggests that "[t]he inspired author of 12:1–2 is the first Old Testament writer to affirm unambiguously the truth of eternal life after death for … the righteous."[108] A comparison of Dan 7 and 12 is instructive. Just as 7:27 uses עָלַם to portray the everlasting heavenly kingdom inherited by the people of God, so 12:2–3 uses the equivalent Hebrew term עוֹלָם to describe the eternal fate of the people of God.[109] This overlap in language suggests an overlap of events: the inheriting of the eternal kingdom by the people of God will also involve their rising to everlasting life and glory. While some of the details in Dan 8–12, especially Dan 11, correspond to the tyranny of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the second century BC, mystery according to these chapters retains its eschatological character in anticipating an everlasting future reality.

There is, nonetheless, a shift in eschatological focus in Dan 8–12. The questions in 7:16 and 19 seek to clarify the end-time events of the preceding vision; in comparison, the enquiries of 8:13 and 12:6 begin with "how long" (עַד־מָתַי), which brings to the fore the timing and duration of the end-time events. However, the answers to 8:13 and 12:6

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[106] For detailed discussions of Dan 9:24–27, see Ron Haydon, *"Seventy Sevens Are Decreed": A Canonical Approach to Daniel 9:24–27*, Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplements 15 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016); Richard S. Hess, "The Seventy Sevens of Daniel 9: A Timetable for the Future?," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 21.3 (2011): 315–30; Michael Kalafian, *The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks of the Book of Daniel: A Critical Review of the Prophecy as Viewed by Three Major Theological Interpretations and the Impact of the Book of Daniel on Christology* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991).
[107] Goldingay, *Daniel*, 547.
[108] Hartman and Di Lella, *Book of Daniel*, 308–9. See also Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 360.
[109] Likewise, the Septuagint and Theodotion of these verses use the same adjective αἰώνιος or the cognate noun αἰών.

neither entail complete revelation nor guarantee full comprehension of the mysteries—as Beale and Gladd affirm in speaking of a threefold pattern of understanding.

The deferring of complete understanding, as Collins suggests, highlights "the mysteriousness of the revelation."[110] This, in turn, emphasises that wisdom comes exclusively from God and is not ultimately dependent on human reception of the divine message and its interpretation. Furthermore, the deferral diverts attention and effort away from speculating about the precise timing of eschatological tribulation. In 12:9–13, Daniel is commanded twice to go (12:9, 13), as the enigmatic exposition of the 1,290 and 1,335 days (12:11, 12) gives way to the exhortation to persevere (12:12). Tanner concludes thus:

> [t]he response to Daniel in v, 9 ... seems to suggest that he is not to ask further questions.... There is to be a divine restriction on what can be comprehended.... The final verse of the book of Daniel is reserved for Daniel himself.... [H]is life serves as a model to those ... who would desire to live a consecrated life unto God. His faithfulness, courage, character, and love of God's word summon [others] to follow in his steps.[111]

In fact, one could draw together more tightly the above conclusions regarding the "divine restriction on what can be comprehended" and the exhortation unto a faithful and courageous life.[112] Since the details of the end times remain obscure even to Daniel, the privileged recipient of mystery, the focus shifts from deciphering the duration of eschatological events to enduring ongoing tribulation.[113]

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[110] Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 400.
[111] Tanner, *Daniel*, 754, 767.
[112] Tanner, *Daniel*, 754, 767.
[113] On how "God alone knows—and that seems to be the point," thereby exhorting "persist[ence] in the light of continuing persecution and trouble," see Tremper Longman, *Daniel*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 287.

2.3.5.3 The Function of Mystery in Dan 8–12

Mystery in these chapters continues to distinguish the wise from the foolish. Lucas notes that the identity of the wise "has been hotly debated because of its pertinence to the question of the circle within which the traditions about Daniel were preserved and developed to produce the book as we have it."[114] Collins, engaging in this historical-critical debate, postulates that Dan 7–12 was composed in 167–63 BC, and identifies the wise as those wary of Jewish armed resistance against Antiochus IV Epiphanes.[115] He also argues that the designation of the wise in 11:33 and 12:3 "is taken from the 'suffering servant'" of Isa 52–53.[116]

Nevertheless, from a literary-critical standpoint, there is a closer parallel to the wise of 11:33 and 12:3 in the second half of Daniel itself. In 9:22, Gabriel pronounces that he has come to grant Daniel insight. The language of insight in this verse derives from the verb שׂכל, and both 11:33 and 12:3 use its participle to denote those who are wise.[117] Indeed, there are parallels between the figure of Daniel in the first half of the book and the wise in the second half. Just as Daniel and other like-minded Jews are

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[114] Lucas, *Daniel*, 288.

[115] Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 61, 66–67. While commentators divide over the dating of Daniel, "[i]t is possible to make a reasoned, and reasonable, defence of a late sixth-century or early fifth-century date for the book." Lucas, *Daniel*, 312. For a defence of an early date for the book, see Steinmann, *Daniel*, 6–18.

[116] Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 385, 393. See also Seow, *Daniel*, 181. Just as the Isaianic suffering servant does not retaliate (Isa 53:7–9), so the wise "pursue a nonviolent course" and come to "triumph ... through suffering and heavenly exaltation." Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 385. Note, however, the following critique: despite the possibility of "an intentional intertextual allusion" to Isa 52–53, "the Danielic 'wise' have a distinct function." Furthermore, there is "no evidence whether the *maśkîlîm* opposed or supported violent resistance"; "[i]t is simply not the topic of the chapter." Newsom, *Daniel: A Commentary*, 352–53. Another historical-critical interpretation compares the designation of the wise in 11:33 and 12:3 with the Hasideans of 1 Macc 2:42 and 7:12, and 2 Macc 14:6. See Lucas, *Daniel*, 288.

[117] In the Theodotion, the language of insight in 9:22 derives from the noun σύνεσις, and 11:33 and 12:3 respectively use the cognate adjective and participle to denote the wise.

persecuted but remain faithful to God, so the wise in 11:32–33 are subject to sword, flame, and captivity but stand firm in God. Just as Daniel shares his wisdom with others, so the wise in 11:33 (MT) share their knowledge with many and make them understand. Also, just as Daniel is rescued from destruction, so the wise in 12:2–3 will eventually be raised to eternal life and glory.

In Dan 2–7, mystery functions polemically in order to differentiate Daniel from the Babylonian sages. By setting the protagonist apart, these chapters foster solidarity with the man who knows hidden things and is faithful to God in service and worship amidst suffering. Likewise, Dan 8–12 distinguishes the wise from the foolish or wicked. By setting the wise apart, the second half of the book encourages alignment with those who understand the mysteries, share their wisdom with others, and persist in God amidst tribulation. This encouragement is reinforced by the juxtaposition of eschatological outcomes: the wise will be raised to a glorious and eternal existence, while the foolish and wicked will rise instead to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan 12:2–3).

2.3.5.4 Summary

Mystery according to these chapters is consistent with its twofold form in the first half of the book. In Dan 8 and 12, questions about a divine message elicit its interpretation. Nevertheless, the replies do not guarantee, in accordance with a threefold pattern of understanding, complete disclosure and enlightenment.

In terms of content, mystery in Dan 8–12 features the ongoing suffering of the people of God, which involves the fall of Jerusalem and its temple. These chapters also

develop the eschatology of Dan 2–7, with a focus on the timing of eschatological events. However, the withholding of precise details puts the emphasis instead on enduring eschatological tribulation of unknown duration.

Finally, mystery in the second half of Daniel continues to function polemically, by distinguishing the wise from the foolish or wicked. These juxtapositions encourage alignment with the former who share their understanding of mystery with others and remain faithful to God, in anticipation of future deliverance, amidst suffering.

2.3.6 Summary of Mystery in Daniel

Scholars have catalogued the following four aspects of mystery according to Daniel: firstly, it is mantic in background; secondly, twofold in form; thirdly, eschatological in content; fourthly, polemical in function. Our investigation affirms these features and seeks to address the following questions. Firstly, what sort of eschatology characterises Danielic mystery? Is it inaugurated? Secondly, what are the main polemical effects of Danielic mystery? Thirdly, what more can be gleaned about mystery with reference to Daniel in its entirety?

In terms of the sort of eschatology, Dan 5 suggests that the end-time trajectory of 2:37–45 has commenced with the fall of Babylon but awaits consummation with the shattering of all earthly kingdoms and the establishment of an indestructible heavenly kingdom. Consequently, Danielic mystery presents an inaugurated eschatology.

Concerning the main polemical effects of mystery, Dan 2–7 differentiates its protagonist from the Babylonian magicians in order to stress that his God alone discloses hidden things. These chapters also set apart Daniel and other like-minded Jews

to encourage alignment with their faithful worship and service of God as the right response to mystery. Likewise, Dan 8–12 polemically distinguishes the wise from the wicked and foolish to foster solidarity with the former in their fidelity amidst suffering, in anticipation of future rescue.

Finally, examining the whole of Daniel rather than selected chapters generates three further insights into mystery. Firstly, in terms of the twofold form of mystery, questions about a divine message can prompt further explanation (Dan 8, 12). Secondly, twofold mystery elicits a threefold pattern of comprehension. The deferral of complete disclosure and understanding of the precise duration of eschatological events diverts attention instead to enduring ongoing tribulation. Thirdly, the content of mystery in Dan 7–12 features the coming of one like a son of man and the suffering of the people of God, including the fall of Jerusalem and its temple.

2.4 Danielic Mystery in Second Temple Jewish Literature

Comprehensive analysis of mystery according to Daniel in the Second Temple Jewish cultural encyclopedia requires some consideration of the notion in relevant noncanonical literature. As Matthew's Gospel emerged out of Second Temple Judaism, other uses of Danielic mystery in writings of that milieu offer a useful point of reference for analysing Matthew's appropriation. In his work on Zechariah's importance to Mark 13, Sloan examines "extant non-Markan uses of pertinent material from Zechariah" to "establish a norm of usage" that is "consistent with the proposed employment in Mark 13."[118] In this section, we will examine extant non-Matthean uses of Danielic mystery

[118] Sloan, *Mark 13*, 37, 55.

to "establish a norm" of understanding and usage in the Second Temple Jewish cultural encylopedia.[119]

2.4.1 Daniel and Second Temple Jewish Literature

Before proceeding further, some comment on the relationship between mystery in Daniel and the noncanonical texts of Second Temple Judaism is apposite. Andrew Perrin depicts "[t]he Danielic tradition's crescendoing authority … in ancient Jewish literature" as a "spectrum of explicit to implicit uses."[120] One could arguably locate the notion and vocabulary of mystery within this spectrum of uses by the Qumran community. For example, Collins specifies "[t]he concept of mystery (*raz*)" in delineating Daniel's "extensive" influence on the Dead Sea Scrolls.[121] In his monograph on mystery and Qumran sectarianism, Samuel I. Thomas includes Daniel in his overview of Aramaic influences on the Qumran community's use of רָז.[122] More recently, Gurtner describes "[the] Qumran notion of 'mystery'" as "strikingly similar to Daniel's language of mysterious dreams."[123]

Charlotte Hempel attempts to account for the Second Temple Jewish use of רָז apart from dependence on Daniel by commending "the possibility that there was a certain section of … Jewish society who favoured such preoccupations and used the

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[119] Sloan, *Mark 13*, 55.
[120] Andrew Perrin, "Daniel, Book Of," *T&T Clark Encyclopedia of Second Temple Judaism* 1:152.
[121] John J. Collins, "The Book of Daniel and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Scriptures and Sectarianism: Essays on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 106.
[122] Samuel I. Thomas, *The "Mysteries" of Qumran: Mystery, Secrecy, and Esotericism in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Early Judaism and Its Literature 25 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009), 116–18.
[123] Gurtner, "Danielic Influence," 318.

same terminology."[124] She supports her suggestion by citing "the sparsity of our sources"—but for this same reason, one should be cautious about eliminating from consideration all possibility of Danielic influence.[125] Our study does not presuppose that every mention of mystery in Second Temple Jewish literature necessarily traces back to the biblical book. Nevertheless, we contend that some instances, especially in the Dead Sea Scrolls, plausibly refer to Daniel.

Our approach flows out of a wider recognition that Daniel exerted considerable influence over the Qumran community in the Second Temple period. A total of eight manuscripts consisting of Danielic material have been identified among the Dead Sea Scrolls, deriving from three separate caves.[126] These eight manuscripts contain fragments of the first eleven chapters of Daniel as preserved in the Masoretic Tradition; Dan 12 is attested in the Florilegium (4Q174), in a quotation of 12:10.[127] The following comparative data throws into sharp relief the significance of Daniel for the Qumran community:

> only the central or core books of the Law and the Prophets—the Torah, Psalms, and Isaiah (plus *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees*)—outnumber the copies of Daniel. Whereas the length of the Book of Daniel is only about one third the size of that of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets..., only eight MSS of the Twelve and six each of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are preserved. At most four copies of other lengthy books such as Job, Proverbs, or the historical books were found.[128]

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[124] Charlotte Hempel, "*Maskil(im)* and *Rabbim*: From Daniel to Qumran," in *Biblical Traditions in Transmission: Essays in Honour of Michael A. Knibb*, ed. Charlotte Hempel and Judith M. Lieu, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 111 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 138.
[125] Hempel, "*Maskil(im)* and *Rabbim*," 138.
[126] Eugene Ulrich, "The Text of Daniel in the Qumran Scrolls," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception, Volume 2*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 83/2 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 573.
[127] Ulrich, "Text of Daniel," 575. For a list of passages from Dan 1–11 in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Ulrich, "Text of Daniel," 574.
[128] Ulrich, "Text of Daniel," 573–74.

Indeed, such attestation and representation of Daniel in the Dead Sea Scrolls is nothing short of "impressive."[129]

Traces of Daniel are also discernible in the noncanonical writings among the Dead Sea Scrolls. In terms of quotations, there are two references to Dan 9 and 12 respectively in Melchizedek (11Q13) and the Florilegium (4Q174). In fact, the latter citation is prefaced with the statement "as it is written in the book of Daniel the prophet" (4Q174 1–3.ii.3). [130] Noteworthy is the specification of Daniel as a prophet, since "'the prophets' ... are often juxtaposed with the Torah of Moses as authoritative sources."[131] This, in turn, indicates that the Qumran community held the biblical book in high esteem.

None of the above observations, in isolation, demands that we trace every instance of mystery in Second Temple Jewish literature back to Daniel. Nevertheless, the combined force of these observations strengthens the likelihood of at least some Danielic influence on the Qumran conception of mystery. This probability further increases with the fact that the term רָז derives from no other canonical text; its indisputable occurrences in the Masoretic Tradition appear only in Daniel.

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[129] Ulrich, "Text of Daniel," 573.
[130] All quotations of the Dead Sea Scrolls, unless otherwise stated, are taken from Donald W. Parry and Emmanuel Tov, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader*, 6 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2004–2005). The Florilegium can be found in *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader* 2.
[131] Collins, "Book of Daniel," 103.

2.4.2 Danielic Mystery in the Dead Sea Scrolls

Thomas's monograph offers a comprehensive treatment of the Qumran exploration of mystery more generally; our analysis will focus on the ways the Dead Sea Scrolls understood and appropriated Danielic mystery.[132]

Some of the writings using רָז in the Dead Sea Scrolls are fragmentary. Of those that are less so, some contain, apart from רָז, other links with Daniel. These texts demonstrate a plausible dependence on the biblical book, which increases the probability that they also rely on its conception of mystery in their use of רָז. Such writings include the Book of Mysteries (4Q300), some Thanksgiving Hymns (4Q427), and the Pesher of Habakkuk (1QpHab). [133] To this list, one could add the War Scroll (1QM), the Rule of Community (specifically 1QS), the Instructions (1Q26; 4Q415–418; 4Q423), and other Thanksgiving Hymns (not from 4Q427 but 1QH[a]).[134]

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[132] See Thomas, *"Mysteries" of Qumran*, 127–86.

[133] Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 105–6. He clarifies that his list of parallels between the Dead Sea Scrolls and Daniel is "not innovative on [his] part, since commentators have likewise suggested these allusions and themes."

[134] Perhaps an omission to this list is the Enochic literature, which appears to echo Daniel's conception of mystery. For example, 1 Enoch emphasises the twofold form of mystery, whereby a question precipitates further explanation or disclosure that enables understanding (21:1–5; 23:4; 27:1–2; 43:3–4). Also, Enochic mystery refers extensively to the Son of Man (1 En 45:3; 48:7; 53:3–6; 62:7; 69:27–29). See Pennington, "Parables of Enoch," 210–16; Patten, "Form and Function of Parables," 246–58. Nevertheless, there remains considerable debate regarding the precise relationship between Daniel and the Enochic apocalypses. Some maintain that parts of 1 Enoch were written late enough for Daniel to be "almost certainly [its] source." Pennington, "Parables of Enoch," 216; Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 105–6. Others, in contrast, insist that the "similarities, and ... even substantial verbal overlaps..., allow for the possibility that the author of Daniel knew the early Enochic traditions well enough to draw upon and then adapt them." Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "Daniel and Early Enoch Traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception, Volume 2*, ed. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 83/2 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 385. Even Gladd, who strongly advocates Danielic influence with respect to mystery in a wide range of Second Temple Jewish writings, concedes that "[t]he relationship between Daniel and 1 Enoch is quite difficult to determine." He also acknowledges the possibility that the two texts, in some instances, "may ... depend on a similar apocalyptic tradition." Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 106 n. 204. Since ascertaining the relationship between Daniel and the Enochic literature falls outside our parameters of inquiry, our discussion of Jewish appropriations of Danielic mystery will not focus on the Enochic writings.

2.4.2.1 The War Scroll (1QM)

Scholars concur that the War Scroll closely relates to Daniel. Loren T. Stuckenbruck, who is wary of assuming Danielic influence on other Jewish writings, nevertheless concedes that the War Scroll is "profoundly affected by and made use of" Daniel.[135] More recently, Matthew L. Walsh declares that "the War Scroll … is obviously dependent on the book of Daniel."[136]

Indeed, the War Scroll contains multiple allusions to Daniel.[137] In the first column alone, the description of the battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness is reminiscent of the wars in the second half of Daniel. For example, the word קרן in 1QM I.4 is used for the horns of Dan 7–8.[138] Also, Kittim, Egypt, and the kings of the north in 1QM I.4 recall the rulers and empires of Dan 11. As for the Sons of Light, the verb חזק describing their activity in 1QM I.13 appears in Dan 11:32, where it depicts the people of God standing firm.

The War Scroll conceives of mystery as eschatological, featuring the end-time events of Daniel, which include the suffering and raising of the people of God and the judgement of the wicked.[139] Regarding the connection between mystery and the suffering of God's people, 1QM XVI.11 speaks of "the slain among the infantry," who

[135] Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The Formation and Re-Formation of Daniel in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Volume 1: Scripture and the Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 129.
[136] Matthew L. Walsh, "Sectarian Identity and Angels Associated with Israel: A Comparison of Daniel 7–12 with 1QS, 11QMelchizedek, and 1QM," in *Dead Sea Scrolls, Revise and Repeat: New Methods and Perspectives*, ed. Carmen Palmer et al., Early Judaism and Its Literature 52 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2020), 181.
[137] For more details, see Stuckenbruck, "Formation and Re-Formation," 128–29.
[138] The War Scroll can be found in *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader 1*.
[139] Other events include the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms, the establishment of the everlasting heavenly kingdom, and the destruction of wicked kings and kingdoms.

"begin to fall by God's mysteries" and are "test[ed] by these mysteries" in the battle against the Sons of Darkness. Four verses later, the chief priest reveals that God "tests the heart of His people in the crucible" (XVI.15). Likewise, XVII.8–9 speaks of "mysteries concerning [the] existence" of the "sons of His covenant," which pertain to "God's crucible," the "fiery trials" these sons go through.

As for the link between mystery and the raising of God's people, 1QM XIV.13–14 speaks of "[God's] wondrous mysteries" as involving the "appointed times of eternity" when he "rais[es] up those for [himself] from the dust." Regarding the connection between mystery and the judgement of those who do not belong to God, III.9 speaks of the "[m]ysteries of God to wipe out wickedness," since "He shall not abate His anger until they are annihilated." Here, "they" refers to those who belong to "wickedness" (רשעה); the cognate participle appears in Dan 12:10 (הַרְשָׁיעוּ), referring likewise to the wicked destined for everlasting contempt.

In short, the War Scroll reflects an understanding of Danielic mystery that affirms its content as eschatological. This text appropriates mystery by applying the end-time experiences of tribulation, resurrection, and judgement to the Qumran community. It appears as though "the Qumran writers ... [were] developing this [Danielic] tradition in the light of the eschatological happenings they believed were occurring in their midst."[140] This, in turn, suggests that the Qumran writers harnessed the polemic of Danielic mystery for their sectarian purposes, thereby fostering the community's solidarity against outsiders destined for punishment.[141]

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[140] Beale, *Use of Daniel*, 31–32.

[141] Thomas explicates that "'mystery' language is one way its members went about claiming priority and authority, and such use reflects also the boundary-making activities of the Yahad and its attempts to assert control over its members and its world." Thomas, *"Mysteries" of Qumran*, 242.

2.4.2.2 The Book of Mysteries (1Q27; 4Q299–301)

The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader classifies the Mysteries under "Sapiential Instructions."[142] In contrast, Giovanni Ibba identifies the Mysteries and "testi sapienziali" as "generi differenti."[143] Matthew J. Goff offers a more nuanced description of the text as a combination of "practical wisdom in the tradition of Proverbs" with "an apocalyptic worldview."[144] On the one hand, it "includes a degree of practical instruction that is compatible with the traditional wisdom of Proverbs."[145] On the other hand, it "uses the term *rāz* in its appeals to supernatural revelation, like Daniel."[146] This suggests that רָז here, as in Daniel, denotes an apocalyptic mystery.[147]

While Goff recognises that the Mysteries "probably reflects some degree of familiarity with Daniel," he cautions against identifying the latter as "a major formative influence" on the former.[148] Although he acknowledges that both texts refer to magicians (חרתמים), he also distinguishes their depictions of these characters. Accordingly, the Mysteries is "more insistent than ... Daniel in its rejection of ... the 'magicians'"; in contrast, the biblical book "does not denounce the wisdom of the Babylonians" and simply presents Daniel to be "better at dream interpretation."[149]

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[142] Donald W. Parry and Emmanuel Tov, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Reader, Volume 4: Calendrical and Sapiential Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).
[143] Giovanni Ibba, "Il 'Libro dei Misteri' (1Q27, f. 1): Testo escatologico," *Henoch* 21 (1999): 83.
[144] Matthew J. Goff, *Discerning Wisdom: The Sapiential Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 116 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 94. Goff similarly categories the Instructions as a combination of "traditional wisdom with an apocalyptic worldview." Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*, 13.
[145] Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*, 95.
[146] Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*, 94.
[147] On the Instructions likewise "disclosing divine mysteries" reflecting an "apocalyptic worldview" and "epistemology ... compatible with that of Daniel," see Matthew J. Goff, *The Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom of 4QInstruction*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 50 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 28.
[148] Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*, 92–93.
[149] Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*, 92.

Nevertheless, other commentators maintain a higher degree of alignment between the two texts. Armin Lange, for instance, infers "[eine] Anspielung auf Nebukadnezzars Traum (Dan 2) in 4Q300".[150]

Contrary to Goff, to state that Daniel is merely "better" arguably downplays the fact that he succeeds where his Babylonian counterparts utterly fail.[151] In Dan 2, the mystery remains impenetrable before the scrutiny of the pagan sages; only the wisdom of God in heaven can unveil the mystery (2:10, 28). Consequently, there is greater correspondence between the two texts than Goff allows for, regarding their rejection of the magicians' wisdom.

The Mysteries reflects an understanding of Danielic mystery that affirms its twofold form and polemical function.[152] In 4Q300 1aii–b.1–2, the magicians "skilled in transgression" are those who "utter the parable and relate the riddle" but have neither "considered the eternal mysteries" nor "come to understand wisdom."[153] According to the next two verses, one can "open the vision," only to discover that "wisdom" has been "kept secret" (4Q300 1aii–b.3–4). In other words, mystery in 4Q300 is twofold, consisting of not just an initial "parable," "riddle," or "vision" but also a subsequent interpretation, wisdom, or understanding.

As for the polemical effect of mystery, the magicians in 4Q300 1aii–b.1–2, in the light of 1Q27, belong to the wicked who "[do] not know the [mystery]" and will

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[150] Armin Lange, "Die Weisheitstexte aus Qumran: Eine Einleitung," in *The Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought*, ed. C. Hempel, A. Lange, and H. Lichtenberger, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 159 (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 13.
[151] Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*, 92.
[152] We will address the content of mystery in the Mysteries in our discussion of רז נהיה (2.4.2.3), an important phrase that appears in both the Mysteries and the Instructions.
[153] The Mysteries can be found in *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader 4*.

be "banished in the presence of righteousness" (1Q27 1.i.3–7).[154] In other words, the magicians feed into the polemical contrast of wickedness with goodness that warns against alignment with the wicked. This juxtaposition arguably fosters the sectarianism of the Qumran community, whose members constitute the righteous as distinct from the immoral.[155]

2.4.2.3 The Instructions (1Q26; 4Q415–418; 4Q423)

While Brown identifies different categories of mystery in Qumran literature, Mertens states that "alle diese Gruppen geeint sind durch den übergreifenden eschatologischen Aspekt."[156] This raises the question as to whether mystery in the Dead Sea Scrolls is eschatological in content. Applying this enquiry to the Instructions and the Mysteries, does the phrase רז נהיה denote an eschatological mystery?

This perplexing expression has generated myriad readings. Many commentators opt for a temporal interpretation: from "le mystère passé" to "le secret 'révélé'" to "the mystery to come."[157] In contrast, others propose a nontemporal interpretation: from "Geheimnis des Werdens" to "mistero dell'esistenza" to "the mystery of existence."[158]

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[154] Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*, 92.
[155] On mystery and Qumran sectarianism, see Thomas, *"Mysteries" of Qumran*, 242.
[156] Mertens, *Buch Daniel*, 129 n. 49. Brown discusses a "variety of material subsumed under the idea of 'mystery'" in Qumran literature, including mysteries of divine providence, mysteries of the sect's interpretation of the Law, cosmic mysteries, and evil mysteries. See Brown, *Semitic Background of the Term "Mystery,"* 22–30.
[157] Roland de Vaux, "La grotte des manuscrits hébreux," *Revue biblique* 56.4 (1949): 605–6; Torleif Elgvin, "The Mystery to Come: Early Essene Theology of Revelation," in *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas L. Thompson, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 290 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 136.
[158] Armin Lange, *Weisheit und Prädestination: Weisheitliche Urordnung und Prädestination in den Textfunden von Qumran*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 18 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 99; Ibba, "Il 'Libro dei Misteri,'" 77; Florentino Garcia Martinez and Eibert J. C. Tigechelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, Pbk. ed. (Leiden: Brill; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 1:67.

The sheer range of options indicates that scholars do not uniformly construe רז נהיה in relation to time, with a view to the future.

Our discussion will not offer a detailed analysis of רז נהיה but will instead propose that the content of this mystery encompasses both the past and future, especially the eschatological future.[159] The Instructions describes רז נהיה as not just about "what is to be" but also "the deeds of old" (4Q417 1.i.3).[160] Nevertheless, 4Q418 77.3 portrays רז נהיה as the end-time event of "the judgement on mankind." Likewise, the Mysteries puts רז נהיה in parallel with "the things of old" in 1Q27 1.i.3. Nevertheless, the following verse declares that wicked people "did not rescue themselves" from רז נהיה, suggesting that this mystery pertains to future judgement (1Q27 1.i.4).

Therefore, רז נהיה lends itself to a temporally-flexible definition: "רז נהיה bezeichnet somit ein Phänomen, das ... historische ... [und] eschatologische ... Komponenten in sich vereinigt."[161] In short, while "no translation is fully adequate," the evidence is such that one could interpret this mystery as "extend[ing] throughout all of history" while maintaining an "emphasis on the final judgement."[162]

2.4.2.4 The Pesher of Habakkuk (1QpHab)

Scholars argue that this text exhibits a strong affinity to mystery in Daniel. Bockmuehl summarises "[t]he two basic ingredients of *pesher* type of 'revelation'" as "the רז (often

[159] Comprehensive discussions can be found in the chapters on 4QInstruction and the Mysteries in Goff, *Discerning Wisdom*.
[160] The Instructions can be found in *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader 4*.
[161] Lange, *Weisheit und Prädestination*, 60. See also Elgvin, "Mystery to Come," 135.
[162] Goff, *Worldly and Heavenly Wisdom*, 34–35.

plural) and its corresponding פשר."[163] These, accordingly, form "[p]articularly interesting parallels" with Daniel, where "the mystery (רז) given ... must be 'decoded' (פשר)."[164] More recently, Daniel A. Machiela remarks that extant Aramaic texts (such as the Book of Giants, the Visions of Amram, etc.) "might give us pause over the status of Daniel relative to the other Aramaic texts" for the Qumran Pesharim.[165] Nevertheless, "Daniel is quoted as an authoritative ('scriptural') [source] twice, both times in the thematic pesharim..., and may therefore deserve some measure of priority in the context of Qumran."[166]

There are indeed noticeable connections between mystery in Daniel and the Pesher of Habakkuk, which reflect an understanding of Danielic mystery that affirms its twofold form and eschatological content. The term רָז occurs in 1QpHab VII.4–5: "to the Teacher of Righteousness ... God made known/ all the mysterious revelations of his servants the prophets."[167] In Dan 9, Jeremiah's oracle yields an interpretation exclusively unveiled to Daniel. Likewise, in 1QpHab VII, Habakkuk's oracle is followed by an explanation disclosed only to the Teacher of Righteousness. In other words, mystery in both texts displays a twofold pattern, consisting of a divine oracle and an interpretation revealed only to a mediator of wisdom.

As for eschatological content, רָז appears in 1QpHab VII.7–8 with respect to "the Last Days." These "Last Days" refer to the eschatological end, when those who do

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[163] Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 48. For the combination of רז and פשר, see, for instance, 1QpHab VII.4–5.
[164] Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 48. On how "[t]he repeated פשר-רז combination with reference to the last times in ... 1QpH points uniquely to the same phenomenon in Daniel 2," see also Beale, *Use of Daniel*, 38.
[165] Daniel A. Machiela, "The Qumran Pesharim as Biblical Commentaries: Historical Context and Lines of Development," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 19.3 (2012): 343 n. 83.
[166] Machiela, "Qumran Pesharim," 343 n. 83.
[167] The Pesher of Habakkuk can be found in *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader* 2.

not belong to God have "their sins … doubled against them" in "judgement" (VII.7, 15–16). In Dan 9:2, Daniel prays about the mystery of the number of years before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem. Likewise, in 1 QpHab VII, mystery is concerned with when "that period," the end-time suffering of the generation to come, will be "complete" (VII.2). According to VII.7–8, "the Last Days will be long, much longer than/ the prophets had said." In these verses, 1QpHab appropriates Danielic mystery to prepare the Qumran community for protracted suffering and delayed final judgement; the implied response to this mystery is perseverance until the end.

2.4.2.5 The Rule of Community (specifically 1QS) and the Thanksgiving Hymns (specifically 1QH[a]; 4Q427)

In Daniel, mystery is impenetrable by man, shut up and sealed unless God unveils it (8:26; 12:9). Likewise, mystery is closed off to all but God in the Rule and the Hymns. For example, 1QS XI.18–19 declares that "[a]part from You there is no other able to … penetrate the depth of Your mysteries."[168] Such knowledge remains hidden until God "enlightens a man's mind" and gives "insight, understanding, and powerful wisdom" (1QS IV.2–3). Both 4Q427 7.i.19 and 1QH[a] XXVI.1 speak of God sealing (לחתום) mysteries and revealing hidden things (נסתרות).[169] Here, לחתום is the infinitive, and נסתרות is the cognate noun, of the verbs in Dan 12:9 (סְתֻמִים וַחֲתֻמִים) depicting the sealing and shutting up of mystery. The Rule and the Hymns, like Daniel, conceive of mystery as inaccessible and hidden unless disclosed by God.

[168] The Rule can be found in *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader 1*, apart from 1QS III.13–IV.26, which is in *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader 4*.
[169] The Thanksgiving Hymns can be found in *Dead Sea Scrolls Reader 5*.

Unlike Daniel, however, the Rule and the Hymns describe the concealing and revealing of mystery with language pertaining to the eye, ear, and heart. In 1QS IV.11, those under the sway of falsehood possess "blind eyes, deaf ears, ... and hard heart[s]"; similarly, 1QH[a] IX.37–38 presents those who "do not understand" as "foolish at heart." Conversely, 1QS XI.3–6 speaks of one's "eye" and "the light of [one's] heart" having "gazed ... upon the mystery" otherwise "hidden from men." Also, 1QH[a] IX.21 narrates how one, "a vessel of clay," gained access to "wonderful mysteries" when God "opened [one's] ears."[170] The absence of such descriptions in Daniel indicates that the Rule and the Hymns do not simply appropriate, but also adapt, Danielic mystery. Our next chapter will identify in Matthew's Gospel a similar depiction of the concealing and revealing of mystery with reference to the eye, ear, and heart.

2.4.3 Summary of Danielic Mystery in the Dead Sea Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls offer a window into how Danielic mystery was understood and deployed in Second Temple Judaism. In the War Scroll, the Mysteries, the Instructions, the Pesher of Habakkuk, the Rule, and the Hymns, mystery retains its twofold form, eschatological content, and polemical function. There is, nevertheless, indication of not just appropriation but also adaptation of mystery: the Rule and the Hymns present the obscuring and unveiling of wisdom in relation to the eye, ear, and heart.

[170] Similar language pertaining to the ear, in relation to the disclosing of mystery, can be found in the Instructions (1Q26 1.4; 4Q418 123.ii.4, 184.2, 190.2).

2.5 Conclusion

Our study endeavours to analyse the Matthean Olivet Discourse through the interpretative grid of mystery in Matthew's narrative. A key hypothesis is that τὰ μυστήρια in Matt 13:11 draws on a specifically Danielic mystery. In this chapter, we have sought to add to existing scholarship by making three inquiries. Firstly, what sort of eschatology characterises Danielic mystery? Is it inaugurated? Secondly, what are mystery's main polemical effects? Thirdly, what more can be gleaned about mystery with reference to Daniel in its entirety?

In addressing these questions, we have derived five features of mystery in Daniel. Firstly, it is mantic in background.

Secondly, it is twofold in form. On occasion, questions about a divine message initiate further explanation.

Thirdly, twofold mystery elicits a threefold pattern of understanding. The deferral of full disclosure and comprehension regarding precise eschatological timings shifts the focus instead onto enduring tribulation of unknown duration.

Fourthly, its content consists of an inaugurated eschatology featuring the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, one like a son of man, and the supplanting of all earthly empires by an everlasting heavenly kingdom.

Fifthly, in terms of function, it polemically distinguishes Daniel and the wise from the Babylonian magicians and the wicked or foolish. These juxtapositions uphold God alone as the revealer of hidden wisdom, and encourage alignment with the wise who remain faithful amidst suffering, in anticipation of future deliverance.

The appropriation of Danielic mystery in the Dead Sea Scrolls reflects the above features. Nevertheless, Qumran adaptation of mystery presents a further, sixth feature: the concealing and revealing of wisdom with reference to the eye, ear, and heart.

Since Matthew's Gospel emerged out of Second Temple Judaism, Danielic mystery in the cultural encyclopedia of that milieu provides useful background for analysing Matthew's appropriation of the notion. Our chapter has delineated the Second Temple Jewish norm of understanding and usage concerning Danielic mystery. We do not assume, however, that Matthew's understanding and use of it simply conform to the above norm. Sloan argues that "[u]ltimately, the interpretation of Mark's employment of any intertextual material depends on the context in which Mark embeds the allusion."[171] Our next chapter will adopt a similar approach as we analyse Matthew's use of Danielic mystery in the narrative context within which he embeds it.

[171] Sloan, *Mark 13*, 55.

Chapter 3
Mystery in Matthew's Gospel

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Christopher W. Skinner, in his survey of character studies in Mark's Gospel, describes William Wrede's work on the Markan secrecy motif as "seminal," even "epoch-making."[1] Although "many of [Wrede's] *conclusions* have been rejected by modern scholars, [his] *questions* have remained relevant and are often the starting point for contemporary ... research."[2]

Contemporary research has developed discussions about secrecy in the Synoptic Gospels in at least two ways. Firstly, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon recounts that "scholarly debate following [Wrede's] work has focused on historical questions" in order to "clarify the history of development from the historical Jesus, through early church tradition, to the evangelist."[3] However, the rise of narrative criticism has shifted the focus onto "a question that is literary."[4] Malbon's essay reflects this transition, demonstrating the "move in thinking about the 'messianic secret' in Mark: from history ... to story."[5]

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[1] Christopher W. Skinner, "The Study of Character(s) in the Gospel of Mark: A Survey of Research from Wrede to the Performance Critics (1901 to 2014)," in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge, Library of New Testament Studies 483 (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2014), 5.
[2] Skinner, "Study of Character(s)," 5, italics original.
[3] Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "History, Theology, Story: Re-Contextualizing Mark's 'Messianic Secret' as Characterization," in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge, Library of New Testament Studies 483 (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2014), 40.
[4] Malbon, "History, Theology, Story," 40.
[5] Malbon, "History, Theology, Story," 40.

Secondly, Macaskill questions "whether the various categories [of secrecy] that Wrede brought together ought to be seen as serving a single purpose or as comprising a single theme."[6] In other words, "there are various distinct themes of secrecy or hiddenness" that deserve to be "considered in quite different terms."[7] Of particular relevance to our investigation is Macaskill's differentiation of "the *hiddenness* represented by the parable theory" from "the *secrecy* commanded of the demons and the disciples."[8]

Our current chapter will focus on what Macaskill distinguishes as hiddenness, by conducting a narrative-critical analysis of mystery in Matt 1–23 as introduced by the term τὰ μυστήρια in 13:11. We will begin by exploring how Matt 1–12 prepares for the appearance of Danielic mystery (3.3), and then examine its appropriation in Matt 13 (3.4), before discussing how Matt 14–23 develops the notion as expressed in Matt 13 (3.5). In doing so, we will argue that Matthew appropriates, even adapts, Danielic mystery, with particular attention to its form, content, and function.

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[6] Grant Macaskill, "Apocalypse and the Gospel of Mark," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought*, ed. Benjamin E. Reynolds and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2017), 63.
[7] Macaskill, "Apocalypse and Mark," 63.
[8] Macaskill, "Apocalypse and Mark," 63, italics original. Likewise, Adela Yabro Collins refers to secrecy in the plural not singular: "all the secrecy themes in the Gospel of Mark." Nevertheless, she differs from Macaskill in assessing these themes as "hav[ing] the same purpose, or at least very similar purposes." Adela Yabro Collins, "Messianic Secret and the Gospel of Mark: Secrecy in Jewish Apocalypticism, the Hellenistic Mystery Religions, and Magic," in *Rending the Veil: Concealment and Secrecy in the History of Religions*, ed. Elliot R. Wolfson (New York: Seven Bridges, 1999), 23.

3.2 Recapitulating the Key Features of Danielic Mystery in Second Temple Judaism

Our previous chapter delineated six key features of Danielic mystery. Firstly, in terms of background, it is mantic, whereby wisdom is predicated on supernatural revelation in coded messages.

Secondly, in terms of form, it is twofold, consisting of a divine message followed by its interpretation. On occasion, questions about the message or its interpretation initiate further disclosure.

Thirdly, twofold mystery generates a threefold pattern of understanding. An initial prophetic vision that yields little enlightenment is followed by an interpretation that produces some comprehension, before the fulfilment of the prophecy in the future brings full understanding.

Fourthly, as for content, mystery features an inaugurated eschatology involving the establishment of an everlasting heavenly kingdom, the coming of one like a son of man, and the fall of Jerusalem and its temple.

Fifthly, in terms of function, mystery's polemic distinguishes the wise from the wicked or foolish in order to uphold God alone as the revealer of hidden wisdom and to encourage alignment with the wise.

Sixthly, Qumran literature adapts Danielic mystery by portraying the obscuring and unveiling of wisdom with reference to the eye, ear, and heart.

All six features are relevant to our investigation. More specifically, in examining Matt 1–12, we will refer to the first (background), fourth (content), and fifth (function) features. Our analysis of Matt 13 will refer to the second (form), fourth (content), fifth

(function), and sixth (eye/ear/heart) features. Finally, in exploring Matt 14–23, we will refer to the second (form), third (threefold understanding), fourth (content), and fifth (function) features.

3.3 Setting the Stage for Danielic Mystery (Matt 1–12)

The Greek term for mystery in Daniel, μυστήριον, appears only once in Matthew's Gospel, in the phrase τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν (13:11). While the word does not occur in Matt 1–12, these early chapters nevertheless anticipate its use in Matt 13.

As mentioned in our introductory chapter (1.3.2.3), framing is the process by which an author introduces and fashions a text using cues that inform and regulate the model reader's expectations.[9] Early and repetitive use of frames "giv[es] orientation and definition to the rest of the story," shaping the model reader's understanding of the ensuing narrative.[10]

We will see below that framing happens in Matt 1–12 as Matthew repeatedly weaves into his narrative particular features of Danielic mystery: its background, content, and function. Consequently, these early chapters suggest that Daniel, especially its conception of mystery, forms part of the backdrop to Matthew's story of Jesus. The model reader discerns and actualises these frames by interpreting τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, when the phrase finally appears in 13:11, as evoking Danielic mystery.

[9] Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David*, 26.
[10] Piotrowski, *Matthew's New David*, 27.

3.3.1 Matthew 1–12 and the Background of Danielic Mystery

The wisdom of Danielic mystery is mantic, predicated on direct revelation in the modes of symbolic dreams and visions often involving angelic messengers. A distinctive feature of Matthew's infancy narrative, in comparison to its synoptic parallels, is the mention of wise men (μάγοι) in 2:1, 7, and 16. According to 2:1–2, these magi from the east display mantic competence in astrology.[11]

The term μάγος occurs in Dan 2:2 and 10 (LXX and Theo.).[12] Scholars debate the implication of this overlapping vocabulary in Matt 2 and Dan 2. On the one hand, Vetne underscores "the likelihood of Matthew bringing the reader's attention to Daniel." [13] As Craig S. Keener suggests, "[w]hatever these Magi's religious commitments, Matthew's audience would probably recall the Magi of their Greek translation of the OT ... (cf. Dan 2:2, 10)."[14] On the other hand, Allison wonders just how significant Matthew's use of μάγος is, amidst "the other parallels in Matthew's infancy narrative to the extra-biblical traditions about Moses."[15]

On balance, one could possibly overstate the relationship between Matt 2 and Dan 2; on the whole, the latter does not appear to exert much influence over Matthew's

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[11] Kyung S. Baek, "Prophecy and Divination in the Gospel of Matthew: The Use of Dream-Visions and Fulfilment Quotations," in *Reading the Bible in Ancient Traditions and Modern Editions: Studies in Memory of Peter W. Flint*, ed. Andrew B. Perrin, Kyung S. Baek, and Daniel K. Falk, Early Judaism and Its Literature 47 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017), 659–60.
[12] In the Theodotion, μάγος appears as well in Dan 1:20, 2:27, 4:7, and 5:7, 11, and 15.
[13] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 30.
[14] Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 99. See also Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 26–27; Pennington, "Refractions of Daniel," 77 n. 39.
[15] Dale C. Allison, *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 311. On how reading Matthew's infancy account "too much in the light of the story of Moses" could be a "mistake," see Ben Witherington, *Matthew*, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary 19 (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2006), 55–57.

infancy account.[16] Conversely, one could dismiss too quickly the likelihood of some, even a loose, connection between the two texts. The term μάγος occurs nowhere in the Septuagint apart from Dan 2; likewise, it appears nowhere in the Synoptic narratives apart from Matt 2.[17] This renders noteworthy the shared use of μάγος in Dan 2 and Matt 2—which, in turn, strengthens the probability of some, even if loose, relationship between the two passages. In Dan 2, οἱ μάγοι are closely associated with the mystery of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, having been summoned precisely to decipher it. Consequently, the appearance of the magi from the east in Matt 2 arguably specifies not just Daniel, but also its conception of mystery, as a backdrop to the story of Jesus.[18]

Matthew's infancy account arguably contains other references to Daniel. Scholars have for some time acknowledged the apocalyptic flavour of Matthew's Gospel, characterising Matthew as "le plus apocalyptique des évangélistes" and his narrative as "the most 'apocalyptic'" of the Gospels. [19] Nevertheless, whether earlier research was "actually concerned with the presence of apocalyptic elements within [Matthew's] gospel rather than simply with end-time expectation" is debated. [20] Kristian Bendoraitis's essay offers "a broader perspective of apocalyptic elements" in Matthew's Gospel beyond "thoughts of end-times and ... global disasters of epic proportion" by focusing instead on angels in the narrative.[21] In Daniel, God communicates in dreams

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[16] Allison, *New Moses*, 311.
[17] In the New Testament, μάγος is only used two other times in Acts 13:6 and 8.
[18] We will discuss Matt 1–12 and the polemical effects of mystery in 3.3.3. As for Matt 2, the allusion to Danielic mystery ironically presents the magi favourably, juxtaposing them (who seek Jesus out and offer him gifts) with Herod (who attempts to kill him).
[19] Leopold Sabourin, "Traits apocalyptiques dans l'Évangile de Matthieu," *Science et Esprit* 33.3 (1981): 357; David H. Wenkel, "The Gospel of Matthew and Apocalyptic Discourse," *The Expository Times* 132.6 (2021): 259. See also Donald A. Hagner, "Apocalyptic Motifs in the Gospel of Matthew: Continuity and Discontinuity," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 7.2 (1985): 53.
[20] Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 241. See also Wenkel, "Gospel of Matthew," 260.
[21] Kristian Bendoraitis, "Apocalypticism, Angels, and Matthew," in *The Jewish Apocalyptic Tradition and the Shaping of New Testament Thought*, ed. Benjamin E. Reynolds and Loren T. Stuckenbruck (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2017), 31, 32.

and visions, with angels as mediators of the divine message. In Matt 1–2, a similar pattern of revelatory dreams (ὄναρ) and angelic messengers emerges repeatedly: in 1:20 and 24, and 2:12, 13, 19, and 22. In fact, ὄναρ, like μάγος, occurs nowhere in the Synoptic narratives apart from Matthew's Gospel.[22]

A possible counterargument is that these dreams and angels may allude to mantic and apocalyptic traditions more generally rather than Daniel in particular. Nevertheless, we have grounds for identifying some relationship between the dreams and angels in Matt 1–2 and Daniel. The key term for dreams in the Septuagint, ἐνύπνιον, occurs 78 times, of which the overwhelming majority appear in the Joseph narrative in Genesis (24 uses) and Daniel (18 uses).[23] In these two texts, the word appears most frequently in Dan 2 (11 occurrences), followed by Gen 41 (10 occurrences). Indeed, while "[d]reams are frequently vehicles of divine revelation in the OT … [and] the intertestamental literature," this is "especially [so] in Genesis and Daniel."[24]

Pennington maintains an "intriguing link" in the way "Joseph the husband of Mary in Matthew 1–2 parallels both Daniel and the OT Joseph."[25] This connection may be significant, since every instance of revelatory dreams and angelic messengers in Matt 1–2 (apart from 2:12) is encountered by Joseph. In the light of this link, one could argue that the Matthean Joseph's experiences hearken back more specifically to Gen 37–42 and Daniel than to mantic and apocalyptic traditions in general. In fact, one

[22] Outside of his infancy narrative, Matthew uses ὄναρ only one other time, when Pilate's wife recounts her dream in 27:19. The term does not appear anywhere else in the New Testament.
[23] This is followed by a mere six uses in Jeremiah; five in Sirach; four in Esther; three each in Job, Deuteronomy, and Judges; two each in Isaiah, 1 Samuel, and Ecclesiastes; and one each in Psalms, 1 Kings, Micah, Joel, Zechariah, and Psalms of Solomon.
[24] W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Introduction and Commentary on Matthew I–VII*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 207.
[25] Pennington, "Refractions of Daniel," 77 n. 39. See also the analysis of "a Joseph typology" in Matt 1–2, in Davies and Allison, *Introduction and Matthew I–VII*, 182.

could be even more precise, since the terms ἐνύπνιον, ἄγγελος, and μάγος do not appear together in Gen 37–42 but only in Dan 2.[26] In other words, Matt 1–2 contains a plausibly stronger allusion to Dan 2 than to Gen 37–42.

As mentioned above, Dan 2 features wise men in close association with the notion of mystery; the same can be said for dreams and angels in Daniel. Just as Danielic mystery uniquely draws together ἐνύπνιον, ἄγγελος, and μάγος, so Matt 1–2 distinctively brings together μάγος, ἄγγελος, and ὄναρ. The evidence supports the conclusion that Daniel, particularly its conception of mystery, inhabits the background of Matthew's infancy narrative.

3.3.2 Matthew 1–12 and the Content of Danielic Mystery

According to Wenham, the "full significance of the book of Daniel as background to the New Testament has not always been recognized."[27] Apart from "the most commonly recognized Danielic echoes" of "the *desolating sacrilege*" and the "heavenly *Son of Man*," Wenham identifies the "less obvious, but ... very important, point of Danielic influence ... in the 'Kingdom of God' concept."[28] In fact, he concludes that Daniel "may be the primary background to the Gospels' teaching about the Kingdom"—a conclusion Evans upholds as well.[29]

The theme of kingdom forms the very heart of mystery in Daniel. 4:25–26 (LXX and Theo.; cf. 4:22–23 MT) declares that the God of heaven rules over the

[26] Both ἄγγελος and μάγος appear alongside ἐνύπνιον in Dan 2 (LXX); in the Theodotion, ἄγγελος does not occur in the chapter. In contrast, neither ἄγγελος nor μάγος are used in Gen 37–42.
[27] Wenham, "Kingdom of God," 132.
[28] Wenham, "Kingdom of God," 132, italics original.
[29] Wenham, "Kingdom of God," 132; Evans, "Daniel in the NT," 510 n. 38.

empires of man on earth, and 2:44 promises that he will set up an indestructible kingdom. In fact, the end times according to 2:36–45 will culminate in this everlasting heavenly kingdom decisively supplanting all earthly dominions.

Among the Synoptic evangelists, Matthew alludes most frequently to the theme of God's kingdom. Of the 121 synoptic uses of βασιλεία, 55 occur in Matthew's Gospel. Of these 55, 31 appear in the phrase ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν—an expression unique to Matthew.[30] R. Alan Culpepper states that "Matthew prefers 'the kingdom of heaven' ... but also uses 'the kingdom of God'.... The two are synonymous since Jews commonly used such circumlocutions to avoid direct reference to God."[31] France concurs that the two expressions are "functionally the same," but he questions the postulation of "a typically Jewish reverential paraphrase": "since Matthew seems to have no inhibitions about speaking of God by name elsewhere, this is hardly an adequate explanation."[32] He concludes that the Matthean ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν may simply be a "stylistic preference which ... requires no explanation," though he recognises that Matthew "may have been influenced by ... Dan 4:26."[33]

Pennington is similarly sceptical of the traditional interpretation: "the odd phrase kingdom of heaven," far from being a reverential circumlocution, is instead "a crucial part of ... Matthew's heaven and earth theme."[34] Through a scrupulous study of the Old Testament and Second Temple Jewish writings, Pennington discovers that

> woven into the story of Daniel 2–7 we find God's kingdom contrasted with the empires of humankind, all the while overlapping with a similar contrast of heaven and earth. This rich tapestry matches other furnishings in Jewish

[30] The closest the New Testament comes to this phrase is τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ τὴν ἐπουράνιον in 2 Tim 4:18.
[31] R. Alan Culpepper, *Matthew: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2021), 55.
[32] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 101.
[33] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 101.
[34] Pennington, *Heaven and Earth*, 310.

> literature, though in Daniel 2–7 it is more compact and tightly woven. It is not only in these chapters of Daniel that these themes appear, although they are brightest there.[35]

He concludes by observing that "[t]hese sentiments are widely acknowledged" in Old Testament scholarship.[36]

There is indeed discernible correspondence between Dan 2–7 and Matt 2–4. For a start, just as mystery according to Dan 2–7 juxtaposes the kingdom of the God of heaven and the dominions of man on earth, so Matt 2–4 contrasts the empires of the earth and the kingdom of heaven. This begins implicitly in Matt 2:16, where Herod's horrific infanticide represents a wider clash between the dominion of Herod the king (Ἡρῴδου τοῦ βασιλέως, 2:1; ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρῴδης, 2:3) and the rule of the king of the Jews (ὁ ... βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων, 2:2). Note how the scene commences with the arrival of magi who call to mind Dan 2; this implies that the dominion of the king of the Jews they seek in Matt 2:2 is the heavenly kingdom of Dan 2. As for Matt 3–4, sandwiched between the two mentions of the phrase ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (3:2; 4:17) is the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (4:1–11). In 4:8, Jesus is offered all the kingdoms of the world (πάσας τὰς βασιλείας τοῦ κόσμου), which he rejects; he proceeds in 4:17 to proclaim instead the kingdom of heaven (ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν).

Furthermore, just as mystery in Dan 2–7 depicts the end-time displacement of all earthly empires by the heavenly kingdom, so Matt 3:2 and 4:17 allude to the momentous arrival of this heavenly kingdom: ἤγγικεν ... ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. In other words, the eschatological displacement that Danielic mystery envisages has finally drawn near. Pennington summarises that "*Matthew, drinking deeply at the waters of*

[35] Pennington, *Heaven and Earth*, 277.
[36] Pennington, *Heaven and Earth*, 277.

Daniel, has developed his kingdom of heaven language and theme from the same motif and similar language in Daniel 2–7."[37] In fact, one could conclude, with even greater precision, that Matthew, in "*develop[ing] his kingdom of heaven language and theme*," "*drink[s] deeply at the waters of*" Danielic mystery.[38]

The only other place in Matthew's narrative where the kingdom of heaven is proclaimed to be at hand is 10:7. Here, Jesus instructs the disciples to preach as well that ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. In the same discourse, he speaks of the disciples going through the towns of Israel ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (10:23). This is no doubt a controversial verse.[39] Nevertheless, one could contend that the clause ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου refers to Dan 7:13, where ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου is likewise the subject of ἔρχομαι.[40] Like the indestructible heavenly kingdom, the one like a son of man is central to the mystery in Dan 7. The arrival of this figure establishes the final kingdom in Dan 7, the very kingdom that supplants all earthly dominions according to 2:44.

In short, it appears as though Matt 10 alludes to not one but two key Danielic themes, both of which feature prominently in the eschatological content of mystery in Dan 2 and 7. Similarly, Matt 11 will refer to the kingdom of heaven and the Son of Man (11:11, 19). This means that the chapters leading up to Matt 13 echo Daniel not once but twice, each time with dual references central to Danielic mystery. This, in

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[37] Pennington, *Heaven and Earth*, 289, italics original.
[38] Pennington, *Heaven and Earth*, 289, italics original.
[39] Turner lays out five options for interpreting the coming mentioned in the verse. Turner, *Matthew*, 277.
[40] Scholars typically conclude that Matt 10:23 alludes to Dan 7:13, describing the relationship between these verses as "evident" and "widely agreed." See John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Bletchley: Paternoster, 2005), 427; France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 396. For a contrasting opinion, see Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 135.

turn, suggests that Daniel, especially its presentation of mystery, contributes to the backdrop of Matthew's narrative.

3.3.3 Matthew 1–12 and the Function of Danielic Mystery

Mystery in Dan 2–6 polemically juxtaposes the wise man Daniel against the (so-called) wise men of Babylon. This serves to uphold Daniel's God as the God of heaven who sovereignly discloses wisdom to some but not others. Daniel captures this in his prayer in 2:19–23, where he thanks God, the one who reveals hidden things, for giving knowledge and understanding to the wise. Jesus's prayer in Matt 11:25–27 similarly contrasts those who are given wisdom with those who are not, to the familiar effect of upholding God as the revealer of mystery.

Not all scholars assess that Matt 11:25–27 echoes Dan 2:19–23; Lena Lybæk, for example, construes the two passages as "contradicti[ng]" each other.[41] Nevertheless, the two passages demonstrate noticeable alignment in their language and ideas: ἐξομολογέω in Matt 11:25 and Dan 2:23; ἀποκαλύπτω in Matt 11:25 and 27, and Dan 2:19 and 22 (Theo.; cf. ἀνακαλύπτω in 2:22 LXX); σοφός in Matt 11:25 and Dan 2:21.[42] Also, both passages express that God alone possesses true wisdom and knowledge, and gives (παραδίδωμι) understanding to whomever he will (Matt 11:27;

[41] "It is all the more interesting that, in a passage which is by most thought to be influenced by wisdom or apocalyptic tradition, it is the wise and the discerning, those to whom revelation previously had been given, who are victims of God's activity of hiding. In fact, the Matthean text stands in direct contradiction to the hymn of Daniel 2:20–21, 23 (θ), where Daniel praises God because he gives wisdom to the wise and insight to those who understand." Lena Lybæk, *New and Old in Matthew 11–13: Normativity in the Development of Three Theological Themes*, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 198 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 199. While agreeing with Lybæk on the difference between the two passages, we will argue that Matthew is adapting, rather than contradicting, Danielic thought.
[42] For more details, see Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 43–46.

cf. δίδωμι in Dan 2:21, 23).[43] These substantial parallels support the evaluation of "eine direkte Abhängigkeit" between the two texts.[44]

According to Evans, "Jesus' prayer ... seems to be a counterpoint to Daniel's prayer."[45] The term "counterpoint" draws attention to the fact that Jesus's prayer does not simply replicate Dan 2:19–23.[46] Rather, Matt 11:25–27 extends, even adapts, Daniel's prayer in two ways, with respect to who reveals wisdom and who receives revelation. As for the revealer of wisdom, 11:25–27 declares that the Father, the Lord of heaven, unknown to all apart from the Son, has handed over all wisdom and understanding to the Son. Consequently, the Father and his hidden wisdom are accessible through the Son to those whom the Son enlightens. In other words, the authoritative and exclusive revealer of wisdom and understanding—who, according to Daniel's prayer, is God—turns out in Jesus's prayer to be the Son.[47]

Secondly, concerning the recipient of revelation, Daniel's prayer declares that God gives σοφίαν (2:21) and σύνεσιν (2:21 LXX) to τοῖς σοφοῖς (2:21 Theo.; cf. σοφοῖς in 2:21 LXX) and to τοῖς εἰδόσιν σύνεσιν (2:21 Theo.). Matt 11:25 likewise uses σοφός and συνετός (the cognate adjective of σύνεσιν), but to make the opposite point: ἔκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις.[48] In this verse, the

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[43] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 43–44.
[44] Werner Grimm, *Jesus und das Danielbuch, Band I: Jesu Einspruch gegen das Offenbarungssystem Daniels (Mt. 11,25–27; Lk. 17,20–21)*, Arbeiten zum Neuen Testament und Judentum 6/1 (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1984), 27.
[45] Craig A. Evans, *Matthew*, New Cambridge Bible Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 245.
[46] Evans, *Matthew*, 245.
[47] For a recent discussion of the Son in Matt 11:25–27 as unique and divine, see Brant Pitre, "From Reimarus to Allison: The Quest for Jesus and the Christological 'Thunderbolt' (Matt 11:25–27 // Luke 10:21–22)," in *"To Recover What Has Been Lost": Essays on Eschatology, Intertextuality, and Reception History in Honor of Dale C. Allison Jr.*, ed. Tucker S. Ferda, Daniel Frayer-Griggs, and Nathan C. Johnson, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 183 (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 373–400.
[48] "Jesus' prayer parallels these components [of Dan 2:21, 23], but in reverse order ... and in an opposite sense: Daniel thanks God for giving wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the understanding;

recipients of divine revelation—who, according to Dan 2:21, are the wise (τοῖς σοφοῖς) and understanding (τοῖς εἰδόσιν σύνεσιν)—turn out instead to be the children (νηπίοις) who are the opposite of the wise and understanding (σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν).[49]

According to Grimm, the wise and understanding in Matt 11:25, in the light of the allusion to Daniel, refer not simply to those resembling the Babylonian sages but also to the likes of Daniel himself. In Matthew's day, the latter includes first-century Jewish visionaries and their followers.[50] In other words, the polemic of 11:25 ultimately "sprengt das System der Apokalyptik an ihrer Wurzel."[51]

However, this interpretation overlooks the immediate literary context of 11:25. Matthew's narrative thus far has not held out "das System der Apokalyptik," represented by Daniel and first-century Jewish visionaries, as a force that Jesus reckons with.[52] Rather, Jesus has been in conflict with the (unbelieving) inhabitants of the Galilean cities denounced in 11:20–24. Furthermore, in 12:1–13, he will confront the Pharisees who, despite being respected teachers, prove unenlightened in their antagonism. Therefore, the wise and understanding of 11:25 more likely refer to the Galileans and the Pharisees who appear wise but lack understanding in their rejection of Jesus.

Jesus thanks God for withholding wisdom from the wise and understanding, giving it instead to 'infants' ... and thereby making 'wise the simple' (Ps 19:7)." Evans, *Matthew*, 245.

[49] 11:25–27 offers an interesting comparison with 1 Cor 2:6–7, where Paul uses μυστήριον in relation to imparting hidden wisdom to those apart from the wise and powerful of this world. Also, 1 Cor 3:1 uses the phrase νηπίοις ἐν Χριστῷ, though in this context Paul is criticising the Corinthians for being fleshly (σαρκίνοις), not spiritual (πνευματικοῖς), people. In contrast, Matt 11:25, as we will argue below, deploys νήπιος in depicting those who, despite being considered naïve and unimportant, follow Jesus. For a detailed analysis of μυστήριον in 1 Cor 1–2, see Gladd, *Revealing the "Mysterion,"* 108–64.

[50] "Denn Daniel wird uns im Lobpreis 2,19–23 und sonst als *Weiser* par excellence vorgestellt, so sehr er mit den babylonischen Weisen konkurrieren mag; ganz gewiß ist er in den 'Weisen und Experten' von Mt. 11,25f einbegriffen.... Zu tun hat es Jesus aber mit den zu seiner Zeit einflußreichen Schriften der jüdisch-apokalyptischen Visionäre und ihrer Anhänger. Sie sind für Jesus die 'Weisen und Experten.'" Grimm, *Jesu Einspruch*, 28, italics original.

[51] Grimm, *Jesu Einspruch*, 31.

[52] Grimm, *Jesu Einspruch*, 31.

If the wise and understanding point to those who, despite being regarded as enlightened, oppose Jesus, then the children refer to those who, despite being considered naïve and unimportant, follow him. Commentators tend to interpret the latter category with reference to other instances of infant imagery in Matthew's Gospel and the Old Testament.[53] For example, Turner, noting how "[s]everal times Matthew speaks of Jesus's disciples as poor, little, or childlike," suggests that the children of 11:25 refer to Jesus's humble followers in general.[54] That is, those who "respond to the kingdom message in repentance."[55]

Nevertheless, one could identify a more precise referent. In the light of Matt 13, the children of 11:25 arguably point to Jesus's earliest disciples who first received the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (13:11) and became scribes trained for the kingdom (13:52).[56] This interpretation finds support in 16:18, where Jesus declares that Peter has received revelation from the Father in heaven. The juxtaposition in 11:25–27 of the wise and understanding with the children will develop into a polemical differentiation of Peter and the first disciples from the Jewish leaders—a polemic we will analyse below (3.4.3, 3.5.2).

In short, by alluding to Dan 2:19–23, which concerns the disclosure of mystery to some but not others, Matt 11:25–27 performs a function similar to that of Danielic mystery. Jesus's prayer contrasts the wise and understanding with the children in order to uphold God as the one true revealer of wisdom. Nevertheless, these verses also extend

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[53] On comparing 11:25 with other uses of infant imagery in Matthew's Gospel, see Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 319; Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 470; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium 1,1–16,20*, Die Neue Echter Bibel 1 (Würzburg: Echter, 1985), 105. On comparing 11:25 with infant imagery in the Old Testament, see Evans, *Matthew*, 245; France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 444; Gundry, *Matthew*, 216.
[54] Turner, *Matthew*, 303.
[55] Turner, *Matthew*, 303.
[56] This does not mean that νηπίοις in 11:25 is restricted to Peter and the earliest disciples; rather, the term refers first and foremost to them.

and adapt the ideas in Daniel's prayer. According to Matt 11:25–27, the Son in particular (not simply God in general) is the authoritative and exclusive revealer of wisdom, and the children (not the wise and understanding) are its recipients. By the end of Matt 11, the narrative points to Daniel, even Danielic mystery, as part of the backdrop to the story of Jesus.

3.3.4 Summary of Danielic Mystery and Matt 1–12

While μυστήριον does not appear in Matt 1–12, these chapters nonetheless refer to three central features of mystery according to Daniel: its mantic background (magi, dreams, and angels in Matt 1–2); its eschatological content (the kingdom of heaven and the Son of Man from Matt 3 onwards); its polemical function (specifying the revealer of wisdom and its recipients in Matt 11).

Taking these references together, the strength of the allusiveness of Matt 1–12 to Danielic mystery intensifies as the story progresses. In comparison to magi, dreams, and angels in Matt 1–2, the mentions of the kingdom of heaven and the Son of Man from Matt 3 onwards are even more suggestive of mystery in Daniel. Furthermore, 11:25–27 specifically appropriates the prayer in Dan 2:19–23 regarding the disclosure of hidden wisdom. Indeed, the narrative leading up to Matt 13 increasingly invokes the frame of Danielic mystery, which the model reader actualises by interpreting the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven in 13:11 as Danielic. Matthew's early chapters thus set the stage for the appearance of Danielic mystery in Matt 13.

3.4 Introducing Danielic Mystery into Matthew's Gospel (Matt 13)

Matthean commentators generally agree that mystery in 13:11 derives from Daniel and its presentation of mystery. Vetne argues that

> [a]lthough we are talking about the parallel of just a single word here ("μυστήριον"), since that word is a key theological term in both Dan 2 and in this Gospel pericope, and is used nowhere else in the OT outside Daniel, it is possible that we are correct to hear Daniel in the background of Jesus' statement.[57]

While Vetne's reasoning is sound, one could push his conclusion with greater confidence: it is not merely "possible" but probable that "we ... hear Daniel in the background of" Matt 13:11.[58] The connection between Dan 2 and Jesus's statement is more substantial than "the parallel of just a single word."[59] According to Beale and Gladd, "the key words *mystery* (*mystērion*), *kingdom* (*basileia*) and *heaven* (*ouranos*) only occur in two passages—Matthew 13:11 and Daniel 2:28."[60] While βασιλεία does not appear in Dan 2:28, this key term occurs repeatedly in close proximity, in the ensuing speech (2:37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44).[61] Moreover, in Matt 13:11, τὰ μυστήρια is qualified by the Matthean expression τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν—which, as discussed above (3.3.2), is fundamentally Danielic. Therefore, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are best regarded as Danielic.

However, scholarly references to mystery in Matt 13 as Danielic tend to be merely passing comments and footnotes. Consequently, there remains a research gap

[57] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 51.
[58] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 51.
[59] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 51.
[60] Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 67, italics original.
[61] Rather, the word that appears in Dan 2:28 is βασιλεύς, not βασιλεία.

concerning "the apocalyptic character of the parables" and "their programmatic significance for the whole narrative."[62] This lacuna calls for further analysis of the ways in which Matt 13, consisting largely of parables, appropriates, even adapts, Danielic mystery. We will now examine the use of Danielic mystery in Matt 13 according to the following features: form, function (including the obscuring of wisdom with reference to the eye, ear, and heart), and content.

3.4.1 The Literary Context of Matt 13

Pennington's outline of Matthew's narrative suggests that it begins with an introduction in 1:1–4:16, with 4:17–22 as a bridge passage.[63] The first subunit of the main body, 4:23–9:38, opens with the first of Jesus's five major discourses. The second subunit commences with the second discourse in 10:1, and the third subunit begins with another discourse in 13:1.

The introduction (1:1–4:16) presents Jesus as the fulfilment of messianic promises in the Old Testament. The ministry of the prophesied messiah is anticipated by the preaching of John the Baptist, who proclaims in 3:2 a Jewish, even Danielic, message concerning the imminence of the kingdom of heaven. Shortly after, in 4:17, the messiah begins his own preaching ministry featuring an identical Danielic message.

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[62] Shively, *Apocalyptic Imagination in Mark*, 12. For an overview of scholarship on the parables in general, see Klyne R. Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018); Ruben Zimmerman, ed., *Hermeneutik der Gleichnisse Jesu: Methodische Neuansätze zum Verstehen urchristlicher Parabeltexte*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 231 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Craig L. Blomberg, *Interpreting the Parables*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic; Nottingham: Apollos, 2012).
[63] Pennington, "Revelatory Epistemology in Matthew," 108.

Later, in 10:7, Jesus instructs his disciples to preach as well that the kingdom of heaven is near.

However, this message does not produce the repentance called for in 3:2 and 4:17 among the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:6). In 3:7–8, John the Baptist denounces the Pharisees and Sadducees who approach him as a brood of vipers who do not bear fruit in keeping with repentance. In 10:14, Jesus anticipates that not all of Israel will welcome his disciples and receive their message. Even Jesus's ministry engenders limited success; in fact, opposition intensifies as the narrative unfolds. In 11:20–24, entire cities (Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum) refuse to repent despite witnessing his mighty works. By 12:14, the Pharisees conspire to destroy Jesus, even accusing him of being possessed by the prince of demons Beelzebul in 12:24. In 12:43–45, Jesus turns the tables on his opponents by pronouncing them an evil generation in the grip of unclean spirits.

Nevertheless, Matt 12 concludes on a positive note, with Jesus identifying the disciples as his (spiritual) family (12:46–50). Earlier, in 11:25, Jesus differentiated little children from the wise; here, in 12:49–50, Jesus distinguishes the disciples who do the will of the Father in heaven from those who do not.

By the end of Matt 12, which concludes the second subunit (10:1–12:50), the narrative elicits the following questions. How will Jesus respond to this rising hostility? Why do the Jewish leaders reject the promised messiah and his message of the kingdom of heaven? How do Jesus's disciples, as those who do the will of the Father, differ from the Jewish leaders? How does this mounting opposition impact the arrival of the kingdom?

The start of Matt 13 introduces "[einer] kurzen szenischen Überleitung," with a shift in location from a house to the seaside.[64] However, ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ (13:1) links the new scene with "the preceding encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees," implying that this scene has "something important to say about the nature of the kingdom and its rejection as well as acceptance."[65] In particular, Matt 13 develops the story by beginning to answer the questions evoked by the previous episodes. We will see below that Matt 13 addresses these questions by appropriating and adapting Danielic mystery.

3.4.2 The Form of Mystery in Matt 13

Matthew 13 marks a change in the form of Jesus's teaching, with him speaking πολλὰ ἐν παραβολαῖς (13:3). In Mark's Gospel, the term παραβολή appears in 3:23, prior to 4:2 (the parallel verse to Matt 13:3); however, it appears in Matthew's narrative for the first time in 13:3. This suggests that Matthew distinctively emphasises the parabolic form of Jesus's teaching in Matt 13. Konradt remarks that "Gleichnisse bzw. bildhafte Vergleiche stehen im Mt auch vor der Rede in Mt 13..., doch wird Jesu Verkündigung in V. 3 erstmals ausdrücklich als Rede in Gleichnisser gekennzeichnet."[66] Although Jesus has spoken in parables prior to the chapter, Matthew reserves παραβολή for 13:3 to indicate that Jesus, in response to mounting hostility, begins to teach more intentionally and extensively in parables.

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[64] Matthias Konradt, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, Das Neue Testament Deutsch 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 210.
[65] Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 367.
[66] Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 210.

In 13:11, Matthew forges a clear link between parabolic teaching and the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. In response to the disciples' question, διὰ τί ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖς αὐτοῖς (13:10), Jesus declares that ὑμῖν δέδοται γνῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἐκείνοις δὲ οὐ δέδοται (13:11). In this exchange, Matthew does not simply appropriate, but also adapts, Danielic mystery. While mystery in Daniel consists of dreams and visions, Matt 13:11–12 associates it instead with parables.[67]

Nevertheless, Matthean mystery remains largely faithful to its origin in retaining the twofold form of Danielic mystery. According to Matt 13, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven consist of not just parables but also their explanations. In 13:3–8 and 24–30, Jesus speaks the parables of the sower and the weeds to the crowds and his disciples. However, in 13:18–23 and 37–43, Jesus either retreats to a secluded location or speaks privately to his disciples, and interprets the two parables to them. Likewise, in 13:47–50, he presents a new parable (the parable of the net) with an accompanying explanation, exclusively to them.

As the second subunit (10:1–12:50) draws to a close, the narrative prompts the question of how Jesus will respond to increasing hostility. Matthew 13 provides the answer: Jesus begins to teach more intentionally and extensively in parables, which he associates with the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. In this chapter, mystery is

[67] One could arguably trace the relationship between the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven and παραβολή in Matt 13 back to the use of מָשָׁל (or the corresponding Aramaic term, מַתְלָא) in Second Temple Jewish writings—which the Septuagint translates as παραβολή. In particular, 1 Enoch establishes a link, right from the beginning, in 1:2, between its protagonist's recounting of mysteries and the parabolic form. (For more details, see Patten, "Form and Function of Parables," 248–49.) There is indeed room for further research along the lines of whether other Jewish texts, especially the Enochic writings, complement Daniel in exerting an apocalyptic influence on Matthew's Gospel.

parabolic, with Jesus's parables and his private explanations to the disciples preserving the twofold form of Danielic mystery.

3.4.3 The Function of Mystery in Matt 13

Mystery according to Daniel polemically contrasts groups of people. Likewise, mystery in Matt 13 exhibits a twofold form that distinguishes the disciples (who are privy to his interpretations of the parables) from the crowds and the Jewish leaders (who are not).[68]

Jesus articulates this differentiation from 13:11 onwards in response to the disciples' question in 13:10. A comparison between the question in 13:10 and its parallel in Mark 4:10 is instructive. The latter is paraphrased generally with ἠρώτων αὐτὸν … τὰς παραβολάς. In contrast, Matthew preserves the enquiry in direct speech and with greater specificity: διὰ τί ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖς αὐτοῖς. The use of διὰ τί reduces the enquiry to the reason why ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖς αὐτοῖς.[69] He replies in 13:11 that he does this because he wishes to distinguish the disciples from the crowds and the Jewish leaders: he earmarks the disciples as those to whom δέδοται γνῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν. The crowds and the Jewish leaders, by contrast, are those to whom οὐ δέδοται to know these mysteries.

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[68] On the contrast between the disciples and the crowds in Matt 13, see Halvor Moxnes, "Secrecy in the Gospel of Matthew from an Anthropological Perspective: Creation of an Alternative World," in *The Gospels and Their Stories in Anthropological Perspective*, ed. Jozef Verheyden and John S. Kloppenborg, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 409 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 184–87. For a more positive interpretation of the crowds, see Matthias Konradt, "The Role of the Crowds in the Gospel of Matthew," in *Matthew within Judaism: Israel and the Nations in the First Gospel*, ed. Anders Runesson and Daniel M. Gurtner, Early Christianity and Its Literature 27 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2020), 219–25.

[69] See διά, BDAG, 226; Wesley G. Olmstead, *Matthew 1–14: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019), 312.

Matt 13:11 (and Mark 4:11) features the perfect passive of δίδωμι, which commentators interpret as a "divine passive."[70] Laura C. Sweat demurs, arguing instead that the passive voice paradoxically "conceals God's action just as much as it reveals it"; she concludes that "whether God is the one who gives this mystery is a matter open to interpretation."[71] However, mystery in Matt 13 is a Danielic mystery, and Matthew's prior allusion in 11:25–27 to Dan 2 has established that God's hidden wisdom is disclosed by the Son. Consequently, the revealer implied by the passive δέδοται in 13:11 is not "open to interpretation."[72] Jesus is indeed the revealer, the Son who unveils the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven to his disciples. In Dan 2–6, mystery distinguishes Daniel from the Babylonian magicians in order to uphold God as the only revealer. Likewise, in Matt 13, mystery distinguishes the disciples from the others in order to uphold the Son as the exclusive revealer. By the end of the chapter, the disciples affirm that they understand precisely because they have received the Son's private instruction (13:51).

As for those to whom οὐ δέδοται to know the mysteries, 13:13–15 describes them using the Isaianic imagery of blind eyes, deaf ears, and callous hearts.[73] As our previous chapter maintained (2.4.2.5), Qumran literature deploys similar imagery to stress the impenetrability of Danielic mystery. However, the imagery in Matt 13:13–

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[70] Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 245 n. 97; Turner, *Matthew*, 339 n. 5; France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 511.
[71] Laura C. Sweat, *The Theological Role of Paradox in the Gospel of Mark*, Library of New Testament Studies 492 (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2013), 32–33.
[72] Sweat, *Theological Role of Paradox*, 33.
[73] The significance of the quotation from Isa 6 in Matt 13 and/or Mark 4 falls outside the scope of our study. For a detailed treatment, see Craig A. Evans, *To See and Not Perceive: Isaiah 6.9–10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 64 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989); Donald E. Hartley, *The Wisdom Background and Parabolic Implications of Isaiah 6:9–10 in the Synoptics*, Studies in Biblical Literature 100 (New York: Lang, 2006).

15 highlights instead the culpability of those who do not receive the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. In fact, Jesus explains in 13:13 that he speaks ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς precisely because (διὰ τοῦτο ... ὅτι) they βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ συνίουσιν. In Mark 4:12, the conjunction of purpose (ἵνα) suggests that Jesus deploys parables in order to bring about spiritual blindness, deafness, and incomprehension. In contrast, Matt 13:13 uses the conjunction of cause (ὅτι) to suggest that Jesus deploys parables because the crowds and the Jewish leaders are spiritually blind, deaf, and uncomprehending.[74]

Comparing Mark 4:12 with Matt 13:13 raises the possibility of a "formal conflict" between the two verses.[75] Pierre Bonnard notes that "[o]n pense généralement que le texte de Mc. ne saurait être authentique et qu'il a été heureusement adouci dans Mat."[76] However, this is not a foregone conclusion; Carson suggests that

> [v]erse 13 recapitulates the reason for speaking in parables but now frames the reason, not in terms of election, but in terms of spiritual dullness. Matthew has already given Jesus' answer in terms of divine election (v. 11); now he gives the human reason. While this brings him into formal conflict with Mark 4:12, he has already sounded the predestinarian note of Mark 4:12.[77]

In other words, the "formal conflict" between the two verses need not denote strict incompatibility; Matthew has arguably "included ... more material than Mark."[78]

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[74] Strictly speaking, one could interpret ὅτι in 13:13 as appositional or "[r]esumptive" (Olmstead) rather than causal, in the light of the preceding διὰ τοῦτο. Nevertheless, since διὰ τοῦτο ... ὅτι denotes "for this reason ... (namely) that," and this pairing functions in 13:13 to "underscore the reason that Jesus speaks to the crowds in parables"—one could simply refer to this ὅτι as a "marker of causality" (BDAG). Olmstead, *Matthew 1–14*, 314; ὅτι, BDAG, 732.
[75] Carson, "Matthew," 355.
[76] He proceeds to reject the popular opinion: "[m]ais, remarquons ... que la citation d'Esaïe 6 introduite par Mat. montre bien qu'il donne au texte le même sens que Mc." Pierre Bonnard, *L'evangile selon saint Matthieu*, Commentaire du Nouveau Testament 1 (Neuchatel, Paris: Delachaux & Niestle, 1963), 194.
[77] Carson, "Matthew," 355.
[78] Carson, "Matthew," 355. The tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility in Mark 4:12 and Matt 13:13 falls outside the scope of our study. For further discussion of compatibilism, see Carson, "Matthew," 355–56; Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 374–75; Turner, *Matthew*, 340–41.

Just as our previous chapter discussed mystery's polemical effect in Daniel, so we will now analyse mystery's polemical effect in Matt 13. Danielic mystery distinguishes the wise from the wicked and foolish in order to encourage alignment with the former. Likewise, Matthean mystery differentiates the disciples from the others in order to encourage alignment with the former.

By the end of Matt 13, Jesus likens his disciples to a scribe trained for the kingdom of heaven (γραμματεὺς μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν, 13:52). Elsewhere, Matthew associates the Jewish scribes with teaching (7:29), preaching (23:3), and making proselytes (23:15). In the light of these verses, γραμματεὺς μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν in 13:52 is one who teaches, preaches, and converts others. However, Jesus clarifies that this scribe, unlike existing Jewish ones, performs the above activities as one who ἐκβάλλει ἐκ τοῦ θησαυροῦ αὐτοῦ καινὰ καὶ παλαιά (13:52). The term παλαιά refers to existing, even established, teachings; in the context of Matthew's Gospel, these teachings probably allude to the instructions of the law and the prophets (τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφήτας) that the Jewish scribes were familiar with (5:17).

As for καινά in 13:52, the term, in the immediate context of the chapter, arguably refers to the mysteries of 13:11. Davies and Allison describe the juxtaposition of old against new in 13:52 as "cryptic" and list alternative referents for καινά, including "Christian tradition," even "Gentile Christian tradition."[79] Nevertheless, one can mount a good case that "[d]er ihm zum Segen für die Anderen anvertraute Schatz enthält das 'Neue' der durch Jesus Christus geoffenbarten 'Geheimnisse des

[79] W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Commentary on Matthew VIII–XVIII*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 447–48.

Himmelreichs.'"[80] In view of 13:17, the mysteries of 13:11 are new precisely because they have hitherto remained hidden, even from the prophets of the Old Testament, but are presently being disclosed by Jesus to his disciples. Furthermore, these mysteries are of the kingdom of heaven; the disciples, on receiving the mysteries of τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, become scribes trained for τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν.

In contrast to the disciples, the Jewish scribes in Matthew's narrative reject Jesus and do not receive the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; these scribes' spiritual blindness, deafness, and incomprehension render them culpable for their exclusion (13:11–13). Mystery in Matt 13, like Danielic mystery, contrasts the disciples against the Jewish scribes in order to encourage alignment with the former. They turn out to be the true scribes, whose teaching concerning Jesus one needs to hold onto, and whose teaching concerning the kingdom of heaven one needs to hold out.

As the second subunit (10:1–12:50) draws to a close, the narrative evokes questions as to why the Jewish leaders reject the promised messiah and his message of the kingdom of heaven, and how Jesus's disciples differ from them. The answers surface in Matt 13, where mystery polemically distinguishes the disciples from the crowds and the Jewish scribes. The Son, according to 11:25–27, is the one true revealer of wisdom, and he has, in Matt 13, given the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven to his disciples but not the Jewish leaders. Consequently, the disciples are set apart as scribes trained for the kingdom of heaven, with whom one should seek alignment.

[80] Peter Fiedler, *Das Matthäusevangelium*, Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament 1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006), 269. He adds that "das 'Alte' der biblischen Offenbarung." See also Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 393.

3.4.4 The Content of Mystery in Matt 13

In Dan 2, mystery centres on the rise and fall of the empires on earth, which culminate in their end-time supplanting by an everlasting kingdom of heaven. In Matt 13, the qualifying of τὰ μυστήρια with τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν denotes that these mysteries are likewise about the eschatological kingdom, "the in-breaking saving reign of God that was already happening in Jesus' day."[81] Indeed, these parables begin with the introductory formula ὁμοία ἐστίν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (Matt 13:31, 33, 44, 45, 47).[82] The only exception is the parable of the sower, which does not refer to the kingdom of heaven. Nevertheless, its explanation in 13:19 mentions τὸν λόγον τῆς βασιλείας, which indicates that the parable is likewise concerned about the heavenly kingdom.

The parables in Matt 13 explore the nature of the heavenly kingdom in relation to its present condition and future reality, and final judgement. The parable of the sower offers a comprehensive portrait of the kingdom's ongoing state and evolution. The sowing of seeds illustrates the proclamation of the word of the kingdom (τὸν λόγον τῆς βασιλείας) through the preaching of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples (3:2; 4:17; 10:7). The division of the ground into four soils implies slow growth, with only one of them yielding grain that survives (13:8, 23).

Such a pessimistic reading presupposes an equal distribution of seed across the soils, such that only one seed out of four produces a lasting harvest. However, France insists that since "[t]here is no indication of what proportion of seed meets with the

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[81] Witherington, *Matthew*, 274.
[82] The prefatorial statement of the parable of the weeds is similar, using the passive of ὁμοιόω in place of ὁμοία ἐστίν: ὡμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (13:24).

various fates mentioned, ... it is not legitimate to state, as some commentators do, that only one quarter of the seed was successful."[83] Likewise, Konradt resists concluding that only a small portion of seed eventually sprouts: "[w]ie sich die vier Fälle in V. 4–8 quantitativ zueinander verhalten, wird nicht festgelegt."[84]

Contrary to these scholars, the pessimistic interpretation remains plausible in the light of the parable's rhetoric. In 13:4–7, one soil after another, up to three successive soils, turn out poorly, with seeds or saplings being devoured, scorched, withered, or choked. Nolland exclaims thus: "[a]s one case of failure gives way to the next, the impression builds up that the sowing procedure of this farmer ... is heading for disaster!"[85] In other words, the accumulating depictions of failure probably generate meagre optimism concerning kingdom growth.

Nevertheless, the parable concludes on a positive note, with the fourth soil producing grain ὃ μὲν ἑκατόν, ὃ δὲ ἑξήκοντα, ὃ δὲ τριάκοντα (13:8). Despite the fact that most who hear the word of the kingdom ultimately reject it, some, according to 13:23, hear and understand, and even bear fruit. Scholars divide over the significance of the numbers thirty, sixty, and hundred. Davies and Allison, for example, consider that these figures "do not seem obviously out of the ordinary," and infer that "[t]he yield in our parable is probably not spectacularly overdone."[86] Nevertheless, the fact remains that amidst much rejection, the kingdom's message elicits a measure of acceptance. Whatever one makes of the numbers in 13:8, the parable promises at least some, possibly abundant, kingdom growth.

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[83] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 505.
[84] Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 211.
[85] Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 526.
[86] Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew VIII–XVIII*, 385. In contrast, Keener suggests that "harvests yielding thirty to a hundred times the seed invested are extraordinarily abundant" and "more than [make] up for any seed wasted on the bad soil." Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 378.

The parable of the sower, as the first parable in Matt 13, is programmatic of the others in the chapter. For a start, it establishes for the others the theme of unbelief and rejection with respect to the kingdom of heaven. This theme appears implicitly in the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven in 13:31–33. Here, the mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds, and the yeast is hidden in flour; the fact that the kingdom appears to be barely visible implies that few have chosen to believe.

The parables of the weed and the net also develop the theme of unbelief and rejection. In the former parable, the field is home to both wheat (representing the sons of the kingdom in 13:38) and weeds (representing the sons of the evil one in 13:38). In the latter parable, the net captures every kind of fish, from good ones (symbolising the righteous in 13:49) to bad ones (symbolising those who are evil in 13:49).

Scholars divide over equating the kingdom in these two parables with the church.[87] Luz argues, on the basis of "*Matthew's situation*," that "Matthew sharpens the scope of the story *inward*, to the church": "the narrative was related to the church itself and spoke of the appearance of evil *within* the community."[88] Nevertheless, from a narrative-critical standpoint, "instead of conjuring up some hypothetical Matthean *Sitz im Leben* the text itself and its literary context should be the key to interpretation."[89] In 13:38, Jesus's interpretation of the parable of the weeds clarifies that ὁ ... ἀγρός ἐστιν ὁ κόσμος, and "[d]er Satz 'Der Acker ist die Welt' lässt sich nicht verwandeln in den

[87] "Zahlreiche Erklärer identifizieren das Reich des Menschensohnes mit der Kirche.... '[D]as Christusreich lokal vergegenwärtigt gedacht wird in Gestalt der Kirche, die Gute und Böse umfaßt.'" Joachim Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium, I Teil: Kommentar zu Kap. 1,1–13,58*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1986), 502. See also Carson, "Matthew," 373.
[88] Luz, *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary*, 255, 270–71, italics original.
[89] Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew VIII–XVIII*, 409.

Satz 'Der Acker ist die Kirche.'"[90] This, in turn, indicates that Matthew has in view the fate of the kingdom amidst wickedness in the world rather than unrighteousness within the church. In other words, the parable depicts the existence of the kingdom of heaven vis-à-vis the rejection and unbelief of this world.

The parable of the sower also establishes for the others the theme of the kingdom's evolution, which appears in the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven. In these parables, the growth of the kingdom is undeniably huge, such that "one cannot judge the future outcome of the kingdom from its present manifestation."[91] In 13:31–32, the mustard seed, said to be the smallest of all seeds, produces δένδρον described as μεῖζον τῶν λαχάνων; in fact, this tree is big enough for birds to make nests in its branches. In 13:33, the leaven that a woman hides in three measures of flour, despite being disproportionately smaller, permeates all three measures.

The parables of the weeds and the net explore the kingdom's future state in relation to final judgement. This is especially apparent in Jesus's interpretation of the parable of the weeds, which mentions the end of the age, συντέλεια αἰῶνός and ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος, in tandem with fiery images, πυρί and εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός (13:39–40, 42). In the Septuagint, εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός occurs only in Dan 3, while εἰς κάμινον πυρός appears only in 4 Macc 16:21, where it recounts the incident in Dan 3.[92] More specifically, εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός appears four times in the Septuagint and the Theodotion of Dan 3:6, 11, 15, and 20; ἐκ τῆς καμίνου τοῦ πυρός and εἰς μέσον τῆς καμίνου τοῦ πυρός occur as well in the Theodotion (Dan 3:17, 21,

[90] Gerhard Maier, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus: Kapitel 1–14*, Historisch-Theologische Auslegung (Witten: Brockhaus; Gitten: Brunnen, 2015), 759.
[91] David E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel*, Reading the New Testament Series (New York: Crossroad, 1993), 149.
[92] Ανανιας καὶ Αζαριας καὶ Μισαηλ εἰς κάμινον πυρὸς ἀπεσφενδονήθησαν καὶ ὑπέμειναν διὰ τὸν θεόν (4 Macc 16:21).

23). The evidence is such that we consider the allusion to Dan 3 in these verses to be "more likely than not," even "probable."[93]

Like Dan 3, Matt 13:42 uses the phrase εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός to speak of judgement. However, the punishment in this verse is eschatological in nature: the Son of Man sends his angels to gather out of this world all causes of sin and all lawbreakers in order to throw these εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός. The references to the Son of Man and worldwide judgement hearken back to Dan 7. In this chapter, one like a son of man receives dominion over all peoples and nations, and the fourth beast guilty of much evil is judged for changing the law (Dan 7:14, 23, 25–26). Moreover, in Matt 13:43, the righteous (οἱ δίκαιοι) are described as shining (ἐκλάμψουσιν) like the sun. According to Maier, "[h]ier kann [Jesus] auf Dan 12,3 zurückgreifen, auch wenn die LXX einen anderen Wortlaut hat."[94] The correspondence is, in fact, even more pronounced when one compares Matt 13:43 with the Theodotion of Dan 12:3, which describes the righteous (ἀπὸ τῶν δικαίων τῶν πολλῶν) as shining (ἐκλάμψουσιν) like the stars.

Daniel 7:14 and 12:3 share the language of eternity: αἰών and its cognate adjective αἰώνιος. This suggests that both the one like a son of man exercising everlasting authority in 7:14 and the righteous shining forever in 12:3 align with the eschatological phenomenon of the eternal heavenly kingdom in 2:44. By alluding to the end-time occurrences of Dan 7:14 and 12:3, the parable of the weeds illustrates the eschatological state of the heavenly kingdom in relation to final judgement.

The parable of the net, in contrast to the parable of the weeds, does not feature the Son of Man. Nevertheless, the two parables display considerable overlap in the

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[93] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 62. See also Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 224.
[94] Maier, *Matthäus: Kapitel 1–14*, 757. Vetne suggests that the allusion to Dan 12 is "as thick as you can get," even "certain." Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 64. See also Turner, *Matthew*, 351.

phrases ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος (13:49, cf. 13:43) and βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός (13:50, cf. 13:40). This suggests that the fiery punishment in the parable of the net also refers to final judgement.

Therefore, parabolic mystery in Matt 13 remains faithful to Danielic mystery in retaining its eschatological elements: the kingdom of heaven, final judgement, the Son of Man, and the resurrection of believers. According to Beale and Gladd, Matthean mystery develops Danielic mystery by presenting an inaugurated eschatology. In contrast to the Old Testament prediction that "the kingdom would be established all at once at the very end of time," Matthean mystery reveals that the kingdom "has come 'already' but ... is 'not yet' completed."[95]

Beale and Gladd are indeed right, but we can offer the following clarification. As our previous chapter discussed (2.3.3.1), Danielic eschatology is also inaugurated. The end-time events at the heart of mystery according to Dan 2 consist of the fall of earthly kingdoms, beginning with the Babylonian empire in 2:39, which has already happened by the end of Dan 5. The difference between Danielic mystery and Matthean mystery is not that the latter alone holds out an inaugurated eschatology; rather, the difference pertains to what precisely has begun.

If Dan 5 demonstrates that the fall of earthly empires has commenced, Matt 13, in comparison, showcases the arrival of the heavenly kingdom. In the preceding narrative, Matthew described the kingdom as near (ἐγγίζω in 3:2; 4:17; 10:7), even here (φθάνω in 12:28). In Matt 13, the kingdom is not simply imminent but present: its word is being sown (13:19); it is like a mustard seed or leaven, barely visible but

[95] Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 74–75.

nonetheless in existence (13:31–33). Only when the Son of Man returns to deal decisively with evil will the kingdom finally be established in the fullness of its glory.

Thus far, we have not discussed the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl (13:44, 45–46) in relation to the eschatology of Matthean mystery. Both parables affirm the overwhelming value of the kingdom of heaven in the light of what the other parables demonstrate regarding its growth and future glory. Despite its humble beginnings, the kingdom is priceless precisely because of its eventual greatness.

As the second subunit (10:1–12:50) draws to a close, the narrative evokes the question of what impact the mounting conflict has on the arrival of the kingdom. The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven in Matt 13 feature an inaugurated eschatology that provides the answer. The kingdom has arrived—barely visible amidst rejection but nonetheless growing—and will be consummated when the Son of Man comes in final judgement.

3.4.5 Summary of Mystery in Matt 13

By the end of Matt 12, the narrative elicits the following questions. Firstly, how will Jesus respond to rising hostility? Secondly, why do the Jewish leaders reject the promised messiah and his message of the heavenly kingdom? Thirdly, how do Jesus's disciples, as those who do the will of the Father, differ from the Jewish leaders? Fourthly, how does this mounting opposition impact the arrival of the kingdom? The narrative begins to answer these questions by introducing τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν in Matt 13. These mysteries retain their Danielic character with respect to form, function, and content.

In terms of form, Matthean mystery is twofold, consisting of both Jesus's parables and their interpretations. This is the answer to the first question: Jesus responds to rising hostility by proclaiming parables to the crowds in public and explaining them to his disciples in private.

Concerning function, parabolic mystery's polemic differentiates Jesus's disciples from the Jewish leaders in order to uphold him as the exclusive revealer and to encourage alignment with his disciples. This addresses the second enquiry—the Jewish leaders neither believe in Jesus nor receive his hidden wisdom because they are spiritually blind and deaf. As for the third question, the disciples, being recipients of the mysteries, are the true scribes trained for the kingdom of heaven.

Finally, regarding content, mystery in Matt 13 presents an inaugurated eschatology. While Danielic mystery showcases the kingdom of heaven as not yet, Matthean mystery depicts this kingdom as both already and not yet. In response to the fourth enquiry—while considerable antagonism renders the kingdom barely visible, it nonetheless exists and is growing towards its glorious destiny.

3.5 Developing Matthean Mystery (Matt 14–23)

We now turn to the way Matt 14–23 develops the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven with reference to their form (including the pattern of limited understanding), function, and content.

In Matt 13, mystery consists of Jesus's public parables and private explanations. Accordingly, our analysis will concentrate on the parabolic teachings of Matt 14–23, in passages containing words like παραβολή or ὁμοιόω/ὅμοιος. These include the

parables of uncleanness (15:10–20), the unforgiving servant (18:23–35), the labourers (20:1–16), the two sons (21:28–32), the tenants (21:33–44), and the wedding feast (22:1–14). We will also discuss episodes where Jesus instructs the disciples alone, using language reminiscent of Matt 13. These include 16:5–12, where he speaks of their failure to understand, and 16:13–28, where he responds to Peter, who has received revelation from the Father but still lacks full access to the mysteries.

3.5.1 The Form of Mystery in Matt 14–23

Twofold Danielic mystery is at times accompanied by a threefold pattern of understanding: an initial prophetic vision is followed by an interpretation that only produces limited comprehension, thereby reserving complete enlightenment for the future.[96] On these occasions, Daniel lacks a thorough grasp of the dream or vision despite receiving its explanation. Matt 14–23 reflects a similar pattern: the disciples, even after receiving Jesus's instruction, betray limited discernment.

This becomes apparent when one compares Matt 15–16 with Matt 13. On the one hand, 13:13–15 differentiates the disciples from the rest who do not comprehend and cannot perceive Jesus's teachings. By the end of Matt 13, Jesus's disciples claim to have understood him, and he designates them as scribes trained for the kingdom of heaven (13:51–52). On the other hand, the disciples in 15:15, represented by Peter, still require Jesus to explain the most recent parable. Also, in 16:5–7, the disciples are confounded by the metaphor of leaven, prompting Jesus to lament their failure to

[96] Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 41.

perceive (16:8–11). While the disciples initially appear to grasp Jesus's teachings, whatever insight they possess is subsequently exposed as partial.

According to John R. Markley, the disciples' "imperception" in 16:5–7 (and Mark 8:14–16) need not amount to an "unfavourable" portrayal.[97] Drawing on comparisons with Dan 12:8 and other apocalyptic literature, Markley eschews identifying the disciples' failure as "negative" and considers it "a standard characteristic of apocalyptic seers."[98] More precisely, the "mystery of the divine realm" is such that humans "cannot perceive as a result of their cognitive humanity," thereby requiring a "gradual process of 'awakening.'"[99]

Markley's explanation arguably downplays Matthew's unflattering application of Isaianic imagery to the disciples.[100] Culpepper, comparing Matt 16:8–9 with Mark 8:17–18, concludes that "Mark heaps harsh criticism on the disciples, echoing judgement language from Isa 6:9 and Mark 4:12," and that "Matthew omits this invective."[101] While Matthew indeed "puts the disciples in a better light," 16:8–11 nonetheless echoes the negative Isaianic description of 13:13–15, where imperception characterises those who do not possess the mysteries of the heavenly kingdom.[102] Moreover, Peter's struggle in 16:21–22 to grasp that Jesus would suffer many things and be killed is hardly neutral; it is, in fact, unequivocally negative, as indicated by Jesus's peremptory censure, ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου, σατανᾶ (16:23).

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[97] John R. Markley, *Peter—Apocalyptic Seer: The Influence of the Apocalypse Genre on Matthew's Portrayal of Peter*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II 348 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 15.
[98] Markley, *Peter—Apocalyptic Seer*, 15.
[99] Markley, *Peter—Apocalyptic Seer*, 192, 218.
[100] As our previous chapter mentioned (2.4.2.5), such imagery (blind eyes, deaf ears, and callous hearts) is absent in Daniel; its protagonist is not characterised in this unflattering fashion.
[101] Culpepper, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 305.
[102] Culpepper, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 304.

A final parallel: in Dan 8:27 and 12:8, Daniel's failure to understand what he has just seen leads him to enquire further; likewise, in Matt 15:15 and 17:10, the disciples express their confusion with questions. These enquiries prompt Jesus to continue revealing mysteries his disciples have yet to grasp (15:16–20; 17:11–12), resulting in their enlightenment (17:13).

3.5.2 The Function of Mystery in Matt 14–23

In Matt 13, mystery distinguishes Jesus's disciples from the crowds and the Jewish leaders in order to uphold the Son as the only revealer of hidden wisdom and to encourage alignment with the disciples as its recipients. In Matt 14–23, Jesus's public parables and the disciples' private education continue to perform these functions.

The pattern of limited understanding in Matt 16 highlights critical gaps in the disciples' knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. These instances of imperception create opportunities for Matthew to continue presenting Jesus as the Son who discloses mystery. In contrast to Matt 11 and 13, Matt 16 focuses on Jesus as the Son who is able to reveal despite his disciples' spiritual blindness and deafness. In 16:8–12, the lack of discernment, which the disciples cannot overcome by themselves, finds its resolution in the Son's efficacious disclosure. The corresponding pericope in Mark 8:14–21 ends abruptly with Jesus's question, οὔπω συνίετε (8:21). In contrast, Matt 16:8–12 concludes instead with the confirmation that the disciples τότε συνῆκαν as a

result of Jesus's teaching (16:12). Also, 17:13 repeats the clause τότε συνῆκαν to highlight the disciples' enlightenment resulting from Jesus's reply to their enquiry.[103]

The way Jesus educates his disciples confirms their role as recipients of mystery. This affirmation is strengthened by the contrasting presentation of the Jewish leaders in Matt 14–23. In 15:13, prior to interpreting the parable of uncleanness, Jesus depicts the Pharisees as such: φυτεία ... οὐκ ἐφύτευσεν ὁ πατήρ μου ὁ οὐράνιος, who ἐκριζωθήσεται. They are τυφλοί ... ὁδηγοί, while the disciples are earmarked by their exclusive receipt of the parable's explanation as true guides to hidden wisdom (15:14; cf. 13:11, 52).

The trilogy of parables in Matt 21–22 reinforces the contrasting depictions of the disciples and the Jewish leaders. In 21:45–46, the chief priests and Pharisees, despite the fact that ἀκούσαντες ... τὰς παραβολὰς αὐτοῦ, ἔγνωσαν ὅτι περὶ αὐτῶν λέγει, are nonetheless ζητοῦντες αὐτὸν κρατῆσαι. Such entrenched hostility confirms that their hearing and perceiving in 21:45, as per 13:13–15, stop short of genuine understanding. Furthermore, the first parable (featuring two sons) likens the Jewish leaders to the one who [οὐ] ἐποίησεν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρός (21:31). The phrase τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρός "ist ... ganz typisch für Mt," echoing Jesus's identification of his disciples in 12:50 as those who ποιήσῃ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρός [αὐτοῦ] τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς.[104] This suggests that the Jewish leaders do not belong to Jesus's (spiritual) family; they are not the recipients of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

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[103] The Markan disciples' incomprehension tends to be "toned down" in the corresponding Matthean pericope; however, this does not mean that "Mark's or Matthew's portrayal of Peter and the disciples" are "at odds." Rather, "incomprehension and understanding ... merely stand at two different points along the continuum of the disciples' revelatory experiences," and Matthew has "decided to emphasize that Jesus' explanations indeed secured their understanding." Markley, *Peter—Apocalyptic Seer*, 213–14.
[104] Fiedler, *Matthäusevangelium*, 329.

In the second parable (featuring the tenants of the vineyard), Jesus declares that ἀρθήσεται ἀφ ὑμῶν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ δοθήσεται ἔθνει ποιοῦντι τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτῆς (21:43). According to Davies and Allison, ἔθνει in this verse denotes "the church" which "gain[s] the kingdom upon the death and resurrection of Jesus."[105] Likewise, Hagner identifies "the most natural" referent as "the church," which he defines as a "new nation ... consist[ing] of both Jews and Gentiles."[106]

However, ἔθνει in 21:43b contrasts with the phrase ἀφ ὑμῶν earlier in the verse, and Konradt questions whether "'von euch' [ἀφ ὑμῶν] faktisch 'von Israel' meine."[107] The comment in 21:45 that Jesus περὶ αὐτῶν λέγει—that is, the chief priests and the Pharisees—implies that ὑμῶν in 21:43a refers specifically to the Jewish leadership, the old tenants in the parable. By implication, the contrasting ἔθνει in 21:43b corresponds to ἄλλοις γεωργοῖς in 21:41, and these new tenants refer to the disciples, the scribes trained for the kingdom of heaven who supplant the Jewish scribes (13:52). That is, the disciples whom Jesus commissions to seek out the lost sheep of the house of Israel (10:6) and to make disciples of all the nations (28:19).

While Konradt is not wrong to clarify that "[h]ier wird nicht Israel durch die Kirche ersatz," the parable nevertheless hints at the "transferring [of] the locus of the people of God."[108] More precisely, the people of God are no longer Israel under the stewardship of the Jewish leaders, but Jews and Gentiles who, under the leadership of the disciples, repent and believe in Jesus. Once again, Matthean mystery (in this instance, the question of who ultimately receives the kingdom) distinguishes the disciples from

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[105] W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), 186.
[106] Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, Word Biblical Commentary 33b (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 1995), 623.
[107] Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 335.
[108] Compare Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 336, with Carson, "Matthew," 512.

the Jewish leaders in order to encourage alignment with the former as the true leaders of God's people.

3.5.3 The Content of Mystery in Matt 14–23

Sweat proposes that "[t]he 'mystery of the kingdom of God' [in Mark 4:11] is not an 'investigative mystery' to be solved."[109] While she acknowledges the allusion to the "common revelatory motif in apocalyptic literature," including Dan 2:27–30, she nevertheless argues that this "does not further inform Mark's audience about the content of the mystery."[110] Drawing on Steven D. Boyer's work on "dimensional mystery," which resists rational understanding even after disclosure, Sweat concludes that the "precise content" or "definition" of Markan mystery remains "unclear," even "hidden."[111]

While Matthean mystery may be inexhaustible to the human mind, some attempt at describing it remains possible. In contrast to Sweat's ambivalence, Markley maintains that mystery in Matthew "is largely related to … the gradual inauguration of the kingdom and its eventual consummation."[112] This analysis accords well with what we have seen above (3.4.4): mystery in Matt 13 depicts the kingdom of heaven from an inaugurated eschatological standpoint. In other words, the kingdom has come but awaits completion.

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[109] Sweat, *Theological Role of Paradox*, 44.
[110] Sweat, *Theological Role of Paradox*, 44.
[111] Steven D. Boyer, "The Logic of Mystery," *Religious Studies* 43.1 (2007): 97; Sweat, *Theological Role of Paradox*, 40, 45.
[112] Markley, *Peter—Apocalyptic Seer*, 217.

The parables of Matt 13 envisage the time between the inauguration and consummation of the heavenly kingdom in terms of its growth amidst rejection. Matthew develops this theme in the subsequent chapters by exploring "matters related to community life during the time [in] between."[113] One such matter is the kingdom-ethic of forgiveness in 18:21–22, which Jesus addresses further in the parable of the unforgiving servant (18:23–35). Another issue pertains to the first becoming last and the last first in 19:30, which Jesus illustrates in the parable of the labourers (20:1–16).

With respect to the consummation of the kingdom, Matt 14–23 reiterates the theme of judgement in Matt 13. Indeed, 16:27, as in 13:41–42, portrays the Son of Man coming with his angels and repaying people according to their deeds. In the parable of the unforgiving servant, Jesus speaks of an angry master handing his servant over to the jailers (18:34). Likewise, the parable of the tenants depicts an owner of a vineyard putting his tenants to a miserable death (21:40–41). Finally, the parable of the wedding feast presents a king whose army burns a city (22:7).

The parable of the wedding feast arguably adds the fall of Jerusalem to the eschatology of Matthean mystery, with 22:7 providing a "veiled prophecy" of the Jewish-Roman war.[114] Carson regards a "veiled allusion" as "implausible," attributing the language of the verse instead to generic images of judgement in the Old Testament.[115] Nevertheless, judgement language in the second half of Daniel points specifically to the devastation of God's city and his house (among other end-time events); the proposal that Matt 22:7 implicitly predicts an invasion of Jerusalem remains tenable.

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[113] Markley, *Peter—Apocalyptic Seer*, 217.
[114] Turner, *Matthew*, 523. Konradt also comments that "man im mt Kontext kaum anders denn als Anspielung auf die Zerstörung Jerusalems lesen kann." Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 340.
[115] Carson, "Matthew," 515. See also Gundry, *Matthew*, 436.

Hagner goes so far as to conclude that "it is virtually impossible for post-70 readers of the Gospel not to see the destruction of Jerusalem alluded to" in 22:7."[116] This, however, does not mean that a pre-70 reader—assuming an early composition date for Matthew's Gospel—would have understood the verse apart from an attack on Jerusalem. Irrespective of the dating of the verse, there remain "important considerations encourag[ing] the reader to find an allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem at 22.7."[117] From a narrative-critical standpoint, one could plausibly argue that the model reader interprets the verse as such. The parable of the wedding feast belongs to the fifth subunit (21:1–25:46), where Jesus addresses Jerusalem in his pronouncement ἀφίεται ὑμῖν ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν ἔρημος (23:37–38). Moreover, this subunit climaxes in the Olivet Discourse, where Matthew, expounding the destruction of the temple, draws on Danielic language in depicting armies encircling Jerusalem (24:15).[118] The references to Jerusalem, both overt (23:37–38) and covert (24:15), support the interpretation of 22:7 as an oblique prediction of the city's doom.

The parable of the tenants, especially 21:42, arguably forecasts as well the devastation of Jerusalem's temple. Despite scholarly claims of temple imagery in 21:42, which "opens up the possibility of linking [the verse] with 26:61 and 27:40," Nolland remains unpersuaded.[119] While he considers the references to 26:61 and 27:40 "suggestive," he nevertheless deems the above reading of 21:42 an "overinterpretation."[120]

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[116] Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 630.
[117] Wesley G. Olmstead, *Matthew's Trilogy of Parables: The Nation, the Nations and the Reader in Matthew 21.28–22.14*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 127 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 120–21.
[118] Refer to our analysis of the phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως (24:15) in 4.5.2.
[119] Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 877.
[120] Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 877.

Nevertheless, one could maintain that the temple is in view in 21:42. The parable of the tenants belongs to the fifth subunit (21:1–25:46) which climaxes in Matt 24–25. The Olivet Discourse begins with the disciples pointing out τὰς οἰκοδομὰς τοῦ ἱεροῦ (24:1), even asking when these buildings will be destroyed (24:3). Moreover, the parable of the tenants contributes to a wider dispute between Jesus and the chief priests (21:23, 45), the representatives of the temple—a dispute that happens in the very precincts of the temple (21:23).

Furthermore, 21:42 contains the quotation λίθον ὃν ἀπεδοκίμασαν οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες. If Nolland is right about "the suggestive wordplay ... in Hebrew or Aramaic between 'son' ... and 'stone,'" then the verse is aligning λίθον with the son in the parable who stands for Jesus.[121] By extension, 21:42 also identifies the builders (οἱ οἰκοδομοῦντες) with those who kill the son in the parable, the tenants who stand for the chief priests. (The parable, according to 21:45, is directed at the chief priests, and the narrative of Jesus's trial, especially 27:1–2, 12, and 20, repeatedly highlights their involvement in his execution.) The description of the chief priests as builders calls to mind the existence of a building, and the building associated with the chief priests is surely the temple they serve in and represent. The link between the quotation and the temple is reinforced by the source of the quotation: Psalm 118, which probably functioned as a liturgy for worshippers at the temple in Jerusalem.[122]

Therefore, when 21:42 designates λίθον as κεφαλὴν γωνίας, Matthew is probably describing κεφαλὴν γωνίας of the temple.[123] This temple is a new one, distinct

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[121] Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 877.
[122] Nancy L. deClaisse-Walford, Rolf A. Jacobson, and Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 864.
[123] "[S]ince Ps 118 was a pilgrimage song that celebrated the temple and the worship that takes place there (see Ps 118:19–26), the cornerstone envisioned in this psalm was not for any ordinary building but for the temple of the Lord." Mitch and Sri, *Gospel of Matthew*, 278.

from the existing temple of the builders openly hostile to the stone. In other words, 21:42 depicts the vindication of the son who is killed, by speaking of the rejected stone becoming the cornerstone of a new building. In denoting a new temple, 21:42 also connotes that the existing one will be displaced—thereby hinting at the doom that awaits Jerusalem's temple.

In short, contrary to Nolland, the evidence favours the conclusion that 21:42 alludes to the devastation of the temple. This reading of 21:42 is congruous with all the contextual data mentioned earlier: the location of the parable in the fifth subunit of Matt 21–25; the occasion of the parable being the dispute with the leaders of the temple; the venue of the dispute being the temple; the likely use of Psalm 118 as an entrance liturgy into the temple.

Finally, Matt 14–23 also adds the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus to the content of Matthean mystery. As mentioned above (3.5.2), the disciples' limited understanding in Matt 16 creates opportunities for Jesus to continue teaching them. In response to Peter's imperception, Jesus's censure in 16:23 underscores the importance of what he just said: that he must suffer, be killed, and be raised (16:21). This crucial disclosure will be reiterated in 17:22–23 and 20:18–19, and on these occasions, Jesus specifically mentions the Son of Man. In Matt 13, mystery focuses on Jesus's second coming as the Son of Man who judges. In contrast, mystery according to 17:22–23 and 20:18–19 highlights Jesus's first coming as the Son of Man who dies and rises again.[124]

[124] It appears as though the focus of mystery shifts, across Matt 13 and 14–23, from Jesus's first coming to his return. While the references to the Son of Man in Matt 13 point to his second coming, the majority of the allusions in Matt 14–23 pertain to his first coming. There are, however, exceptions: 16:27 and 19:28 arguably refer to final judgement.

3.5.4 Summary of Mystery in Matt 14–23

Mystery in these chapters retains the Danielic character of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven with respect to form, function, and content. For a start, twofold mystery generates a pattern of limited understanding among the disciples. At times, they ask questions leading to further disclosure which, in turn, affirms that Jesus is capable of enlightening the spiritually blind and deaf.

In terms of function, mystery's polemic in Matt 14–23 continues to differentiate the disciples from the Jewish leaders in order to encourage alignment with the former. These chapters confirm that the unbelieving leaders are blind guides; in contrast, the disciples are the new tenants of God's vineyard, the true leaders of his people.

As for content, mystery according to Matt 14–23 portrays an inaugurated eschatology, with some parables exploring ethical issues concerning life between the kingdom's commencement and consummation. Other parables focus on judgement, which includes the fall of Jerusalem and its temple. Finally, in contrast to Matt 13, these chapters relate mystery to Jesus's first coming as the Son of Man who dies and rises again.

3.6 Conclusion

The key term for mystery in Daniel, μυστήριον, occurs only in Matt 13. Nevertheless, the preceding chapters anticipate its appearance in 13:11. As Matt 1–12 unfolds, the narrative invokes with increasing intensity the frame of Danielic mystery, particularly its mantic background, eschatological content, and polemical function. The model

reader actualises these frames by interpreting τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν in 13:11 as evoking Danielic mystery.

While these mysteries are faithful to their Danielic origin in form, function, and content, they are not simply appropriations but also adaptations of Danielic mystery. In terms of form, Matthean mystery consists not of dreams and their interpretations but of Jesus's public teaching in parables and private explanations to his disciples. This twofold mystery is accompanied by a pattern of limited understanding: as the disciples grapple with incomprehension and ask questions, Jesus continues to unveil hidden wisdom.

As for the function of Matthean mystery, it polemically distinguishes Jesus's disciples from the crowds and the Jewish leaders in order to uphold Jesus as its exclusive revealer and to encourage alignment with his disciples as its recipients. The Jewish leaders reject Jesus and do not receive the mysteries because of their blind eyes, deaf ears, and callous hearts; in fact, he derides them as blind guides. In contrast, the disciples are scribes trained for the kingdom of heaven, the new tenants of God's vineyard who are the true leaders of his people.

Regarding content, Matthean mystery, like Danielic mystery, presents an inaugurated eschatology featuring the kingdom of heaven, the Son of Man, final judgement, and the fall of Jerusalem and its temple. However, the heavenly kingdom in Matthew's Gospel has commenced but awaits consummation, and Matthean mystery explores the ethics of kingdom-living in the interim. Furthermore, in contrast to Danielic mystery, the Matthean Son of Man will not simply come to judge and establish his kingdom; he will also suffer, die, and rise again.

In analysing the background, form, function, and content of mystery in Matt 1–23, we have delineated a key narrative context of Matt 24–25. While Matthean mystery features the Son of Man coming in final judgement and the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, the narrative thus far does not clarify how these punishments relate. Accordingly, the following question remains: do these judgements overlap or not? That is, will the destruction of the temple coincide with the end of the age? Or does Jesus speak of two temporally distinct judgements, one imminent and the other distant? Matthew begins to address this from 24:1 onwards, in the Olivet Discourse—which brings us to our next chapter.

Chapter 4
Matthean Mystery and the Olivet Discourse (I): Matt 24:1–35

4.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Carson, "[f]ew chapters of the Bible have elicited more disagreement ... than Matthew 24 and its parallels in Mark 13 and Luke 21."[1] The interpretative challenge of the Olivet Discourse persists; more recently, Sloan comments that Mark 13 generates "numerous questions."[2]

A single thesis cannot answer or even attempt to address every question concerning the Olivet Discourse. Our previous two chapters have explored Danielic mystery in Second Temple Judaism, and Matthew's use of it in the narrative preceding the Olivet Discourse. We will now apply the above findings to our central question, "How does attending to Danielic and Matthean mystery illuminate Matthew's Olivet Discourse?" We will do so in two chapters, beginning with an outline of the structure and meaning of Matt 24–25 (4.2; 5.1) and a summary of the narrative context of mystery in Matt 1–23 (4.3; 5.2), followed by detailed exegesis of 24:1–35 (4.4, 4.5) and 24:36–26:2 (5.3, 5.4). We will conclude (5.5) by assessing the significance of mystery for interpreting Matthew's Olivet Discourse, and the significance of the Olivet Discourse for Matthew's overall theological and pastoral agenda.

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[1] Carson, "Matthew," 548. He first made this comment in the earlier (1984) edition of the commentary.
[2] Sloan, *Mark 13*, 1.

By way of preview, our two chapters will propose the following interpretation of Matt 24–25. In 24:3, the disciples enquire about the destruction of the temple, the parousia of Jesus, and the end of the age, where they appear to presuppose the conflation of these events. The first part of Jesus's speech (24:4–35) engages with the disciples' enquiry and assumption. Here, he teaches that the temple will be devastated in the lifetime of the contemporary generation. Nevertheless, the end of the temple is only the beginning of the (ultimate) end; only the parousia of the Son of Man will bring the present age to its completion. In this way, 24:4–35 shifts the model reader's attention from the temple to the Son of Man. The second part of Jesus's speech (24:36–25:46) reinforces this shift through the instructions to stay awake and prepare for his final coming that brings universal judgement. In short, the Matthean Olivet Discourse discloses the mysteries of the temple, the Son of Man, and the end in order to exhort those who are wise in these mysteries to be vigilant and ready for final judgement.

4.2 A Preview of the Matthean Olivet Discourse

4.2.1 A Proposed Outline of the Matthean Olivet Discourse

24:1–3 Narrative introduction

- 24:1–2 Setting the scene
- 24:3 The disciples' enquiry and assumption

24:4–25:46 Main body: Jesus's answer to the disciples' enquiry and assumption

Part I: The destruction of the temple, the parousia of the Son of Man, and the end of the age

- 24:4–14 Birth pangs preceding the end
- 24:15–28 The destruction of the temple and the great tribulation
- 24:29–31 The parousia of the Son of Man
- 24:32–35 Climax: the parable of the fig tree

Part II: The parousia of the Son of Man

- 24:36–41 The parousia is unknown and will come unexpectedly
- 24:42–44 Exhortation to stay awake and be prepared
- 24:45–25:30 Parables about staying awake and being prepared
  - 24:45–51 Faithful/wise vs wicked servants
  - 25:1–13 Wise vs foolish virgins
  - 25:14–30 Good/faithful vs wicked/slothful servants
- 25:31–46 Climax: universal judgement during the parousia

26:1–2 Narrative conclusion

4.2.2 A Preview of the Meaning of the Matthean Olivet Discourse

The above outline divides 24:1–26:2 into three sections. Firstly, 24:1–3 serves as a narrative introduction to the Olivet Discourse. Here, Jesus departs from the temple (the public setting of the previous scene) and sits on the Mount of Olives (the private setting of a new scene). These verses contain the disciples' enquiry, which prompts Jesus's speech from 24:4 onwards.

Secondly, 26:1 replicates, with modification, the closing formula of καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς... that concludes all the major discourses in Matthew's Gospel (cf. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1). In this way, 26:1–2 provides a narrative conclusion for the Olivet Discourse.

Thirdly, the intervening verses (24:4–25:46) constitute Jesus's response to the disciples' enquiry in 24:3, which make up the main body of the Olivet Discourse. This reply consists of two parts, with the fronting of περὶ δέ in 24:36 indicating a different topic—or, more precisely, a new aspect of an existing topic.[3]

Part I of the speech can be further divided into four sections. The first section, 24:4–14, commences with the visual imperative βλέπετε (24:4) and develops this warning with another visual imperative, ὁρᾶτε μὴ θροεῖσθε (24:6). This section concentrates on events that precede the end and yet do not signal its imminence.

The second section begins in 24:15 with the connective οὖν, which occurs for the first time in Jesus's reply. The temporal clause in this verse, ὅταν ... ἴδητε, presents τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως that prompts onlookers in Judea to flee without delay.

[3] Wesley G. Olmstead, *Matthew 15–28: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019), 257.

This section is concerned with the event that signals the impending destruction of the temple. The end of the temple unleashes great suffering that afflicts not just the inhabitants of Judea (οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ, 24:16) but also the rest of humanity (πᾶσα σάρξ, 24:22).

The next stage of Jesus's temporal exposition unfolds from 24:29 onwards, as demarcated by the developmental connective δέ in tandem with the temporal phrase εὐθέως ... μετὰ τὴν θλῖψιν. Here, Jesus moves from the disciples' first question regarding the destruction of the temple to their second question regarding the parousia of the Son of Man.

The sharp change in imagery—from the Son of Man and his angels (24:30–31) to the fig tree (24:32)—signals the transition into the fourth section. Also, the introduction of the first parable (παραβολή) in Jesus's speech sets 24:32–35 apart. The parable of the fig tree and its explanation clarifies the timings of, and the relationships between, the destruction of the temple, the parousia of the Son of Man, and the end of the age.

Part II of Jesus's speech likewise divides into four sections. It opens in 24:36–41 with a new aspect of an existing topic: the unknown timing of the parousia of the Son of Man and the consequent suddenness of this arrival.

The second section begins in 24:42 with the imperative γρηγορεῖτε and the inferential connective οὖν, which establishes the command to stay awake as the main implication of the preceding verses.

24:45–25:30 consists of three parables distinguished by their introductory statements in 24:45, 25:1, and 25:14. The third section develops the prior instructions to stay awake and be prepared through three sets of contrasts. The first parable likens

staying awake to being a faithful and wise—not a wicked—servant. The second parable compares being ready to the conduct of the wise—not the foolish—virgins. The third parable illustrates watchfulness as the good and faithful use—not the wicked and slothful neglect—of talents.

The shift from parabolic language to straightforward description (with limited illustrative elements) from 25:31 onwards demarcates the fourth section. Part II of Jesus's speech climaxes in 25:31–46 with the grand vision of the parousia of the Son of Man in final judgement of all humanity.

4.3 The Narrative Context of Mystery for the First Half of the Matthean Olivet Discourse

Of particular relevance to 24:1–35 are the form and content of mystery; its polemical function is especially significant for the second half of Jesus's speech.

4.3.1 The Form of Mystery

Mystery according to Daniel is twofold, consisting of a divine message followed by its interpretation. This twofold mystery is accompanied by a threefold pattern of understanding. On some occasions, enquiries about a dream or vision, or its explanation, initiate further disclosure. Likewise, Matthean mystery is twofold, made up of Jesus's parables in public and his explanations in private to the disciples. A pattern of limited understanding complements this twofold mystery. As the disciples struggle to

comprehend the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, they pose questions to Jesus, and he continues to reveal his hidden wisdom to them.

4.3.2 The Content of Mystery

Mystery in Matt 1–23, true to its Danielic origin, presents an inaugurated eschatology featuring the final judgement of the Son of Man and the fall of Jerusalem and its temple. However, Matthew's narrative thus far does not clarify how these punishments relate and whether they coincide. In other words, does the fate that awaits Jerusalem and its temple usher in the consummation of the age and the coming of the Son of Man in universal judgement? Or are the two punishments temporally distinct: one imminent and the other distant?

4.4 The Narrative Introduction (Matt 24:1–3)

4.4.1 Setting the Scene (24:1–2)

These verses prepare for a new scene by delineating two transitions in two clauses. Since 21:23, Jesus has been in the temple, speaking in public to the Jewish leaders (21:45; 22:23, 41) and the crowds (23:1). In contrast, the main verb of the first clause in 24:1, ἐπορεύετο, denotes a change in location, with ἐξελθὼν … ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ specifying Jesus's departure from the temple. The main verb for the next clause, προσῆλθον, marks a shift from public to private interaction, with the disciples alone approaching Jesus to point out the buildings of the temple.

These two transitions notwithstanding, the new scene develops the thematic concern of the preceding episode. In 23:37–38, Jesus pronounces judgement on Jerusalem for its inhabitants' rejection of him: the desolation of its house, the temple. Schnackenburg acknowledges that ὁ οἶκος ὑμῶν (23:38) could mean "das Land Israel … [oder] die Stadt Jerusalem … oder der Tempel."[4] While Luz identifies the temple as the referent, Daniel J. Harrington interprets the verse as pointing to the destruction of both Jerusalem and its temple.[5] Nevertheless, the temple is the most likely option, since the only other occurrence of οἶκος in Matt 21–25 refers to it: ὁ οἶκός μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται (21:13).[6]

In 24:1–3, Jesus departs (ἐπορεύετο, ἐξελθών) from the temple and proceeds to sit on the Mount of Olives. According to Nolland, "the view that Jesus' departure from the temple symbolises here its abandonment by God is probably not to be accepted for Matthew."[7] However, in Ezek 10–11, the glory of God likewise departs (ἐξῆλθεν, 10:18) from the temple and stops momentarily on the Mount of Olives (τοῦ ὄρους, ὃ ἦν ἀπέναντι τῆς πόλεως, 11:23). The parallels between Ezek 10–11 and Matt 24:1–3 imply that Jesus's movements signify an abandonment of the temple, as a reiteration in physical terms of the earlier prophecy of desolation (23:38). This, in turn, suggests that the theme of judgement on the temple carries over into the new scene from 24:1 onwards.

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[4] Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium 16,21–28,20*, Die Neue Echter Bibel 1 (Würzburg: Echter, 1987), 229.

[5] Compare Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21–28: A Commentary*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2005), 162, with Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Sacra Pagina Series 1 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 329.

[6] Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 322.

[7] Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 958. For a contrasting opinion, see R. T. France, "Matthew and Jerusalem," in *Built upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and John Nolland (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 124; Johnstone, "Jesus and the Climax," 254.

The prophecy of the temple's desolation, which Jesus articulates (23:37–38) and then physically enacts (24:1–3), is lost on the disciples, who approach him to marvel over the buildings of the temple (24:2). Mitch and Sri suggest that "[w]e should not be surprised by this," since "the Herodian temple was a breathtaking spectacle."[8] Nevertheless, attending to Matthean mystery uncovers a deeper problem with the disciples beyond mere distraction by "a veritable architectural wonder."[9] On previous occasions, despite Jesus's parabolic instruction and private explanation, the disciples fail to fully comprehend the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; here, they betray a similar lack of discernment. Using the language of 13:14, the disciples may have heard Jesus's words in 23:37–38, but they do not understand his message; all they see and perceive are the stones that make up the magnificent buildings before them.

In Matt 14–23, the disciples' spiritual blindness and deafness prompts further revelation from Jesus concerning the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Likewise, in 24:2, Jesus responds to their incomprehension by reiterating his prophecy of the temple's devastation. He uses the emphatic οὐ μή with the subjunctive ἀφεθῇ to assure them of the complete dismantling of the architecture they were admiring.[10]

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[8] Mitch and Sri, *Gospel of Matthew*, 302. For more details on how "[t]he temple was renowned for its beauty," see Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 559–60.
[9] Mitch and Sri, *Gospel of Matthew*, 302.
[10] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 468.

4.4.2 The Disciples' Enquiry and Assumption (24:3)

4.4.2.1 The Disciples' Two Questions

The verse stresses privacy with the phrase κατ' ἰδίαν. Since Matt 13, Jesus has been revealing the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven to his disciples; 17:1 and 20:17 use κατ' ἰδίαν to signal their exclusive instruction. The way 24:3 emphasises privacy in relation to the disciples approaching Jesus with an enquiry strengthens the likelihood that Matthew is invoking the frame of mystery. This conforms to the twofold form of Danielic and Matthean mystery, whereby the asking of a question (especially about eschatological timing) elicits further disclosure (Dan 7:16, 19; 8:13; 12:6; cf. Matt 15:15–20; 17:10–12).

Moreover, the content of the disciples' enquiry reinforces the invocation of Danielic and Matthean mystery, since the questions refer to the very end-time events that feature in the notion. The demonstrative (ταῦτα) near the start of the verse, in its immediate context of 24:2, refers to the destruction of the temple, while the remainder of the enquiry concerns the parousia of Jesus (τῆς σῆς παρουσίας) and the end of the age (τῆς ... συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος).

For a start, the devastation of the temple features explicitly in Dan 9:26–27, 11:31, and 12:11 (which Matthew cites in 24:15), and implicitly in Matt 21:42. Also, συντέλεια appears in Dan 12:4 and 13, and Matt 13:39, 40, and 49, where the word refers to the completion of the age. While παρουσία does not occur in Daniel or Matt

1–23, the parousia in Matt 24:3 turns out to be that of τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in 24:27, 37, and 39—the Son of Man whose arrival in Dan 7 draws the end times to a close.[11]

Scholars debate the number of questions the disciples ask in 24:3. Peter F. Ellis states that they issue three in total: one about the destruction of the temple, another about the coming of Jesus, and a third about the end of the age.[12] However, this view does not fit well with the syntactical construction of the disciples' enquiry. In 24:3, τῆς σῆς παρουσίας and τῆς … συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος make up a single phrase held together by just one article (τῆς) and one connective (καί); this suggests that the two events constitute a "conceptual unity."[13] Therefore, construing the enquiry as two, not three, questions makes more sense: one about the destruction of the temple, and another about the parousia of Jesus and the end of the age.[14]

4.4.2.2 The Disciples' Assumption

Interpreting 24:3 as two enquiries raises the question as to why the disciples mention the parousia of Jesus and the end of the age in response to his prediction of the temple's destruction. In fact, Sloan describes the abrupt transition from one set of events to another as "a major conundrum created by the Olivet Discourse."[15] Commentators

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[11] Scholars have written much about the influence of Daniel on the Son of Man in the Olivet Discourse, especially Matt 24:30 and Mark 13:26. See Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 133–35; Jonathan W. Lo, "The Contours and Functions of Danielic References in the Gospel of Mark" (The University of Edinburgh, PhD diss., 2012), 210–27.

[12] Peter F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1974), 87.

[13] Olmstead, *Matthew 15–28*, 236. See also Gundry, *Matthew*, 476; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 688.

[14] This construal receives further support from the use of two interrogatives in 24:3: πότε for the destruction of the temple and τί for the sign of the parousia of Jesus and the end of the age. For further discussion concerning the number of questions in 24:3, see Timothy J. Christian, "A Questionable Inversion: Jesus' Corrective Answer to the Disciples' Questions in Matthew 24:3–25:46," *The Journal of Inductive Biblical Studies* 3.1 (2016): 47–49; Talbert, *Matthew*, 265.

[15] "[W]hy does [the Olivet Discourse] begin with a prophecy and question about the destruction of the temple and end with a statement about 'the coming of the Son of Man'?" Sloan, *Mark 13*, 2.

seek to resolve this by positing a connection between the incidents. According to Maier, "[o]ffenbar verbinden die Jünger die Tempelzerstörung sehr eng mit der Wiederkunft"; Culpepper likewise remarks that "the disciples' questions may assume that these events will occur at the same time."[16] However, these discussions tend to be brief and do not explain how or why the disciples associate the destruction of the temple with the end of the age.[17]

Addressing this matter involves resolving another disparity: the use of the plural demonstrative in 24:3 for what appears to be the single event of the temple's devastation. Mark 13:4 records the disciples using the same demonstrative twice (ταῦτα then ταῦτα ... πάντα), with the addition of πάντα the second time round stressing the plurality of "these things." Nolland suggests that ταῦτα reflects the understanding that "the destruction of the temple is necessarily caught up in a larger complex of events."[18] While Mark's second question continues to hint at this "larger complex of events" with the phrase ταῦτα ... πάντα, Matthew's second question identifies these other events as the parousia of Jesus and the end of the age.[19]

Like Nolland, Gibbs states that the disciples connect the destruction of the temple to the parousia of Jesus and the end of the age. Nevertheless, Gibbs may be too tentative in his proposition: "[t]he point of view that juxtaposes the two events is perhaps not unknown to the implied reader, given the cultural background when the Gospel of Matthew was written."[20] There is indeed data from Second Temple Judaism

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[16] Gerhard Maier, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus: Kapitel 15–28*, Historisch-Theologische Auslegung (Witten: Brockhaus; Gitten: Brunnen, 2017), 408; Culpepper, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 465.
[17] Where commentators offer explanations, these tend to be passing and tentative: "[p]erhaps we may assume an undefined sense that so cataclysmic an event as the destruction of the temple must usher in the end of the present world order." France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 895.
[18] Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 960.
[19] Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 960.
[20] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 179.

that the temple was perceived as the cosmos in miniature.[21] Psalm 78:69 is "[p]erhaps [the] simplest biblical example" of this worldview, in its portrayal of God's temple sanctuary (מִקְדָּשׁוֹ) as resembling the high heavens (כְּמוֹ־רָמִים) and the earth (כָּאָרֶץ).[22] Elsewhere, the Old Testament depicts particular components of the tabernacle or the temple in association with the sea and the heavens. For example, the washbasin in the temple courtyard is described as the sea (הַיָּם, 1 Kgs 7:23).[23] Also, the lamps in the tabernacle (הַמָּאוֹר, Ex 35:14) appear comparable to the lights in the expanse of the heavens in the creation account (מְאֹרֹת בִּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם, Gen 1:14).[24] Accordingly, the dismantling of the temple would have been tantamount to "the destabilization and dissolution of the world" and the present age.[25] In fact, Matthew arguably implies such a perspective in 27:51, by uniquely relating the rending (ἐσχίσθη) of the temple veil (τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ) to the splitting (ἐσχίσθησαν) of the rocks of the earth (ἡ γῆ … καὶ αἱ πέτραι).[26]

Moreover, the cultural encyclopedia undergirding Matthew's Olivet Discourse features Daniel, as indicated by the phrase τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου in 24:15.

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[21] "Jewish theology maintained that the temple was an architectural model of the world, just as the world was conceived as a temple on a cosmic scale." Mitch and Sri, *Gospel of Matthew*, 304.
[22] On Ps 78:69, see Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Destruction of the Temple and the Relativization of the Old Covenant: Mark 13:31 and Matthew 5:18," in *Eschatology in Bible and Theology: Evangelical Essays at the Dawn of a New Millennium*, ed. Kent E. Brower and Mark W. Elliott (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 159.
[23] On 1 Kgs 7:23–26, see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 33.
[24] On מָאוֹר in the Old Testament, see Beale, *Temple and the Church's Mission*, 34–35. For more details on the relationship between the temple and the cosmos in both the Old Testament and noncanonical Jewish writings, see Fletcher-Louis, "Destruction of the Temple," 156–62; Beale, *Temple and the Church's Mission*, 29–80.
[25] Mitch and Sri, *Gospel of Matthew*, 304.
[26] This association is Matthean, since neither Mark nor Luke allude to the splitting of the rocks of the earth alongside the rending of the temple curtain (cf. Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). On the link between the temple and the cosmos in Mark's Gospel, see Timothy C. Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Its Narrative Role* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 149.

Thus far, 24:1–3 has invoked the frame of Danielic mystery, and Dan 9:26 and 11:31–35 tie together the devastation of the temple with the completion of the age. As our previous chapter discussed (2.3.5.2), Dan 9 and 11 depict the devastation of the temple as an end-time event intimately associated with καιροῦ συντελείας (9:26; 11:35 LXX) or καιροῦ πέρας (11:35 Theo.). Accordingly, one could reasonably contend

> that Daniel's eschatological schema influenced the disciples' thinking..., and that on hearing Jesus' prediction they immediately assumed that the destruction of the temple and the "end of the age" would be closely related events.[27]

In other words, the disciples, in all probability, presuppose that the end of the temple, like the coming of the Son of Man, marks the end of the age.[28] Indeed, Danielic mystery provides an explanation as to how or why the disciples appear to conflate these two end points.

This presupposition fits well with the narrative context of mystery in Matt 1–23. In the earlier parables, Jesus spoke of the judgement of the Son of Man at the end of the age (13:37–43, 47–50); he also alluded to the fall of Jerusalem and its temple (21:42; 22:7). However, Matt 1–23 does not clarify how these different punishments relate and whether they will coincide. Now, in 24:3, the disciples seem to assume that the destruction of the temple, the parousia of Jesus, and the completion of the age will unfold in close proximity if not simultaneously. This, in turn, sets up the expectation that Jesus's speech, in answering the disciples' questions, will also address the temporal relationship between the above events.

[27] Johnstone, "Jesus and the Climax," 261.
[28] See also Wilson, *When Will These Things Happen?*, 137–38; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 688; Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 235; Bonnard, *L'evangile selon saint Matthieu*, 347.

4.4.3 Summary of 24:1–3

These verses, which set the stage for a new scene, contain early and repetitive invocations of the frame of mystery according to Daniel and Matt 1–23. The model reader actualises these frames by making sense of the disciples' questions in 24:3 through the interpretative grid of mystery. They enquire about the destruction of the temple, the parousia of Jesus, and the completion of the age, assuming that the end of the temple, like the coming of the Son of Man, culminates in the end of the age. This verse raises the expectation that Jesus's speech will engage with not just the disciples' enquiry but also their presupposition.

4.5 Part I: The Destruction of the Temple, the Parousia of the Son of Man, and the End of the Age (Matt 24:4–35)

The central scholarly dispute concerning the main body of the Olivet Discourse pertains to its relationship with the disciples' enquiry in 24:3. A preterist interpretation suggests that Jesus only responds to the disciples' first question in speaking about the destruction of the temple.[29] A futurist interpretation suggests that Jesus only answers the second question in alluding to his parousia and the end of the age.[30] In contrast, a preterist-futurist interpretation depicts Jesus replying to both questions in referring to all the

[29] For example, see N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God 2 (London: SPCK, 1996), 339–67; A. Feuillet, "Le sens du mot Parousie dans l'Evangile de Matthieu: Comparaison entre Matth. XXIV et Jac. V, 1–11," in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*, ed. W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 262–72.
[30] For example, see Burnett, *Testament of Jesus-Sophia*; Sim, *Apocalyptic Eschatology in Matthew*, 99–108.

above events.[31] Finally, Peter G. Bolt charts an independent course by arguing that Jesus responds to neither question in choosing to focus instead on his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.[32]

While our analysis will engage this spectrum of interpretations, we will pay more attention to the following two streams of narrative-critical research. Firstly, the simple preterist-futurist view, which the most recent monograph-length treatments of Matt 24–25 have adopted.[33] Secondly, Bolt's view, with which few commentators have engaged extensively thus far.[34] Recent scholarly references to it have been favourable: Wright finds it a "fascinating suggestion," while David S. Schrock is "convinced."[35] Neither of them, however, offer a detailed defence of Bolt's interpretation.

4.5.1 Birth Pangs Preceding the End (24:4–14)

Jesus's speech commences with the imperative βλέπετε; in both Matt 24:4 and Mark 13:5, it introduces a warning against deception. In the light of the disciples' question

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[31] For example, see Macaskill, *Revealed Wisdom*, 175; Balabanski, *Eschatology in the Making*, 153–62; Booth, "First Jerusalem"; Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*.

[32] Peter G. Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance: Atonement in Mark's Gospel*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 18 (Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 90–91; Peter G. Bolt, "Mark 13: An Apocalyptic Precursor to the Passion Narrative," *The Reformed Theological Review* 54.1 (1995): 26. While Bolt's scholarly publications on the Olivet Discourse focus on Mark 13, the comments in his exposition of Matthew's Gospel indicate that he adopts a similar position with regard to Matt 24–25. See Peter G. Bolt, *Matthew: A Great Light Dawns*, Reading the Bible Today Series. (Sydney South: Aquila, 2014), 217.

[33] Booth, "First Jerusalem"; Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*.

[34] Bolt acknowledges that his analysis has "received … little interaction" despite being "occasionally noticed." Peter G. Bolt, *The Narrative Integrity of Mark 13:24–27*, Australian College of Theology Monograph Series (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2021), xii.

[35] N. T. Wright, *History and Eschatology: Jesus and the Promise of Natural Theology* (London: SPCK; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019), 307 n. 62; David S. Schrock, *The Royal Priesthood and the Glory of God*, Short Studies in Biblical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022), 136. See also Jeremy R. Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 103.

about signs, Bolt concludes that they are in danger of being led astray by false leaders performing miracles.[36] In other words, the warning specifically targets the disciples' fixation with signs, thereby communicating a rejection of their enquiry.

In fact, Bolt argues that not just the warning, but also the speech more broadly, ignores the disciples' questions. Instead of answering their enquiry about signs, Jesus deliberately cautions them against such a perilous preoccupation.[37] Also, instead of replying to their question about timing, Jesus intentionally shifts their focus from the temple's destruction onto his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.[38]

Bolt's conclusion that the Olivet Discourse is not about the devastation of the temple or the completion of the age can be traced back to his interpretation of the warning at the start of the speech. However, the Matthean Jesus is by no means opposed to signs in principle, since he mentions τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in 24:30. In the light of this phrase, the warning in 24:4, contrary to Bolt, is unlikely to be an attack on the disciples' concern with signs and therefore a rejection of their enquiry in 24:3.

On closer examination, 24:4 targets the misinterpretation of signs rather than signs per se. In 24:6, Jesus issues another exhortation, ὁρᾶτε μὴ θροεῖσθε, in parallel to the earlier warning, and proceeds to explain that messianic pretenders must rise, and wars and rumours of wars must happen. Following this explanation is the adversative clause ἀλλ' οὔπω ἐστὶν τὸ τέλος, where ἀλλά introduces a correction to the preceding statement.[39] That is, while messianic pretenders must come, and wars and rumours of war must occur—the end nonetheless remains distant (οὔπω). Consequently, Jesus's

[36] Bolt, "Mark 13," 27.
[37] Bolt, "Mark 13," 29.
[38] Bolt, "Mark 13," 30–31.
[39] Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 55–56.

imperatives in 24:4 and 6 do not stop the disciples from enquiring about signs; rather, he is cautioning them against misinterpreting the above events as signifying the end.

Furthermore, Jesus's vocabulary in 24:4 and 6, closely associated with Matthean mystery, suggests that his speech contains revelation about the destruction of the temple, the parousia of Jesus, and the end of the age. The occurrence of βλέπετε and ὁρᾶτε in these verses, as part of Matthew's repeated use of βλέπω, ὁράω, and ἀκούω throughout the Olivet Discourse, echoes 13:11–15, the seminal passage concerning the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.[40] This suggests that the start of Jesus's speech (24:4–6), like its narrative introduction (24:1–3), invokes the frame of mystery. The model reader actualises this frame by interpreting Jesus's speech through the lens of mystery, especially its pattern of revelation, whereby the asking of a question prompts further explanation. This, in turn, raises the expectation that Jesus's speech, contrary to Bolt, will provide more disclosure regarding the topics of the disciples' enquiry.

In short, Bolt's analysis indicates that a literary-critical approach does not necessitate the interpretation that Jesus's speech focuses on either the destruction of the temple or the consummation of the age. A narrative reading alert to Matthean mystery, however, anticipates that Jesus's reply will indeed explore both events.

Nevertheless, scholars continue to puzzle over which verses in Jesus's speech relate to the destruction of the temple, and which relate instead to his parousia and the completion of the age. 24:4–8 alludes to false leadership, wars and rumours of wars, nations and kingdoms rising against each other, and famines and earthquakes—which Jesus depicts as the beginning of birth pains (ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων, 24:8). The word ὠδίν

[40] βλέπω occurs in 24:2 and 4; ὁράω occurs in 24:6, 15, 30, and 33, as well as 25:37, 38, 39, and 44; ἀκούω occurs in 24:6. Likewise, the theme of understanding in 13:11–15 appears in 24:15 and 32.

denotes the pain associated with childbirth, and the phrase ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων in 24:8 potentially elicits the question as to what the end point might be. If the excruciating events of 24:4–8 are simply the beginning, then what do the birth pains eventually culminate in? More precisely, what is τὸ τέλος in 24:6?

One clue to the referent of τὸ τέλος is the image of birth pangs conjured by ὠδίν. Pitre, in his work on messianic tribulation, contends that this image is "not merely a common metaphor" but has a "more specific cluster of connotations surrounding it."[41] In particular, he infers from a range of Old Testament and Second Temple Jewish texts that these birth pangs refer to the woes preceding the arrival of the messiah and the new messianic age.[42] This supports the complex preterist-futurist perspective of the Olivet Discourse (as espoused by Luz), where τὸ τέλος in 24:6 refers to the return of Jesus and the end of the age.[43]

However, the use of ὠδίν does not necessitate that τὸ τέλος must mean the end of the age (rather than the temple). Pitre suggests as well that the Old Testament and Second Temple Jewish literature also deploy the image of birth pangs in relation to the woes preceding the destruction of a city.[44] For example, Jer 6:23–24 and Mic 4:10 respectively apply ὠδίν and its cognate verb ὠδίνω to their depictions of Jerusalem's sufferings at the hands of a foreign nation.[45] This supports the simple preterist-futurist perspective of the Olivet Discourse (as advocated by France), where τὸ τέλος in 24:6 refers to the devastation of Jerusalem and its temple.[46]

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[41] Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation*, 229.
[42] Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation*, 229–30.
[43] Luz, *Matthew 21–28: A Commentary*, 192 n. 87.
[44] Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation*, 229.
[45] Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation*, 229.
[46] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 903. See also Booth, "First Jerusalem," 192–93.

Another clue to the referent of τὸ τέλος can be found in 24:14, where the term appears again. However, we should first ascertain whether τὸ τέλος in 24:6 and 14 are identical. The answer depends on the relationship between 24:4–8 and 9–14. The latter verses begin with τότε, which denotes either "at that time" or "thereupon."[47] If its use in 24:9 means "thereupon," then the events of 24:9–14 only happen after the events of the preceding verses—in which case, τὸ τέλος in 24:6 and 14 need not be identical.

The alternative meaning "at that time" is preferable, since the phenomenon of false leaders who πολλοὺς πλανήσουσιν in 24:5 occurs again in 24:11, where false prophets πλανήσουσιν πολλούς. This reiteration suggests that the events of 24:9–14 do not happen after, but at the time of, the incidents described in 24:4–8. The development across these two sets of verses is not a progression of time but of particularity, whereby 24:9–14 develops the early birth pains (ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων) that specifically afflict followers of Jesus.[48] Therefore, τὸ τέλος in 24:6 and 24:14 probably refer to an identical end point transpiring after the concurrent tribulations of 24:4–8 and 9–12.

According to 24:14, τὸ τέλος will only happen after the proclamation of the gospel ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ. For this reason, scholars adopting a complex preterist-futurist position interpret τὸ τέλος as the parousia of Jesus and the end of the age. For example, Balabanski understands the phrase ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ to convey the completion of the mission to the Gentiles, and τὸ τέλος to mean "the End."[49] By the time Jerusalem fell in AD 70, the gospel had only penetrated as far west as Greece, Asia

[47] τότε, BDAG, 1012–13.
[48] Unlike, say, wars and earthquakes in 24:4–8, which affect believers and nonbelievers alike, persecution for the sake of Jesus's name, falling away, lawlessness, and one's love growing cold in 24:9–12 are struggles that only believers experience. See Wolfgang Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament 1 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1998), 412; Evans, *Matthew*, 404; Bonnard, *L'evangile selon saint Matthieu*, 350.
[49] Balabanski, *Eschatology in the Making*, 154.

Minor, Rome, possibly Spain, and as far south as parts of North Africa.[50] In the light of the phrase ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ, identifying τὸ τέλος in 24:14 with anything other than the end of the age seems virtually impossible.

Nevertheless, the use of ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ does not strictly determine that τὸ τέλος must mean the end of the age (rather than the temple). The word οἰκουμένη, which occurs only once in Matthew's narrative, appears elsewhere in the New Testament with respect to the proclamation of the gospel. According to Rom 10:18, the gospel εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἐξῆλθεν, even εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης. A comparable statement can be found in Col 1:6, which affirms that the word of truth ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστὶν καρποφορούμενον καὶ αὐξανόμενον.[51] As documents broadly contemporaneous with Matthew's Gospel, Romans and Colossians suggest that Matt 24:14 was written and read in a milieu where the gospel was perceived to have already begun spreading ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ. This supports the simple preterist-futurist perspective of the Olivet Discourse (as adopted by Booth), where τὸ τέλος in 24:14 refers to the fall of Jerusalem and its temple in AD 70.[52]

Contrary to the interpretations of τὸ τέλος as either the end of the age (Balabanski, Luz) or the end of the temple (France, Booth), Nolland argues instead that the term in 24:6 and 14 encompasses both events:

> [i]t can hardly be satisfactory to refer [τὸ τέλος] to "the completion of the age" of v. 3 and to separate this from the destruction of the temple. But the diction can hardly refer to the destruction of the temple and not to the completion of the age. The assumption seems to be that the destruction of

[50] Mark Keown, "An Imminent Parousia and Christian Mission: Did the New Testament Writers Really Expect Jesus's Imminent Return?," in *Christian Origins and the Establishment of the Early Jesus Movement*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 12 (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 247–48. He concludes that "[t]he gospel was certainly not fully established in or beyond the Roman regions, and large parts of what we call Asia, Europe, and Africa were barely, if at all, touched."
[51] Also, Col 1:23 describes the gospel as such: τοῦ κηρυχθέντος ἐν πάσῃ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν.
[52] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 192–93. See also France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 909–10.

> the temple and the completion of the age are closely connected to each other.[53]

Indeed, in 24:3, the disciples enquire about the end of the age in response to the prediction of the end of the temple (24:2), probably because they assume, in the light of Danielic mystery, that both incidents overlap. 24:4–14, following immediately after the disciples' questions, arguably refers to this larger complex of events without explicitly distinguishing the destruction of the temple from the completion of the age. In other words, for now, Jesus may be depicting the end in broad brushstrokes, issuing statements that do not differentiate between the two end points.

The interpretation of τὸ τέλος as a wider complex of end points is advantageous vis-à-vis the limitations of the two alternative positions. On the one hand, the reading that restricts τὸ τέλος to the destruction of the temple does not give ample consideration to the final clause in 24:6, ἀλλ' οὔπω ἐστὶν τὸ τέλος. As mentioned above, ἀλλά introduces a clarification of the preceding explanation, δεῖ γὰρ γενέσθαι. The events that must take place include deceivers claiming to be the Christ, and the clause ἀλλ' οὔπω ἐστὶν τὸ τέλος clarifies that these incidents do not signify τὸ τέλος. Crucially, this clarification presupposes that τὸ τέλος will only come when the true messiah arrives. In fact, Jesus goes on to say precisely this in 24:23–31: the end of the age, which will not come through the rise of messianic pretenders (24:23–28), will arrive instead at the parousia of the Son of Man (24:29–31). Therefore, τὸ τέλος in 24:6 is unlikely to refer to the devastation of the temple alone, to the exclusion of the return of the Christ.

On the other hand, the reading that confines τὸ τέλος to the end of the age does not sufficiently account for Matthew's selection of words in 24:3, 6, and 14. In contrast

[53] Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 963.

to 24:6 and 14, where τέλος appears, 24:3 uses instead συντέλεια to denote the completion of the age. Based on this variety in vocabulary, Jeannine K. Brown and Kyle Roberts attempt to differentiate the end point of 24:6 and 14 (τὸ τέλος) from that of 24:3 (τῆς … συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος).[54]

Brown and Roberts perhaps overstate their case, since the shift from συντέλεια to τέλος may simply demonstrate "the richness of Matthew's vocabulary."[55] Nevertheless, elsewhere in Matthew's narrative (13:39, 40, 49; 28:20), he exclusively uses συντέλεια, a word associated with Danielic mystery (see 4.4.2.1), to speak of the consummation of the age. Also, in Dan 9:27 (LXX), συντέλεια and τέλος appear in proximity and seem to have distinct even if related referents.[56] More specifically, τέλος occurs in relation to ἡ θυσία and ἡ σπονδή being removed, thereby pointing to the desecration of the temple. As for Dan 9:26–27 (Theo.), where συντέλεια and τέλος appear together as well, τέλος occurs specifically in relation to the war that destroys τὴν πόλιν of Jerusalem and τὸ ἅγιον of the temple.[57] Consequently, τὸ τέλος in Matt 24:6 and 14 may be more than a synonym for the phrase τῆς … συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος in 24:3.

In short, the evidence favours, as the most credible referent of τὸ τέλος, a complex of end points that does not overtly differentiate the destruction of the temple from the completion of the age. This interpretation fits with most, if not all, of the data discussed: ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων (24:8) and ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ (24:14); the disciples' implicit assumption (24:3); the presupposition that τὸ τέλος will come when the true messiah

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[54] Jeannine K. Brown and Kyle Roberts, *Matthew*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 216.
[55] Charles L. Quarles, *Matthew*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2017), 282.
[56] Quarles, *Matthew*, 282.
[57] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 205.

arrives (24:6; cf. 24:23–31); the varied vocabulary of συντέλεια (24:3) and τέλος (24:6, 14).

Nevertheless, Jesus, in using τὸ τέλος as a collective term, is not necessarily endorsing the disciples' assumption in 24:3. Cooper analyses in Matt 3 that "two events described within a speech as contemporaneous" can be "separated or *resolved* in the subsequent narrative."[58] We will apply Cooper's insight to the Olivet Discourse and argue that the end of the temple and the end of the age, ostensibly indistinguishable in 24:3–14, get "separated or *resolved*" later in Jesus's speech.[59] In other words, Jesus will increasingly differentiate the two end points as his speech unfolds.

Summary of 24:4–14

24:4–14 commences Jesus's reply to the disciples and continues to invoke mystery through its use of βλέπετε and ὁρᾶτε, thereby reinforcing the early and repetitive framing in 24:1–3. Interpreting the speech through the lens of the twofold form of mystery strengthens the expectation that Jesus will disclose further the mysteries of the destruction of the temple, the parousia of the Son of Man, and the completion of the age. In the meantime, 24:4–14 clarifies that the distressing incidents in these verses are only a beginning; they do not signify the end of the temple or the age.

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[58] "In Matthew 3, we saw how two events described within a speech as contemporaneous were separated or *resolved* in the subsequent narrative.... John the Baptist described the imminent arrival of one after him (3.11) who will execute a separating judgment (3.12). However, when this one does arrive in the very next narrative episode (3.13–17), there is no separating judgment.... [I]t is not that John spoke incorrectly, but that he spoke imprecisely. Subsequent events separate the two events temporally, while retaining their close association." Cooper, *Incorporated Servanthood*, 207, italics original.

[59] Cooper, *Incorporated Servanthood*, 207, italics original.

4.5.2 The Destruction of the Temple and the Great Tribulation (24:15–28)

In 24:15, the use of οὖν for the first time in the Olivet Discourse marks the start of another section in tight continuity with the preceding material.[60] Nevertheless, the nature of the connection between 24:15 and the previous verses is "not immediately clear."[61] Olmstead presents the resumptive οὖν as one option, whereby 24:15 reverts to the theme of tribulation that precedes "the parenthetical comment at 24:14."[62]

However, the statement regarding τὸ τέλος in 24:14 should not be regarded as merely "parenthetical," considering that τὸ τέλος appears as well in 24:6.[63] The thrust of the previous section (24:4–14) is not simply that there will be tribulations, but that they are simply ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων which do not announce τὸ τέλος. According to 24:6 and 14, the end will only happen after the birth pains run their course and the gospel is preached ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ.

The inferential οὖν is thus preferable. In the preceding verses, Jesus warned against being led astray (24:4) and being alarmed (24:6), precisely because τὸ τέλος remains distant. Therefore (οὖν), only when the end draws close, as people in Judea witness τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, do they need to flee to the mountains without delay (24:15–16).

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[60] In her study of conjunctions in Matthew's Gospel, Stephanie Black identifies οὖν as "a signal … of continuation and retrospect" in both narrative and exposition. Stephanie L. Black, *Sentence Conjunction in the Gospel of Matthew: καί, δέ, τότε, γάρ, οὖν and Asyndeton in Narrative Discourse*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 216 (London: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 273, 280. See also Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 43.
[61] Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 968.
[62] Olmstead, *Matthew 15–28*, 242.
[63] Olmstead, *Matthew 15–28*, 242.

The sign of the end, according to 24:15, is τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως. The use of ἐρήμωσις, the cognate noun of ἔρημος in 23:38, indicates that the desolation of 24:15 refers to that of the temple; so τὸ τέλος in view from 24:15 onwards is specifically the end of the temple. However, the genitive of τῆς ἐρημώσεως is, as Theophilos remarks, "notoriously difficult to define."[64] One option is the epexegetical genitive (or genitive of apposition), whereby both τὸ βδέλυγμα and τῆς ἐρημώσεως refer to the same thing: the abomination, that is, the desolation.[65] Another option is the resultative genitive (or genitive of product), whereby the abomination (τὸ βδέλυγμα) brings about the desolation (τῆς ἐρημώσεως).[66]

While "[t]he exact sense of the genitive construction is impossible to know with certainty," the latter option (resultative genitive) is more plausible.[67] Since τὸ βδέλυγμα indicates that τὸ τέλος is near, and this end relates to the temple's desolation—then Matthew is unlikely to equate the abomination with the desolation (epexegetical genitive). In other words, τὸ βδέλυγμα is unlikely to be the very desolation it signals as imminent. Conversely, if the abomination brings about the desolation (resultative genitive)—then the abomination serves as a warning that the end of the temple will soon take place.

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[64] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 120.
[65] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 120; Olmstead, *Matthew 15–28*, 242. While Davies and Allison opt for "an epexegetical genitive," their explanation that τὸ βδέλυγμα "either 'makes desolate' or 'causes horror' or ... both at the same time" suggests the genitive of product as a more accurate label. Compare Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 346, with Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 106.
[66] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 121. Olmstead identifies the attributive genitive as an alternative ("the desolating abomination"), but this arguably overlaps with the resultative genitive. In order for the abomination to be characterised as desolating, it necessarily brings about desolation. Olmstead, *Matthew 15–28*, 242.
[67] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 184.

The rest of 24:15 identifies the phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως as τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου. Here, Matthew invokes the frame of Daniel and prompts the model reader to discern the cue, using the parenthetical exhortation ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοείτω. In other words, the model reader actualises the frame by understanding τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως in its Danielic context.

While commentators generally agree that τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως is a citation of Dan 9:26–27, 11:31, and 12:11, the consensus ends here. Robert H. Stein delineates eight possible interpretations with regard to the incident that lies behind the parallel quotation in Mark 13.[68] These range from the historical referent of an event that happened before or during the Jewish-Roman war (of which Stein identifies five possibilities) to the eschatological referent of the activity of the anti-Christ that will happen in the future.[69]

An examination of Dan 9:26–27, 11:31, and 12:11 suggests the following characteristics of the incident signified by τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως. For a start, mystery according to 11:31 and 12:11 (LXX) associates the event with the removal of the temple sacrifice (ἀποστήσουσι τὴν θυσίαν and ἀποσταθῇ ἡ θυσία); the former verse refers as well to a foreign army defiling the sanctuary (μιανοῦσι τὸ ἅγιον).[70] As for mystery according to 9:26–27 (LXX), these verses portray βδέλυγμα τῶν ἐρημώσεων with respect to the temple (ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερὸν), against the backdrop of a foreign ruler

[68] These eight interpretations are not exhaustive but are only "[s]ome of the more important" options. Robert H. Stein, *Jesus, the Temple and the Coming Son of Man: A Commentary on Mark 13* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 90–91. See also Turner, *Matthew*, 579.
[69] Stein, *Jesus, the Temple*, 90–91.
[70] Similarly, Dan 11:31 and 12:11 (Theo.) associate βδέλυγμα with the removal of the regular temple offering (μεταστήσουσιν τὸν ἐνδελεχισμόν and παραλλάξεως τοῦ ἐνδελεχισμοῦ καὶ τοῦ δοθῆναι); 11:31 refers as well to a foreign army profaning the sanctuary (βεβηλώσουσιν τὸ ἁγίασμα).

devastating the city and the sanctuary (καὶ βασιλεία ἐθνῶν φθερεῖ τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὸ ἅγιον).[71]

Accordingly, interpreting τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως in its Danielic context points to an incident within the following parameters. Firstly, it relates to the destruction of the temple (Dan 11:31; 12:11). Secondly, it is associated with the fall of Jerusalem (Dan 9:26–27) happening at the hands of a foreign power (Dan 11:31).

To the above two parameters, one may add a third and fourth, in the light of the exhortation in Matt 24:16, οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη. That is, thirdly, the subject of the clause, οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ, suggests an incident localised to the region of Judea. Fourthly, the instruction to flee to the mountains suggests an event happening early enough for onlookers in Judea to have sufficient time to escape.

One could add a final, fifth, parameter. Since τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως relates to the destruction of the temple, the phrase specifically addresses the disciples' first question, πότε ταῦτα ἔσται. In 24:3, ταῦτα refers to the earlier prediction of the literal dismantling of the temple (24:2), which Jesus issued in reaction to the disciples' admiration of its physical buildings (24:1). Consequently, the phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, as an answer to the enquiry regarding ταῦτα in 24:3, signals as imminent the literal devastation of the physical temple in Jerusalem. Conversely, the phrase in its Matthean context of 24:1–3 probably does not connote a nonphysical desecration of a metaphorical temple.

These five parameters yield the following profile of the Matthean τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως. The event points to the literal destruction of the physical temple as

[71] Likewise, Dan 9:26–27 (Theo.) portrays βδέλυγμα τῶν ἐρημώσεων with respect to the temple (ἐπὶ τὸ ἱερόν), against the backdrop of the devastation of the city and the sanctuary (καὶ τὴν πόλιν καὶ τὸ ἅγιον διαφθερεῖ).

near; it does not, in and of itself, entail the complete devastation. Rather, the incident happens during an early stage of an attack on Jerusalem, when people in Judea can still anticipate the fall of the city and its temple and seek safety in the mountains.

What impedes scholarly attempts at discerning τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως is that proposed incidents tend to conform only in part with the above profile. For example, Davies and Allison are inclined to identify the incident as "some future, eschatological defilement and destruction, and perhaps even activities of an anti-Christ," distinct from "the destruction of the temple in AD 70."[72] Such a futurist interpretation risks dissociating the referent of τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως from its physical and geographical characteristics: the physical dismantling of the temple in Jerusalem and the necessity of a swift withdrawal from Judea.

Preterist interpretations of the phrase risk dissociating the referent from its temporal features. According to Theophilos, "within the Matthean narrative, the βδέλυγμα ('abomination') refers to Israel's infidelity, particularly her rejection of Jesus as Messianic King."[73] However, this infidelity and rejection, which manifested itself most acutely in some of the Jews' involvement in crucifying Jesus, did not necessitate an immediate retreat by onlookers in Judea. As for Caligula's attempt at erecting his statue in the temple in AD 39–40, just about thirty years prior to the invasion of Jerusalem—this also would not have required the people of Judea to depart without hesitation.[74] Conversely, Titus's entry into the sanctuary of the temple took place at

[72] Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 345–46.
[73] Theophilos, *Abomination of Desolation*, 230.
[74] In any case, Caligula's order was not actually implemented. Evans, *Matthew*, 406.

the very end of the Jewish-Roman war; this would have left no time for the inhabitants of Judea to seek safety elsewhere.[75]

Perhaps the interpretation that fits best with the profile mentioned before is Luke 21:20, which construes τὸ βδέλυγμα in Mark 13:14 as a military encroachment on Jerusalem indicative of impending desolation (ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς). As broadly contemporaneous documents, Luke 21:20 suggests that Matt 24:15 was written and read in a milieu where τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως was perceived as an attack on Jerusalem culminating in the temple's desolation.[76] While Luke 21:20 may not have been an interpretation of Matt 24:15 per se, it nevertheless sheds light on how τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως had been understood in the first century.

Indeed, interpreting the Matthean τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως as armies approaching Jerusalem accords with the proposed physical, geographical, and temporal features of the referent. An impending attack on Jerusalem signifies that the full devastation of the city and its temple hovers on the immediate horizon. Also, there may still be time during the preliminary stage of a siege for people in the wider region of Judea to seek refuge elsewhere, as long as they depart in haste.

A possible counterargument is that this reading fits better with Mark 13:14, where τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως is qualified by the phrase ἑστηκότα ὅπου οὐ δεῖ. In contrast, τὸ βδέλυγμα in Matt 24:15 is qualified by the more precise statement ἑστὸς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ. Many Matthean commentators understand τόπον ἅγιον to mean the

[75] By that time, "the opportunity to flee was long past." Evans, *Matthew*, 406.
[76] Going back to the earlier discussion of the genitival τῆς ἐρημώσεως, the comparison of Luke 21:20 with Matt 24:15 supports the argument that the epexegetical genitive is less likely. Since τὸ βδέλυγμα, the attack of Jerusalem, signals that ἤγγικεν ἡ ἐρήμωσις αὐτῆς, this abomination will precede, and should not be in apposition with, the desolation.

temple.[77] While the interpretation of an army beginning to encircle Jerusalem accords with the description that it stands where it ought not (Mark 13:14), this reading does not accord equally well with the description that it stands in the temple itself (Matt 24:15).

However, the phrase ἑστὸς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ arguably alludes to Jerusalem rather than the temple. Matthew's replacement of Mark's masculine ἑστηκότα with the neuter ἑστός specifies that the participle qualifies the neuter τὸ βδέλυγμα and not the feminine τῆς ἐρημώσεως. By the time people in Judea see τὸ βδέλυγμα standing in the temple itself, the end of the temple has already transpired. In other words, interpreting the term τόπῳ ἁγίῳ as the temple accords less well with the function of the abomination as a sign that the temple's desolation is near (or has just begun) but has yet to happen in full. Carson, who argues for τόπῳ ἁγίῳ to mean the temple, acknowledges this problem: "by the time the Romans had actually desecrated the temple in AD 70, it was too late for anyone in the city to flee."[78]

Furthermore, while τὸ ἅγιον in Dan 9:26 refers to the temple sanctuary, the adjective ἅγιος modifies τὴν πόλιν in the immediate context of 9:24 (Theo.); likewise, ἅγιος modifies τὴν πόλιν in 3:28 (LXX and Theo.). In Second Temple Jewish literature, the use of ἅγιος with τόπος occurs in relation to not just the temple (2 Macc 8:17) but also the land more generally (2 Macc 2:18).[79] As for Matthew's narrative, putting aside ἅγιος in 24:15, the adjective never appears with respect to the temple—but occurs twice with regard to the land of Jerusalem (4:5; 27:53). This suggests that the phrase ἐν τόπῳ

[77] See, for example, Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 373; Carson, "Matthew," 562; Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 970; Gundry, *Matthew*, 482; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 700; Luz, *Matthew 21–28: A Commentary*, 196.
[78] Carson, "Matthew," 562.
[79] Gundry, *Matthew*, 482.

ἁγίῳ in 24:15 may refer to the city. Going back to τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως … ἑστὸς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ, the reading that τὸ βδέλυγμα refers obliquely to a preliminary attack on Jerusalem remains possible, even tenable.

After urging hasty flight to the mountains in 24:16–19, Jesus exhorts prayer in 24:20 that this does not happen on an inopportune occasion such as winter or the sabbath. The following verse (24:21) contains the connective γάρ, which introduces an explanation of the background to the preceding exhortation.[80] In 24:21, Jesus explicates that as armies approach Jerusalem, leading to the destruction of the temple, there will be θλῖψις μεγάλη.

While θλῖψις occurred earlier in 24:9, as part of the beginning of the birth pains (ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων), what sets the suffering of 24:21 apart is its description as "great" (μεγάλη). Jesus further emphasises the remarkable character of this tribulation in the statement οἵα οὐ γέγονεν ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς κόσμου ἕως τοῦ νῦν οὐδ οὐ μὴ γένηται (24:21). Here, the correlative οἵα followed by οὐ rules out all prior suffering from outstripping this great distress in its severity. Furthermore, the double negative οὐ μή with the subjunctive γένηται emphatically denies that any tribulation will supersede this great distress.[81] In other words, θλῖψις μεγάλη in 24:21 is not just any great distress but *the* great distress.

The focus on the unrivalled harshness of this tribulation invokes the frame of Danielic mystery. The model reader actualises this frame by interpreting the phrase θλῖψις μεγάλη through the lens of mystery according to Dan 12. Indeed, Matt 24:21 aligns discernibly with Dan 12:1, which features ἡ ἡμέρα θλίψεως (LXX; cf. καιρὸς

[80] Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 52.
[81] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 468.

θλίψεως in Theo.) and uses οἵα with γίνομαι to establish its exceptional intensity. [82] In its immediate context, ἡ ἡμέρα θλίψεως or καιρὸς θλίψεως is precisely the end-time tribulation that gives way to final judgement, where people will experience everlasting life or contempt, and the wise will rise to shine like stars forever (12:2–3). In other words, ἡ ἡμέρα θλίψεως or καιρὸς θλίψεως refers to *the* great distress preceding the end of the age (καιροῦ συντελείας, 12:4; συντέλειαν ἡμερῶν, 12:13). This suggests that the corresponding θλῖψις μεγάλη in Matt 24:21 refers to the same distress culminating in the completion of the age (τῆς ... συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, 24:3).

In contrast to this interpretation, some scholars confine the great tribulation of 24:21 to the attack on Jerusalem because of the clause οὐ μὴ γένηται. According to Carson, "if what happens next is ... the new heaven and the new earth, it seems inane to say that such 'great distress' will not take place again."[83] No doubt this seems inane—but only if one understands οὐ μὴ γένηται in a literalistic fashion. However, the Old Testament deploys similar statements in its descriptions of suffering in order to emphasise the horror of the locust attack in Exod 10:14 and the grief over the slaughter of the firstborn in Exod 11:6.[84] These verses set a precedent for reading οὐ μὴ γένηται in Matt 24:21 as a stock description of overwhelming trauma. In other words, the clause does not demand that the great distress must literally happen sometime during the middle of human history and cannot culminate in the end of the age.

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[82] On the echo of Dan 12:1 in Matt 24:21, see Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 209–10; Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 374; Harrington, *Gospel of Matthew*, 337; Turner, *Matthew*, 578; Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium 16,21–28,20*, 235.
[83] Carson, "Matthew," 563. See also Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 185; Booth, "First Jerusalem," 196–97. Others, however, remain unpersuaded: "[g]iven that Dn. 12.1–2 anticipates that the sufferings will give way to an ultimate deliverance involving resurrection to everlasting life, the addition of 'and never will be' is an easy and natural development." Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 975.
[84] See also Joel 2:2.

Other commentators widen the referent of θλῖψις μεγάλη in 24:21–22 to include both an attack on Jerusalem and a subsequent distress immediately before the completion of the age. For example, Osborne, espousing a telescopic-fulfilment perspective of the Olivet Discourse, states that αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι in 24:22 "refer[s] to the destruction of Jerusalem as a foreshadow of the final time of tribulation connected with the appearance of the Antichrist."[85] However, 24:21–22 stresses the unrivalled severity of the great distress in those days (αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι) as the superlative duress of all human history. This implies that the tribulation is a single phenomenon and not two distinct incidents separated over time. In this way, the evidence favours interpreting θλῖψις μεγάλη and αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι as signifying one great distress that begins with the destruction of the temple and extends to the end of the age.

This, in turn, suggests that Jesus's speech from 24:21 onwards begins to challenge the disciples' presupposition in 24:3. In the light of mystery according to Dan 12, Matt 24:21 indicates that the end of the age will only happen in the future, after the great distress. Consequently, if the fall of Jerusalem and its temple precipitates a great tribulation that occurs until the completion of the age—then the end of the temple cannot be conflated with the end of the age.

In other words, 24:21–28 begins to disentangle the devastation of the temple from the parousia of the Son of Man and the completion of the age. In fact, Jesus cautions the disciples in 24:23–26 against precipitous claims concerning the coming of the Christ during the temple's destruction and the great distress: τότε ἐάν τις ὑμῖν εἴπῃ· ἰδοὺ ὧδε ὁ χριστός, ἤ· ὧδε, μὴ πιστεύσητε. Furthermore, Jesus clarifies in 24:27–28

[85] Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 886. See also Turner, *Matthew*, 578. Further critique of the telescopic-fulfilment approach to the Olivet Discourse can be found in Booth, "First Jerusalem," 99–102.

that his return will be a public spectacle that everyone will witness for themselves. Such statements effectively keep "the *parousia* and the end of the age decisively apart from the coming destruction of the temple."[86]

Nevertheless, one may still keep the devastation of the temple in close temporal proximity to the completion of the age—but only if one assumes that the great distress in the interim will be brief. While the first and third clauses of 24:22 promise that αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι of the great distress will be cut short, the second clause gives the impression that this duress will nevertheless last longer than expected. Jesus portrays the great tribulation as affecting not just the inhabitants of Judea (οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ, 24:16) but also the rest of humanity (πᾶσα σάρξ, 24:22). In other words, πᾶσα σάρξ indicates "dass wir uns jetzt in diesem erweiterten Horizont bewegen," from the prior focus on "die ganze judäische Bevölkerung" in 24:16.[87]

We therefore maintain, contrary to Carson and Osborne, that θλῖψις μεγάλη in 24:21–22 begins with an attack on Jerusalem, extends beyond the temple's destruction, and expands beyond Judea to engulf all humanity, before ushering in the end of the age. Shively summarises that

> a desolating sacrilege will initiate a time of tribulation for Jesus' followers that will continue until the coming of the Son of Man.... The impending judgment on the temple, then, may be a harbinger of the end, but that judgment itself is not the end.[88]

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[86] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 918.
[87] Maier, *Matthäus: Kapitel 15–28*, 421, 422.
[88] Shively, *Apocalyptic Imagination in Mark*, 200–201. Her comments pertain to Mark 13:20–24 but aptly describe as well the corresponding verses in Matt 24.

In other words, the great distress will commence, but not cease, with the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, and will continue for a non-specified (albeit shortened) period—with the end of the age thereby belonging to the future.[89]

Summary of 24:15–28

These verses build on the preceding section by introducing an incident that signifies τὸ τέλος as imminent. That is, τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, which, in its Danielic and Matthean contexts, most probably refers to an initial attack on Jerusalem (τὸ βδέλυγμα) that culminates in the desolation of the temple (τῆς ἐρημώσεως). The end of Jerusalem and its temple will unleash the great distress of the present age, which will expand beyond Judea to afflict the rest of the world. In this way, Jesus's speech begins to challenge the disciples' assumption. Even after the temple meets its end, the great distress must run its course prior to the return of the Christ and the completion of the age.

4.5.3 The Parousia of the Son of Man (24:29–31)

The two temporal markers in 24:29, εὐθέως and μετά, together with the developmental δέ, signal a further stage in Jesus's temporal exposition.[90] In this verse, μετὰ τὴν θλῖψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων hearkens back to the phrases θλῖψις μεγάλη and αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι (24:21–22). These indicate that 24:29 marks a new section delineating the event that follows from the great distress.

[89] The great distress is shortened but not necessarily short.
[90] Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 31.

According to Konradt, εὐθέως in 24:29 indicates "dass Matthäus das Ende als nahe erwartet hat."[91] However, Matthew's expectation regarding the parousia can only be described as imminent if the great distress in 24:21–22 and 29 is confined to the attack on Jerusalem and its temple. As mentioned above (4.5.2), θλῖψις μεγάλη and αἱ ἡμέραι ἐκεῖναι of 24:21–22 commence, but do not cease, with the end of the temple; the great distress will continue until the end of the age.[92]

Within the spectrum of preterist-futurist interpretations, the main dispute concerns whether 24:29–31 falls under the preterist or the futurist portions of Jesus's speech. Do these verses refer to the destruction of the temple or to the parousia of the Son of Man and the end of the age? Wright and France argue that 24:29–31 pertain to the Jewish-Roman war; subsequent preterist readings of the verses draw on significant aspects of their argument.[93]

A crucial aspect of Wright's analysis involves promoting the right reading of the language of the sun, moon, and stars in Mark 13:24–25 and the parallel verses. According to him, the imagery does not denote the "physical collapse of the space-time world" commonly associated with the end of the age; in fact, he declares such interpretation as "crass literalism."[94] Rather, he considers the cosmic language of 13:24–25 metaphorical, highlighting the earth-shattering impact of "socio-political and military catastrophe" in history.[95]

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[91] Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 376. Though he also concedes that in 24:36, "[a]uf Terminspekulationen hat sich Matthäus allerdings nicht eingelassen."
[92] In Konradt's defence, he acknowledges that the great distress of 24:21–22 "nicht bloß wie V. 15–20 zurückblickt, sondern (auch) Gegenwart und Zukunft einbezieht." Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 374.
[93] While France takes a simple preterist-futurist view of the Olivet Discourse, with Matt 24:36 onwards focusing on the second coming of Jesus, Wright takes a purely preterist view of the entire speech.
[94] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory*, 361.
[95] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory*, 361.

However, Wright's contrast between the "crass literalism" of a futurist reading and the poetic sensitivity of a preterist reading arguably amounts to a false dichotomy.[96] Indeed, one could subscribe to a metaphorical interpretation of Mark 13:24–25 and its parallels while contending that the imagery points to the parousia of Jesus and the end of the age. For example, Sloan presents the imagery of 13:24–25 as a poetic depiction of the glory of the final appearance of the Son of Man.[97] His analysis strikes a modest balance:

> [w]hether Mark uses the imagery exclusively poetically or expects actual cosmic occurrences is unclear; that he might expect such phenomena does not mean the statements in 13:24–25 necessarily devolve into predictions of a space-time collapse. It takes seriously, however, the fact that Mark narrates "darkness" at Jesus' crucifixion.[98]

Likewise, our study acknowledges the poetic force of the cosmic language in Matt 24:29, in its portrayal of the parousia of Jesus, without precluding the possibility of a literal fulfilment of the images.

Nevertheless, we counter-propose that 24:29 connotes not so much the glory of the parousia, as Sloan argues, but the cosmos-shaking import of this coming. In 24:3, the disciples, probably informed by Danielic mystery, ask two questions presupposing that the destruction of the temple marks the completion of the age. As mentioned above (4.4.2.2), the temple, according to the Second Temple Jewish worldview, was regarded as the cosmos in miniature; its dismantling would have been tantamount to the dissolution of the present creation and age. In contrast, 24:29 clarifies that the event that truly shakes the cosmos is not the destruction of the temple but the parousia of the

[96] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory*, 361.
[97] Sloan, *Mark 13*, 133. Another example is Johnstone's reading of Matt 24:29. Johnstone, "Jesus and the Climax," 281–82.
[98] Sloan, *Mark 13*, 133.

Son of Man—the very arrival that will bring the present age to pass following the great distress.

As for the sources of the cosmic language in Matt 24:29, these images probably allude, at the very least, to Isa 13:10 and 34:4.[99] A crucial aspect of France's analysis involves promoting the right reading of these Old Testament passages. According to him, the passages portray the threat of divine judgement on a single city or nation within history: Babylon in Isa 13:10 and Edom in 34:4.[100] By extension, where similar language occurs in Matt 24:29, the imagery likely also connotes the judgement of a single city or nation: in this case, Jerusalem.[101]

While France concedes that such imagery can be extended to speak of eschatological judgement, he is nonetheless keen to uphold its "primary reference to historical events."[102] However, the immediate contexts of Isa 13 and 34 refer not just to the punishments of Babylon and Edom but also to the end-time judgement encompassing the whole world (τῇ οἰκουμένῃ ὅλῃ, 13:11) and all the nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, 34:2). In other words, while 13:10 and 34:4 deploy cosmic language in oracles against particular cities and nations, these punishments within history relate to eschatological judgement. Consequently, one could argue that Matthew's appropriation of Isa 13:10 and 34:4 retains the wider contextual reference to universal judgement at the completion of the age.

Taking Danielic mystery into consideration supports the above argument. Mystery according to Dan 2 delineates the following eschatological trajectory: the

[99] Regarding these allusions to Isa 13:10 and 34:4 as "nearly universally accepted," see Sloan, *Mark 13*, 194.
[100] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 922.
[101] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 922.
[102] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 923.

kingdoms on earth rise and fall, one after another, until all of them crumble in the face of the kingdom of heaven. As our previous chapter (2.3.3.1) discussed, while Dan 5 recounts the fall of a single nation (Babylon) in history, the message, in the context of Dan 2, is that the end-time trajectory of mystery has begun. In other words, the downfall of one empire within history in Dan 5 points forward to the final judgement of all earthly kingdoms at the end of history.

Drawing the threads together, even if the cosmic imagery of Matt 24:29 alludes to the past judgement of a single nation such as Babylon or Edom, the verse need not correspond simply to the fall of Jerusalem in history. Rather, we maintain that the allusion, interpreted in its Isaianic context, through the lens of Danielic mystery, points instead to the final judgement of all nations by the Son of Man at the end of history. Moreover, immediately after 24:29, Matthew portrays this end-time judgement in 24:30–31 (and again in 25:31–32).[103]

The phrase τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in 24:30 arguably substantiates the futurist reading of 24:29–31. Here, Matthew's arthrous use of σημεῖον is a deliberate insertion, since the term does not occur in the parallel verse in Mark 13. Indeed, "[s]icher wird man sagen können, daß es jenes Zeichen ist, nach dem die Jünger gefragt haben (V 3)."[104] In Matt 24, τὸ σημεῖον has occurred only one other time, in the disciples' enquiry τί τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας καὶ συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος (24:3).

[103] In fact, at every point in Matthew's narrative where judgement, the Son of Man, and angels appear, Jesus is consistently referring to final judgement. In 13:37–43, the judgement of the Son of Man, which he implements by sending his angels, occurs ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος. In 16:26–27, the judgement of the Son of Man, who comes with his angels, affects every person and involves the eschatological punishment of forfeiting one's soul. Likewise, the cosmic imagery in 24:29 that speaks of judgement leads into the mention of the Son of Man and his angels in the next verse (24:30).

[104] Joachim Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium, II Teil: Kommentar zu Kap. 14,1–28,20 und Einleitungsfragen*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1992), 329. See also Evans, *Matthew*, 410; Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 375–76.

By echoing τὸ σημεῖον in 24:3, Matthew marks out 24:30 as an explicit answer to the disciples' second question.

Nevertheless, Quarles notes that the modifier of τὸ σημεῖον in 24:3, τῆς σῆς παρουσίας, differs from the modifier in 24:30, τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου.[105] On this basis, Booth infers that "Jesus's sign in Matt 24:30 is indeed a different sign than that requested by the disciples."[106] This, however, does not give sufficient weight to the fact that the term παρουσία in 24:3 appears three more times (24:27, 37, 39), where Matthew modifies the term with the appellation τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Moreover, the first of these three instances of the phrase ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου occurs in 24:27—just three verses before 24:30. Therefore, Quarles and Booth's distinction between τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου in 24:30 and τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας in 24:3 may be too subtle. Given the repeated modification of ἡ παρουσία with τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (24:27, 37, 39), τὸ σημεῖον in 24:30 is most probably the same as τὸ σημεῖον in 24:3. This, in turn, supports the futurist reading of 24:30–31.

The referent of τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου remains elusive. Olmstead lists three options for the genitival τοῦ υἱοῦ, all of which are possible; he also assesses that "[o]ne's understanding of the genitive here is inextricably bound up with the interpretation of 24:29–31 more generally."[107] More precisely, commentators' interpretations of τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου tend to be informed by their prior exegetical decisions regarding the key phrase in 24:30: τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

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[105] Quarles, *Matthew*, 289.
[106] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 207. See also Quarles, *Matthew*, 289.
[107] Olmstead, *Matthew 15–28*, 252. The three options are as follows. Firstly, epexegetical, meaning "'the sign that is the Son of Man'; cf. Gundry." Secondly, subjective, meaning "'the sign/ensign that the Son of Man raises'; cf. Davies and Allison." Thirdly, objective, meaning "'the sign that heralds the Son of Man'; so NEB; cf. Gibbs."

Since all three readings of τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου are possible, sifting the options is of limited profit. We will focus instead on τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ and propose that this key phrase depicts the second coming of Jesus. There are two main alternatives to our proposal, and a common denominator to these options is the precise direction and destination of the Son of Man's movement in Dan 7. Bolt, France, Booth, Brown, and Roberts maintain that the Son of Man in Dan 7:13 approaches the Ancient of Days and therefore moves up to heaven.[108]

Nevertheless, these scholars diverge in their suggested referent for the heavenward coming of the Son of Man. Bolt argues that the phrase in 24:30 denotes the literal exaltation of Jesus in his resurrection and ascension into heaven.[109] In contrast, Booth, Wilson, Brown, and Roberts conclude that it signifies a nonliteral exaltation, whereby Jesus, hitherto rejected by the temple establishment, is vindicated at the moment of the temple's destruction in AD 70.[110]

France, in analysing the parallel verse in Mark 13, acknowledges that the New Testament (especially Rev 1:7) attests to the appropriation of Dan 7:13 for the parousia.[111] He nevertheless argues that Mark 13:26 depicts Jesus's vindication in AD 70, grounding his conclusion in the differentiation of "the vision of Daniel as Jesus and his apostles would have understood it" from subsequent Christian and patristic

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[108] Peter G. Bolt, "The Narrative Integrity of Mk 13:24–27" (Australian College of Theology, MTh thesis, 1991), 115; France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 923; Booth, "First Jerusalem," 209; Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 218.
[109] Bolt, "Mark 13," 24–25; Bolt, *Matthew*, 217, 228.
[110] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 209–11; Wilson, *When Will These Things Happen?*, 156–57; Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 218–19.
[111] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002), 503.

development.[112] In other words, France maintains that Jesus and the apostles would not have associated Dan 7:13 with the second coming.

France's reasoning deserves further investigation. Acts 1:10–11 recounts how two men in white robes informed the apostles that Jesus, who had just ascended to heaven in a cloud, οὕτως ἐλεύσεται ὃν τρόπον ἐθεάσασθε αὐτὸν πορευόμενον εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν. Crucially, these verses indicate that the link between the Son of Man's arrival on clouds and the second coming is hardly a patristic development alien to the apostles. In fact, the apostles had known of this link ever since they encountered the two men of Acts 1:10–11. Like Rev 1:7 and Acts 1:10–11, Matt 24:30 was written and read at a time when Jesus's earliest followers had already been exposed to the association of Dan 7:13 with his return. Contrary to France, one could possibly, even plausibly, argue that Matt 24:30 applies to the parousia the Danielic imagery of the Son of Man coming on clouds.

A key difference between Matt 24 and Mark 13 is the former's unique use of the word παρουσία.[113] Booth and France argue that Matthew deploys ἔρχομαι in 24:30 instead of παρουσία as a deliberate attempt at distinguishing the two arrivals.[114] However, this distinction risks overstatement, since Matthew's use of ἔρχομαι may simply be consistent with his borrowing as much as is possible of the terminology of mystery in Dan 7. In the light of how Matthew adopts υἱός, ἄνθρωπος, νεφέλη, and οὐρανός from Dan 7:13 (LXX and Theo.), he has, in all probability, borrowed ἔρχομαι as well from the same source. In other words, the occurrence of ἔρχομαι and not

[112] France, *Gospel of Mark*, 503, 534–35.
[113] The word does not appear elsewhere in Matthew's narrative—or for that matter, anywhere else in the Synoptic Gospels.
[114] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 209–10; France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 924.

παρουσία in 24:30 is unlikely to differentiate between the two comings. In fact, elsewhere in Jesus's speech, Matthew deploys ἔρχομαι to speak of the parousia (24:42, 46; 25:19, 27), even the parousia of the Son of Man (24:44; 25:31).[115]

The clause in the middle of 24:30, καὶ τότε κόψονται πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς, seems to counteract the above reading. Both Gibbs and France understand the subject, πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς, to mean all Jewish tribes in the land of Israel. According to them, the clause alludes to Zech 12:10–14 and envisages a specifically Jewish mourning.[116] If so, this reinforces their interpretation that 24:29–31 portrays an event that primarily affected the Jews: the destruction of the temple in AD 70.

Nevertheless, φυλή and γῆ in 24:30 need not refer to Zech 12:10–14 alone, since these words appear as well in Zech 14:17.[117] While the use of κόπτω in the middle voice, in association with φυλή and γῆ, only occurs in 12:10–14, the precise construction "all the tribes of the earth" only appears in 14:17. According to 14:17, anyone ἐκ πασῶν τῶν φυλῶν τῆς γῆς who does not worship the king will be judged on the day of the Lord. Matthew arguably alludes to both Zech 12:10–14 and 14:17, with the conflation of these verses pointing to the mourning of both Jews and Gentiles in the face of universal judgement. This means that Matt 24:30 can still be about the final coming of the Son of Man that affects all humanity rather than the historic judgement of the temple that chiefly impacted the Jews.

Finally, the depiction of the parousia as taking place εὐθέως ... μετὰ τὴν θλῖψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων reinforces the clarification that the end of the temple does not

[115] All these verses belong to the second part of Jesus's speech (24:36–25:46), which France, Booth, Brown, and Roberts agree to be about the parousia of Jesus.
[116] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 200; France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 924–25.
[117] On the allusion to Zech 14:17, see Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 984.

immediately culminate in the end of the age. The attack on Jerusalem unleashes the great distress that extends beyond the destruction of the temple; the second coming at the completion of the age will only happen after this duress, thereby belonging to the future.

Summary of 24:29–31

Scholars argue that these verses, on the basis of the cosmic imagery (24:29) and the heavenward movement of the Son of Man (Dan 7), refer to events other than the return of Jesus. Nevertheless, interpreting these data in the light of Danielic and Matthean mystery, Acts 1:10–11, and Zech 14:17 favours the conclusion that Matt 24:29–31 portrays the final coming of the Son of Man. This implicitly challenges the disciples' presupposition in 24:3, since the parousia will only happen after the great distress, beginning with the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, runs its course.

4.5.4 Climax: The Parable of the Fig Tree (24:32–35)

The developmental δέ in 24:32 introduces the next segment of Jesus's speech.[118] These verses are not simply a new section but the climactic section of the first half of the Olivet Discourse. Through an analysis of Matthew's use of temporal adverbs, rhetorical underlining, and ἀμήν in 24:32–35, Booth identifies these verses as a discourse peak.[119] However, he argues that this peak, beginning in 24:32, only ends in 24:41, and

[118] Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 31.
[119] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 157–61.

functions as the climax of the entire speech (24:4–25:46).[120] In contrast, our study proposes that 24:32–35 is the discourse peak of the first part of Jesus's speech (24:4–35), and 25:31–46 is the discourse peak of the second half (24:36–25:46).

An advantage of our proposal is that it preserves the integrity of 24:32–35 as a distinct unit, prior to the significant break in 24:36, where the fronting of περὶ δέ introduces a new topical frame. Indeed, the transition to a different subject in 24:36 may explain Booth's inclination to extend the discourse peak from 24:32 all the way to 24:41. According to his simple preterist-futurist reading, 24:4–35 exclusively explores the first topic (the destruction of the temple), while 24:36–25:46 only addresses the second topic (the parousia of the Son of Man).[121] Therefore, were Booth to confine the discourse peak to the distinct unit of 24:32–35, then his suggested climax for the entire speech only contains, rather curiously, one of its two main subjects.

However, 24:4–35, as we have been arguing, features both the destruction of the temple and the parousia of Jesus. Likewise, 24:32–35, as we will argue below, draws the two events into a single parable that serves as the climax to the first part of Jesus's speech. Furthermore, the second part of Jesus's speech, as our next chapter will argue (5.3), addresses only the parousia of Jesus, and the majestic description of this parousia from 25:31 onwards functions as the climax to 24:36–25:46.[122] In other words, just as the first part of Jesus's speech builds towards a discourse peak in 24:32–35, so the second half, from 24:36 onwards, builds towards its own discourse peak in 25:31–46.

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[120] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 157.
[121] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 184.
[122] The "theme of being ready to face the Son of Man at his *parousia* has dominated the latter part of the discourse ... [and] comes to its majestic climax in a vision of the judgement that will then take place." France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 957. See also Mitch and Sri, *Gospel of Matthew*, 325; Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 432; Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium 16,21–28,20*, 248.

We will not replicate Booth's analysis of 24:32–35 but will instead add another argument for the climatic significance of these verses. 24:32–35 recounts the very first parable in Jesus's speech; in fact, this is the only parable in the Olivet Discourse designated as such (παραβολή, 24:32). In Matt 13, the seminal chapter featuring τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, Matthew associates Danielic mystery with Jesus's parabolic ministry. Now, in 24:32, Matthew's use of παραβολή earmarks 24:32–35 as a significant, even climactic, stage in Jesus's revelation of the mysteries of the temple, the parousia, and the end.

Since 24:21, Jesus has been challenging the disciples' presupposition that the end of the temple coincides with the end of the age. However, one has had to infer this correction from the exposition in 24:21–31 of the timings of the temple's destruction, the great distress, and the second coming. From 24:32 onwards, Jesus overtly "separate[s] or *resolve[s]*" the devastation of the temple from the parousia of the Son of Man.[123]

The parable in 24:32 presents a fig tree, where the tenderness of its branch and the sprouting of its leaves signal that summer is near (ἐγγύς).[124] Accordingly, πάντα ταῦτα in 24:33 signal that ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἐπὶ θύραις. Some commentators argue that the cognate verb ἐγγίζω in 3:2 and 4:17 signals "presence" and not merely "imminent arrival."[125] Nevertheless, the details in the parable and its explanation in 24:32–33 indicate that ἐγγύς signals proximity rather than presence. The fig tree, being deciduous, brings forth its first leaf buds after winter, which indicate that spring has come, and

[123] Cooper, *Incorporated Servanthood*, 207, italics original.
[124] ἐγγύς, BDAG, 271.
[125] Olmstead, *Matthew 1–14*, 67. However, this interpretation rests in part on Matthew's choice of the perfect tense; France suggests that "[t]he present tense, *engizei*, would have conveyed the standard eschatological hope, it 'is coming near.'" France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 103.

summer is close by.[126] Also, the epexegetical phrase ἐπὶ θύραις in 24:33, in the light of a similar idiom in Jas 5:9 (πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν), strengthens the conclusion that ἐγγύς in 24:32–33 denotes "very close proximity."[127]

24:33 has generated two major disputes. The first pertains to the referent of πάντα ταῦτα, and the second concerns the (implied) subject of the clause ἐγγύς ἐστιν. Regarding the latter debate, Gibbs postulates an impersonal subject ("it") for ἐγγύς ἐστιν, which he identifies as the destruction of Jerusalem.[128] Nevertheless, the phrase at the end of the clause, ἐπὶ θύραις, evokes the impression of a personal subject through the image of a human figure standing at the gates—precisely the image Jesus evokes again in 25:10. In this verse, the same word θύρα (albeit in the singular) occurs in the context of the coming (ἦλθεν) of the bridegroom, which echoes the coming (ἐρχόμενον) of the Son of Man in 24:30. This favours the interpretation that ἐγγύς ἐστιν ἐπὶ θύραις speaks of the Son of Man on the brink of his final arrival.

Consequently, as for the first dispute concerning πάντα ταῦτα, the phrase in 24:33 should exclude the parousia of Jesus. Just as the branches and leaves of the fig tree in 24:32, as indications of the nearness of summer, are distinct from summer itself, πάντα ταῦτα in 24:33, as signs of the imminent Son of Man, are distinct from the parousia itself.[129] The only other major end-time events mentioned thus far in Jesus's speech are the temple's destruction and the great tribulation. Furthermore, 24:29, as discussed above (4.5.3), testifies that the Son of Man will return εὐθέως ... μετὰ τὴν θλῖψιν τῶν ἡμερῶν ἐκείνων that begins with the attack on Jerusalem and its temple.

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[126] Culpepper, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 479.
[127] Quarles, *Matthew*, 290.
[128] Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 204.
[129] Since "'all these things' in v. 34 ... [and] v. 33 ... show that Christ's return is near," they "therefore cannot include Christ's return itself." Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary 22 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1992), 364.

Taking all these into consideration, the devastation of the temple and the ensuing great tribulation are the most credible antecedents for πάντα ταῦτα in 24:33.

There are two further hints that πάντα ταῦτα in 24:33, in all probability, involves the temple's destruction. The first pertains to preceding appearances of the plural neuter demonstrative in Jesus's speech. In the disciples' enquiry (24:3), ταῦτα refers primarily to the dismantling of the temple. While Timothy J. Geddert argues that the antecedent of ταῦτα "must be determined wholly from" the Olivet Discourse itself, he is sceptical of taking the disciples' question as a "valid clue," since there are other verses that deploy the pronoun.[130]

Apart from 24:3, ταῦτα appears as well in 24:8. However, this verse can be ruled out as a possible context for interpreting 24:33. The point of 24:8 is that "these things" are ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων that does not signal the nearness of the end—which is the opposite of what "these things" in 24:33 do. This leaves 24:3 as the likely point of reference for interpreting 24:33. As Jesus concludes the first part of his reply, he appears to return back to the very question in 24:3 that prompted his speech, echoing the disciples' use of ταῦτα as a shorthand for the temple's destruction.

The second hint pertains to preceding appearances of the verb ὁράω in Jesus's speech. Prior to the clause ὅταν ἴδητε πάντα ταῦτα in 24:33, ὁράω appears in 24:6, 15, and 30. For a start, 24:6 can be ruled out as a possible context for interpreting 24:33, since the warning in 24:6, ὁρᾶτε μὴ θροεῖσθε, pertains to events that do not signal the nearness of the end—which is the opposite of what "these things" do in 24:33. Also, 24:30 does not provide the context for 24:33; by the time people see (ὄψονται) the Son

[130] Timothy J. Geddert, *Watchwords: Mark 13 in Markan Eschatology*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 26 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 240.

of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, the parousia is already happening and is not simply at hand (ἐγγύς). This leaves 24:15 as the remaining option; in fact, this is the only other verse in Jesus's speech, apart from 24:33, where ὁράω occurs alongside ὅταν. In 24:15, what is seen is τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, the attack on Jerusalem that culminates shortly in the destruction of the temple.

As mentioned above, the comparisons between 24:3, 15, and 33 are simply hints; on their own, they do not compel the identification of πάντα ταῦτα in 24:33 as the temple's devastation and the great distress. Nevertheless, they support the interpretation of these incidents as the most credible referents of πάντα ταῦτα. As Jesus's followers witness the destruction of the temple and experience the great distress, they can anticipate the parousia of the Son of Man as the next major eschatological event.

The parable of the fig tree also addresses the disciples' second question, τί τὸ σημεῖον τῆς σῆς παρουσίας καὶ συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος (24:3). While Jesus deploys the term τὸ σημεῖον in 24:30, that particular sign will unfold almost simultaneously with his return itself; it is, therefore, not an entirely satisfactory answer to the question. In 24:32–33, the sign that Jesus offers concerning his imminent return—before stating in 24:36 that the exact timing remains unknown—is the destruction of the temple.

That the temple's devastation signals the second coming addresses the disciples' assumption in 24:3. If it were not already clear before, it should be evident by 24:33 that the end of the temple does not usher in the end of the age. The destruction of the temple is at best a precursor of what comes next, the parousia of the Son of Man. In other words, the end of the temple is merely the beginning of the (ultimate) end; only the parousia brings the present age to its completion.

In 24:34, Jesus addresses the disciples' first question, πότε ταῦτα ἔσται. In this verse, πάντα ταῦτα echoes the identical phrase in 24:33, which, in turn, refers to the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, and the ensuing great distress. Jesus also declares in 24:34 that ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη will not pass away until πάντα ταῦτα happen. The natural reading of ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη, which accords with Matthew's other uses (especially 23:36), is that the phrase refers to the generation contemporaneous with Jesus.[131] Witherington contends that "[v]erse 34 and its phrase 'this generation' have been contorted in various ways" by those wanting to avoid the suggestion that Jesus predicted the parousia to happen in his generation.[132] However, if πάντα ταῦτα (24:33, 34), as we have argued, excludes the parousia—then 24:34 simply affirms that the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, and the great distress will happen in the lifetime of Jesus's contemporaries.

While 24:34 predicts that πάντα ταῦτα will commence before the current generation expires, the verse does not promise that all these events will conclude by then. As a stative aorist verb, γένηται in 24:34 can take an ingressive Aktionsart emphasising the beginning of an action without implying whether it continues or not.[133] The same ingressive γένηται features in the parable of the fig tree with respect to its branches (24:32). In this verse, ἐκφύῃ parallels γένηται, but, as a present verb, it is unlikely to denote ingressive activity. Nevertheless, ἐκφύῃ, as Quarles suggests, probably takes a progressive Aktionsart.[134] Unlike an instantaneous (or punctiliar)

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[131] For a list of interpretative options for ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη, see Philip La Grange Du Toit, "'This Generation' in Matthew 24:34 as a Timeless, Spiritual Generation Akin to Genesis 3:15," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 39.1 (2018): 1–2, https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v39i1.1850. Note, however, that the alternative meanings of the expression, "even if they were lexically possible," are arguably too broad to "offer [any] help in response to the disciples' question 'When?'" France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 930. See also Turner, *Matthew*, 586; Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 367; Wiefel, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 419.
[132] Witherington, *Matthew*, 453.
[133] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 558.
[134] Quarles, *Matthew*, 290.

present verb, which depicts an action that terminates at the moment of speaking, the progressive ἐκφύῃ portrays continuous activity.[135] Drawing these threads together, we infer that 24:34 "prophesies that the tribulation events will begin within this generation's time span." [136] Conversely, the verse "does not say either that the parousia will occur in this generation or that the tribulation will have been completed in this generation."[137] In other words, while the great distress, as part of "all these things" (πάντα ταῦτα), must at least commence in the current generation, it need not be completed before the generation expires; in fact, it may even continue for a non-specified duration.

Nevertheless, the commencement of "all these things" in the current generation raises the question as to whether the parousia of the Son of Man will also happen then. Jesus will engage with this issue in the second part of his speech; for now, the prospect of "all these things" continuing for an indeterminate period keeps open the possibility that the parousia will not happen so soon. This hypothesis is consistent with the portrayal of the great distress in 24:22, which seems to extend beyond the destruction of the temple, evolve out of Judea, and engulf the rest of humanity.

Summary of 24:32–35

The significance of parables for Matthean mystery distinguishes these verses as the climax of the first part of Jesus's speech, where he summarises his answer to the disciples' enquiry (24:3). Regarding the first question, he emphatically declares that the

[135] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 517–18.
[136] Talbert, *Matthew*, 270.
[137] Talbert, *Matthew*, 270.

destruction of the temple and the great distress will unfold in the lifetime of the contemporary generation. As for the second question, he presents the above events as a signal that the parousia of the Son of Man is the next major eschatological event. He also overturns the disciples' assumption by teaching that the end of the temple is only the beginning of the (ultimate) end, and the parousia alone will bring the present age to pass.

4.5.5 Summary of Part I of Jesus's Speech (24:4–35)

Matthew begins a new scene in 24:1–3 where the disciples' private enquiry, in alignment with the form and content of mystery, invites further revelation concerning the destruction of the temple, the parousia of Jesus, and the end of the age. Their questions, probably informed by Danielic mystery, also presuppose that the above events will unfold simultaneously. The first part of Jesus's speech provides answers to their enquiry and clarification regarding their assumption.

In 24:4–14, Jesus arguably subsumes the end of the temple and the end of the age under the collective term τὸ τέλος. From 24:15 onwards, he narrows the focus onto the devastation of the temple, which begins with the attack on Jerusalem and unleashes the great tribulation. This tribulation will nonetheless expand beyond Judea and engulf the rest of the world. Such duress will culminate in a judgement from 24:29 onwards that, interpreted through the lens of Danielic mystery, encompasses all nations. In 24:29–31, Jesus speaks of the parousia of the Son of Man that will succeed the great distress.

Considerations of the form of mystery suggest that the first part of the speech builds towards its climax in 24:32–35, where the parable of the fig tree and its explanation summarises Jesus's answer to the disciples' questions. The destruction of the temple, which will happen in the current generation, signals the closeness of the returning Son of Man. This teaching overtly distinguishes between eschatological events: the end of the temple is simply the beginning of the (ultimate) end; only the parousia will usher in the consummation of the age.

Chapter 5
Matthean Mystery and the Olivet Discourse (II): Matt 24:36–26:2

5.1 Recapitulation

5.1.1 A Proposed Outline for the Matthean Olivet Discourse

24:1–3 Narrative introduction
- 24:1–2 Setting the scene
- 24:3 The disciples' enquiry and assumption

24:4–25:46 Main body: Jesus's answer to the disciples' enquiry and assumption

- Part I: The destruction of the temple, the parousia of the Son of Man, and the end of the age
  - 24:4–14 Birth pangs preceding the end
  - 24:15–28 The destruction of the temple and the great tribulation
  - 24:29–31 The parousia of the Son of Man
  - 24:32–35 Climax: the parable of the fig tree
- Part II: The parousia of the Son of Man
  - 24:36–41 The parousia is unknown and will come unexpectedly
  - 24:42–44 Exhortation to stay awake and be prepared
  - 24:45–25:30 Parables about staying awake and being prepared
    - 24:45–51 Faithful/wise vs wicked servants
    - 25:1–13 Wise vs foolish virgins
    - 25:14–30 Good/faithful vs wicked/slothful servants
  - 25:31–46 Climax: universal judgement during the parousia

26:1–2 Narrative conclusion

5.1.2 A Summary of the First Half of the Matthean Olivet Discourse

A new scene unfolds in 24:1–3. The disciples' private enquiry, in alignment with the form and content of mystery, invites further revelation concerning the temple's destruction, Jesus's parousia, and the end; they also presuppose that these events will unfold simultaneously. The first part of Jesus's speech provides answers to their enquiry and clarification regarding their assumption.

In 24:4–14, Jesus arguably subsumes the end of the temple and the end of the age under the collective term τὸ τέλος. From 24:15 onwards, he narrows the focus onto the devastation of the temple, which begins with the attack on Jerusalem and unleashes the great tribulation. This tribulation will nonetheless expand beyond Judea and engulf the rest of the world. From 24:29 onwards, Jesus speaks of the parousia of the Son of Man that will succeed the great distress.

Considerations of the form of mystery suggest that the first part of the speech climaxes in 24:32–35. The parable of the fig tree and its explanation reveal that the temple's devastation during the current generation signals the nearness of the returning Son of Man. This teaching overtly distinguishes between end-time events: the end of the temple is simply the beginning of the (ultimate) end; only the parousia will draw the present age to a close.

5.2 The Narrative Context of Mystery for the Second Half of the Matthean Olivet Discourse

5.2.1 The Form of Mystery

Mystery according to Daniel is twofold, consisting of a divine message and its interpretation, and is accompanied by a threefold pattern of understanding. In Dan 8–12, the deferral of full disclosure and comprehension regarding precise eschatological timings shifts the focus instead to enduring ongoing tribulation of unknown duration. In Matthew's Gospel, mystery is similarly twofold, consisting of Jesus's parables and their explanations; it also generates a pattern of limited understanding among the disciples.

5.2.2 The Content of Mystery

Matthean mystery, true to its Danielic origin, presents an inaugurated eschatology featuring the kingdom of heaven, the Son of Man, final judgement, and the fall of Jerusalem and its temple. However, in contrast to Danielic mystery, the heavenly kingdom in Matthew's Gospel has commenced but awaits consummation. Accordingly, Matthean mystery explores kingdom ethics pertaining to Christian living in the interim.

5.2.3 The Function of Mystery

Mystery in Daniel and Matt 1–23 polemically contrasts groups of people. In Daniel, it repeatedly distinguishes the protagonist and the wise from the Babylonian magicians and the wicked or foolish. These juxtapositions uphold God alone as the revealer of hidden things and foster solidarity with the wise who remain faithful amidst suffering, in anticipation of future deliverance. In Matt 1–23, mystery likewise differentiates Jesus's disciples from the Jewish leaders in order to uphold Jesus as the one true revealer of hidden wisdom and to encourage alignment with his disciples as its true recipients. The disciples are scribes trained for the kingdom of God, the new tenants of God's vineyard who turn out to be the true leaders of his people.

5.3 Part II: The Parousia of the Son of Man (Matt 24:36–25:46)

5.3.1 The Parousia Is Unknown and Will Come Unexpectedly (24:36–41)

According to Booth, περὶ δέ in 24:36 signals a new topical frame for the second part of Jesus's speech.[1] More specifically, he argues that this major transition marks the shift from the disciples' first question to their second question, from the destruction of the temple to the return of Jesus.[2]

Contrary to Booth, our previous chapter has argued (4.5) that the first half of Jesus's speech already began exploring the parousia of the Son of Man. In particular,

[1] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 222–23.
[2] Booth, "First Jerusalem," 222–24.

24:33 clarifies that the second coming will only happen after the devastation of the temple and the great distress. 24:34 also establishes that this devastation and distress will commence in the generation contemporaneous with Jesus. However, these verses do not offer a more precise time frame for the parousia. This, in turn, evokes the question as to whether Jesus will return during the lifetime of his current generation.

Therefore, the transition in 24:36 is not a shift to a different subject altogether; rather, it simply moves to a new aspect of the existing topic of the parousia.[3] More precisely, περὶ δέ marks a transition from the known timing of the temple's destruction to the unknown timing of the second coming. That Jesus begins concentrating on the exact timing of his return is indicated by the phrase τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης καὶ ὥρας (24:36). If the fronting of περὶ δὲ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης καὶ ὥρας gives prominence to the new topic, οὐδεὶς οἶδεν at the back of the clause yields a twist in the tale: nobody knows exactly when the parousia will happen.

This is surprising precisely because of the earlier passage 11:25–27, which drew on Daniel's prayer concerning mystery (Dan 2:19–23). In 11:25–27, Jesus presented himself as the Son (ὁ υἱός) to whom the Father (ὁ πατήρ) has given hidden things for authoritative and exclusive revelation to the disciples. In contrast, by the end of 24:36, Jesus clarifies that nobody—not even the Son (ὁ υἱός)—knows exactly when he will return; only the Father (ὁ πατήρ) knows. If Jesus himself is ignorant of the precise timing, then his disciples will surely remain in the dark; "[e]ntsprechend ist es erst recht nicht an den Jüngern, den Termin zu kennen."[4]

[3] Olmstead, *Matthew 15–28*, 257.
[4] Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 378.

The fact that the disciples remain ignorant, despite being privileged recipients of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, hearkens back to the threefold pattern of understanding in Dan 8 and 12. In these chapters, Daniel, despite induction into God's hidden wisdom concerning the end times, does not fully comprehend these mysteries. The withholding of complete revelation and understanding from Daniel directs attention from speculating about the last days to enduring them.

Reading Matt 24:36 in the light of Danielic mystery sets up the expectation that the second part of Jesus's speech will effect a similar shift in focus: from deciphering the timing of the second coming to persevering amidst the great distress. This, in turn, generates the expectation that 24:36–25:46 will contain paraenetic material calling for an appropriate response to the hidden timing of the parousia.

Nevertheless, Matthew does not fulfil this expectation immediately. 24:37 begins with ὥσπερ γάρ, where γάρ signals an explanation of the previous material.[5] The correlative ὥσπερ indicates that the parousia of the Son of Man is comparable to the flood at the time of Noah. In those days, people lived unaware of the approaching disaster and continued with their regular activities of eating, drinking, and marrying (24:38). When the flood eventually arrived, it drowned them with utmost suddenness (24:39). Likewise, when the second coming happens, it will come upon humanity in utter abruptness, such that of two men in the field or two women at the mill, one will be taken, presumably unto death, leaving behind only one survivor (24:40–41).[6] The hidden timing of the parousia means that the Son of Man will come unexpectedly and

[5] Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 52.
[6] Benjamin L. Merkle, "Who Will Be Left behind? Rethinking the Meaning of Matthew 24:40–41 and Luke 17:34–35," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 72.1 (2010): 169–70; Evans, *Matthew*, 414; Mitch and Sri, *Gospel of Matthew*, 314; Witherington, *Matthew*, 455; Gundry, *Matthew*, 494.

overwhelm the world in a judgement that divides those who will be punished from those who will live.

5.3.2 Exhortation to Stay Awake and Be Prepared (24:42–44)

From 24:42 onwards, Jesus's speech begins to meet the expectation of parenesis raised earlier (24:36). The inferential οὖν (24:42) establishes the exhortation γρηγορεῖτε as a consequence of the preceding material. The next connective, ὅτι, introduces a dependent clause recapitulating the reason for the exhortation: because one is ignorant as to when the Son of Man will arrive. In other words, since the Son of Man will come abruptly, therefore (οὖν) one ought to stay awake (γρηγορεῖτε).

The occurrence of another causal ὅτι clause in 24:44, similar to the one in 24:42, suggests that γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι (24:44) parallels the prior imperative γρηγορεῖτε (24:42). Nevertheless, Matthew introduces the two hortatory statements differently, with οὖν in 24:42 and διὰ τοῦτο in 24:44. Instead of taking both διὰ τοῦτο and οὖν to mean "therefore," Runge maintains a nuanced distinction between the two: "διὰ τοῦτο offers a narrower semantic constraint than οὖν does," in emphasising a "narrower *causal*" connection.[7] This suggests that διὰ τοῦτο in 24:44 draws attention to the causal relationship between the verse and the preceding illustration in 24:43.

While the comparison in 24:43–44 between the Son of Man and a burglar may seem incongruous, the analogy, in presenting the second coming negatively, is as effective as it is surprising. If οὖν in 24:42 highlights the imperative γρηγορεῖτε as the

[7] Compare Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 720, with Runge, *Discourse Grammar*, 48–49, italics original.

consequence of the preceding verses, then διὰ τοῦτο in 24:44 emphasises the suddenness of end-time punishment as the cause of the exhortation γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι. In other words, because (διὰ τοῦτο) the Son of Man will arrive unannounced (like a thief) in judgement, one needs to be ready (γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι) for him.

Summary of 24:36–41 and 42–44

24:36 introduces a new aspect of an existing topic: the precise timing of the parousia of the Son of Man. As this timing remains hidden, the parousia will happen in utmost suddenness. The disciples' ignorance resembles Daniel's lack of awareness with respect to specific eschatological timings. Such ignorance shifts the focus from calculating the last days to responding appropriately. From 24:42 onwards, Jesus prescribes the apposite reaction of staying awake and being prepared in order to escape punishment when he finally arrives.

5.3.3 Parables about Staying Awake and Being Prepared (24:45–25:30)

24:45 begins with the interrogative τίς introducing a question that drives an extended illustration. 24:45–25:30 forms its own section, consisting of three parables. Although the second part of Jesus's speech thus far contains illustrative material (24:40–41, 43), he only begins to speak in sustained parables from 24:45 onwards.

These three parables demonstrate unity in their shared vocabulary. Just as the first parable opens with a question in 24:45 concerning the faithful and wise servant (ὁ πιστὸς δοῦλος καὶ φρόνιμος), so the second features five virgins in 25:2 who are wise

(φρόνιμοι), and the third portrays two servants whom their master praises in 25:21 and 23 as faithful (πιστέ).[8] Both the first and third parables end with the chilling depiction of the place of punishment, where there is ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων (24:51; 25:30).[9] Also, all three parables use ἔρχομαι to describe the coming of the master or the bridegroom (24:46; 25:10, 19, 27).

While these parables form their own section, they evince connections with the previous verses. The connective ἄρα in 24:45 presents the parabolic material from this verse onwards as an inference drawn from the preceding verses.[10] More precisely, 24:45–25:30 develops the prior instructions to be awake and prepared (24:42, 44). For example, the conclusion to the second parable, γρηγορεῖτε οὖν, ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε τὴν ἡμέραν οὐδὲ τὴν ὥραν (25:13), weaves the command to stay awake (24:42) together with the unknown day and hour of the parousia (24:36).

Like the previous sections, 24:45–25:30 continues to invoke for the model reader the frame of mystery. In terms of form, Matthew associates Danielic mystery with Jesus's parables—of which there are three in this section. As for content, the paraenesis from 24:42 onwards accords with mystery in Matt 13–23. Just as the earlier parables explored the ethics of living between the kingdom's commencement and consummation (18:23–35; 20:1–16), so the parables from 24:45 onwards illustrate the ethics of watching for the parousia of the Son of Man.

In terms of function, Danielic mystery distinguishes those who are wise from those who merely appear so, in order to promote the right response of emulating the former. Maier, in delineating the background of the wise servant in Matt 24:45–51,

[8] Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 997–98.
[9] Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 725.
[10] ἄρα, BDAG, 127; Olmstead, *Matthew 15–28*, 263.

mentions Moses in Num 12:7 and Joseph in Gen 39:4.[11] To date, no commentator appears to have explored the influence of the wise man Daniel. For a start, Dan 1:17 portrays Daniel and his friends as those to whom God has given wisdom (φρόνησιν).[12] In 3:33 (cf. 3:44), Daniel describes himself as one of the servants (τοῖς δούλοις) of God.[13] According to 2:48, Daniel is the servant whom the king appointed (κατέστησεν) over all the sages and magicians of Babylon.[14] Noteworthy are the echoes of these verses in Matt 24:45: the parable introduces the servant (ὁ … δοῦλος) who is wise (φρόνιμος), whom the master appoints (κατέστησεν) over all the other workers of the household.

As we have mentioned, 24:45–25:30 invokes the frame of Danielic mystery; the model reader actualises the cue by interpreting the parables against the backdrop of not just the form and content, but also the function, of mystery. The first parable differentiates the wise and faithful servant from his wicked and foolish counterpart—a pattern Jesus repeats with respect to the virgins in 25:1–13 and the servants in 25:14–30. The purpose of these juxtapositions is to commend alignment with the wise and faithful in anticipation of the sudden and unexpected arrival of the Son of Man.

5.3.3.1 Faithful/Wise Servants vs Wicked Servants (24:45–51)

These verses open with the question τίς … ἐστὶν ὁ πιστὸς δοῦλος καὶ φρόνιμος, and this wise and faithful servant illustrates the previous commands γρηγορεῖτε and γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι (24:42, 44). The wicked servant dwells on his master's delay, which lulls him

[11] Maier, *Matthäus: Kapitel 15–28*, 453.
[12] See also Dan 2:23 (LXX), where Daniel speaks of receiving wisdom (φρόνησιν).
[13] See also Dan 9:17 (Theo.), where Daniel presents himself as God's servant (τοῦ δούλου σου).
[14] See also Dan 6:4–5, where καθίστημι is used again to present Daniel as the servant whom the king appoints over all his fellow officials in Babylon.

into neglecting his responsibilities (24:48–49). In contrast, the wise servant continues to discharge his duties of running the household and feeding the others (24:45–46).[15] In other words, staying awake and being prepared involves responding to the apparent delay of the parousia by caring for those who belong to the Son of Man.

Matthean commentators divide over the description of the servant as one whom the master κατέστησεν ... ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκετείας αὐτοῦ (24:45): does this constrain the application of the parable to leaders? According to Gnilka, "im Mittelpunkt einer steht, dem besondere Verantwortung über die anderen verliehen wurde." [16] While Schnackenburg thinks that the equivalent parable in Luke's Gospel targets "die Gemeindeführer," he also states that Matt 24:45–51 is directed at "alle Christen."[17]

Thus far in Matthew's Gospel, mystery distinguishes Jesus's disciples from the Jewish leaders, the former being the true scribes trained for the kingdom of heaven. This seems to suggest that the parables featuring servants in 24:45–51 and 25:14–30 uphold the disciples, and not the Jewish leaders, as the authentic servants of God and leaders of his people. Nevertheless, mystery in Daniel and Matt 1–23 distinguishes Daniel and the disciples, the wise and faithful servants, from those who are not, in order to encourage imitating the former. Moreover, Jesus commissions his disciples in Matt 28:20 to teach others to obey all that he has commanded—which surely includes the exhortations γρηγορεῖτε and γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι (24:42, 44), and their subsequent elaborations (24:45–25:30).

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[15] "Jesus keine besonderen Verdienste jenes Knechtes herausstreicht. Für ihn genügt die Treue.... Die praktisch-ethische Auslegung von R.T. France zieht daraus mit Recht die Kosequenz: 'it is in service to others that we prepare for the parousia.'" Maier, *Matthäus: Kapitel 15–28*, 454–55.
[16] Gnilka, *Matthäusevangelium Kap. 14,1–28,20*, 345.
[17] Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium 16,21–28,20*, 242.

Finally, the parable paints not just a portrait of the contrasting servants but also a picture of their respective outcomes. The wise and faithful servant is set over all his master's possessions while the wicked servant is punished, cast into a place where there will be ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων (24:51). This phrase also occurs in earlier parabolic material (13:42, 50; 22:13) where Jesus spoke of final judgement. The acute disparity between the fates of the wise and the wicked fosters solidarity with the former, in view of escaping punishment.

5.3.3.2 Wise vs Foolish Virgins (25:1–13)

The second parable deploys the typical prefatorial formula, with slight modification, of the Matthean Jesus's parables: ὁμοιωθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (25:1). This statement is similar to that of 13:24, 18:23, and 22:2, apart from its use of the future tense: ὁμοιωθήσεται rather than ὡμοιώθη. According to Hagner, this difference highlights the parable's eschatological orientation with respect to the parousia of the Son of Man.[18]

This explanation does not entirely satisfy, since the parables that begin differently elsewhere (13:24; 18:23; 22:2) display similar concern for final judgement.[19] Conversely, 25:1–13 devotes just under half of its verses to depicting the present experience of awaiting the second coming. Perhaps the distinctive use of ὁμοιωθήσεται in 25:1 accentuates the perception of the parousia as belonging to the distant future.

[18] Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 728.
[19] See especially Matt 13:30, 18:35, and 22:13.

This, in turn, sharpens the thrust of the parable regarding how one ought to respond to the ostensible deferment of the final coming.

Following on from the previous parable that upheld the faithful and wise servant (ὁ πιστὸς δοῦλος καὶ φρόνιμος, 24:45), this parable showcases ten virgins, of which five are φρόνιμοι and the remainder are μωραί (25:2). Despite the concluding exhortation γρηγορεῖτε in 25:13, the difference between the two groups does not reside in whether they fall asleep—since all ten virgins do so in 25:5.[20] Rather, what distinguishes the wise from the foolish is that the former prepares sufficient oil to last the bridegroom's delay (25:4).[21]

Bonnard notes that scholars offer myriad interpretations of the symbolic value of the oil—from faith ("la foi") to good works ("les bonnes œuvres")—and concludes that "*l'huile* de notre parabole a joué un rôle néfaste dans l'histoire de l'exégèse."[22] In fairness to those who think that the oil represents good works, this theme is present in the surrounding verses: 24:45 and 25:35–40 speak of serving one's fellow believers, and 25:16–17, as we will see below (5.3.3.3), alludes to discharging one's God-given responsibilities.

However, the problem with scholarly efforts at decoding the oil is that such attempts risk obscuring the thrust of the parable. 25:1–13 is not concerned with the oil per se, which is "merely an element in the narrative showing that the foolish virgins

[20] Witherington, *Matthew*, 460.
[21] Furthermore, the wise virgins are "smart enough not to comply with the request to loan oil to the foolish virgins.... The issue here is not selfishness but rather preparation and wisdom." Witherington, *Matthew*, 460.
[22] Bonnard, *L'evangile selon saint Matthieu*, 358, 359, italics original. Blomberg similarly observes "frequent" and "conflicting suggestions" of referents for the oil: "good works, faith, grace, or the Holy Spirit." Blomberg, *Matthew*, 370.

were unprepared for the delay."[23] Rather, Matthew highlights the fact that only half the virgins, in bringing enough oil, prepare for the bridegroom's delay. While the surrounding parables shed light on what practising readiness entails, we maintain that a sufficient supply of oil in this parable merely symbolises being ready.[24]

Finally, the parable paints not just a portrait of two contrasting groups of virgins but also a picture of their respective outcomes. The wise virgins accompany the bridegroom into the wedding feast while the foolish ones, despite crying out κύριε κύριε, receive only his disavowal, οὐκ οἶδα ὑμᾶς (25:10–12). The foolish virgins' appeal and the bridegroom's rebuff are reminiscent of a similar exchange in 7:21–23, where Matthew depicts final exclusion from the kingdom of heaven and therefore eschatological punishment.[25] The sharp difference between the fates of the virgins encourages alignment with the wise ones in the face of apparent delay in the parousia of Jesus, for the sake of averting judgement.

5.3.3.3 Good/Faithful vs Wicked/Slothful Servants (25:14–30)

25:14 commences with the comparative ὥσπερ and an implied ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν (gapped from 25:1), thereby signalling another illustration of the kingdom of heaven. Like the preceding parables, 25:14–30 showcases a figure of authority who goes away and returns in judgement that divides two groups of followers. As in 24:45–51,

[23] On how "[t]he oil cannot easily apply to 'good works' or 'Holy Spirit,'" being "merely an element in the narrative showing that the foolish virgins were unprepared for the delay," see Carson, "Matthew," 575.
[24] Bonnard, *L'evangile selon saint Matthieu*, 358–59.
[25] Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 599; Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 400; Luz, *Matthew 21–28: A Commentary*, 235; Gnilka, *Matthäusevangelium Kap. 14,1–28,20*, 352.

judgement in the parable of the talents involves a master praising faithful servants (δοῦλε … πιστέ) in 25:21–23 and punishing slothful ones (δοῦλε … ὀκνηρέ) in 25:26.

The servant declared ὀκνηρέ does nothing with the talent given to him apart from hiding it (25:18); he even blames the master for his lack of productivity (25:24–25). In contrast, the servants declared πιστέ multiply the talents given to them (25:16–17) and receive the master's commendation for doing so (25:21, 23). Scholars rightly observe that the two faithful servants, despite accumulating different numbers of talents, receive the same reward (25:21, 23).[26] This indicates that the parable exhorts the faithfulness of productivity while awaiting Jesus's return, without differentiating between degrees of fruitfulness.

Matthean commentators dispute what, exactly, the talents symbolise. Blomberg presents the parable to be primarily (though not exclusively) about the Christian use of finances.[27] In contrast, Davies and Allison adopt a more open-ended interpretation by applying τάλαντον to God's gifts generally.[28] However, of the different gifts τάλαντον could represent, the term is unlikely to symbolise God-given abilities. In 25:15, the master distributes the talents ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν δύναμιν. This suggests that the talents stand for God-given responsibilities or duties measured out according to different individuals' abilities—as France has argued.[29]

France's reading raises the question as to what these duties or responsibilities entail. Ben Chenoweth registers that 25:29 echoes 13:12, and he identifies on this basis

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[26] Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 408; Witherington, *Matthew*, 463; Turner, *Matthew*, 601.
[27] "One need not limit the application of this parable to money matters, but finances probably best illustrate the principles involved.… Jesus' imagery does suggest that capital which earns money may create even greater wealth to use for God's glory." Blomberg, *Matthew*, 375.
[28] Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 405.
[29] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 951–52.

that the talents correspond to the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven in 13:11.[30] Nevertheless, 13:11–12 are not the only verses in Matt 13 that the parable of the talents alludes to. The imagery of sowing and scattering in 25:24–26 echoes as well the parable of the sower and its explanation, which sandwich 13:11–12.

Drawing these threads together, the talents need not refer to the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven per se but illustrate instead the responsibility of sowing and scattering them. In other words, the talents probably stand for the duty of proclaiming the message of the heavenly kingdom for the sake of producing a harvest in the kingdom's growth. This interpretation finds support from within the Olivet Discourse itself, since 24:14 has already mentioned that κηρυχθήσεται τοῦτο τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς βασιλείας ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ εἰς μαρτύριον πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν.

Finally, as in the preceding two parables, 25:14–30 portrays the dual outcomes of the contrasting characters. Like the closing verse of the first parable, 25:30 concludes the third parable with the phrase ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων. Once again, the excruciating disparity between the outcomes promotes solidarity with the faithful servants, in view of receiving commendation and averting judgement.

Summary of 24:45–25:30

The three parables develop the instructions γρηγορεῖτε and γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι in the face of the unknown and unexpected timing of Jesus's return. A key exegetical step involves reading these parables in the light of the function of mystery. Danielic and Matthean

[30] Ben Chenoweth, "Identifying the Talents: Contextual Clues for the Interpretation of the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14–30)," *Tyndale Bulletin* 56.1 (2005): 68–69.

mystery distinguishes the wise from the foolish; likewise, 24:45–25:30 differentiates the wise and faithful from the foolish and slothful by characterising the former as vigilant. They display readiness, despite the Son of Man's ostensible delay (25:1–13), by serving fellow believers (24:45–51) and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom (25:14–30). Finally, all three parables contrast the commendation and the punishment that respectively await the wise and the foolish, thereby encouraging alignment with the former, in anticipation of final judgement.

5.3.4 Climax: Universal Judgement during the Parousia (25:31–46)

While the preceding parables allude to the return of Jesus, they emphasise instead the juxtaposition of the wise and faithful against the foolish and slothful. 25:31 begins with the temporal clause ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, which moves the focus onto depicting the parousia itself. Also, while Talbert labels 25:31–46 a parable, other commentators point out that the metaphorical elements in these verses are largely confined to 25:32b–33.[31] Accordingly, it seems as though there is a change of genre, from parable in 24:45–25:30 to "word-picture" or prose narrative from 25:31 onwards.[32]

The shifts in focus and genre, the placement of the verses at the end of the speech, the gloriousness of the Son of Man and his throne, and the magnitude of all angels and all nations—their cumulative force suggests that 24:36–25:46 reaches its climax from

[31] Talbert, *Matthew*, 274. Likewise, Evans labels this section as "[the] parable of the sheep and goats." Evans, *Matthew*, 422.
[32] Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 418; Turner, *Matthew*, 604.

25:31 onwards.[33] The phrase πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in 25:32 echoes πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν in 24:14, where Jesus spoke of the gospel spreading throughout the world. Also, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (25:32) possibly looks back to the phrase πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς in 24:30, where Jesus, conflating Zech 12:10–14 and 14:17, alluded to both Jewish tribes and Gentile nations. We therefore maintain that πάντα τὰ ἔθνη in 25:32 presents the final judgement of the Son of Man as the universal division of humanity.[34]

The thrust of 25:31–46 is the standard by which the Son of Man judges all humanity, "[d]er universale Gerichtsmaßstab."[35] 25:40 summarises the criterion: ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἑνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων, ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε.[36] This statement has generated two related interpretative disputes. Firstly, who are the people designated by the pronoun ὑμῖν? Do they believe in and follow Jesus? Secondly, to whom does the phrase ἑνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων refer? Again, do they believe in and follow Jesus?

According to Fiedler, 25:31–46 demonstrates "[eine] universale Ausrichtung," in that neither the righteous sheep (ὑμῖν) nor the recipients of the acts of service (ἑνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων) are necessarily believers and followers of Jesus.[37] In fact, he concludes that the receipt of either eternal life or everlasting punishment does not depend on "die ausdrückliche Anerkennung oder Ablehnung Jesu

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[33] On the climactic quality of 25:31–46, see Mitch and Sri, *Gospel of Matthew*, 325; Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 432; France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 957; Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1023; Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium 16,21–28,20*, 248.

[34] On 25:31–46 as depicting universal judgement, see Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 391–92; Gnilka, *Matthäusevangelium Kap. 14,1–28,20*, 371; Turner, *Matthew*, 608; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 742; Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1024; France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 961; Bonnard, *L'evangile selon saint Matthieu*, 365–66; Gundry, *Matthew*, 511.

[35] Fiedler also points out that "[i]n diesem großen Finale kommt nun konkret zur Sprache, worauf sich sein Urteil gründen wird." Fiedler, *Matthäusevangelium*, 376, 377.

[36] The converse statement appears a few verses later: ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐφ ὅσον οὐκ ἐποιήσατε ἑνὶ τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων, οὐδὲ ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε (25:45).

[37] Fiedler, *Matthäusevangelium*, 377.

als Messias."[38] In contrast, Cooper contends that "the way [the nations] treated Jesus' humble brethren who represented Christ to them ... is a measure of their reception of the proclamation of the kingdom." [39] He concludes thus: "[h]ow one treats the messenger shows how one responds to the message; and how one treats the 'brothers,' the 'least of these' or 'little ones' shows how one treats Jesus and the one who sent him."[40]

In analysing the connection in 25:40 between those in need (ἑνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων) and Jesus himself, Fiedler refers in passing to the similar pronouncement of 10:40: ὁ δεχόμενος ὑμᾶς ἐμὲ δέχεται. There, the pronoun (ὑμᾶς) parallels προφήτην in 10:41. Just as ὑμᾶς in 10:40 refers to the disciples whom Jesus tasks to proclaim the kingdom of heaven (10:7), so προφήτην in 10:41 refers to preachers of the gospel. If the preacher is received in 10:41 precisely because he is a prophet (εἰς ὄνομα προφήτου), then the ones receiving him refer to those who accept his message of the kingdom. The comparison of 25:40 with 10:40–41 suggests that 25:31–46 does not depict serving the needy in general. Rather, these verses focus on needy believers of Jesus who testify to him, who receive kindness from those who embrace their testimony.[41]

The link between ὑμᾶς and προφήτην (10:40–41), and ἑνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων (25:40), is reinforced by the description of "you" and "prophet" in 10:42a as ἕνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων. According to 10:42b, the prophet, one of the little

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[38] He argues in the same paragraph that "[d]ie Verurteilten wie die Gerechten müssen mit ihm nicht notwendig direkt in der Verkündigung des Evangeliums konfrontiert worden sein." Fiedler, *Matthäusevangelium*, 379, 380.
[39] Cooper, *Incorporated Servanthood*, 203.
[40] Cooper, *Incorporated Servanthood*, 202. See also Gibbs, *Jerusalem and Parousia*, 219; Gundry, *Matthew*, 514; Turner, *Matthew*, 605–6; Carson, "Matthew," 583–84; Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 747.
[41] "[O]ne unwittingly treats Jesus as one treats his representatives (10:40–42)." Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 605.

ones, receives acts of kindness precisely because he is a follower of Jesus (εἰς ὄνομα μαθητοῦ). Indeed, 10:40–42, as a parallel statement to 25:40, suggests that both the doers and the recipients of the acts of service in 25:40 are followers of Jesus—with the recipients being those who proclaim the kingdom to the doers. By implication, those who show kindness do so, contrary to Fiedler, as an outworking of their acceptance of the gospel preached to them.

The surprise of the righteous sheep in 25:37–39 potentially undermines the above interpretation. According to France, their amazement implies that they see themselves as having extended charity to fellow human beings in need and not to those who are discernibly disciples (even preachers) of Jesus:

> [the sheep's] surprise when the Son of Man himself claims to have been the object of their loving action must throw doubt on the suggestion that their actions were specifically directed toward those they knew to be disciples.... They thought they were merely meeting human need.[42]

France also clarifies that the sheep's actions are neither "directed towards Jesus" nor "an expression of their attitude to [him]"; by extension, the sheep are not "openly declared supporters of Jesus."[43]

However, one can be more precise concerning the amazement of the righteous sheep. In 25:37–39, they marvel over how they—who have not, in the first place, seen Jesus hungry and thirsty—can be praised for giving him food and drink. Therefore, one does not need to deny, as France does, that the sheep were "openly declared supporters of Jesus," or that their kindness and service "were specifically directed toward those

[42] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 964.

[43] "[B]oth sheep and goats claim that they *did not know* that their actions were directed towards Jesus.... As far as [the sheep] were concerned, it was simply an act of kindness to a fellow human being in need, not an expression of their attitude to Jesus." France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 959, italics original.

they knew to be disciples."[44] Rather, the sheep can behave kindly towards Jesus's followers, out of belief in him, and still be surprised that they have served Jesus, whom they have not encountered in person.

As mentioned above (5.3.3), the parables of 24:45–25:30 differentiate the wise and faithful from the foolish and slothful in order to urge solidarity with the former. While 25:31–46 does not mention the wise and faithful or the foolish and slothful, the verses nonetheless distinguish the sheep from the goats in order to encourage alignment with the former. Like the preceding three parables, 25:31–46 develops the key imperatives γρηγορεῖτε and γίνεσθε ἕτοιμοι: these involve not just hearing but also accepting Jesus's message of the kingdom, as expressed by serving his followers and preachers. When the Son of Man finally arrives, he will set those who are awake and ready (the sheep) apart from those who are not (the goats), and the former will inherit the kingdom and receive eternal life (25:34, 46).

Bolt argues that this gathering and separating of the nations before the Son of Man does not refer to final judgement. Rather, it simply depicts the activities that 28:18–20 mentions: the disciples' proclamation of the gospel and their gathering of converts from among the nations.[45] Accordingly, the coming of the Son of Man in 25:31–46 refers to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus that initiates these activities. Bolt's reading of 25:31–46 accounts for the clauses κληρονομήσατε τὴν … βασιλείαν (25:34b) and ἀπελεύσονται … εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον (25:46b). These clauses may refer to a nonliteral entry into the kingdom of heaven and eternal life that commences upon a convert hearing and believing the gospel.

[44] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 959, 964.
[45] Bolt, *Matthew*, 227.

Nevertheless, 25:34b and 46b form a clear juxtaposition with the other statements πορεύεσθε ... εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον (25:41b) and ἀπελεύσονται ... εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον (25:46a). Bolt's interpretation, its strengths notwithstanding, accords less well with these statements. The present tense of πορεύεσθε (25:41b) suggests an ingressive-progressive Aktionsart that portrays the nonbeliever's entry εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον as commencing upon the arrival of the Son of Man.[46] 25:41b also calls to mind 13:40–42, where the parable of the weeds mention πυρί, τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός, and ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (likewise accompanied by angels; cf. 25:31) in depicting eschatological punishment.[47] It therefore seems more likely that the coming in 25:31–46 refers not to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus but to his parousia that brings final judgement.

Moreover, the application of the adjective αἰώνιος to the dual fates of life and punishment in 25:46 invokes the frame of Danielic mystery.[48] In particular, Dan 12:2 deploys αἰώνιος to portray the contrasting outcomes of life and shame when the time of consummation (καιρὸς συντελεία, 12:4) ensues. The model reader actualises the frame of mystery according to Dan 12:2–4 by interpreting the gathering and separating in Matt 25:31–46 as the decisive division of humanity at the completion of the age. This further strengthens our conclusion that the coming of the Son of Man in 25:41–46 refers not to his resurrection and ascension but to his parousia.

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[46] The ingressive-progressive present imperative "stresses both the inception and progress of an action commanded." Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 721.
[47] Refer to our analysis of the parables of the weeds and the net (3.4.4).
[48] On the allusion to Dan 12, see Gnilka, *Matthäusevangelium Kap. 14,1–28,20*, 377; France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 966; Gundry, *Matthew*, 516.

Summary of 25:31–46

The second part of Jesus's speech climaxes in 25:31–46 with a magisterial vision of the parousia, where the Son of Man implements universal judgement. His favourable verdict will be predicated on the outworking of one's belief in the gospel through acts of kindness to other followers, especially those who proclaim the kingdom. The stark differences in the conduct of the sheep and the goats, and in their respective fates for eternity, commend emulating the former who serve others.

5.3.5 Summary of Part II of Jesus's Speech (24:36–25:46)

While the first part of the speech addresses the disciples' enquiry and presupposition in 24:3, Jesus offers little clarification concerning the precise timing of his return at the end of the age. From 24:36 onwards, he reveals that this timing remains hidden; the parousia will therefore happen unexpectedly, in the suddenness of final judgement.

Accordingly, Jesus exhorts his disciples in 24:42–44 to stay awake and be prepared, which he elaborates in three parables. In 24:45–25:40, vigilance and readiness entail serving fellow believers (24:45–51), being prepared for an ostensible delay (25:1–13), and proclaiming the kingdom of heaven (25:14–30).

The second part of the speech reaches its discourse peak in 25:31–46, with a grand vision of the parousia of the Son of Man. This vision establishes that the final judgement of all humanity will divide those who express their belief in Jesus through acts of service to fellow believers from those who do not.

The main purpose of 24:36–25:46 may be discerned from its repeated pattern of contrast. Mystery according to Daniel and Matt 1–23 distinguishes the wise from the foolish in order to foster solidarity with the former. Likewise, the second part of Jesus's speech contains multiple juxtapositions that commend alignment with the wise and faithful, who will escape punishment and enjoy eternal life at the second coming.

5.4 The Narrative Conclusion (Matt 26:1–2)

26:1 repeats Matthew's closing formula, καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε ἐτέλεσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, for the preceding four major discourses (cf. 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1). The previous conclusions either looked back at people's reaction to Jesus (7:28) or pointed forward to a new scene in a different venue with a separate audience (11:1; 13:53; 19:1).

In contrast, the narrative conclusion of the Olivet Discourse does not present the disciples' response to Jesus, or a new set of characters (who only appear in 26:3), or a distinct venue (which only features in 26:6). 26:1–2 is the only closing statement to include additional direct speech from Jesus: μετὰ δύο ἡμέρας ... ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται εἰς τὸ σταυρωθῆναι. By referring to the Son of Man, most recently and frequently mentioned in the Olivet Discourse, 26:2 looks back at Matt 24–25. Also, 26:2, by declaring that παραδίδοται εἰς τὸ σταυρωθῆναι, points forward to Jesus's impending crucifixion. In this way, 26:1–2, as Bolt discerns, "ties the events which led to Jesus' death closely to his Apocalyptic Discourse."[49]

Less convincing is Bolt's explanation of the link between Matt 24–25 and 26–28, that the events of the passion and resurrection singularly fulfil the prophecies of the

[49] Bolt, *Matthew*, 229. To date, Bolt appears to be the only scholar to have made this inference.

Olivet Discourse.[50] Matt 24–25, as we have argued, is concerned instead with the destruction of the temple, the parousia of the Son of Man, and the end of the age. Moreover, Matt 26–28 concludes with the phrase ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος (28:20), which indicates that this consummation remains in the future. This, in turn, cautions against simply identifying the events of 26:3–28:20 as the completion of the age.

The narrative conclusion of 26:1–2, in linking Matthew's Olivet Discourse to his passion and resurrection account, raises the following questions. What, exactly, is the relationship between, on the one hand, the destruction of the temple and the parousia of Jesus, and, on the other, his imminent crucifixion and resurrection? What are its implications?

5.5 Conclusion

We will conclude by evaluating, firstly, the significance of mystery for our narrative-critical analysis of Matt 24–25, and, secondly, the significance of Matt 24–25 for Matthew's wider pastoral and theological concerns.

[50] Bolt, *Matthew*, 217; Bolt, "Mark 13," 26.

5.5.1 The Significance of Mystery for Interpreting the Matthean Olivet Discourse

A well-organised text, as our introductory chapter mentioned (1.3.2.3), shapes the interpretation of the model reader through the use of frames. The Matthean Olivet Discourse, as such, invokes the frame of mystery according to Daniel and Matt 1–23, which the model reader actualises by understanding Matt 24–25 in the light of the notion.

The disciples' private enquiry in 24:3, in alignment with the form and content of mystery, solicits further disclosure concerning the mysteries of the end times. This sets up the expectation that Jesus's speech will focus on the destruction of the temple, the parousia of the Son of Man, and the end of the age. Also, the disciples' questions implicitly assume that the devastation of the temple coincides with the completion of the age. This sets up the expectation that Jesus's reply will address the temporal relationship between the two end points. The contents of the speech confirm these two anticipations.

Considerations of the form of mystery suggest that the parable of the fig tree and its explanation functions as the discourse peak of 24:4–35. The climactic verses of 24:32–35 capture the core of Jesus's response to his disciples' enquiry and presupposition. While the temple will be devastated in the current generation, its end is merely the beginning of the (ultimate) end; only the parousia of the Son of Man will draw the present age to a close.

The second half of Jesus's speech exhorts those who are wise in such things to watch for the parousia of the Son of Man. 24:36–25:46, in accordance with the form

and content of mystery, deploys parables to explore ethical living with a view to the completion of the age. Also, these verses, in alignment with the function of mystery, differentiate the wise and faithful from the wicked and foolish. The repeated polemical contrasts foster solidarity with the former as those who watch for Jesus, thereby escaping punishment and receiving eternal life upon his return.

Attending to Danielic and Matthean mystery sheds light on a range of exegetical issues in the Olivet Discourse. These include discerning τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως in 24:15, interpreting θλῖψις μεγάλη in 24:21–22, understanding the cosmic imagery of 24:29, and identifying which coming features in 25:31–46. For a start, τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως, contrary to futurist readings, most plausibly refers to an attack on Jerusalem that culminates in the devastation of the temple. Concerning θλῖψις μεγάλη, this duress, contrary to telescopic-fulfilment and simple preterist-futurist interpretations, arguably commences with the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, and continues until the parousia of the Son of Man. Regarding the cosmic language of 24:29, these images, contrary to the preterist and the simple preterist-futurist positions, depict the second coming of Jesus in the fullness of its cosmos-shaking import. As for the Son of Man's arrival in 25:41–46, this coming, contrary to Bolt, alludes to final, universal judgement that precipitates entry into either eternal life or everlasting judgement.

5.5.2. The Significance of the Matthean Olivet Discourse for Matthew's Overall Pastoral and Theological Agenda

As part of Matthew's exploration of Danielic mystery, the Olivet Discourse brings greater precision to the end-time trajectory depicted in Daniel. In doing so, Matt 24–

25 does not simply inform the model reader about the temple and the Son of Man; more specifically, these chapters illuminate the relative eschatological importance of the temple and the Son of Man. The first part of Jesus's speech does not present the temple's devastation, horrifying as it may be, as significant in and of itself; it functions to signal that the truly cosmos-shaking event, the parousia of the Son of Man, comes next. Moreover, the second part of Jesus's speech focuses exclusively on the Son of Man and unpacks what it means to stay awake and prepare for his arrival. The Olivet Discourse thus feeds into Matthew's wider agenda of "instruct[ing]...; provid[ing] apologetic and evangelistic material, especially in winning Jews...; [and] inspir[ing] deeper faith in Jesus the Messiah, along with a maturing understanding of his person, [and] work."[51]

The second part of Jesus's speech distinguishes the wise and faithful from the wicked and foolish. Here, he repeatedly contrasts these two groups in their present attitude and conduct, and in their eventual fate. These juxtapositions encourage alignment with the former who prepare for the Son of Man by proclaiming the kingdom of heaven and practising kindness, thereby averting judgement and enjoying eternal life when he finally comes. The Olivet Discourse thus feeds into Matthew's wider strategy of "encourag[ing] believers in their witness before a hostile world." [52]

5.5.3 Unresolved Questions

26:1–2 forges a link between the predictions of the Olivet Discourse and the ensuing passion and resurrection narrative, thereby raising the following questions. What,

[51] Carson, "Matthew," 49. Refer to our earlier discussion of Matthew's overall agenda (1.4.5).
[52] Carson, "Matthew," 49. Refer to 1.4.5.

precisely, is the relationship between, on the one hand, the destruction of the temple and the parousia of the Son of Man, and, on the other, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus? What are its implications? Our next chapter will address these questions.

Chapter 6
Matthean Mystery, the Olivet Discourse, and the Passion and Resurrection Narrative

6.1 Introduction

Matthew's Olivet Discourse, as an extension of his exploration of Danielic mystery, focuses on the mysteries of the destruction of the temple, the parousia of Jesus, and the end of the age. The first half of Jesus's speech (24:4–35) delineates the timings of, and the relationship between, these events. The climactic verses of 24:32–35 reveal that the temple will be destroyed within the lifetime of the generation contemporaneous with Jesus—but the end of the temple does not mark the end of the age. Rather, it signals that the parousia will happen after that, the very coming that will bring the present age to its completion.[1] Nonetheless, the second half of Jesus's speech (24:36–25:46) teaches that the exact timing of the final arrival remains unknown, thereby underscoring the need to stay awake and be prepared for the Son of Man.

Our analysis of Matt 24–25 stands in contrast to Bolt's conclusion that the Olivet Discourse is not concerned with the temple's destruction and the Son of Man's arrival but with the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.[2] Bolt bases his conclusion on the links between Mark 13 and 14–16. According to Eric Roseberry,

[1] As our previous chapter argued (4.5.2), this does not mean that the second coming will happen immediately after the destruction of the temple. Rather, the attack on Jerusalem and its temple unleashes the great distress, which will expand beyond Judea to engulf the rest of humanity. The parousia will only occur after this duress runs its course.
[2] Bolt, "Mark 13," 25–26; Bolt, *Matthew*, 217.

"Bolt has highlighted narrative connections … that must be dealt with by all interpreters of the [Olivet] discourse."[3]

From here, one could raise several questions for a narrative-critical analysis of the Matthean Olivet Discourse. Firstly, does Matthew, like Mark, embed echoes of the Olivet Discourse in his passion and resurrection account—if so, what are they? Secondly, given its importance for the Matthean Olivet Discourse, how does mystery illuminate the links between Matt 24–25 and 26–28? Thirdly, if, as we have argued, Matthew's Olivet Discourse speaks of the temple's devastation and the Son of Man's arrival—what, then, is the meaning and significance of the connections?

We will address these questions in turn, beginning with a survey and review of secondary literature on the relationship between the Olivet Discourse and the passion and resurrection account (6.2). We will then establish the connections between Matt 24–25 and 26–28 (6.3), especially those concerning the temple's destruction and the Son of Man's coming, before exploring the meaning and significance of these links (6.4).

By way of preview, our chapter proposes the following argument. In the light of Matthean mystery, the links between Matt 24–25 and 26–28 point to the inauguration and prefiguration of the temple's devastation and the Son of Man's arrival in Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection. This enriches the model reader's appreciation of the main message and purpose of the Olivet Discourse, by reinforcing the shift in attention from the temple and its full destruction to the Son of Man and his final coming.

[3] Eric Roseberry, "The Passion Narrative and the Destruction of the Temple" (Lincoln Christian Seminary, MA thesis, 2012), 78.

6.2 A Survey and Review of Secondary Literature

Numerous scholarly works refer in passing to the relationship between the Olivet Discourse and the passion and resurrection account in either Mark's or Matthew's narrative. However, few draw the critical connections together into an integrated consideration of their meaning and significance. Even fewer analyse these connections as part of a narrative-critical interpretation of the Olivet Discourse. We will concentrate on secondary literature that has attempted to uncover the meaning and significance of these links, beyond merely acknowledging their presence.

6.2.1 Surveying the Current State of Research

R. H. Lightfoot, *The Gospel Message of St. Mark* (1950)

Lightfoot is "the first modern exegete" to pay attention to the parallels between Mark 13 and 14–16.[4] Bolt, in developing his interpretation of Mark 13, acknowledges his debt to Lightfoot's delineation of the correspondence between the time-markers in 13:35 and the three-hour intervals in the passion account.[5]

Lightfoot mentions four other connections. Firstly, the occurrences of "the verb to hand up, or to deliver over": "three times in chapter 13, and ten times in chapters 14 and 15."[6] Secondly, the parallel between the warning to the elect against stumbling

[4] Danny Yencich, "Sowing the Passion at Olivet: Mark 13–15 in a Narrative Frame," *Stone-Campbell Journal* 20.2 (2017): 194 n. 25.
[5] Bolt, "Mark 13," 22. See R. H. Lightfoot, *The Gospel Message of St. Mark* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1950), 53.
[6] Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 51–52.

in 13:22–23 and the disciples' subsequent failure in deserting Jesus.[7] Thirdly, the references to a specific and significant "hour" in 13:32–33 and the passion narrative.[8] Finally, the way 14:62 recalls 13:26 in evoking the coming of the Son of Man amidst clouds.[9]

Lightfoot thereby concludes that the relationship between Mark 13 and 14–16 "may be closer and more subtle than was previously supposed."[10] In particular, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus present a "first fulfilment" of the Olivet Discourse.[11] Nevertheless, Lightfoot does not unpack the implications of this fulfilment beyond suggesting that 13:30, οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη μέχρις οὗ ταῦτα πάντα γένηται, "becomes much less difficult than is usually supposed."[12]

A. Feuillet, "Le sens du mot Parousie dans l'Evangile de Matthieu" (1956)

This article seeks to distinguish the parousia of the Son of Man in Matthew's Gospel from the second coming of Jesus in final judgement.[13] According to Feuillet, the destruction of the temple promised in 24:15 is fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem, and the parousia of the Son of Man promised in 24:30 is "la contrepartie glorieuse" to the

[7] Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 52.
[8] Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 52–53.
[9] Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 54.
[10] Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 51.
[11] Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 54. These constitute a preliminary fulfilment since the dying and rising of Jesus is "a sign, a seal or assurance ... of the ultimate fulfilment."
[12] Since the "first fulfilment" of 13:30, happening in Mark 14–16, "at any rate was not far off". Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 54.
[13] Feuillet, "Le sens du mot Parousie," 261–62.

devastation of the city and its temple.[14] Likewise, the coming of the Son of Man in 26:64 is "la contrepartie glorieuse" to the imminent death of Jesus.[15]

Drawing on Lightfoot, Feuillet argues for a similar relationship between Matt 24–25 and 26–28: the Olivet Discourse receives "une première réalisation" in the passion and resurrection account.[16] More precisely, the destruction of the temple in 24:15 is initially realised at the death of Jesus, as symbolised by the tearing of the temple veil in 27:51. Also, the arrival of the Son of Man in 24:30 is initially fulfilled in the coming mentioned in 26:64, the glorious counterpart to the death of Jesus.

However, Feuillet derives a different implication from the preliminary realisation of Matt 24–25 in Matt 26–28. His discussion of its significance concentrates on the (purported) dissociation of the parousia of the Son of Man in the Olivet Discourse from the final coming of Jesus.[17]

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[14] Feuillet, "Le sens du mot Parousie," 266.
[15] Feuillet, "Le sens du mot Parousie," 266. He explains how this is the case using John's Gospel: "[s]i tout ce qu'on vient de dire est exact, l'auteur du Quatrième Evangile n'aurait donc rien inventé en présentant la Passion du Sauveur comme le jugement du monde mauvais et du 'prince de ce monde' et en même temps et indivisiblement comme l'heure de la glorification du Fils de l'homme." Feuillet, "Le sens du mot Parousie," 268.
[16] "[O]n a fait remarquer récemment que presque tous les traits de l'apocalypse synoptique reçoivent une première réalisation dans le drame de la Passion tel que l'ont compris les évangélistes.... La correspondance est surtout visible dans Marc, mais on la note également chez les deux autres synoptiques qui dépendent de lui." Feuillet, "Le sens du mot Parousie," 266–67.
[17] See especially Feuillet, "Le sens du mot Parousie," 268–69.

Dale C. Allison, *The End of the Ages Has Come: An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus* (1985)

W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII* (1997)

Allison reiterates Lightfoot's explication of the relationship between Mark's Olivet Discourse and his passion account. However, for Allison, "Lightfoot's work does not exhaust the significant parallels," so he adds five more.[18] Firstly, the darkness of 15:33 recalls a similar phenomenon in 13:24.[19] Secondly, the rending of the temple veil in 15:38 reiterates the passing away of the temple promised in the Olivet Discourse.[20] Thirdly, the stress on Judas being part of Jesus's inner circle in 14:10, 18–20, and 43 echoes the prophecy of betrayal in 13:12–13.[21] Fourthly, the flight of the disciples and an unnamed young man in 14:50–52 recalls the exhortation to flee in 13:14–16.[22] Fifthly, the way Jesus comes to his disciples and finds them sleeping in 14:37–40 replays the sequence of coming, finding, and sleeping in 13:36.[23]

Allison argues that these parallels are important for the passion account since they "suggest that the sufferings of Jesus himself belong to the great tribulation."[24] In particular, Jesus's crucifixion "has universal significance, ultimate power, [and] cosmic

[18] Dale C. Allison, *The End of the Ages Has Come: An Early Interpretation of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1985), 37.
[19] Allison, *End of the Ages*, 37.
[20] Allison, *End of the Ages*, 37.
[21] Allison, *End of the Ages*, 37.
[22] Allison, *End of the Ages*, 37.
[23] Allison, *End of the Ages*, 37.
[24] Allison, *End of the Ages*, 38.

sweep," as "precisely that event which ushers in the last times, inaugurating eschatology."[25]

Davies and Allison's commentary mentions the echoes of Matt 24–25 in Matt 26–28, including the "key words" γρηγορέω, καθεύδω, and ὥρα.[26] They conclude likewise that "in Matthew the passion of Jesus is eschatological."[27] Neither Allison's monograph nor his commentary develop the implications of these links for interpreting the Olivet Discourse.

Timothy J. Geddert, *Watchwords: Mark 13 in Markan Eschatology* (1989)

Geddert, drawing on Lightfoot, devotes an entire chapter to unpacking the connections between Mark's Olivet Discourse and his passion account.[28] According to Geddert, the connection between ὥρα in 13:32 and 14:41 suggests more than one referent for the term: the hour relates primarily to Jesus's second coming and secondarily to his crucifixion.[29] The dual referents help make sense of 13:32 in relation to the temporal complexity of 13:30, since "the first fulfilment of 13:32 occurred but a few days after."[30] Geddert's use of "first fulfilment" recalls the prior expressions of Lightfoot ("first fulfilment") and Feuillet ("une première réalisation").[31]

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[25] Allison, *End of the Ages*, 38.
[26] Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 502.
[27] Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 502.
[28] Geddert, *Watchwords*, 89.
[29] Geddert, *Watchwords*, 108.
[30] Geddert, *Watchwords*, 108.
[31] Geddert, *Watchwords*, 108; Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 54; Feuillet, "Le sens du mot Parousie," 266–67.

More generally, Geddert interprets the links between Mark 13 and 14–16 to mean that "Jesus' passion proleptically fulfils … eschatological expectations."[32] This echoes Allison's analysis of the passion as "that event which ushers in the last times."[33]

Geddert argues that the chief significance of the parallels entails guiding the interpretation of the term γρηγορέω in Mark 13 and 14. In 14:32–50, the disciples' main problem is not "ignorance" but "disobedience and unfaithfulness."[34] This implies that "watch[ing] (γρηγορέω) is … *not* a discernment process; *it is to act in obedience* … even when full knowledge is withheld."[35] More specifically, "the commanded 'watching' is the appropriate *response* to the fact that [the disciples] are ignorant of the hour; it is not a way of discerning which hour brings eschatological fulfilment."[36] Also, the repetition of γρηγορέω in 13:34, 35, and 37, and 14:34, 37, and 38 presents Jesus in Gethsemane as an example for his followers of watching in faithfulness and obedience.[37]

Contrary to Lightfoot, Geddert concludes that rightly understanding γρηγορέω prevents an erroneous reading of the Olivet Discourse in a fit of "apocalyptic fever."[38] Accordingly, Mark 13 is less concerned with "how [the readers] can determine the timing of the End and the signs that precede it" than with "how to live as faithful disciples without knowing when the End will come."[39] However, this arguably promotes a false dichotomy, since the Matthean Olivet Discourse presents the temple's

[32] Geddert, *Watchwords*, 106–7.
[33] Allison, *End of the Ages*, 38.
[34] Geddert, *Watchwords*, 104.
[35] Geddert, *Watchwords*, 104, italics original.
[36] Geddert, *Watchwords*, 104–5, italics original.
[37] Geddert, *Watchwords*, 106.
[38] Geddert, *Watchwords*, 109.
[39] Geddert, *Watchwords*, 109.

destruction as a sign of Jesus's return (24:32–35) while also exhorting faithful vigilance in anticipation of an unexpected coming (24:36–25:46).[40]

> Peter G. Bolt, "The Narrative Integrity of Mark 13:24–27" (1991)
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> Peter G. Bolt, "Mark 13: An Apocalyptic Precursor to the Passion Narrative" (1995)
>
> Peter G. Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance: Atonement in Mark's Gospel* (2004)
>
> Peter G. Bolt, *Matthew: A Great Light Dawns* (2014)
>
> Peter G. Bolt, *The Narrative Integrity of Mark 13:24–27* (2021)

Bolt construes the Olivet Discourse as an "apocalyptic precursor" to the crucifixion and resurrection account: "the expectations generated by the eschatological discourse find their fulfilment in the passion and exaltation of Jesus."[41] He compares his work with Geddert's, both of which share the aim of "understand[ing] Mark 13 in the context of Mark's Gospel."[42] However, while Geddert, following Lightfoot, regards the passion account as a "first fulfilment" of Mark 13, Bolt considers the passion account "the *only fulfilment that the text actually encourages*."[43]

Bolt's scholarly publications on the topic are thus far restricted to Mark 13, though his passing comments suggest a similar reading of Matt 24–25 and Luke 21. According to him, "the [Synoptic] parallels, (and indeed the rest of the New Testament), appear to support the perspective [he has] offered on Mark, in that *they can be read along*

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[40] See our earlier analysis of 24:32–35 (4.5.4) and 24:36–25:46 (5.3).
[41] Bolt, "Mark 13," 26, 31.
[42] Bolt, "Narrative Integrity," 183.
[43] Bolt, "Narrative Integrity," 183, italics original; Geddert, *Watchwords*, 108.

similar lines."[44] In his popular exposition of Matthew's Gospel, Bolt eschews the "well-worn paths" of interpreting Matt 24–25 to be about the fall of Jerusalem or the second coming of Jesus.[45] Rather, he describes the discourse "as an *apocalyptic preparation for the death and resurrection of Jesus*."[46] Nevertheless, if, as we have argued, the Olivet Discourse is indeed about the temple's destruction and the second coming—then the links between Matt 24–25 and 26–28 call for a different explanation.

Vicky Balabanski, *Eschatology in the Making: Mark, Matthew and the Didache* (1997)

Vicky Balabanski, "Mission in Matthew against the Horizon of Matthew 24" (2008)

Balabanski's monograph acknowledges that "there are ... motifs which link Mark 13 to the passion narrative."[47] However, she remains unpersuaded that the predictions of Mark 13 are fulfilled in Mark 14–16, since the Olivet Discourse "projects beyond the plotted time of [Mark's] narrative."[48] Apart from brief allusions to "cosmic significance" and "prefigurement," the monograph does not address the implications of the parallels between Mark 13 and 14–16.[49]

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[44] Bolt, "Narrative Integrity," 161, italics original.
[45] Bolt, *Matthew*, 217.
[46] Bolt, *Matthew*, 217, italics original.
[47] Balabanski, *Eschatology in the Making*, 67.
[48] Balabanski, *Eschatology in the Making*, 67.
[49] Balabanski, *Eschatology in the Making*, 67. She simply states that "13:24 prepares the reader to recognize the cosmic significance of 15:33 and to see it as a prefigurement pointing beyond the plotted time of the narrative."

Balabanski addresses this in an article on the "[v]erbal and thematic parallels between Matt 28.16–20 and Matt 24.1–31."[50] These parallels include the repeated phrases τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος (28:20; cf. 24:3) and πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (28:19; cf. 24:9, 14), and the reiterated Danielic themes of power and glory (28:18; cf. 24:30).[51] Balabanski does not explicate these links in terms of 28:16–20 fulfilling 24:1–31; in fact, she clarifies that Jesus's "presence among the disciples in Matthew 28 does not yet constitute the παρουσία of Matt 24.3, 27–31."[52] The article argues instead that the connections call for interpreting 24:1–31 and 28:16–20 as "mutually significant," especially for "understanding Matthew's missional perspective as a whole."[53]

C. Marvin Pate and Douglas W. Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet: The New Testament and the Great Tribulation* (2003)

Pate and Kennard briefly mention the parallels between Mark 13 and 14–16 as part of their analysis of the great tribulation and messianic woes in the New Testament. They allude to Lightfoot and Allison in their discussion, and they cite at length Allison's analysis of the meaning and significance of the links.[54] Consequently, these parallels

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[50] Vicky Balabanski, "Mission in Matthew against the Horizon of Matthew 24," *New Testament Studies* 54.2 (2008): 161.
[51] Balabanski, "Mission in Matthew," 162–63.
[52] Balabanski, "Mission in Matthew," 163.
[53] Balabanski, "Mission in Matthew," 170, 175. In particular, reading 28:16–20 alongside 24:1–31 prevents "too narrow a reconstruction of the concept of mission for the Matthean community." For example, "[e]ndurance" exhorted in 24:1–31 "was as much core business as teaching and preaching" emphasised in 28:16–20. Balabanski, "Mission in Matthew," 174.
[54] C. Marvin Pate and Douglas W. Kennard, *Deliverance Now and Not Yet: The New Testament and the Great Tribulation*, Studies in Biblical Literature 54 (New York: Lang, 2003), 306–8.

simply indicate to Pate and Kennard that "Mark equated the afflictions surrounding Jesus' death with the Messianic Woes."[55]

Timothy C. Gray, *The Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Its Narrative Role* (2010)

In exploring "the role of the temple in Mark's narrative," Gray examines the "link between Mark 13 and the ensuing narrative of Jesus' passion in Mark 14–15."[56] He draws on "Lightfoot's groundbreaking work" to suggest that "Mark intend[s] the reader to see the scene at Gethsemane through the lens of the eschatological parable" in 13:32–37.[57] He also identifies "three echoes to Daniel in the Gethsemene scene alone: 'Son of Man,' 'hour,' and 'handing over'—all of which converge to show that the passion of Jesus is the great eschatological trial spoken of in Mark 13."[58]

Like Bolt, Gray argues that the Markan Olivet Discourse "recount[s] the life and passion of Jesus in a way that aims to show how Jesus ushered in the beginning of the eschatological end time."[59] However, unlike Bolt, he also implies a subsequent fulfilment of Mark 13 in the Jewish-Roman war by commenting that the discourse "is more interested in giving a theological account of these events [of AD 70] than relating them simply as prophecy *ex eventu*."[60]

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[55] Pate and Kennard, *Deliverance Now*, 306.
[56] Gray, *Temple in Mark*, 1, 151.
[57] Gray, *Temple in Mark*, 165–66.
[58] Gray, *Temple in Mark*, 171.
[59] Gray, *Temple in Mark*, 199.
[60] He goes on to say that "Mark assumes his readership is aware to some degree of the political events surrounding the temple." Gray, *Temple in Mark*, 153.

In discussing the tearing of the temple veil (15:38), Gray remarks that "Jesus's death ... inaugurates the temple's destruction."[61] His delineation of the connections between Mark 13 and 14–16 culminates in the following conclusion: "the eschatological tribulation that will usher in the end of the temple begins with the tribulation that brings about Jesus' death."[62] In other words, Gray approaches the connections with a view to establishing their significance for the passion account and not the Olivet Discourse. Like Allison, Pate, and Kennard, he focuses on the eschatological character of Mark 14–16: "the death of Jesus signals the end of the temple..., which in turn signals the end of the age."[63]

Eric Roseberry, "The Passion Narrative and the Destruction of the Temple" (2012)

This unpublished master's thesis from Lincoln Christian Seminary tests Bolt's interpretation of Mark 13 against Matt 24–25.[64] It concludes that Bolt's "major contribution" is not his interpretation of Mark 13 per se; rather, "Bolt's emphasis on reading the discourse within its narrative context can help interpret the imagery which occurs in both the discourse and the passion."[65]

Roseberry argues, like Allison, Gray, Pate, and Kennard, that the links between the Olivet Discourse and the passion and resurrection account highlight the "in-breaking of eschatological realities" during Jesus's final week.[66] Roseberry also

[61] Gray, *Temple in Mark*, 193.
[62] Gray, *Temple in Mark*, 192.
[63] Gray, *Temple in Mark*, 193.
[64] Roseberry, "Passion Narrative," 30.
[65] Roseberry, "Passion Narrative," 48.
[66] Roseberry, "Passion Narrative," 78.

maintains, like Lightfoot, Feuillet, Geddert, and Bolt, that the connections indicate the fulfilment of the Olivet Discourse in the passion and resurrection account.[67]

Nevertheless, Roseberry eschews Bolt's "exclusivist interpretation" that confines the fulfilment of Matt 24–25 to Matt 26–28.[68] Like Lightfoot, Feuillet, and Geddert, Roseberry argues that the dying, rising, and exalting of Jesus is "not the final" but "an initial fulfilment."[69] He concludes that the Olivet Discourse "is about one event fulfilled in two-stages [sic]."[70] This "one event" refers to "the establishment of [Jesus] as God's anointed who now has authority to bring judgment."[71] Its fulfilment "began … through the resurrection and ascension of Jesus … [and] continued and was given a physical manifestation by the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E."[72] However, if, as our previous chapters argued, the Olivet Discourse features not just the temple's destruction but also Jesus's second coming—then the relationship between the parousia and the different stages of fulfilment calls for further exploration.

Jeremy R. Treat, *The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology* (2014)

Treat cites Bolt's interpretation of the Markan Olivet Discourse: it is not "a detached future-eschatology lecture"; rather, "in the context of Mark's narrative, it is primarily about the death and resurrection of Christ."[73] His mention of Bolt is brief and does not

[67] Roseberry, "Passion Narrative," 78.
[68] Roseberry, "Passion Narrative," 78.
[69] Roseberry, "Passion Narrative," 78.
[70] Roseberry, "Passion Narrative," 99.
[71] Roseberry, "Passion Narrative," 99.
[72] Roseberry, "Passion Narrative," 99.
[73] Treat, *Crucified King*, 103.

present evidence for the proposed relationship between Mark 13 and 14–16. Nevertheless, he discusses the theological implication of the relationship by speaking of how it "places the cross on an eschatological plane": "[t]he cross represents the end of the ages and is the turning point in redemptive history."[74] Like Allison, Gray, Roseberry, Pate, and Kennard, he concludes that the echoes of the Olivet Discourse in the passion account "fills … the death and resurrection of Christ" with "eschatological meaning."[75]

Danny Yencich, "Sowing the Passion at the Olivet: Mark 13–15 in a Narrative Frame" (2017)

Yencich begins by explaining that although "[a] few interpreters have noticed particular parallels between Mark 13 and the Markan passion, … no one has offered a unified theory for its function *within the Markan narrative*."[76] He seeks to redress this by arguing that "Mark 13 serves beautifully as prolepsis, anticipation, or proemium of the passion to come."[77] This echoes Bolt's interpretation of Mark 13 as a "precursor" for the crucifixion and resurrection account.[78] Nevertheless, Yencich maintains that Mark 13 does not point exclusively to the dying, rising, and exalting of Jesus but also to events outside of Mark 14–16, such as the destruction of the temple.[79] Accordingly, the

[74] Treat, *Crucified King*, 103.
[75] Treat, *Crucified King*, 103.
[76] Yencich, "Sowing the Passion," 189, italics original. While Yencich mentions Lightfoot and Geddert in his article, he does not appear to have encountered Bolt's publications. For the reference to Geddert, see Yencich, "Sowing the Passion," 196 n. 31.
[77] Yencich, "Sowing the Passion," 200.
[78] Bolt, "Mark 13," 26.
[79] Yencich, "Sowing the Passion," 199.

passion account, contrary to Bolt, provides an initial, not exclusive, fulfilment of the Olivet Discourse.

Finally, like Allison, Geddert, Pate, Kennard, Gray, and Roseberry, Yencich concludes that "the many anticipations of the passion in Mark 13 lend the death of Jesus a particularly *eschatological* character" in "mark[ing] the end of the age."[80] The article does not discuss the significance of these anticipations for understanding Mark 13.

6.2.2 Reviewing the Current State of Research

We can make five observations about the existing scholarship. Firstly, despite extensive research on the Olivet Discourse, only a few scholars have given more than a cursory glance at its parallels with the passion and resurrection account. Secondly, much of the acknowledgement of these parallels pertains to Mark's, not Matthew's, narrative. Thirdly, only a subset of the scholars commenting on these links explore their meaning and significance.

Fourthly, where secondary literature has considered the implications of these connections, not all of the literature pays attention to their significance for the Olivet Discourse. Much of the literature focuses instead on how the connections affect other aspects of the narrative, such as the eschatological character of Jesus's final week or Matthew's perspective on missionary activity.

Fifthly, where scholarly writings have explored the import of these parallels for interpreting the Olivet Discourse, not all of the writings pay attention to the central message and purpose of Matt 24–25. Many of the writings focus instead on narrow

[80] Yencich, "Sowing the Passion," 200, italics original.

issues within the Olivet Discourse, especially the temporal complexity of Mark 13:30. There is, however, some discussion of the fulfilment of the Olivet Discourse by Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection.

From these observations, we may delineate three main areas of investigation, which correspond to the three questions raised in the introduction (6.1). Firstly, there remains scope for more work establishing the parallels between Matthew's Olivet Discourse and his passion and resurrection account. Secondly, there is room for exploring whether Matthew's conception of mystery sheds light on these connections. Thirdly, further analysis is due with regard to the meaning and significance of these links for a narrative-critical interpretation of Matt 24–25. The remainder of our chapter will address these questions in turn.

6.3 Establishing the Connections between Matt 24–25 and 26–28

For Lightfoot and other scholars, a critical connection between Mark 13 and 14–16 is the timings of 13:35, ἢ ὀψὲ ἢ μεσονύκτιον ἢ ἀλεκτοροφωνίας ἢ πρωΐ.[81] While these temporal markers do not feature in Matthew's corresponding pericope, the question remains as to whether he has embedded other echoes of the Olivet Discourse in his passion and resurrection narrative.

[81] These four timings reappear, explicitly or otherwise, in the passion account: 14:17 takes place in the evening, 14:32–42 around midnight, 14:68 and 72 at the crowing of a rooster, and 15:1 during the morning. Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 53. See also Allison, *End of the Ages*, 37; Bolt, "Mark 13," 22–23; Yencich, "Sowing the Passion," 196–97; Roseberry, "Passion Narrative," 30–32.

This is a promising inquiry because the conclusion of Matthew's Olivet Discourse (26:1–2) simultaneously looks back at Jesus's speech and points forward to his crucifixion, tying "the events which led to Jesus' death closely to his Apocalyptic Discourse."[82] While this does not necessitate Bolt's conclusion that the events promised in the Olivet Discourse are "played out in the Passion narrative," it nevertheless suggests some relationship between Matt 24–25 and 26–28.[83]

We will catalogue seven general links between Matthew's Olivet Discourse and his passion and resurrection account, which indicate that the two passages are "mutually significant."[84] Our focus will then narrow onto the parallels specific to the main events of Matt 24–25: the destruction of the temple and the parousia of the Son of Man.

6.3.1 General Connections between Matt 24–25 and 26–28

Existing research on the parallels between Mark 13 and 14–16 catalogue at least four links that also appear in Matthew's Gospel. Firstly, "the verb to hand up, or to deliver over" occurs "three times in [Mark] chapter 13, and ten times in chapters 14 and 15."[85] Matthew likewise uses παραδίδωμι, at least three times in his Olivet Discourse (24:9, 10; 26:2) and fourteen times in his passion and resurrection account (26:15, 16, 21, 23, 24, 25, 45, 46, 48; 27:2, 3, 4, 18, 26).[86]

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[82] Bolt, *Matthew*, 229.
[83] Bolt, *Matthew*, 229.
[84] Balabanski, "Mission in Matthew," 170.
[85] Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 51–52.
[86] These verse references only include occurrences of the verb with either the disciples or Jesus as the object (or the passive subject).

Secondly, the warning to the elect against stumbling in Mark 13:22–23 parallels the disciples abandoning Jesus in Mark 14.[87] Similar language and themes carry over to the corresponding episodes in Matthew's Gospel. Just as Mark uses the verb ἀποπλανάω in 13:22, so Matthew deploys πλανάω for the warning in 24:24. Also, just as Mark 14:50–52 and 66–72 portray the disciples deserting Jesus, so Matt 26:56 and 69–75 depict their defection.

Thirdly, Mark refers to a specific and significant hour in 13:32, 14:35, and 14:41.[88] In Matthew's Olivet Discourse, ἡ ὥρα appears not just in 24:36 (parallel to Mark 13:32) but also in 25:13.[89] In his passion and resurrection account, ἡ ὥρα appears in 26:45 (parallel to Mark 14:41).

Fourthly, the flight of the disciples in Mark 14:50–52 echoes the exhortation to flee in 13:14–16.[90] These verses use the verb φεύγω, which also occurs in the corresponding verses of Matt 24:16 and 26:56.

Matthew, despite excluding from his narrative the temporal markers of Mark 13:35, has nevertheless retained other connections between the Olivet Discourse and the passion and resurrection narrative. To the above list of connections we could add three more: the repetitions of τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος (28:20; cf. 24:3) and πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (28:19; cf. 24:9, 14), and the reiteration of the Danielic themes of power and glory (28:18; cf. 24:30).[91] Taken together, these seven parallels indicate that Matthew has conceived Matt 24–25 and 26–28 as "mutually significant."[92] These links function

[87] Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 52.
[88] Lightfoot, *Gospel Message of Mark*, 52–53.
[89] On ὥρας in 24:36 sharing the article with ἡμέρας, see Olmstead, *Matthew 15–28*, 257.
[90] Allison, *End of the Ages*, 37.
[91] Balabanski, "Mission in Matthew," 162–63.
[92] Balabanski, "Mission in Matthew," 170.

as frames, which Matthew's model reader discerns and actualises by interpreting the passages in the light of each other.

6.3.2 Specific Connections between Matt 24–25 and 26–28

6.3.2.1 References to the Destruction of the Temple

δύναμαι καταλῦσαι τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ (26:61)

The first evocation in Matt 26–28 of the temple's destruction takes place during Jesus's trial before the chief priest and other Jewish leaders. In 26:61, two witnesses accuse Jesus of declaring, δύναμαι καταλῦσαι τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ. Talbert notes that "Matthew has no such saying attributed to Jesus," thereby concluding that the evangelist "regards this as false testimony."[93] Also, Bolt infers from the parallel verses (Mark 14:55–58) that "Mark distances Jesus from [the accusers'] comments by clearly labelling their testimony as 'false.'"[94] He maintains that 14:58 "is hardly strong evidence that Jesus, or Mark, was interested in the destruction of the physical temple."[95]

However, the fact that Jesus does not issue the exact claim of Matt 26:61 anywhere in Matthew's narrative (or even anywhere in the Synoptic Gospels) need not render the testimony entirely fictive. The accusation hearkens back to the themes of Jesus's teaching, especially the prophecies of the temple's devastation in 23:38 and

[93] Talbert, *Matthew*, 295.
[94] Bolt, "Mark 13," 18.
[95] Bolt, "Mark 13," 18.

24:2.[96] In fact, the overlapping vocabulary of καταλύω in 26:61 and 24:2 strengthens the link between the two verses.[97] In Matt 26–28, the verb only appears in 26:61 and 27:40, with the temple as the object on both occasions. Outside of these chapters, καταλύω occurs in 24:2, again with (the stones of) the temple as the object. (Matthew uses the verb only two other times, in 5:17, the object being τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφήτας.) Therefore, one can reasonably argue that 26:61 is a paraphrastic echo—but an echo nonetheless—of the prediction of the temple's destruction in 24:2.

As for the accusation in 26:61 being a false charge, Matthew, like Mark, introduces the allegation in the context of the chief priest and Sanhedrin soliciting ψευδομαρτυρίαν (Matt 26:59; cf. Mark 14:55–56). Nevertheless, Matthew, unlike Mark, does not apply the word ψευδομαρτυρία specifically to the accusation in 26:61 (cf. Mark 14:57). This suggests, contrary to Bolt and Talbert, that "[t]he testimony of the two witnesses, however motivated, is assumed to be true and highlights Jesus' power over even the temple and its fate."[98]

Even if one insists, in the light of Mark 14:57–59, that the allegation in Matt 26:61 is false, it is by no means evident what, precisely, is untrue. Evans suggests that "[t]he ruling priests were seeking 'false testimony' because from Matthew's point of view Jesus has committed no crime"; conversely, "[h]onest and fair testimony will not lead to a conviction."[99] In other words, the accusation of 26:61 need not be false in the sense of being erroneous in content, as opposed to being dishonest or unfair in use or

[96] Also, the rest of the accusation in 26:61, καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν οἰκοδομῆσαι, probably hearkens back to Jesus's self-description in 21:42, κεφαλὴν γωνίας. This, as our previous chapter argued (3.5.3), implies the supplanting of the temple in Jerusalem by the formation of a new one with Jesus as its foundation.
[97] Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 798.
[98] Garland, *Reading Matthew*, 253.
[99] Evans, *Matthew*, 441. See also Carson, "Matthew," 619.

intent. Other commentators propose that the deceit in 26:61 pertains to the attribution of the temple's destruction to Jesus's personal agency.[100] In predicting the devastation of the temple (24:2), Jesus does not mention any direct or immediate involvement on his part.

Neither of these hypotheses necessitate that Matthew considers the charge in 26:61 utterly false; one could reasonably construe the accusation as "[eine] Verdrehung oder doch [ein] Missverständnis eines ... Jesuswortes."[101] Carson strikes a careful balance in assessing that the accusation "had some element of truth but was evilly motivated."[102] In fact, Matthew's account of the trial arguably separates the circumstance of 26:59–60a from that of 26:60b–61. While in 26:60a πολλῶν προσελθόντων ψευδομαρτύρων, 26:60b, by abruptly specifying προσελθόντες δύο, switches to a fresh scenario. Also, the combination of the developmental connective δέ and the adverb of temporal progression ὕστερον reinforces the impression of a new situation in 26:60b: "das letzte Zeugnis von den früheren ... abhebt."[103] This impression, in turn, encourages consideration as to what may be true—even if only partially true—about the fresh accusation in 26:61. Bearing in mind the shared vocabulary of καταλύω, Matthew in all probability wishes to preserve some link between the prophecy of 24:2 and the accusation in 26:61.

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[100] "[H]andelt es sich auch hier um eine Falschaussage, weil Jesus mit keinem Wort ge sagt hat, *er* werde den Tempel zerstören, und schon gar nicht hat er mit dem Vermögen, dies tun zu können, 'geprahlt.'" Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 421, italics original. See also France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1022–23.
[101] Maier, *Matthäus: Kapitel 15–28*, 575. See also Brown and Roberts, *Matthew*, 244.
[102] Carson, "Matthew," 619.
[103] Jostein Ådna, *Jesu Stellung zum Tempel: Die Tempelaktion und das Tempelwort als Ausdruck seiner messianischen Sendung*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II 119 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 113.

Drawing the different strands of data together, the evidence favours the conclusion that Matthew presents 26:61 as a distorted echo—but an echo nonetheless—of the prediction of the temple's devastation in 24:2.

καὶ ῥίψας τὰ ἀργύρια εἰς τὸν ναὸν ἀνεχώρησεν (27:5)

27:5 does not appear directly relevant to the theme of the temple's destruction in Matt 26–28. Nevertheless, the verse, in its immediate context, evokes the related theme of innocent or righteous blood which appeared before in 23:29–39. Having spoken of the shedding of the righteous blood of God's prophets in 23:35 and 37, Jesus promptly draws attention in 23:38, with the emphatic ἰδού, to the desolation of the temple. The tight succession of these statements strongly implies the temple's desolation as precisely the punishment for shedding righteous blood.

Moreover, the proximity of Matt 24 a mere few verses later indicates that the desolation of 23:38 involves the physical dismantling of the temple. The Olivet Discourse begins with Jesus's prophecy that οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὃς οὐ καταλυθήσεται (24:2), which prompts the disciples to enquire when this will happen (24:3). Jesus answers the question in 24:15, where he uses ἐρήμωσις, the cognate noun of ἔρημος in 23:38, to speak of the temple's desolation that τὸ βδέλυγμα, an attack on Jerusalem, will bring about shortly.[104] The connections between 23:38, 24:2, and 24:15 affirm that the temple's desolation (23:38; 24:15) involves its physical destruction (24:2). On this basis, one could build a strong case that 27:5, through the theme of

[104] Refer to our analysis in 4.5.2 of the phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως (24:15) as referring to the abomination that brings about the temple's desolation.

righteous or innocent blood, alludes (albeit indirectly) to the prediction of the temple's destruction in 24:2.[105]

The immediate context of 27:5 consists of Judas's acknowledgement, ἥμαρτον παραδοὺς αἷμα ἀθῷον, and the chief priests and elders' callous reply (27:4). In response to the Jewish leaders, Judas flings silver pieces εἰς τὸν ναόν in 27:5, which the chief priests subsequently describe as τιμὴ αἵματός (27:6). Matthew's specification as to where Judas throws the blood money, εἰς τὸν ναόν, forges a connection between the taint of righteous blood spilled and the very premise of the temple. This parallels the earlier association in 23:35 between the temple and [τὸ] αἷμα δίκαιον of Abel and Zechariah, who were slaughtered μεταξὺ τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου. The vivid image in 23:35, of a temple defiled, gives way to further images in 23:38 and 24:2, of a temple desolated and dismantled. Going back to 27:5, the description of blood money tainting the temple, in the light of 23:35–24:2, calls to mind the consequence of the temple's devastation.

A possible counterargument is that the verses mentioned above draw on different vocabulary for the temple: ναός in 23:35 and 27:5, οἶκος in 23:38, and ἱερόν in 24:1–2.[106] This potentially undermines the proposed connection between the verses.

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[105] The link between 27:5 and the end of Matt 23 has not gone unnoticed by Matthean commentators. However, not all of them draw out its implications by exploring Matthew's interest in the temple's fate; some focus instead on Judas's predicament. See, for example, Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium 16,21–28,20*, 273; Luz, *Matthew 21–28: A Commentary*, 471. In contrast, Davies and Allison suggest that "the presence of the blood money in the ναός foreshadows the end of the temple (cf. v. 51)." Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 565.

[106] For a survey of ναός, οἶκος, and ἱερόν in Matthew's Gospel more generally, see Daniel M. Gurtner, "Matthew's Theology of the Temple and the 'Parting of the Ways': Christian Origins and the First Gospel," in *Built upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew*, ed. Daniel M. Gurtner and John Nolland (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 130–32; Akiva Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah: Redefining Identity and Ethos in the Shadow of the Second Temple's Destruction*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II 418 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 223–24. On Matthew, "as is common in the NT, … us[ing] any of [these] terms for the Temple," see Gurtner, "Matthew's Theology," 130.

Nevertheless, 23:38 uses ἔρημος to speak of the desolation of τοῦ οἴκου while 24:15 uses the cognate noun ἐρήμωσις to refer to the same desolation in response to the disciples' question about the stones of τοῦ ἱεροῦ (24:1–3). This suggests at least some correspondence between οἶκος in 23:38 and ἱερόν in 24:1–2, which enables us to speak of a relationship between the verses.

Likewise, 23:35–38 implies that the desolation of τοῦ οἴκου in 23:38 is the consequence of the shedding of righteous blood which, according to 23:35, was spilled μεταξὺ τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου. The murder of Ζαχαρίου υἱοῦ Βαραχίου in this verse, according to 2 Chr 24:21, happened ἐν αὐλῇ οἴκου κυρίου. Matthew's choice of ναός in 23:35 does not strictly differentiate this venue from οἶκος but instead pinpoints the location ἐν αὐλῇ οἴκου κυρίου for Zechariah's spilled blood: μεταξὺ τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου.[107] In 27:5, the occurrence of ναός as the location for the tainted silver links the shedding of Jesus's blood with the murder of righteous prophets in 23:35 and 37. This overlapping terminology, encompassing ναός in 23:35 and 27:5, οἶκος in 23:38, and ἱερόν in 24:1–2, serves to buttress the proposed connection between the verses.[108] We therefore maintain that the description of blood money tainting the temple (27:5) recalls the consequence of the temple's devastation (23:35–24:2).

27:9 offers further hint of Matthew's interest in the destruction of the temple. This verse identifies the citation from Zechariah as τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἰερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου, which Harrington regards as a mistake in ascription.[109] Nevertheless, he concedes that

[107] While ναός, like ἱερόν, can refer to the entire area making up a temple, it also occurs in the more restricted sense of a shrine where the image of a deity stood. Compare ναός, BDAG, 665, with ἱερόν, BDAG, 470. See also Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 223. Applying this narrower meaning to the temple in Jerusalem, ναός can allude to the "holy place and holy of holies, within the precincts of the ἱέρον [sic]." Gurtner, "Matthew's Theology," 132.
[108] On ναός and ἱερόν as "generally interchangeable" terms in Matthew's narrative, see Cohen, *Matthew and the Mishnah*, 223.
[109] Harrington, *Gospel of Matthew*, 386.

Jer 18 and 32 have also influenced the quotation.[110] More probably, the quotation is "[ein] Konglomerat" of different prophecies by Zechariah and Jeremiah, which Matthew simply decides to attribute to the latter.[111]

This ascription raises the question as to why Matthew chooses to mention Jeremiah. According to Davies and Allison, this "may be due ... to [Jeremiah's] reputation as the prophet of doom or to Matthew's desire to call attention to what might otherwise be missed."[112] These are possible suggestions, and they call for further integration and development. Matthew is perhaps calling attention to Jeremiah's reputation as a prophet of doom concerning God's people, city, and house: "Jeremia ist der Prophet der Zerstörung des ersten Tempels."[113]

In 21:13, Matthew has alluded, through the phrase σπήλαιον λῃστῶν, to Jer 7:11, which belongs to an oracle warning of the temple's destruction. In Matt 27:9–10, he alludes to either Jer 18:1–2, or 19:1–13, or 32:6–9, all of which occur in proximity to mentions of the siege of Jerusalem (Jer 18:11, 19–23; 19:3, 6–9, 12–15; 32:2, 24, 28–31, 36).[114] In both Jeremiah's oracles and Matthew's Olivet Discourse, the fall of the city of God closely relates to the destruction of his house. In fact, our previous chapter has argued that the invasion of Jerusalem in Matt 24:15 signals the imminence of the temple's devastation.[115] By mentioning τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἱερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου in

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[110] Harrington, *Gospel of Matthew*, 386.
[111] Fiedler, *Matthäusevangelium*, 406.
[112] Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 569.
[113] Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 430.
[114] For the purpose of our study, it does not matter whether Matthew has in mind either Jer 18 or 19 or 32 (or more than one of these). What matters is that all these oracles speak of the fall of the city of God as the punishment of his people for their sin. For an in-depth treatment of the influence of Jeremiah on Matt 27:9–10, see Michael Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel: The Rejected-Prophet Motif in Matthaean Redaction*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 68 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 52–81.
[115] Refer to our discussion in 4.5.2 of the phrase τὸ βδέλυγμα ... ἑστὸς ἐν τόπῳ ἁγίῳ (24:15) as pointing to the encircling of Jerusalem by a foreign army.

27:9, Matthew arguably capitalises on Jeremiah's reputation as a prophet of doom for Jerusalem and its temple. This, in turn, bolsters the implicit reference in 27:5 to the destruction of the temple as the punishment for the shedding of Jesus's blood.[116]

> καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς πᾶς ὁ λαὸς εἶπεν· τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐφ᾽ ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν (27:25)[117]

The theme of the spilling of righteous blood, which precipitates the destruction of the temple (23:35–38; cf. 24:2, 15), appears again in the account of Jesus's trial before Pilate. In 27:19, Pilate's wife declares Jesus as "that righteous man" (τῷ δικαίῳ ἐκείνῳ), and in 27:24, Pilate pronounces himself innocent "of this man's blood" (ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τούτου). In response to Pilate's abdication of blame, the people in 27:25 willingly shoulder the responsibility of crucifying Jesus, with the statement τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐφ᾽ ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν.

Nolland suggests that the people's use of ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν and ἐφ᾽ ἡμᾶς conveys their earnestness in urging Jesus's execution.[118] While this is true, Matthew may also be conveying a deeper, ironic meaning with these phrases. Already, the mention of Jesus's blood in 27:25 calls to mind the repercussion of the temple's devastation in Matt 23–25. In particular, 24:34 states that the temple will be destroyed in the current generation.[119] Accordingly, Matthew's combination of ἐφ᾽ ἡμᾶς and ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν

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[116] Konradt concludes thus: "[e]ntsprechend geht Matthäus' Bestreben, das Fehlverhalten der Gegner Jesu durch Anspielungen auf Jer beleuchten, damit einher, dass er Zerstörung des zweiten Tempels als Strafe für die Feinde Jesu." Konradt, *Evangelium nach Matthäus*, 430.
[117] 27:20–25, especially 27:25, is a source of much controversy concerning the fate of subsequent generations of Jews and the charge of anti-Semitism against Matthew, which fall outside the scope of our study. For a concise discussion, see Turner, *Matthew*, 655–56.
[118] Nolland, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1178.
[119] Refer to our analysis of 24:34 in 4.5.4.

in 27:25 may constitute a merism that encompasses the entire generation of people alive during Jesus's time. In this case, the crowd's statement τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ ἐφ ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα ἡμῶν points unwittingly, even ironically, to "the destruction of their temple at the end of the generation, in their children's days."[120]

ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν (27:40)

The shared vocabulary in 27:40 and 26:61—the verbs καταλύω and οἰκοδομέω, the arthrous use of ναός, and the reference to τρισὶν ἡμέραις—presents the mockery in 27:40 as a reiteration of the charge in 26:61. Therefore, the argument regarding the link between 26:61 and 24:2 applies as well to 27:40.

27:40 does not simply look back at the prediction of the temple's devastation in 24:2; it also looks forward with irony to the temple's damage in 27:51. Donald Juel identifies the parallel taunt to 27:40 in Mark 15:29–30 as ironic:

> in [Mark] chapter 15, in the account of the mockery to which Jesus is subjected as he hangs on the cross, the temple charge is treated in the same manner as the messianic charge (15:29–32). If, as we argued in the case of the mockery in 15:31–32, the purpose of the taunt is to highlight the charge made at the trial for the purpose of irony, it is possible that the same function is intended in the repetition of the temple charge in 15:29. Again, it is perhaps important that one of the two climactic events reported at the moment of Jesus' death is the tearing of the temple veil (15:38).[121]

In response to this, Eyal Regev describes "several [of Juel's] interpretive steps" as "unwarranted," in "prefer[ring] double readings over simple facts in Mark's narrative."[122]

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[120] Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 671. See also Mitch and Sri, *Gospel of Matthew*, 354–55.
[121] Donald Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 31 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1977), 118.
[122] Eyal Regev, *The Temple in Early Christianity: Experiencing the Sacred*, The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), 100.

Nevertheless, one could legitimately read Matt 27:40 as ironic, just as Juel has done with Mark 15:29. The former verse forms part of the mockery in 27:39–44 that the onlookers of the crucifixion hurl against Jesus. In both 27:40 and 42–43, Matthew records the onlookers using the verb σῴζω with a reflexive pronoun, which suggests some parallelism between the two rounds of abuse. The onlookers mock Jesus for not being able to save himself despite (purportedly) boasting of an ability to destroy the temple (27:40) and despite saving others and calling himself θεοῦ ... υἱός (27:42–43). The second round of taunts in 27:42–43 is acutely ironic: it is precisely by not saving himself that Jesus effectively rescues others and reveals himself to be the Son of God. In fact, these outcomes of Jesus saving others (from sin and death) and showing himself to be the Son of God take place by the end of Matt 27. In 27:50–54, Matthew associates Jesus's final breath with the tombs breaking apart and the dead rising from the grave, which illustrate his work of rescuing from sin and death. These verses also relate his final breath to the centurion and other soldiers' declaration that Jesus is θεοῦ υἱός (27:54), which affirms his self-revelation.

What is ironically true of 27:42–43 is also true of the first round of mockery in 27:40: it is precisely in Jesus not saving himself that the temple sustains damage by the end of Matt 27. Just as the outcomes of 27:42–43 transpire as Jesus draws his last breath in 27:50–54, so the outcome of 27:40, the temple's destruction, likewise occurs in 27:50–54. In these verses, Matthew associates Jesus's final breath (27:50) with descriptions of not just tombs being broken (27:52), the dead being raised (27:53), and the centurion speaking (27:54) but also the temple veil being ripped into two (27:51).

Indeed, an inspection of the facts in Matthew's narrative warrants a "double" reading of the mockery in 27:40 as ironic.[123]

τὸ καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη ἀπ᾽ ἄνωθεν ἕως κάτω εἰς δύο (27:51)

In his extensive survey of the history of interpretation for this verse, Gurtner maintains that "[t]o date, only one scholar has claimed that the rending of the veil does not in *any* way signify the destruction of the temple."[124] This one scholar is Martin Hengel, who contends: "Mark 15.38, the rending of the veil of the temple, is not to be connected with the portents of the destruction of Jerusalem in Josephus, Tacitus, Talmudic accounts and other authors of antiquity, despite later exegesis in the church."[125] Rather, he concludes that the verse "marks the end of the cult, since the annual sacrifice of atonement in the Holy of Holies has become obsolete through the atoning death of the Son of God."[126]

Along with Hengel, we will relate the tearing of the temple veil in Matt 27:51 to Jesus's atoning death precipitating the end of the temple. Nevertheless, contrary to Hengel, we will argue that the verse indeed anticipates the destruction of the temple. The way noncanonical Jewish writings depict the severed curtain as a portent of the

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[123] Regev, *Temple in Early Christianity*, 100.
[124] Daniel M. Gurtner, *The Torn Veil: Matthew's Exposition of the Death of Jesus*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 139 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 11, italics original.
[125] Martin Hengel, *Studies in the Gospel of Mark* (London: SCM, 1985), 14. Noncanonical Jewish texts depict certain miraculous events happening around AD 30 (including the extinguishing of the temple's western lamp, the tearing of its veil, and the opening of its gates) as foreshadowing the destruction of the temple forty years later. For more details, see Robert L. Plummer, "Something Awry in the Temple? The Rending of the Temple Veil and Early Jewish Sources That Report Unusual Phenomena in the Temple around AD 30," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48.2 (2005): 301–16.
[126] Hengel, *Studies in Mark*, 14.

temple's destruction does not necessitate that we interpret 27:51 as such. However, these texts at least testify to a connection between the torn veil and the temple's eventual devastation within the worldview of Second Temple Judaism. Note, especially, the way Liv. Pro. (Hab) 12:10–12 portrays the end of the temple at the hands of a western nation: "the veil of the inner sanctuary will be torn to pieces" (τὸ ἅπλωμα … τοῦ δαβεὶρ εἰς μικρὰ ῥαγήσεται) [127] Considerations of the Second Temple Jewish cultural encyclopedia commend the possibility that 27:51 foreshadows the destruction of the temple.

With Hengel as the only exception, there is remarkable consensus on the link between 27:51 and the theme of the temple's devastation—a consensus Gurtner endeavours to overturn.[128] According to him, "few [scholars] have articulated precisely *why* the *velum scissum* (whichever veil is intended) symbolises the destruction of the temple."[129] He also comments, "scholars frequently conjectured that as discussion of temple destruction is in close proximity to the Matthean *velum scissum*…, the *velum scissum* must in some respect refer to the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E."[130]

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[127] Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Lives of the Prophets: Greek Text and Translation.*, Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 1 (Philadelphia, PA: Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, 1946), 29, 43–44. On Liv. Pro. (Hab) 12:10–12, see Plummer, "Something Awry," 314–15. On the probability of the Lives of the Prophets as a first-century document, broadly contemporaneous with Matthew's Gospel, see James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Volume 2: Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms, and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 381.
[128] Studies on the tearing of the temple veil or the temple more generally in the Synoptic Gospels frequently cite Gurtner. However, few scholars seem inclined to adopt his conclusion per se that Matt 27:51 has nothing to do with the destruction of the temple. See, for example, Brian Carrier, *Earthquakes and Eschatology in the Gospel according to Matthew*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II 534 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 153 n. 52. Cohen's essay on the temple in Matthew's Gospel is a recent exception, where he assesses Gurtner to have "cogently argued that in Matthew the *velum scissum* is not associated with the temple's destruction." Akiva Cohen, "Matthew and the Temple," in *Matthew within Judaism: Israel and the Nations in the First Gospel*, ed. Anders Runesson and Daniel M. Gurtner, Early Christianity and Its Literature 27 (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2020), 96–97.
[129] Gurtner, *Torn Veil*, 11, italics original.
[130] Gurtner, *Torn Veil*, 200.

However, Gurtner arguably underestimates the proximate references to the devastation of the temple as a narrative context for the tearing of the temple veil in 27:51. There are only four uses of ναός in Matthew's passion and resurrection account, and all three instances preceding 27:51 allude to the earlier prediction of the temple's destruction (24:2). The accusation in 26:61 and its reiteration as a taunt in 27:40 bear distorted echoes—but echoes nonetheless—of the prophecy in 24:2. As for Judas's act in 27:5, this points to the tainting of the temple with innocent blood, which, according to 23:34–24:2, will result in the devastation of the temple. Taken together, the three prior mentions of ναός function as frames for the fourth reference in 27:51, which the model reader actualises by interpreting the severed veil as connoting the destruction of the temple.

Furthermore, the taunts in 27:40 and 42–43 ironically anticipate that Jesus, by not saving himself, will rescue others, show himself to be the Son of God, and bring about the temple's destruction. In 27:52–54, Matthew records the realisations of the first two expectations. In continuity with these realisations, the tearing of the temple veil in 27:51 most probably fulfils the third expectation of the temple's devastation. In other words, what Gurtner regards as merely proximate mentions of the temple's destruction, when taken together, form a narrative context for interpreting 27:51 as such.

In his article on Mark 15:38, Gurtner highlights the occurrence of σχίζω in describing the tearing of the heavens (σχιζομένους, 1:10) and the tearing of the temple veil (ἐσχίσθη, 15:38).[131] He thereby concludes that Mark's rending of the temple veil

[131] Daniel M. Gurtner, "The Rending of the Veil and Markan Christology: 'Unveiling' the 'ΥΙΟΣ ΘΕΟΥ (Mark 15:38–39)," *Biblical Interpretation* 15.3 (2007): 293.

performs a "revelatory function" in disclosing to the centurion the secret of Jesus as the Son of God.[132] Gurtner's monograph mounts a similar argument for the revelatory character of Matt 27:51: "for Matthew, the rending of the veil is an apocalyptic image depicting the opening of heaven."[133]

However, transferring Gurtner's reading of Mark 15:38 onto Matt 27:51 is by no means straightforward. While Matthew retains σχίζω for the tearing (ἐσχίσθη) of the temple veil in 27:51, he deploys a different verb, ἀνοίγω, for the opening (ἠνεῴχθησαν) of the heavens in 3:16. Consequently, he has not overtly aligned the opening of the heavens with the rending of the temple veil.

In addition to the absence of (overt) correspondence between 3:16 and 27:51, there is an alternative parallel between 27:51 and the tearing of an old garment in 9:16. The latter verse features the only occurrence in Matthew's Gospel of σχίσμα, the cognate noun of σχίζω in 27:51. In its immediate context (9:15–17), σχίσμα in 9:16 illustrates a breach in the old cloth of existing religious structures and practices, stemming from their fundamental incompatibility with the new cloth of Jesus the bridegroom (ὁ νυμφίος, 9:15).[134] More precisely, this destructive breach relates to the old giving way to the new, since the episode ends in 9:17 with Jesus's statement βάλλουσιν οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς καινούς.

As in σχίσμα in 9:15–17, σχίζω in 27:51 arguably connotes the passing away of the old as Jesus expires on the cross. More precisely, the verb in 27:51 portrays the splitting of the rocks of the earth (representing the present order of creation) and depicts

[132] Gurtner, "Rending of the Veil," 306.
[133] Gurtner, *Torn Veil*, 178.
[134] On how Jesus and his ministry challenges "traditional Jewish piety" and "impels a new kind of behaviour and a new set of rituals," see France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 351; Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew VIII–XVIII*, 112.

the rending of the temple veil (symbolising the present order of religion).[135] In other words, the severed curtain signifies a destructive breach in the temple with reference to the displacing of the old system of piety.[136]

Scholars have mooted the replacement of the temple in their critique of Gurtner's position. On the one hand, Gurtner expresses scepticism over the *velum scissum* symbolising the temple's destruction because "[n]o negative word is uttered by either the evangelist or his Jesus about the temple *itself*."[137] More precisely, he states that "neither the temple nor its services are portrayed in a negative light."[138] Conversely, all "negative statements about it ... are centred on confrontations with the religious leaders who mismanage it."[139] On the other hand, while Schreiner, like Gurtner, cautions against viewing the Matthean Jesus as anti-temple, he also remarks that "it would be a *non-sequitur* to argue that [Matthew] does not reject the temple."[140] Likewise, Simon J. Joseph describes Matthew's attitude towards the temple as "complex," in the context of "a larger framework in which Jesus' death represents a *transference* of the soteriological efficacy of atoning sacrifice."[141]

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[135] The passing away of the present cosmos in 27:51b does not entail the arrival of the new creation in full. As our previous chapters maintained, 28:20 presents the completion of the age (τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος) as a future phenomenon (see 5.4), and 24:29–31 relates the final shattering and displacement of the existing creation to the second coming of the Son of Man (see 4.5.3).
[136] A comprehensive analysis of Jesus's replacement of the temple falls outside the scope of our study. For more details, see Sunik Hwang, "Matthew's View of the Temple" (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, PhD diss., 2002); Nicholas Perrin, *Jesus the Temple* (London: SPCK; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 80–113.
[137] Gurtner, *Torn Veil*, 100, italics original.
[138] Gurtner, *Torn Veil*, 108.
[139] Gurtner, *Torn Veil*, 100.
[140] Patrick Schreiner, *The Body of Jesus: A Spatial Analysis of the Kingdom in Matthew*, Library of New Testament Studies 555 (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2016), 126 n. 20.
[141] Simon J. Joseph, *Jesus and the Temple: The Crucifixion in Its Jewish Context*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 165 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 121, italics original.

Matthew's portrayal of Jesus's ministry and death commends Schreiner's and Joseph's observations of rejection and transference. From the start, the narrative sets up the expectation that σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν (1:21). In 20:28, Jesus implies that his crucifixion fulfils the ministry of saving people from sin by depicting his death as λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν. More overtly, in 26:28, Jesus speaks of his crucifixion as the pouring of his blood εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. This verse evokes the Old Testament background of Lev 17:11, which relates blood to atonement.[142] Noteworthy as well is Lev 4, which repeatedly associates the pouring of blood with the priestly atonement for sin (4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34).[143] Accordingly, Matt 26:28 denotes that Jesus's pouring of blood on the cross achieves the atonement hitherto effected by the priests in the temple. In denoting this, the verse also connotes that Jesus supplants the temple in its function of securing forgiveness.[144]

Reading 26:28 against the backdrop of Lev 4 and 17 supports Joseph's critique of Gurtner, since the verse implicitly depicts Jesus's death as "a *transference* of the soteriological efficacy of atoning sacrifice."[145] Conversely, "forgiveness and atonement was related to the temple cult until Jesus's death."[146] Using the language of Matt 9:15–17, Jesus's death on the cross renders the old cloth of the temple obsolete, thereby effecting a σχίσμα on it, as illustrated by the phenomenon in 27:51, τὸ καταπέτασμα

[142] Maier, *Matthäus: Kapitel 15–28*, 535.
[143] Evans, *Matthew*, 431; Culpepper, *Matthew: A Commentary*, 516.
[144] Matthew's theology of atonement in relation to Jesus's death on the cross falls outside the scope of our study. For a survey and evaluation of recent approaches, see Hans M. Moscicke, *The New Day of Atonement: A Matthean Typology*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II 517 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 7–53.
[145] Joseph, *Jesus and the Temple*, 121, italics original.
[146] Anders Runesson, *Divine Wrath and Salvation in Matthew: The Narrative World of the First Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2016), 129. He goes on to say that "the teaching on forgiveness, which was previously positioned in relation to the temple cult, is now centered on Jesus's atoning sacrifice for the sins of many."

τοῦ ναοῦ ἐσχίσθη. As mentioned above, Gurtner denies that the ripped curtain illustrates the temple's devastation, on the basis of Matthew's favourable attitude towards the temple.[147] Nevertheless, recognising that Matthew (implicitly) "reject[s] the temple" clears the path to interpreting 27:51a as signifying its displacement and destruction.[148]

One encounters in Heb 10 a different perspective of the tearing of the temple veil.[149] Gurtner, contrasting the common view (associating the *velum scissum* with the temple's destruction) with "statements about accessibility to God found in Hebrews," offers the following assessment: the former is "not without its problems and warrants careful scrutiny," while the latter is "quite valid."[150] Although these perspectives of the symbolic value of the severed curtain are distinct, they are not strictly incompatible or mutually exclusive.[151] Without denying the potential multivalency of the torn veil, one can nonetheless discern its primary meaning as recounted in Matt 27:51a by focusing on the surrounding narrative clues mentioned above. In summary, every other occurrence of ναός in Matt 26–28 alludes to the earlier prophecy of the temple's dismantling (24:2). In fact, 27:40 anticipates the devastation of the temple by the end of Matt 27. Furthermore, σχίζω in 27:51, when seen alongside the use of its cognate noun σχίσμα in 9:16, arguably depicts the severing of the temple veil as a destructive

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147 Gurtner, *Torn Veil*, 100.

148 Schreiner, *Body of Jesus*, 126 n. 20. Elsewhere, he relates the severing of the temple veil to the destruction of the temple: "when Jesus dies, the temple curtain is torn in two (27:51), signifying the end of the temple period.... At the tearing of the temple curtain, the new exile begins.... The temple is destroyed." Schreiner, *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe*, 237.

149 According to Heb 10:19–20, Jesus opened ὁδὸν ... διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος, giving access εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ αἵματι [αὐτοῦ].

150 Gurtner, *Torn Veil*, 138.

151 On "the different interpretive possibilities ... [and] the diverse associations that the reference to the temple's curtain could have," see Marius Nel, "Mark's Distinctive Emphasis on the Temple's Torn Curtain," *In die Skriflig* 49.2 (2015): 7, https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i2.1823. See also Harrington, *Gospel of Matthew*, 400.

breach. There are indeed solid grounds for interpreting Matthew's tearing of the temple veil as chiefly symbolising the devastation of the temple.

Despite their connections, 24:2, 27:40, and 27:51, put together, evoke a sense of temporal incongruity. 27:40 anticipates that Jesus's refusal to save himself will somehow result in the temple's devastation, which manifests shortly after in 27:51. However, 24:4–14 anticipates that οὔπω ἐστὶν τὸ τέλος, which suggests that the end of the temple will not transpire soon (24:6). Moreover, 24:34 promises that the temple will be destroyed in the contemporary generation, and this may only happen at "the end of the generation," during the lifetime of the children of the people at Jesus's trial (27:25).[152] This incompatibility raises a question we will address below (6.4): how can 24:6 state that the temple's destruction οὔπω ἐστίν if the temple meets its end in 27:51? For now, we will examine the links between Matt 24–25 and 26–28 concerning the coming of the Son of Man.

6.3.2.2 References to the Coming of the Son of Man

> ἀπ᾽ ἄρτι ὄψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου … ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (26:64)

While 26:64 is not the first verse in Matt 26–28 to mention the Son of Man, it is the only one in these chapters where he features as the subject of ἔρχομαι. In this verse, Matthew qualifies ἐρχόμενον with the phrase ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, which

[152] Keener, *Gospel of Matthew*, 671.

points to an allusion to the Danielic Son of Man.[153] More precisely, Dan 7:13 (LXX) mentions ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου with the verb ἔρχομαι and ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.[154]

Apart from 26:64, the only other verses in Matthew's Gospel referencing the Son of Man alongside the participle of ἔρχομαι are 16:28 and 24:30. In comparison with 16:28, 24:30 displays two additional parallels to 26:64. In fact, 24:30 and 26:64 are the only two verses in Matthew's Gospel to present τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου as the object of ὁράω and to qualify ἐρχόμενον with ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. We therefore maintain that 26:64 looks back to not just the Son of Man of Dan 7:13 but also the Matthean Son of Man and his coming in Matt 24:30.

ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς (28:18)

While the opening clause of Jesus commissioning his disciples does not mention the Son of Man, it nevertheless alludes to the Danielic figure. Just as Dan 7:13–14 (LXX) declares, concerning ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, that ἐδόθη αὐτῷ ἐξουσία, so Jesus pronounces in Matt 28:18 that ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία.[155] Both statements reflect not just similar choices of words but also an identical syntactical arrangement: the main verb (ἐδόθη) preceding an indirect object (μοι or αὐτῷ) followed by the passive subject (ἐξουσία).[156] Furthermore, Matthew qualifies πᾶσα ἐξουσία with the phrase ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς; likewise, οὐρανός and γῆ in Daniel frequently occur in proximity, including Dan

[153] On the "universal agreement" over the "certain allusion" to Daniel in Matt 26:64, see Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 136–37. See also Lo, "Contours and Functions," 227–35.
[154] Similarly, Dan 7:13 (Theo.) features ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου with the verb ἔρχομαι and the phrase μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.
[155] Likewise, Dan 7:14 (Theo.) uses the verb δίδωμι, though the passive subject is not ἐξουσία but ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ βασιλεία. Nevertheless, the verse subsequently describes the authority of the one like a son of man as everlasting (ἐξουσία αἰώνιος).
[156] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 89.

7:13–14.[157] These parallels, "numerous and strong," increase the likelihood that "Jesus is not only influenced by Daniel but wants to direct our attention back to this book."[158]

Like Matt 26:64, the declaration in 28:18 recalls the Olivet Discourse. In addition to 24:30 and 25:31, 16:27 speaks of the Son of Man and his coming in terms of the power and glory associated with final judgement. Nevertheless, one could contend that a stronger link exists between 28:18 and Matt 24–25. The immediate context of 28:18 mentions πάντα τὰ ἔθνη and τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος (28:19, 20), and the Olivet Discourse is the only other passage in Matthew's Gospel that uses both of these phrases (24:3, 9, 14; 25:32). In short, 28:18, like 26:64, arguably evokes not just the Son of Man of Dan 7:13 but also the Matthean Son of Man and his coming in Matt 24–25.

The way in which both 28:18 and 26:64 echo Dan 7 and Matt 24–25 suggests an overlap between the two verses. This, in turn, raises the possibility that Jesus's appearance in Galilee (28:18) fulfils his prediction that ἀπ᾽ ἄρτι ὄψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου … ἐρχόμενον (26:64). Carson and Luz find this doubtful, since "the records show that the high priest and other august leaders were not witnesses of the resurrection."[159] This reasoning depends on limiting the verb ὁράω in 26:64 to a literal or physical sighting. However, 28:11–15 indicates that the chief priests and the elders, through the firsthand account of the soldiers, are vicarious witnesses of the empty tomb

[157] On the pairing of heaven and earth in Second Temple Judaism, Pennington contends that "[i]n the canonical OT, this is most prominent in Daniel (especially chapters 2–7)." Pennington, *Heaven and Earth*, 183. For a detailed analysis, see Pennington, *Heaven and Earth*, 268–78.
[158] Vetne, "Influence and Use of Daniel," 92.
[159] Carson, "Matthew," 621. Likewise, Luz mentions that "[o]nly the disciples will see the exalted Lord to whom all power in heaven and on earth is given (28:18–20)." Luz, *Matthew 21–28: A Commentary*, 430.

and, by extension, the risen Jesus. Consequently, the proposal that 28:18 fulfils 26:64 remains possible.

Another potential counterargument is that 28:18–20, contrary to 26:64, does not depict Jesus ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ. Nevertheless, the New Testament records that the exaltation of Jesus, beginning with his resurrection, culminates in his ascension to heaven, where ἐπήρθη καὶ νεφέλη ὑπέλαβεν αὐτὸν … εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν (Acts 1:9, 11). This renders tenable our proposal that the risen Jesus's appearance in Galilee fulfils 26:64.

The strongest evidence for our interpretation is the sheer temporal contiguity of Jesus's pronouncement in 26:64 to his exaltation in 28:18. In contrast to Mark 14:62, Matt 26:64 declares that the coming of the Son of Man will be visible ἀπ ἄρτι, and Jesus arrives in Galilee as the risen Son of Man in a matter of days.[160] Matthew's addition of ἀπ ἄρτι emphasises the imminence of the arrival; from 26:64 onwards, the narrative recounts no proximate sighting of the Son of Man other than that of 28:18. In other words, identifying 28:18 as the realisation of 26:64 accords fully with the temporal force of the Matthean ἀπ ἄρτι.

Blomberg concludes that 26:64 is "perhaps alluding to [Jesus's] more immediate exaltation (28:18) long before his actual return as judge (25:31)."[161] The evidence in fact favours espousing this conclusion with greater confidence, as France does:

> [i]t is fully consonant with this prediction [26:64] that in 28:18, only a few days later, the risen and vindicated Jesus will declare the fulfilment of Dan 7:14 in his assertion that "all authority in heaven and on earth has been

[160] According to Davies and Allison, the phrase ἀπ ἄρτι probably refers instead to the emphatic particle ἀπαρτί. Davies and Allison, *Commentary on Matthew XIX–XXVIII*, 530. However, the single word ἀπαρτί occurs rarely in the New Testament and only potentially in Rev 14:13 and John 13:19. In contrast, Matthew has used the phrase ἀπ ἄρτι earlier in his narrative (23:39; 26:29). Quarles, *Matthew*, 326.

[161] Blomberg, *Matthew*, 403.

> given to me" (28:18). In the vindication of the repudiated Messiah ... they "will see" that it is he who is now seated on the heavenly throne.[162]

Nevertheless, France's reading addresses only some of the temporal complexities of the verses. The Olivet Discourse presents the coming of the Son of Man in 24:30 as happening only after the temple is in ruins and the great distress runs its course (of an unspecified duration). Moreover, the statements χρονίζοντος ... τοῦ νυμφίου in 25:5 and μετὰ ... πολὺν χρόνον ἔρχεται ὁ κύριος in 25:19 anticipate that this arrival will not occur so soon. In contrast, 26:64 promises that people will witness this coming ἀπ᾽ ἄρτι, when Jesus appears with all authority before his disciples in Galilee (28:16–18). Our next section (6.4) will address this incongruity.

6.3.3 Summary

As in Mark's Gospel, there are indeed connections between Matthew's Olivet Discourse and his passion and resurrection account, including links specific to the main events of Matt 24–25. The arthrous occurrences of ναός in 26:61, 27:5, and 27:40 consistently allude to Jesus's prediction of the temple's dismantling (24:2). The expectation of the temple's destruction in these verses is realised by the tearing of its curtain in 27:51. Also, the connections between 26:64, 28:18–20, and the Olivet Discourse indicate that these verses look back to not just the Danielic Son of Man but also the Matthean Son of Man and his coming in Matt 24–25. The expectation in 26:64 that the coming of the Son of Man will be visible ἀπ᾽ ἄρτι finds its fulfilment in the exaltation of Jesus in 28:18.

[162] France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 1028.

6.4 Analysing the Meaning and Significance of the Connections between Matt 24–25 and 26–28

In examining the links between Matthew's Olivet Discourse and his passion and resurrection account, we have begun unpacking their meaning along the lines of prediction and fulfilment. In particular, the tearing of the temple veil in 27:51 actualises the temple's destruction prophesied in 26:64 and 27:40 (and therefore 24:2). Also, the exaltation of the risen Jesus in 28:18 actualises the Son of Man's arrival predicted in 26:64 (and therefore 24:30).

In analysing these connections, we have also registered some incongruity in the timings of the temple's devastation and the Son of Man's coming. How can these events belong to the future (24:6; 25:5, 19) if they transpire in Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection (27:51; 28:18)? Addressing this question will be a critical step towards establishing the significance of the links between Matt 24–25 and 26–28. Our previous two chapters explored Matthew's Olivet Discourse through the interpretative grid of mystery in Matthew's narrative; we will now examine, through the lens of Matthean mystery, the temporal tensions arising from the links.

6.4.1 Danielic Mystery and τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν in Matthew's Gospel

Mystery in Dan 2 concerns the end times (2:29), especially the shattering of all empires on earth with the establishing of an indestructible kingdom from heaven (2:44). According to the rest of Daniel, the arrival of this kingdom entails at least two end-time

events: the coming of one like a son of man (7:13–14) and the abomination of desolation associated with the temple's devastation (9:27; 11:31; 12:11).

Matthew specifically evokes Danielic mystery through the phrase τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν in 13:11, and he adapts it in at least two ways. Firstly, he associates τὰ μυστήρια with the inaugurated eschatology of the kingdom's gradual growth. The narrative preceding Matt 13 deploys the verbs φθάνω and ἐγγίζω with respect to the kingdom (3:2; 4:17; 10:7; 12:28). According to Matt 13, the kingdom is present: ὁ λόγος τῆς βασιλείας is already being sown, and the kingdom, like a mustard seed or leaven, is hardly visible but in existence (13:19, 31, 33). Nevertheless, it will only be consummated in the fullness of its glory when the Son of Man returns to deal decisively with evil.

The second development consists of Matthew relating τὰ μυστήρια to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Matthew 13 identifies the form of mystery with Jesus's parabolic ministry involving the private instruction of the disciples. This exclusive education in Matt 14–23 features Jesus's teaching concerning his dying and rising. 16:21 reveals that δεῖ αὐτὸν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἀπελθεῖν … καὶ ἀποκτανθῆναι καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ ἐγερθῆναι—which Jesus reiterates in 17:22–23 and 20:18–19. In Matt 13, Jesus's parables portray mystery in relation to the Son of Man's second coming in final judgement. In 16:21, 17:22–23, and 20:18–19, Jesus's private instruction presents mystery in relation to the Son of Man's first coming in crucifixion and resurrection.

In short, the interpretative grid of mystery draws together three key points. Firstly, Daniel relates the establishment of the heavenly kingdom to the temple's devastation and the Son of Man's coming. Secondly, Matthew associates Danielic mystery with the inaugurated eschatology of the kingdom that has come but awaits

consummation. Thirdly, Matthew presents mystery with respect to not just Jesus's parousia but also his first coming.

6.4.2 Matthean Mystery and the Temporal Tensions between Matt 24–25 and 26–28

According to the inaugurated eschatology of Matthean mystery, the kingdom of heaven commences in the person and work of Jesus at his first coming but will only be consummated when he returns. As key events pertaining to the kingdom's establishment, the dismantling of the temple and the coming of the Son of Man will also be inaugurated at Jesus's first coming. In particular, the temple's devastation commences immediately after Jesus's righteous blood is shed on the cross, as illustrated by the severing of the temple veil upon his final breath (27:51). Also, the parousia of the Son of Man begins with the exaltation of the risen Jesus, who appears in Galilee having received all authority in heaven and on earth (28:18).

These inaugurations of the temple's destruction in 27:51 and the Son of Man's arrival in 28:18 are also prefigurations of future consummations outside the narrative of Matt 26–28. More precisely, the rending of the temple veil in 27:51 anticipates the subsequent and thorough dismantling of the temple: οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὃς οὐ καταλυθήσεται (24:2). Likewise, the exalting of the resurrected Jesus anticipates the final appearance of the Son of Man in full glory as universal judge: ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν τῇ δόξῃ αὐτοῦ..., τότε καθίσει ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης αὐτοῦ· καὶ

συναχθήσονται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, καὶ ἀφορίσει αὐτοὺς ἀπ᾽ ἀλλήλων (25:31–32).[163]

As mentioned above (6.1), "Bolt has highlighted narrative connections … that must be dealt with by all interpreters of the [Olivet] discourse."[164] Bolt can indeed be commended as one of a handful of recent scholars attentive to the intriguing connections between the Olivet Discourse and the passion and resurrection account. His conclusion that the Olivet Discourse is about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus accords with the echoes of Matt 24–25 in Matt 26–28. Nevertheless, this reading does not satisfactorily address the potential incongruities arising from the echoes. This is especially true with respect to the timing of the coming of the Son of Man: if this arrival is simply the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, how is that the Son of Man is ostensibly delayed (χρονίζοντος, 25:5) and will only appear μετὰ … πολὺν χρόνον (25:19)?

Another attempt at resolving the temporal tensions centres on the phrase ἀπ᾽ ἄρτι in 26:64. From Carson's perspective, "if 'from now' or 'from now on' ill suits the delay till the Parousia, it is equally unsuited to the delay till the resurrection and the ascension."[165] Witherington overtly states what Carson implies by cautioning against "press[ing] *ap' arti* too far": "that phrase need mean no more than 'in the future.'"[166] These comments, however, dilute the immediacy that typically defines ἄρτι.[167] While

[163] We can apply the perspective of inaugurated eschatology to the passing away of the first creation in 27:51b. While this commences as Jesus dies on the cross, it will only happen in full, as per 24:29–31, at his second coming.
[164] Roseberry, "Passion Narrative," 78.
[165] Carson, "Matthew," 621.
[166] Witherington, *Matthew*, 499.
[167] See ἄρτι, BDAG, 136.

ἀπ ἄρτι can mean "in the *near* future rather than from that actual moment," the term "can hardly be stretched … to mean the distant future."[168]

In contrast to the above suggestions, Matthew's conception of mystery provides ample resources to account for the disparate timings in Matt 24–28 of the temple's destruction and the Son of Man's arrival. In particular, the inaugurated eschatology of Matthean mystery satisfactorily holds together the temporally distinct fulfilments of the above events in the paradoxical pattern of the now-but-not-yet. This is how the end of the temple οὔπω ἐστίν (24:6) but also occurs as Jesus draws his final breath (27:50–51). This is also how the Son of Man is ostensibly delayed (χρονίζοντος, 25:5) and will only come μετὰ … πολὺν χρόνον (25:19) but does so ἀπ ἄρτι, when the risen Jesus appears in Galilee (26:64; 28:16–18).

6.4.3 The Significance of the Connections between Matt 24–25 and 26–28

As we have observed (6.2), those who acknowledge the links between the Olivet Discourse and the passion and resurrection account tend to focus on the implication of these connections for understanding Jesus's death and resurrection. Where they comment on the import of the parallels for the Olivet Discourse, they tend to concentrate narrowly on issues such as the temporal complexity of Mark 13:30. Our goal is to add to existing research by drawing out the significance of the connections for the main message and purpose of Matt 24–25.

[168] Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, 800, italics original. In this way, ἀπ ἄρτι "raises the serious possibility that Matthew does not look exclusively to the *parousia* to find fulfilment … of Dan 7:13–14." Olmstead, *Matthew 15–28*, 346.

The Olivet Discourse extends Matthew's exploration of Danielic mystery concerning the temple and the Son of Man. Jesus teaches that the temple will be destroyed in the current generation, but the end of the temple is only the beginning of the (ultimate) end; it is the parousia of the Son of Man that will draw the present age to a close (24:4–36). The purpose of this message is to direct attention from the temple and its devastation to the Son of Man and his second coming—thereby exhorting the model reader to watch for the parousia (24:36–25:46).

The relationship between Matt 24–25 and 26–28 demonstrates that the temple's destruction and the Son of Man's arrival have not just begun—but have begun earlier than one would expect from reading the Olivet Discourse on its own. This is especially pertinent if Matthew composed and circulated his narrative before the devastation of the temple during the Jewish-Roman war. According to Matt 27, Jesus's innocent blood was shed on the cross, which precipitated the devastation of the temple as expressed by the torn veil of 27:51. This means that Jesus's followers need not wait for the temple to be completely dismantled as per 24:2 before focusing instead on the Son of Man and his parousia. Even before AD 70, the temple had already come under divine judgement.

Fiedler suggests that the fulfilment of the prophecy of the temple's destruction in AD 70 "kann die folgenden Worte über die endzeitlichen Ereignisse nur als sicherer erscheinen lassen."[169] Nevertheless, irrespective of such confirmation, Jesus's followers can be certain of his prediction of the second coming. While the parousia of the Son of Man remains in the distant future, Matthew has presented in 28:18 the exaltation of the risen Jesus with all authority in heaven and on earth, thereby encouraging confidence

[169] Fiedler, *Matthäusevangelium*, 361.

in his return in power and glory. This, in turn, keeps to the fore the need to make disciples of all nations before final judgement.

The connections between Matt 24–25 and 26–28 remain significant even if Matthew composed and circulated his narrative after AD 70. In particular, they caution against desiring a new physical temple or even rebuilding the devasted temple. The destruction of the temple is not simply the outcome of divine judgement on those who shed innocent blood (23:34–24:2; 27:4–5, 25). It reflects as well the reality that through his death on the cross, Jesus has presented the atoning sacrifice (26:28), decisively supplanting the temple in procuring forgiveness for sin. Consequently, Jesus's followers have no reason to be distracted from the parousia of the Son of Man by the prospect of a new physical temple. If anything, now that the temple has been entirely dismantled in AD 70, the second coming is the next major eschatological event on the horizon. This, in turn, encourages alertness towards the parousia.

The apparent delay of the return of the Son of Man after the destruction of the temple can undermine the vigilance of Jesus's followers, which may explain the repeated exhortations in 24:42–25:30 to be awake and ready. The prefiguration of the parousia in 28:18 provides the model reader with something to look back on. If the Olivet Discourse commends watchfulness by projecting forward to the second coming, 28:18 reinforces the instruction with a preview of this arrival. Moreover, the exaltation of the risen Jesus is not merely a prefiguration but also an inauguration, since he has, according to 28:18, already received all authority in heaven and on earth. It is only a matter of time before he who appeared in Galilee as the Son of Man comes again in full majesty as universal judge.

6.4.4 Summary

Matthew's conception of mystery provides sufficient resources to explain the ostensible incompatibilities between Matt 24–25 and 26–28 concerning the timings of the temple's devastation and the Son of Man's arrival. In particular, mystery's inaugurated eschatology holds together the disparate fulfilments of the above events in the paradox of now-but-not-yet.

Examining the echoes of Matt 24–25 in Matt 26–28 contributes to a narrative-critical interpretation of the Olivet Discourse. Apart from indicating the end-time character of Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection, these parallels also reinforce the main message and purpose of Matt 24–25. They indicate that the temple's destruction and the Son of Man's arrival have begun earlier than one would expect from reading the Olivet Discourse on its own.

This revelation is significant irrespective of whether Matthew's Gospel was composed and circulated before or after the Jewish-Roman War. Before AD 70, the revelation would have emphasised that the temple, with its curtain severed, had already been destroyed and displaced—thereby shifting the focus onto the Son of Man prior to the temple's full dismantling. The revelation would also have encouraged confidence that the Son of Man, who appeared with all authority in 28:18, will come again—thereby lending urgency to the making of disciples before final judgement.

After AD 70, the revelation would have discouraged hopes in, even labours for, another physical temple—thereby encouraging instead an ongoing focus on the parousia. The revelation would also have addressed concerns stemming from the apparent delay

of the Son of Man after the complete devastation of the temple by pointing to the inauguration and prefiguration in 28:18 of his final coming.

6.5 Conclusion

Our chapter began by acknowledging that Bolt's work raises important questions for a narrative-critical analysis of the Matthean Olivet Discourse. Firstly, does Matthew embed echoes of the Olivet Discourse in his passion and resurrection account? Secondly, how does Matthean mystery illuminate these connections? Thirdly, what is the significance of these links?

Regarding the first question, there are indeed connections between Matt 24–25 and 26–28, including links pertaining to the destruction of the temple and the coming of the Son of Man. 26:61 and 27:5, 25, and 40 evoke the prophecy of the temple's devastation in Matt 24, with the tearing of the temple veil in 27:51 fulfilling this prophecy. Also, 26:64 echoes the prediction of the Son of Man's arrival in Matt 24–25, and the exaltation of the risen Jesus in 28:18 actualises this prediction.

As for the second enquiry, Matthean mystery satisfactorily accounts for the tensions in the timings of the temple's devastation and the Son of Man's coming. Its inaugurated eschatology holds together the temporally disparate manifestations of these events in the paradox of now-but-not-yet. In fact, the links between Matt 24–25 and 26–28 point to the inauguration and prefiguration of the temple's devastation and the Son of Man's arrival in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

Concerning the third question, the echoes of Matt 24–25 in Matt 26–28 enrich the model reader's appreciation of the main message and purpose of the Olivet

Discourse. These parallels disclose that the events of the Olivet Discourse have begun earlier than one would expect from reading Matt 24–25 on its own. This revelation cautions against focusing on the temple in Jerusalem, which had been judged and rendered obsolete before AD 70 and does not need to be rebuilt after that. The revelation also generates confidence that the Son of Man, who appeared with all authority in 28:18, will also return in full power and glory—even if the parousia does not occur soon after AD 70. This, in turn, encourages vigilance in making disciples of all nations before the parousia. In other words, the commencement and anticipation of the events of the Olivet Discourse reinforce the shift in attention from the temple and its full destruction to the Son of Man and his final coming.

Our chapter contributes to scholarship on the Matthean Olivet Discourse in two ways. Firstly, we have extracted from Matthean mystery an interpretative framework to explain the links between Matt 24–25 and 26–28. Secondly, we have explored the significance of these connections for a narrative-critical analysis of Matthew's Olivet Discourse. According to Matthean mystery, the links point to the inauguration and prefiguration of the events of Matt 24–25 in Jesus's death and resurrection. This, in turn, reinforces the shift in focus from the temple to the Son of Man—thereby encouraging readiness for his return.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

7.1 Retrospections

7.1.1 Overview

Despite much secondary literature on the Olivet Discourse and the Old Testament in Matthew's Gospel, there remains a dearth of book-length research on Danielic mystery in Matthew's Gospel, and Matthew's Olivet Discourse. Our study endeavoured to fill these gaps by pursuing a narrative-critical analysis of Matt 24–25 that deploys Matthew's use of Danielic mystery as a key interpretative grid.

In terms of methodology, we adopted a narrative-critical approach complemented by Eco's theories of the cultural encyclopedia, the model reader, and texts that train the model reader. From this perspective, the Olivet Discourse is an integral component of Matthew's first-century narrative that emerged out of the Second Temple Jewish cultural encyclopedia. Also, Matthew's model reader exhibits specific encyclopedic competence, which includes knowing τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Δανιὴλ τοῦ προφήτου (24:15) and its presentation of mystery. Accordingly, Matt 24–25 shapes interpretation by invoking frames pertaining to Danielic and Matthean mystery, which the model reader actualises by interpreting Jesus's speech as an exploration of the notion.

7.1.2 Summary

Chapter 2 examined mystery in Daniel and Danielic mystery in Second Temple Jewish literature, and derived the following six features. Firstly, mystery is mantic in background. Secondly, it is twofold in form; at times, questions about a divine message initiate further disclosure. Thirdly, it elicits a threefold pattern of understanding. Fourthly, its content features end-time events: the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, the coming of one like a son of man, and the establishment of an everlasting heavenly kingdom. Fifthly, in terms of function, mystery polemically distinguishes the wise from the wicked or foolish. Sixthly, the Dead Sea Scrolls portray the obscuring and unveiling of mystery with reference to the eye, ear, and heart. These six features constitute a norm of understanding and usage concerning Danielic mystery, rendering any Matthean appropriation or adaptation of it more discernible.

Chapter 3 discussed Matthew's exploration of Danielic mystery in the narrative preceding the Olivet Discourse. The early chapters (Matt 1–12) allude to the mantic background of mystery by featuring wise men, revelatory dreams, and angelic messengers. These chapters also contrast the kingdoms of the earth with the kingdom of heaven, thereby echoing the pairing of earth and heaven, and the conception of kingdom, in Daniel. These set the stage for the appearance of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven in Matt 13 as Danielic mysteries. Mystery in Matt 13–23 retains its twofold form, consisting of Jesus's parables in public and his explanations to the disciples in private; those apart from the disciples have blind eyes, deaf ears, and hard hearts. The disciples typically respond with limited understanding, asking questions that elicit further disclosure from Jesus. Mystery polemically differentiates the disciples from

the Jewish leaders and the crowds, in its function of upholding Jesus as the one true revealer of God's hidden wisdom and prompting alignment with his disciples as its recipients. The disciples, not the leaders opposing Jesus, are the scribes trained for the kingdom of heaven and the true stewards of the people of God. In terms of content, Matthean mystery develops Daniel's eschatology. The heavenly kingdom commences at the first coming of Jesus but will only be consummated when the Son of Man returns in judgement at the end of the age. While Matt 21–22 alludes to the fall of Jerusalem and its temple, the narrative does not clarify whether this punishment coincides with final judgement.

Chapters 4 and 5 developed the above findings by analysing Matt 24–25 with mystery in Matt 1–23 as a key narrative context. The private setting and the Danielic content of the disciples' questions in 24:3 invoke the frame of mystery, precipitating the expectation of further revelation concerning the destruction of the temple, the parousia of the Son of Man, and the completion of the age. Significantly, the two questions arguably presuppose that these events coincide and may even unfold concurrently. The first half of Jesus's speech, especially 24:32–35, clarifies that the end of the temple does not culminate in the end of the age; it merely signifies that the parousia of Jesus is next, which will bring the present age to its completion. From 24:36 onwards, Jesus reveals that the precise timing of the second coming remains unknown, and exhorts his followers to stay awake and be prepared. The wise demonstrate readiness by serving others (particularly other believers) and proclaiming the kingdom of heaven, until they receive eternal life at final judgement. Put together, the two halves of Jesus's speech shift the focus from the temple and its destruction to the Son of Man, thereby encouraging vigilance in anticipation of the parousia.

Chapter 6 completed our narrative-critical analysis of the Olivet Discourse by addressing its echoes in Matt 26–28. These connections encourage Bolt to argue that the prophecies of Matt 24–25 find their fulfilment in Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection; the evidence, however, warrants a different interpretation. Matthew's passion and resurrection account evoke the prophecies of the temple's destruction and the Son of Man's arrival. In particular, ἀπ᾽ ἄρτι in 26:64 and the taunting of 27:40 indicate, explicitly or implicitly, that these predictions will be imminently fulfilled—which ostensibly contradicts anticipations of a prolonged wait according to Matt 24–25 (24:6, 48; 25:5, 19). Nonetheless, Matthean mystery's inaugurated eschatology holds together temporally disparate actualisations of the above prophecies in the paradox of the now-but-not-yet. That is, the tearing of the temple veil in 27:51 and the exaltation of the resurrected Jesus in 28:18 are inaugurations and prefigurations of the temple's full destruction and the Son of Man's final appearance. This indicates that the connections between Matt 24–25 and 26–28 do not simply highlight, as scholars tend to argue, the eschatological character of the passion and resurrection account. Rather, the links also affirm that the temple's devastation and the Son of Man's coronation have begun in Jesus's death, resurrection, and exaltation. This, in turn, reinforces the overall message and purpose of the Olivet Discourse by further directing attention from the temple to the Son of Man—thereby strengthening the call to watch for his return.

7.1.3 (Twofold) Conclusion

The central question of our study has been, "How does attending to Danielic and Matthean mystery illuminate Matthew's Olivet Discourse?" Drawing together our findings yields a twofold answer.

Firstly, alertness to mystery, especially its form, content, and function, clarifies the main message and purpose of Matt 24–25. The temple's destruction signals the nearness of the returning Son of Man. Nevertheless, the end of the temple is simply the beginning of the (ultimate) end; only the parousia draws the present age to a close. 24:36–25:46 reinforces the shift in focus from the temple to the Son of Man. These verses polemically distinguish the wise and faithful from the foolish and wicked in order to encourage alignment with the former who stay prepared for the second coming.

Secondly, Matthean mystery's inaugurated eschatology explains the connections between Matt 24–25 and 26–28 in terms of preliminary fulfilment. The tearing of the temple veil and the appearance of Jesus in Galilee commence the events of the Olivet Discourse while pointing to their future consummation. This, in turn, reinforces the main message and purpose of Matt 24–25 by directing attention from the temple to the Son of Man in anticipation of his coming in the fullness of power and glory as universal judge.

7.2 Ramifications

While our study neither postulated a profile of the first readers of Matthew's Gospel nor explored the historical occasion for the composition of the narrative, its findings

arguably suggest that Matthew espoused an *extra muros* perspective. Commentators continue to divide over the issue of whether Matthew addressed his narrative to Jewish believers who had already separated from Judaism. The parallel between Danielic and Matthean mysteries, in their polemical juxtaposition of the wise against the foolish, reflects a degree of pointedness and clarity in Matthew's differentiation of the disciples from the Jewish leaders who resist Jesus. Whether the first readers had already been evicted from the synagogues, the narrative promotes alignment with the disciples as the ultimate tenants of God's vineyard, the authentic leaders of his people. Also, whether the first readers had already witnessed the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, Matt 24–28 encourages a shift from the old to the new: from the temple to the Son of Man; from the former's full dismantling to the latter's final coming; from any hope of restoring the physical temple to the task of making disciples of all nations. Even as Matthew testifies to a measure of continuity between Judaism and Jesus, other elements in his narrative reflect some discontinuity.

Concerning potential lines of inquiry for future research— the question of how the apocalyptic tradition of Second Temple Judaism could have shaped New Testament thought continues to drive scholarly debates. As part of a broader and ongoing discourse, our thesis offered a focused examination of τὰ μυστήρια in Matt 13:11 with reference to the mysteries in Daniel. There is indeed scope for more research on whether other non-canonical Jewish texts, especially the Enochic writings, complement Daniel in exerting an apocalyptic influence on Matthew's portrayal of mystery. One starting point could be exploring further the link between mystery and the form of parables, in both the Enochic literature and Matthew's Gospel.

Our study, in adopting a narrative-critical approach, eschewed discussing the Markan and Lukan Olivet Discourses, apart from ascertaining Matthew's distinctive perspective. Synoptic commentators continue to debate the meaning of Matt 24–25, Mark 13, and Luke 21, and the extent of their overlap. In arguing for a particular interpretation of Matt 24–25 and its echoes in Matt 26–28, our study raises questions as to whether the corresponding Markan and Lukan passages contain a similar message and purpose. More specifically, do Mark and Luke also draw their conception of mystery from Daniel? If so, what are the similarities and differences? Also, how does attending to Markan and Lukan mysteries shed light on Mark 13 and Luke 21, even their respective echoes in Mark 14–16 and Luke 22–24?

Outside of the Synoptic Gospels, the ostensible parallel between Matthew's Olivet Discourse and 2 Thessalonians is even more intriguing. The latter text uses the term μυστήριον, not in relation to the kingdom of heaven but instead to lawlessness (2 Thess 2:7). The immediate context relates this mystery of lawlessness (τὸ … μυστήριον … τῆς ἀνομίας) to the antithesis of the Son of Man, and his devastation of the temple: ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀνομίας … ὁ ἀντικείμενος καὶ ὑπεραιρόμενος ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν ναὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσαι (2 Thess 2:3–4). Matthew's appropriation of Danielic language to speak of the physical dismantling of a literal building does not necessitate an identical use by Paul; Beale, for example, argues that 2 Thess 2 alludes to a nonliteral desecration of a nonphysical temple.[1] Only further comparative analysis will afford greater clarity as to whether Paul and Matthew (as well

[1] Beale, *Temple and the Church's Mission*, 286–87. In contrast, Charles A. Wanamaker argues that the passage "reads like prophecy about historical events to come, and it is almost certain that this is how Paul and his readers would have understood it": with an "obvious reference to the historical temple at Jerusalem." Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1990), 248.

as Mark and Luke) are simply offering different perspectives of the same event or expounding different events fulfilling the same Danielic prophecies.

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