THE INFLUENCE OF *MISHNA AVOT* AND OTHER JEWISH THOUGHT ON JESUS'S TEACHINGS, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE IN MATTHEW 5:38–42

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Statement of Original Authorship

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Dedication

בעזרת השם

Thank you to my wife, Dr. Heftsibah Cohen, who prods me along with love and care; to my wonderful children Jonpaul, Emani, and Koa who encourage Dad to be a better person; and Dulcie for being a support to me and the family, always. I am grateful for the love and support shown, allowing me to dig deeper into biblical understanding. I am grateful that I have been able to study and learn with your support for so long. You are an amazing family.

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This dissertation builds upon early work I have submitted for a Master of Arts degree at the University of Waikato, but which is not replicated in this dissertation. My previous work specialised in the field of political science; however, this dissertation focuses on the theology of Matthew 5:38–42 and not the political science applications of peace studies.[1] There are distinct differences found in this research that bring new discoveries into the field of theological studies and which illuminate a synergy between Matthew 5:38–42 and *Mishna Avot* based on the theological field of scholarship.

[1] Roger Ewald Lang, Jr. "Those who heard it first: The political implications of the sermon on the mount to Jesus' Jewish audience" (M.A., University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2013). Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/10289/8465. This Master of Arts in Political Science thesis provided a basis for peace studies; however, further research by Roger Lang's supervisor, Dr. Colm McKeogh, regarding the field of peace studies and the Sermon was published by C. McKeogh, *Why Peace, Quaker?* (Hamilton: Logo Express, 2015).

ABSTRACT

This dissertation reveals that, contrary to much prior scholarship on Matthew 5:38-42, Jesus was not an advocate of passive endurance of abuse; rather, he taught a peaceful form of resistance to oppression. His teachings, while nonviolent, still demanded justice and mercy. Jesus was a faithful and observant Jew, and the first audience that Jesus addressed was a mixed Galilean Jewish audience acquainted with Torah, the Oral Law, and the rules of the land as per Roman governance. This dissertation examines, in its intended context, Matthew 5:38–42, and compares its content with the Jewish writings of *Mishna Avot,* the Roman *lex talionis* (tenets of the Roman law), the Dead Sea scrolls, and other sources of Jewish Oral Law. By examining the historical and social aspects of *Mishna Avot* and Matthew 5:38–42 through a comparative religious lens, what emerges is a similarity of conceptual ideologies. Both Matthew 5 and *Mishna Avot* show similar intellectual thought regarding passive resistance to abusive authority. Jesus did not adopt a pacifist identity and capitulate to oppressors. Nor should history incorrectly describe him as creating followers who abhor resistance and often, in consequence, justice. Jesus taught that social justice includes protecting against abuse and retaining personal dignity in a conflict. The theological connections between *Mishna Avot* and Matthew 5:38–42 illuminate Jesus's understanding of Oral Law and his view of non-retaliatory peace.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Ant.	*Antiquities*
b.	*Babylonian Talmud*
B. Bat.	*Baba Batra*
B. Mes.	*Baba Mesia*
B. Qam.	*Baba Qamma*
Ber.	*Bracht*
ca.	*circa*, approximately.
CD	Damascus Document
CH	Code of Hammurabi
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
HTR	*The Harvard Theological Review*
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
Jos.	Josephus
JTS	*The Journal of Theological Studies*
Jub.	*Jubilees*
J. W.	*Jewish War*
JPS	*Jewish Publication Society*
JSNT	*Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
Ket.	*Ketubbot*
LXX	Septuagint
m.	*Mishna*
Mak.	*Makkot*
Meg. Taan.	*Megillat Taanit*
MT	Masoretic Text
Ned.	*Nedarim*
Nes.	*Neziqin*
NT	New Testament
R.	*Rabbi*
Rab.	*Rabbah*
Sanh.	*Sanhedrin*
Shab.	*Shabbat*

Tann.	*Tannit*
y.	*Jerusalem Talmud*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation contributes to the scholarship examining a Jewish Jesus. It does so by developing a new understanding of the Jewish context of Matthew 5:38–42, a context which is revealed by a conception of nonviolent retaliation found in both Matthew and *Mishna Avot.*[2] In the search for the historical Jesus, much has been published on the culture and context of 1st-century Jews living in Galilee. Yet there is still a lacuna in scholarship that examines Jewish intellectual thought evident in Matthew 5:38–42 in relation to the Jewish identity of Jesus as it is connected with *Mishna Avot*.

In this dissertation, a study of Matthew 5:38–42 juxtaposed with selected texts supporting peace in *Mishna Avot* reveals how Jewish Oral Law influenced the audience of Jesus's sermon. As it progresses, this study also notes the problem that has developed from an interpretation of Matthew 5:38–42—namely, one that incorrectly depicts Jesus as a total pacifist, resulting in generations of people who believe that the Bible wants them to accept abuse from an abuser by 'turning the other check' to abuse. In order to show that in Matthew 5:38–42 Jesus did not advocate that people should accept abuse or violence from another person in authority, portions of the Sermon on the Mount and the Jewish Oral Law preserved within various texts of *Mishna Avot* in the context of non-violence are examined. In this dissertation, I decipher Jesus's ethical and nonviolent resistance sayings found in Matthew 5:38–42 within a Jewish understanding from his era.

[2] *Avot* is a tractate found in the order of *Nezkim* in the *Mishnah*. *Mishnah Avot* is commonly called *Pirkei Avot*, which loosely translates as either "Chapters of the Fathers" or "Ethics of our Fathers."

The words of Jesus are inextricably tied to the traditions and the intellectual thoughts of his time, and this dissertation makes an original contribution within the Jewish Christian scholarship of Jesus by demonstrating, by means of comparisons and contrasts, how the nonviolent resistance sayings of the Oral Tradition are inherently linked to Matthew 5:38–42. A consideration of the surrounding historical intellectual environment provides clarity to Jesus's sayings on non-violence, ultimately demonstrating that justice and equality are demanded by Jesus's sayings.

1.1 The Research Question

This dissertation provides a new understanding of how the audience who heard the peace saying found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:38–42) would have understood it—that is, from their perspective as Jewish people within the Jewish context of the time. It approaches this broader question by seeking to discover whether Jesus's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount are unique to his time or whether they are similar to the greater corpus of learning that was the Oral Law. Hence the research questions addressed in the dissertation are as follows:

1. When examining Matthew 5:38–42 from the perspective of his Jewish audience, would the listeners have learnt any new knowledge from Jesus relating to non-violence, or would they have perceived commonly understood and previously learnt concepts from the part of the Oral Law that later became incorporated into the *Mishna Avot*?
2. What implications do the answer to question 1 have for the interpretation of Matthew 5:38–42?

Exploring these questions reveals that those people who listened to Jesus (a Jewish Rabbi) were indeed themselves Jewish. It further shows that the *Mishna Avot* contains sayings from Oral Traditions that existed during Jesus's time and were attributed to sages who lived before Jesus or who contemporaneous with him. These sayings in *Mishna Avot* of

sages who lived before Jesus likely influenced how people received, filtered, or understood the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42.[3]

1.2 Methodological Considerations

This dissertation examines the Hebrew Bible, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and *Mishna Avot* to investigate whether the ideas found in them are in alignment with the peace sayings found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:38–42). There are several methodological challenges to be faced in this endeavour, including determining which of the traditions found in *Mishna Avot* are prior to or contemporaneous with Jesus, finding a way to evaluate the level of confidence that can be placed in the accurate transmission of Oral Law across generations, and finding a way to determine whether Jesus's audience was Jewish.

1.2.1 Which Traditions of *Mishna Avot* Are Contemporaneous with Jesus?

It is commonly held that Rabbi Yehuda Ha-Nasi, a descendant of Hillel, compiled *Mishna* in approximately 200 CE,[4] and most contemporary scholars also date the final

[3] *See* on reception history John Riches, "Reception History as a Challenge to Biblical Theology," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 7 (2013): 171–185; and *idem,* Why Write a Reception-Historical Commentary?" *JSNT* 7 (2012): 171–185; Jonathan Rowlands. "Reception History, Theological Interpretation, and the Future of New Testament Studies," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 13 (2019): 147–67. For generalised scholarship supporting how reception history supports an understanding of how the Bible influenced communities and different cultures, see J. F. A. Sawyer, *Sacred Language and Sacred Texts* (London: Routledge, 1999), 2; Furthermore, J. Muilenberg contends that this form of influence will remain in academia, see J. Muilenberg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 1–18.

[4] Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, ed., *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2 ed. (Jerusalem: Keter, 2007) s.v. "Mishnah." For further scholarship on development of *Mishna* see Aharon Oppenheimer, *Rabbi Judah Ha-Nasi: Statesman, Reformer, and Redactor of the Mishnah* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017). Brandes illustrates that it is commonly viewed that the sources were compiled in a traditional view; however, some scholars say that the development of *Mishna* represents future rabbis amending earlier Tannaitic literature in the *Gemara.* See Yehuda Brandes, "The Canonization of the Mishnah," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 10 (2019): 145–80. See Miller for more on the connection of Judah Ha-Nasi and Christian overlap in Sepphoris. See Stuart S. Miller, "Mary and Rabbi Judah Ha-Nasi at Sepphoris," *Henoch* 38 (2016): 383–412. Although Stemberger believes in a much later dating of 800 C.E., this dissertation does not agree and supports more contemporary scholarship for an earlier date: see Gunter Stemberger, "Mischna Avot: Fruhe Weisheitsschrift, Pharisaisches Erbe order spatrabbinische Bildung?," *Zetschrift fur die neutestamentliche wissenschaft und die Kunde der Alteren Kirche* 96 (2005): 243-58. For a study on the development of Ha-Nasi and his decedents as applied to development of the Oral Tradition, see Alan Appelbaum, "Rabbi's Successors: The Later Jewish Patriarchs of the Third

composition of the Mishnaic tractate *Avot* to about 200 CE.[5] The text of *Mishna Avot* consists of teachings as well as anonymous sayings that are attributed to the Jewish sages between 300 BCE and 200 CE.[6] This dating raises an important methodological question: "Which of the traditions incorporated in *Mishna Avot* were circulating at the time of Jesus, and how may they be identified?"

There are two lines of evidence that can be put forward to make the case that many of the traditions found in *Mishna Avot* were in circulation at the time of Jesus and to identify which ones they are. First, many of the sayings in it are attributed to rabbis who predated Jesus or were his contemporary. If transmitted accurately (see 1.2.2) and attributed correctly, there is a reasonable chance that such sayings could have been known to Jesus and those who heard him. Second, one can point to similarities in thought between the rabbinic writings and that of Josephus, the Dead Sea scrolls, and the New Testament. While these similarities do not demonstrate that the traditions in *Mishnah Avot* attributed to sages prior to or

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Century," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 63 (2012): 1–21. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski supports the theory that each individual saying is attributed to a particular sage accurately, see Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, 5.

[5] Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski suggests that Avot is an early witness to rabbinic thought and values and that of the early rabbis and proto-rabbinic sages: see Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah, The More Life: A Christian Commentary on Mishnah Avot* (Leuven: Peeters, 2018). Because of their earlier date, the traditions of the Tannaitic literature which are embedded in the *Mishna*, are considered more reliable in depicting the history of the first centuries CE than other later rabbinic literature, such as the Babylonian Talmud. See Lee Levine, *Jerusalem: Portrait of the City in the Second Temple Period (538 B.C.E–70 C.E.)* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002). For scholarship supporting the development of Mishna in this theory, see H. L. Strack and Gunter Stemberger, *Introduction to Talmud and Midrash,* trans. And ed. By Markus Bockmuchl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992). In more recent works by Goldhill, the use of coins is explored to show how the archaeological discovery of coins minted during the Tannaitic period show the replacement of Roman faces with the approved imagery of the Jewish leaders of the time. This shows how the leaders of the Jewish people would use political resistance by giving to Caesar though the use of coins but also putting local rabbinical approvals on top of the Roman coin. See Amit Gvaryahu, "Roman Coinage and Its Early Rabbinic Users," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 111 (2021): 1–27. Further research by Rosen-Zi shows that the Tannaitic literature is the development period of the Jewish self-idea that an identity and rabbinical voice was being developed during this period that is different than later Jewish literature periods. See Ishav Rosen-Zvi, "The Rhetorical Self in Tannaitic Halakha," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 28 (2021): 341–66; Anat Koplowitz-Breier, "'Turn it Over and Over' (Avot 5:22): American Jewish Women's Poetry on Lot's Wife," *Literature and Theology* 34 (2020): 206–27.

[6] Unlike the rest of the *Mishnah*, the *Avot* is not a compilation of Jewish law, which is known as *halacha*, and it does not contain *aggadah*, which are traditional explanations of the Jewish Law.

contemporaneous with Jesus have been accurately represented in it, they at least provide evidence such ideas were in circulation at the time of writing of the New Testament.

Because many of the traditions in *Mishna Avot* are attributed to specific rabbis and because the general date in which they worked is known, it is possible to have an indication of the time period to which a particular tradition can be ascribed. *Mishna Avot* records traditions attributed to the rabbis of the *Mishnaic* period, or the period of the *Tannaim* (ca. 10 to 220 CE), as well as some sayings attributed to sages from earlier periods still.[7] The sayings included in it that are attributed to sages known to live prior to Jesus or contemporaneously with him are consequently attributed to those who lived before and during the time of Jesus. Consequently, understanding the traditions embodied in *Mishna* dated to this time throws light on views held at the time of Jesus and on how he was understood during the Second Temple period. Many of the traditions embodied in *Mishna* and Matthew 5:38–42 were formulated at a similar time.[8] Though the sayings recorded in *Mishna Avot* were put in written form well after the Gospel of Matthew was written, certain sayings in *Mishna Avot* are similar to those found in Matthew and are thus attributed to sages prior to and contemporary with Jesus. Furthermore, David Weiss Halivini contends that *Mishna Avot* influenced Jewish thought from 10 CE to 220 CE as the emphasis in Jewish study shifted from *midrash* to *mishna*.[9]

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[7] Rabbinic sages are grouped together in "periods," beginning with the period of the *Zugoth* (ca. 170 BCE – 30 CE), the *Tannaim* (ca. 10 – 220 CE), the *Amoraim* (200 – 500 CE), the *Zavoraim* (500-600), the *Geonim* (589 – 1038 CE), etc.

[8] This dissertation will look at the connections between Matthew and Oral Tradition in later chapters. For more information about the historical development of Matthew and the Sermon on the Mount, see Hans Dieter Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount, Hermenia–A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995); Paul Foster, "Matthew and the Mishnah," *Expository Times* 128 (2017): 305–6.

[9] David Weiss Halivni and Jeffrey L Rubenstein, *The Formation of the Babylonian Talmud* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4. Halivni explains that the *Mishna* is "transferred material from one passage to another" (Ibid.), 190.

Many of the sources used in *Mishna Avot* come from the sayings attributed to the rabbis before Jesus. Even though *Mishna Avot* was written down by 220 CE, it incorporated the sayings of Jewish thought from 536 BCE to ca 220 CE, with the majority of those sayings coming from 10 CE to 220 CE. This study is focused on the first century up to 70 CE. The audience of Matthew 5:38–42 may have known these oral sayings and traditions, as Schiffman contends. He suggests that over time Jewish scholarship became heavily influenced by Oral Law and its focus on Torah.[10] Schiffman further contends that the dates of the authors cited in *Mishna Avot* show that these oral traditions predate Matthew 5:38–42.[11] This dissertation supports the concept that *Avot* includes within it fragments of earlier traditions.

This study only focuses on specific sayings that were imported from earlier dates when it argues for the credibility of selected passages from *Mishna Avot*. This is important because it is not an objective in this dissertation to delineate the authorship history of the entire *Mishna Avot,* but only selected passages relevant to peace in the context of Matthew 5:38–42. The aim and purpose are to show the connection in intellectual thought between the *Mishna Avot* and the sayings found within the book of Matthew 5:38–42. Furthermore, this dissertation does not set out to prove that Jesus's sayings entered into *Avot*. However, showing a connected intellectual thought between *Mishna Avot* and Matthew helps provide a

[10] Lawrence Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem: Studies in the Dead Sea Scroll and the History of Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 1.

[11] *Ibid.* Fisch purports that a modern read of Romans 10:5-13 shows how Paul in the New Testament utilises the oral and written Torah in his writings affirming that there is an overlap in the Jewish intellectual context at the time of writing the New Testament and Tannaitic writings. Yael Fisch, "The Origins of Oral Torah: A New Pauline Perspective," *Journal for the Study of Judaism: In the Persian Hellenistic & Roman Period* 51 (2020): 43–66. See also Amram Tropper, ''Tractate Avot and Early Christian Succession Lists,'' in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,* ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 2003), 161–62. Others may take a slightly different stance. For example, Jacob Neusner argues that the sayings of *Mishna Avot* did not exist before the 3rd century, although not many adopt his position. Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 3:185–86.

connection between *Mishna Avot* and the development of peace thoughts in the Sermon. It is possible to find other relevant data outside of *Mishna Avot* located in other tractates of *Mishna*. The use of sources beyond the *Mishna Avot* is helpful because it substantiates the thought found within the *Mishna Avot* as similar to the Jewish thought during the life and time of Jesus. Thus, in this dissertation both the intellectual thought of *Mishna Avot* and the concepts found within other tractates of *Mishna* are examined. Acknowledging that *Mishna Avot* may be dated after Matthew in no way diminishes the value and purpose of connecting the intellectual thought of the two works.

1.2.2 Transmission of the Oral Law

The authenticity and exactness of the *Mishna*'s sayings which are attributed to specific rabbis who are prior to or contemporary with Jesus depend upon the accuracy of the transmission of the Oral Law. According to *Mishna Avot* 1:1 (which will be further explored in chapter 5), Moses was given both Oral Law and Written Law at Sinai. It states, "Moses received the Torah at Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the Men of the Great Assembly."[12] *Mishna Avot* begins by recounting the transmission of the Oral Law from Moses to Joshua, to the elders, to the prophets to the men of the Great Assembly as evidence of the validity of the sayings of the forefathers.

Why the sages did not write down the Oral Law before the third century is a complex question to which the best researchers have devoted their energies.[13] Most scholars have

[12] מֹשֶׁה קִבֵּל תּוֹרָה מִסִּינַי, וּמְסָרָהּ לִיהוֹשֻׁעַ, וִיהוֹשֻׁעַ לִזְקֵנִים, וּזְקֵנִים לִנְבִיאִים, וּנְבִיאִים מְסָרוּהָ לְאַנְשֵׁי כְנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלָה www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.1.1.

[13] See Menahem Kister, "Observations on Aspects of Exegesis, Tradition, and Theology in Midrash, Pseudepigrapha, and Other Jewish Writing," *Jewish Pseudepigrapha* (Georgia: *Jewish Journal*, 1994), 1–34; David Weiss Halivni, *Revelation Restored – Divine Writ and Critical Responses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). For discussions on preservation of oral history see Jonathan Klawans, "Josephus and the Rabbis,

concluded that the *Mishna* and the *Talmud* were not kept in written form during the period of their composition.[14] Scholars are in agreement that after the era known as the post-destruction age that Mishna and Talmud originated out of "Oral Law," because, as the name suggests, they had hitherto been transmitted in an oral manner.[15] In Jewish thought, Oral Law reflects the written Torah's holiness. The orality of the law defines not only how the law is studied by scholars but also how it is transmitted generationally.[16]

1.2.3 Was Jesus's Audience Jewish?

Most commentators suggest that Jesus's audience was essentially Jewish, although some Gentiles may have been able to hear Jesus as he was teaching in Galilee. Jesus was a Torah-observant Jew,[17] and there is agreement in the literature that Jesus's teaching was

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Written by Tal Ilan and Vered Noam, in Collaboration with Meir Ben Shahar, Daphne Baratz, and Yael Fisch," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 26 (2019): 270–72.

[14] See Jacob N. Epstein: *Introduction to the Mishnaic Text* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1948), 692–706; Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminar, 1950), 83–85. Jacob Neusner developed a standing view that the sayings found in *Mishna* were attributed to other authors. The foundation of the study of rabbinic law comes with the analysis of Mishna with these early Tannaitic parallels. See Jacob Neusner, *In Quest of the Historical Pharisees* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2007). For a contrary view to this, some scholars argue that much of the Gemara is not from older thoughts, see Yair Furstenberg, *Purity and Community in Antiquity: Traditions of the Law from Second Temple Judaism to the Mishnah* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2016), 305–12.

[15] Avigdor Shinan, *The Aggadah in the Aramaic Targums to the Pentateuch. Literary Analysis and Description of the Aggadic Material Contained in the So-Called "Palestinian" Targums to All Five Books of the Pentateuch, With Examination of this Genre Against its Background* (Jerusalem: Makor, 1979), 44–66. For further discussion on how religious thought developed contemporary literary criticism, Handelman shows a crucial connection within modern textual interpretation theory for Rabbinical hermeneutical thought. See Susan A Handelman, *Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982).

[16] Cyrus Gordon, *Jewish Reaction to Christian Borrowings*, in: *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth. Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of his Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 685–690.

[17] In the Christian tradition, the concept of Jesus being a 'Son of God' and a part of the Trinity can be confusion for some who acknowledge that Jesus was a Torah-observant Jewish person. As this dissertation does not deal with the Trinitarian doctrines, for scholarship on this issue see, John Pawlikowski, *Christ in the Light of the Christian-Jewish Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982). For scholarship on how the emergence Christianity was influenced broadly by Judaism, see Christine Hayes, *The Emergence of Judaism: Classical Traditions in Contemporary Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011). For scholarship that discusses when Christianity and Judaism began to separate and take different forms in identity, see Marcel Simon, *Verus*

largely directed at Jews, even though it was ultimately found to be relevant to both Jews and Gentiles.[18] This author takes the stance that both Jews and Gentiles were among the audience that heard the Sermon.

Israel; Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways, A.D. 70 to 135 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1992); William Horbury, *Jews and Christians in Contact and Controversy* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998); Judith Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Daniel Boyarín, *Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); and Daniel Boyarin, *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007). There is good scholarship showing that in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, anti-Jewish sentiment in the Christian community, known as supersessionism, was evident in Alexandria in 130 CE. For more information on the historical implications of the rise of supersessionism, see, R. Kendall Soulen, *The God of Israel and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); Scott Bader-Saye, *Church and Israel after Christendom: The Politics of Election* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999); and Peter C. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004), 147–185. Marcel Simon, *A Study of the Relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism*, 4 vols. (New York: Vanguard Press, 1965–1985); and Edwin H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty-three Centuries of Anti-Semitism* (New York: Macmillan, 1965). For a modern discourse on explaining that Paul in the Pauline writings was trying to replace Jews through supersessionism but it was a critique on moral monotheism see Timothy P. Jackson, *Mordecai Would Not Bow Down: Anti-Semitism, the Holocaust and Christian Supersessionism* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2021); Ann Conway-Jones, "The New Testament: Jewish or Gentile?" *Expository Times* 130 (2019): 237–42.

[18] For a discussion on the Jewish Jesus, see David Rudolph, "Introduction to Messianic Judaism," *Hebrew Studies* 57 (2016): 355–58; Kathy Ehrensperger, "Jesus Der Jude: Beobachtungen Zu Den Jüdisch-Christlichen Beziehungen in Der Gegenwärtigen Forschung," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 146 (2021): 21–36; Juan Marcos Bejarano Gutierrez, *Forgotten Origins: The Lost Jewish History of Jesus and Early Christianity* (Grand Prairie, TX: Yaron Publishing, 2017). Eugene Fisher, "Forgotten Origins: The Lost Jewish History of Jesus and Early Christianity," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 56 (2021): 152–53; Anthony Giambrone, "When Christians Were Jews: The First Generation," *Nova et Vetera (English Edition)* 19 (2021): 303–9. For a discussion regarding who the teachings of Jesus addressed, see K. W. Clarke, "The Gentile Bias in Matthew," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 66 (1947): 165–72; Samuel Sandmel, *A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1956); Georg Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit: Untersuchung zur Theologie des Matthäus* (*Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,* 1971); Sjef van Tilborg, *The Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); John P. Meier, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church, and Morality in the First Gospel* (New York: Paulist, 1979). It is worth noting that John Martens suggests that Matthew often follows Mishnaic writings as a Jewish style, such as Matthew 19:3 when it seems probable that the Pharisees are seeking to see which side of current debates on divorce Jesus falls, as formulated in Mishnah Gittin 9:10 (Mishnah Gittin 9:10 is not compared in this dissertation). For more discussion on the Jewish Apocalyptic read on Jesus, see John W Martens, "'But from the Beginning It Was Not so': The Jewish Apocalyptic Context of Jesus's Teaching on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage," *Journal of Moral Theology* 10 (2021): 5–33. For an understanding of the Jewish Ritual and Jesus, see Matthew Thiessen, "Jesus and Ritual Impurity," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 47 (2021): 66–68.

1.3 Chapter Conclusion

The findings presented in this dissertation seek to close a gap in the literature about the influence of Oral Law on ideas of peace and pacifism found in Matthew 5:38–42. The commonality between *Mishna Avot* and Matthew 5:38–42 will be examined in the setting of nonviolent resistance. The Jewish peace sayings and their historical origins show similarities in culture and language in specific interpretations of Matthew 5:38–42 in regard to nonviolent protest. The careful application of an appropriate methodology will allow a viable link to be made between the Oral Law and the original audience's understanding of Jesus's words which are found in Matthew 5:38–42.

CHAPTER 2 WAR, PEACE, AND MESSIAH IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter considers key passages dealing with war and peace in the Hebrew Bible and explores how images and themes from these passages are used in the New Testament. Through the discussion of God as a warrior God and a God of people, the chapter demonstrates how the Northern and Southern kingdoms failed to develop active military offensive war strategies and relied on defensive strategy. The chapter illustrates how by the time of Jesus, the Jewish people were not training to be warriors but were surviving and assimilating; thus, a concept of a messianic redeemer develops as well as a theory of peace and war.

2.2 Warrior God and War in the Hebrew Bible

In the Hebrew Bible there are multiple passages that portray God as both a warrior God and as a God of peace, and both types of passage have captured the attention of academics working in the field of Hebrew Bible studies.[19]

[19] In the *Tanakh*, there are examples of Yahweh as the God of War and stories of divine war. One example is found in Exodus 4:24–26 in which immediately after commissioning Moses as his emissary to Egypt, Yahweh tries to kill him. Another story is when Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10) are killed to the hands of an angry Yahweh. In the story of King David in 2 Samuel 24, Yahweh sends that kills 70,000 Israelites. These stories do not form an ethos of war or a war ethic even though they are examples of war and killing attributed to Yahweh as a command toward for Israelites. Yahweh is depicted as having honour to defend, see David A Glatt-Gilad, "Yahweh's Honor at Stake: A Divine Conundrum," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 26 (2002): 63. For more scholarship surrounding the concept of a Jewish War ethic and the ethics of war from a Jewish perspective, see Doniwen Pietersen, *"*Yahwistic Incongruency and Enigma: A Challenge to Relinquish Violence*?" Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 77 (2021): 1–6; Paul Copan, "Yahweh Wars and the Canaanites: Divinely Mandates Genocide or Corporate Capital Punishment? Responses to Critics." *Philosophia Christi* 11 (2009): 73–90; Lawrence Schiffman and Wolowoleski, Joel, eds., *War and Peace in Jewish Tradition* (New York: Yeshiva University Press/Ktav, 2007); Max Schulmann, *Wehrgedanke im Staatszionismus* (Berlin: Max Schulmann, 1934); Eliezer Shenvald, *Sefer Harel: Tsvaiyut Israelit BeAspaklaria Toranit* (Hispin: Yeshivat HaGolan, 2000); Rudolph Smend, *Jahwekrieg und Stämmebund: Erwägungen zur ältesten Geschichte Israels* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht,1963); Pinhas Smith, *Sefer Briti Shalom* (Lakewood: Mechon Sofrim, 2013); Heath A Thomas, Jeremy Evans, and Paul Copan, *Holy War in the Bible: Christian Morality and an Old*

There is no doubt that the *Tanakh* presents an image of Yahweh as a God of War.[20] During the conquest of Canaan by Joshua and the Israelites, YHWH was depicted in Hebrew Bible as a warrior God, but he is not depicted as a god of war like the Greek and Roman gods of Ares and Mars.[21] During this time all foreigners needed to worship YHWH to be accepted into the community.[22] If they refused, they could not remain in the land.[23] Coincidentally, warfare was allowed for the Jewish people in the Northern and Southern kingdoms.[24] There are stories in the *Tanakh* that portray YHWH as the warrior God. Second Samuel 5:24 explains how YHWH instructed David, "When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then go into action, for the Lord will be going in front of you to attack the Philistine forces". YHWH also directed hailstones, the moon, the sun, and the stars as well as torrential waters (Josh 10:11–13, Judg 5:20–21). Ballentine suggests that in this respect,

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Testament Problem (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2013); Cat Quine, "Military Coups in Ancient Israel and Their Implications for Conceptions of YHWH's Divine Army," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 34 (2020): 30–42. For scholarship about the biblical law for Jewish war when a city is surrounded in war, see Elisha Wislitsky et. al, eds., *Sugyat HaKriah LeShalom BaMilhama* (Jerusalem: Merhavim, 1993).

[20] The Tanakh is an anacronym for the Torah, the Nevi'im (Prophets), and the Ketuvim (Writings). For more information on the Ancient Israelites weapons and the trade of weapons as part of a war organization see Boyd Seevers, *Warfare in the Old Testament: The Organization, Weapons, and Tactics of Ancient Near Eastern Armies* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013).

[21] "Within biblical Judaism, there is no established ethic of warfare, as the Jewish texts advocate self-preservation, for both the Israelites of the northern kingdom and the Judahites of the southern kingdom" Roger Ewald Lang, Jr., "Those Who Heard it First: The Political Implications of the Sermon on the Mount to Jesus' Jewish Audience," (M.A., University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand, 2013); https://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10289/8465/thesis.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y; cf. Michael Waltzer, "War and Peace in the Jewish Tradition," in *The Ethics of War and Peace,* ed. Terry Nardin, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 96. The methods of warfare within the Biblical story are adapted from external styles and techniques of warfare from the surrounding countries; see John C. L. Gibson, *Aramaic Inscriptions, Including Inscriptions in the Dialect of Zenjirli,* Vol. 2 of Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 8–9.

[22] For more discussion on the stranger and the roles in Jewish war please see Brad Kelle, *Osprey Guide to Ancient Israel at War 853–586 BC* (Oxford: Osprey, 2014); Aurélie Bischofberger, "Stranger in a Land: Late-Antique and Medieval Narratives on Foreigners and Exile," *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 17 (2020): 299–310.

[23] Gerda de Villiers, "The 'Foreigner in Our Midst' and The Hebrew Bible," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 75 (2019), 1.

[24] Michael Waltzer, "War and Peace in the Jewish Tradition," in *The Ethics of War and Peace,* ed. Terry Nardin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 96.

YHWH resembles Ugaritic Baal, who armed himself with the forces of the storm—clouds, winds, lightning bolts, and rains.[25] For the people of the *Tanakh*, self-preservation is connected to war.[26] Fighting and killing for national self-preservation may have been dictated by God against adversaries, such as the incident described in 1 Samuel 15 when Saul failed to destroy all the Amalekites; however, this did not include an actual ethic of war.[27] This call for genocide remains without explanation as to why an entire people must be eradicated until we learn later the ramifications that Haman, who was a defender of Agag, the king of the Amalekites, became a threat to the Jewish people.[28] The Northern and Southern kingdoms

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[25] Debra Scoggins Ballentine, *The Conflict Myth and the Biblical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 73–108.

[26] For a complete listing on the conquest and military history for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, please see Yaakov Liver, *Historia Tsvait Shel Eretz Israel BiTekufat Hamikra* (Tel-Aviv: Maarachot, 1964).

[27] Modern war ethicists Hauerwas and Levinas have examined peace in relation to violence. Levinas holds that peace is a false state of mind only in the present in which war is inevitable. Hauerwas also holds that false peace does not substitute true peace. See Jeffrey L Kosky, *Levinas and The Philosophy of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001). *Levinas* further contends that peace is inherent to humanity. Stanley Hauerwaus teaches that true peace would require people fully surrendering power over themselves. See Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983); Stanley Hauerwaus, *Should War Be Eliminated? Philosophical and Theological Investigations* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1984); Stanley Hauerwaus, *Against the Nations: War and Survival in a Liberal Society* (New York: HarperCollins, 1988); Stanley Hauerwaus, *War and the American Difference: Theological Reflections on Violence and National Identity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, 2011); for more studies on the Just War Theory in the context of Realism and pacifism, see Robert Holmes, *On War and Morality (*Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). The ethics of war for self-preservation is important to acknowledge because the questions of theodicy arise, see Philip D Stern, "1 Samuel 15: Towards an Ancient View of the War-Herem," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 21 (1989): 413–20. Although, in this dissertation, I cannot completely define why God would allow some to die and others to live, I can focus on certain scenarios. For more understanding of the ethics surrounding God and war, *see,* Bertrand Russell, "The Ethics of War," *International Journal of Ethics* 25 (1915): 127–142; Bertrand Russell, "The Future of Pacifism," *The American Scholar* 13 (1943): 7–13; Glenn Stassen, *Just Peacemaking: Transforming Initiatives of Justice and Peace* (Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992).

[28] For further scholarship on the role that genocide has on the formation of the Jewish nation and the ethical responses for calls for genocide in the biblical narratives, see John J. Collins, *Does the Bible Justify Violence?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 8–11. For further understanding about genocide and how the destruction of the Amalekites is not a national ethos of war, see Gili Kugler, "Metaphysical Hatred and Sacred Genocide: The Questionable Role of Amalek in Biblical Literature," *Journal of Genocide Research* 23 (2021): 1–16; John Allister, "The Amalekite Genocide," *Churchman* 124 (2010): 217–26. For an understanding of a Christian view of Jewish divine violence and genocide, see Eric A Seibert, "Recent Research on Divine Violence in the Old Testament (with Special Attention to Christian Theological Perspectives)," *Currents in Biblical Research* 15 (2016): 8–40. For a broad study of genocide in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, see Shawn Kelley, "Genocide, the Bible, and Biblical Scholarship," *Brill Research Perspectives in*

failed to develop an active military offensive war strategy. After David and Solomon secured the kingdom, formerly victorious Israel was largely reduced to defensive tactics against superior armies.[29]

The Torah limits the capacity of kings to acquire tools of war.[30] Deuteronomy 17:16 prohibits a king from accumulating excess and numerous horses, to include specialised horses used by Egypt for war.[31] This prevents the king from creating a vast army of war and keeps the king's cavalry limited to only personal use, such as personal transportation, as opposed to amassing overly large herds of horses, to go to war.[32] The king was also not to acquire wealth or large harems from war or peace, nor for an exhibition of a surplus of personal

Biblical Interpretation 1 (2016): 1–71. For a critique on the problems with biblical stories of genocide, especially with violence against women, see Caryn Reeder, "Deuteronomy 21.10-14 and/as Wartime Rape," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 41 (2017): 313–36; Ibid., "Wartime Rape, the Romans, and the First Jewish Revolt," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 48 (2017): 363–85. Genocide and war, in modern Christianity, often carry a level of ambivalence due to eschatology, and this impacts modern views of peace and war, see Wilhelm Wille, "Ambivalence in the Christian Attitude to War and Peace," *International Review of Psychiatry* 19 (2007): 235–42.

[29] There is a great amount of research that looks into the war ethos of Judaism during the time of the development of Israel. For more insight, see Shmaryahu Arieli, *Mishpat HaMilhama: Beayot, Beirurim VeHidushim BeDinei Tzava UMilhama Be'Israel* (Jerusalem: Revuen Mass, 1971); Christophe Batsch, *La guerre et les rites de guerre dans le judaïsme du deuxième Temple* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Michael J. Broyde, *The Bounds of Wartime Military Conduct in Jewish Law: An Expansive Conception* (Flushing: CUNY, 2006); Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eenderman, 1978); Nethanel Eliashiv, *LeEzrat Hashem BaGiborim: Pirkey Hadrakha VeLivuy LeSheirut Tzvai'I MeMushach* (Jerusalem: Binyan Hatora, 2010); Reuven Firestone, *Holy War in Judaism: The Fall and Rise of a Controversial Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Yigal Levin and Amnon Shapira, *War and Peace in Jewish Tradition: From the Biblical World to the Present* (New York: Routledge,1980); Yigal Levin and Amnon Shapira, *Yahweh Is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Scottdale: Herald, 2003).

[30] For more scholarship in specific battles show how Torah limits the exercise of power in warfare, see Stephen Leston and Christopher Hudson, *Illustrated Guide to Bible Battles: The Background, Overview, Key Players, Weapons and Meaning of More Than 90 Scriptural Battles* (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour Books, 2014).

[31] Thomas F Carney, *The Shape of the Past* (Lawrence: Coronado Press, 1975), 61; David Flatto, "Constructing Justice: The Selective Use of Scripture in Formulating Early Jewish Accounts of the Courts," *Harvard Theological Review* 111 (2018): 488–515.

[32] J. G McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 294; Kristin Weingart, "'My Father, My Father! Chariot of Israel and Its Horses!' (2 Kings 2:12 // 13:14): Elisha's or Elijah's Title?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137 (2018): 257–70.

wealth.[33] The direction to not accumulate a large standing army was juxtaposed against the large army of Egypt. Hazony summarises the biblical case for limiting government for David thus:

> The law of the king thus proposes a limited state: one headed by a king whose life is not consumed in the unending quest for ever-greater power but is instead subject to a law that is higher than his own whims and whose purpose is the well-being of the nation. In the same way, the narrative also insists that the state be limited territorially, with the books of Moses and Joshua both including clear boundaries for the land and warning against encroachment on the lands of neighbouring peoples.[34]

Even though Saul created a standing army, and David grew a standing army, this was against the biblical directives of Torah and shows contrasting ideologies in the narratives about the conquests in the early theocracy. The Egyptians set a standard for the use and value of large chariot armies among the neighbouring communities.[35] For the Egyptian Pharaoh, the chariot represented his heroic personality with gods overseeing his military strength.[36] However, the

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[33] Duane L Christensen, *Deuteronomy 1–21:9* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 381; For more information on the biblical harem restrictions, see Beverly Cushman, "The Politics of the Royal Harem and the Case of Bat-Sheba," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30 (2006): 327–43; Kristin Weingart, "'My Father, My Father! Chariot of Israel and Its Horses!' (2 Kings 2:12 // 13:14): Elisha's or Elijah's Title?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137 (2018): 257–70.

[34] Yoram Hazony, "The Biblical Case for A Limited Government," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* 226 (2012): 41.

[35] For a description of the introduction of horses and chariots into Egypt, as well as how chariots were constructed, see Robert B. Partridge, *Fighting Pharaohs* (Manchester: Peartree, 2002), 60–74; James Bowden, "'Send the Archers': Archery's Primary Role in Canaanite-Levantine Military Thought," *Revista Universitaria de Historia Militar* 9 (2020): 122–45; Mazzù et. al., "Dynamical Behaviour of Bronze Age War Chariots," *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 36 (2021): 1-15.

[36] Ian Shaw, *Egyptian Warfare and Weapons, Shire Egyptology* (Buckinghamshire: Shire, 1991), 41; R. Cox, "Expanding the History of the Just War: The Ethics of War in Ancient Egypt," *International Studies Quarterly* 61 (2017), 371-384; an example of a biblical story in which a chariot is used for but is not accumulated in excess is found in 2 Sam 15:1–6. Here the narrator presents Absalom's rebellion in a remarkable way. Absalom surrounded himself with the symbolic military equipment of a ruler, but he did not do anything practical with it; he made no immediate move to gather elite supporters or build an army. Instead, he stationed himself at a point where he could control access to a resource that was apparently more important than wealth or soldiers—people hoping for judgment. He first asked them to identify themselves geographically, by city, but instead they identified themselves in terms of kinship, by tribe. It was only after the conversation had opened with this act of tribal identification that Absalom claimed to perceive the rightness of their case. Despite this the king does not provide them with a hearing.

God of Israel commanded the Israelites *not* to have excess like the Egyptians.[37] Historically, however, kings have developed large armies, made themselves rich, and taken pleasure in their harems.[38] Even though the kings acquired wealth contrary to the commands of Torah, they never developed an ethos in favour of wars against foreign lands. In the Torah, standardised precepts of war were not developed. Seltzer suggests that "there is no Jewish theory of war and peace, and until modern times, there were no theories produced by individual Jews."[39]

The Bible does have many records of large armies such as those that Abijah and Jeroboam accumulated to have in a war against one another (2 Chr 13). Solomon's accumulation of many chariots and horses is an example of a large army: "And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen; and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen…." (1 Kgs 10:26). In the Hebrew text, the verse reads:

וַיֶּאֱסֹף שְׁלֹמֹה֙ רֶ֣כֶב וּפָרָשִׁ֔ים וַיְהִי־לֹ֛ו אֶ֥לֶף וְאַרְבַּע־מֵא֖וֹת רֶ֑כֶב וּשְׁנֵים־עָשָׂ֥ר אֶ֖לֶף פָּרָשִׁ֑ים וַיַּנִּחֵם֙ בְּעָרֵ֣י הָרֶ֔כֶב וְעִם־הַמֶּ֖לֶךְ בִּירוּשָׁלָֽ ם׃

The Hebrew word פָּרָשׁ means "horseman" (although rendered "horse" or "steed" by some translators). Solomon established himself as a middleman, a dealer of sorts, importing horses

[37] After David, the book of Micah speaks of divine retribution against YHWH's own people at the time of the devastating Assyrian campaigns, "Disaster from the Lord descended on the gate of Jerusalem" (1:12). The oracle of Micah 1:12 shows how YHWH does not defend the gates of the city. The Ugaritic prayer is similar, "When a strong foe attacks your gate, a warrior your walls, you shall lift your eyes to Baal [and say]: 'O Baal, if you drive the strong one from our gate, the warrior from our walls, a bull, O Baal, we shall sanctify'; see Dennis Pardee, *Ritual and Cult at Ugarit 10* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 149–50 for more information on the Ugarit cult. In the book of Micah, it is stated: "In anger and wrath (YHWH shall) wreak vengeance" (5:15), but neither natural forces nor conventional weapons are invoked. Not blind to the political realities, the prophet acknowledged the threat from Assyria (5:4) (5:5) and Babylonia (4:10) but did not present their armies as YHWH's conscripts and even foretold Israelite subjugation of Assyria and Nimrod, should Assyria attack (5:4–5).

[38] J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1974), 205.

[39] J. M. Seltzer, *War and Peace in the Jewish Tradition*, eds. Lawrence H. Schiffman and Joel B. Wolowelsky (New York: Michael Scharf Publication Trust of the Yeshiva University Press, 2007), 95.

and chariots from Que (Tarsus) and Egypt. He would then sell them to Hatti and Aram (1 Kgs 10:28–29). This placed Solomon as an arms dealer and trader. It is nevertheless obvious that, even apart from the marriage of Solomon marriage to a princess from Egypt (1 Kgs 3:1), this account of his reign does implicate him in trying, in a sense, to undo Exodus by sending his people back to Egypt to buy horses and chariots (1 Kgs 10:28–29)—something that Deut 17:16 specifically prohibits.

The experience of war in the 8th to 6th century was different: instead of being the aggressors against the established nations, Israel and Judah became the target of aggressive foreign invaders and did not have an effective military means to resist the invaders. As Elizabeth Bloch-Smith explains:

> One contribution of archaeology to biblical studies is to raise questions prompted by material remains. In this context, the physical devastation wrought by the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III through Nebuchadnezzar with their concomitant death and suffering raises the question of YHWH's role in the unfolding events. Both biblical texts and archaeological evidence attest to successful assaults on settlements in Israel and Judah beginning in the late 8th century. No match for the Assyrian and Babylonian armies, Israelites retreated from offensive to defensive strategies. This tactical shift occasioned a reconceptualization of the national deity, the warrior god YHWH. 8th – 6th century prophetic and Deuteronomistic references to siege warfare and the deity's response increasingly portray YHWH as a warrior in a new guise, transitioning from field marshal to "situation-room" supreme military commander in charge of all forces—Israelite and enemy alike.[40]

With the recasting of the image of YHWH as a warrior God during the conflict with the Assyrian and Babylonian armies, there was a need to reveal that YHWH was in control and supreme.[41]

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[40] Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, "The Impact of Siege Warfare on Biblical Conceptualizations of YHWH," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 137 (2018): 19. For more understanding of the context for the military practice during 8th century BCE, see Michael G. Hasel, *Military Practice and Polemic: Israel's Laws of Warfare in Near Eastern Perspective* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005), 107.

[41] The need to show that YHWH was in control and the ruler of all foreign and domestic deities, the metaphor of YHWH is expressed as a heavenly warrior in the book of the Psalms. For more information on YHWH as a warrior metaphor in Psalms, see Martin Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior*

2.3 Conceptions of War in the Second Temple Period

During the Second Temple period, there was no contemporary written ethos or ethic that guided the Jewish nation regarding war, such as the earlier kingdoms that preceded them.[42] There are differences in the definition of war and battle as well. There is a distinction between what the concept of war and battles entailed in Israelite times and what the word ,מִלְחָמָה meaning "war," which Klingbeil suggests is a generalised term for battle.[43] During the time of Jesus, the Jewish nation was a conquered people under Roman oppression, and they were not preparing for מִלְחָמָה. Historically, the Jewish war stories also recall accounts of a great God who delivers the people through militaristic means that are greater than (but similar to) the surrounding kingdoms. The eastern kingdoms of Mesopotamia and Ugarit tell a story of divine military support and greatness.[44] Moshe Weinfeld provides evidence from the Ugaritic writings, Egyptian writings, and Greek literature that "the image of the fighting god who hastens to the aid of his people was widespread in the ancient Near East." This evidence demonstrates a similarity with "stars that fight from heaven, the fire and the cloud, annihilating divine forces, stones from heaven, thunder, and the hiding cloud"—all supposed manifestations of deities for the cause of the faithful who hail them.[45] Hoffmeir argues that

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and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999). For a discussion on the role of YHWH and the Ark's role in the act of war, see Thomas Roemer, "The Ark of Yhwh: From War to Alliance," *Etudes Theologiques et Religieuses* 94 (2019): 95–108.

[42] Kingdoms such as the Sumerians had stele inscribed, which is a stone or wooden slab, generally taller than it is wide, showing how the Sumerian state sponsored warfare. These dated to 2500 BCE. They were found in Lagash (known also as Telloh and Ginsu). This is before the Babylonian King Hammurabi (1792 BCE–1750 BCE) produced the Code of Hammurabi, which had laws for soldiers and fighting.

[43] Martin Klingbeil, *Yahweh Fighting from Heaven: God as Warrior and as God of Heaven in the Hebrew Psalter and Ancient Near Eastern Iconography* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 95; Adia Mendelson Maoz, "Lives of Wars and Trauma," *Hebrew Studies* 59 (2018): 421–30.

[44] B. Albrektson, *History and the Gods* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 34–35.

[45] Ibid.

surrounding military-backed empires relied on a divine involvement in the success of their countries.[46]

During the *Mishnaic* period, there was a push to define different types of war and the categories of war. This was a preliminary to defining the types of wars. Waltzer explains:

> The *first* category includes all wars commanded by God; the list is very short, drawn from the biblical accounts of the conquest of the land, though it is subject to some modest rabbinic expansion for the sake of the subsequent defence of the land. The *second* category includes all permitted wars, and seems to be a concession to Israel's kings, since the only examples are the expansionist wars of David. These are the wars that disqualified David from the temple building but they are permitted to him as king … The missing *third* category is the banned or forbidden war. It cannot be the case that all wars not required are permitted, for it is fairly clear that there were wars of which the rabbis disapproved.[47]

War and fighting were permitted for the conquest of land and for kings as they saw fit for the need of the land; however, the category of forbidden wars limited how people could choose to defend their national interest. War was used to preserve the Jewish way of life—to preserve the cultic worship of God. Importantly, the intent was self-protection and preservation and not peace and pacifism. Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) ascribed to war a central role in the formation of ancient Israel, termed in his writings "cradle of the nation" (*Wiege der Nation*, 1905).[48] How the ancient kings of Israel won a war or lost a war affected the development of the nation.

Anthony D. Smith contends that what is most important for the emergence of national consciousnesses is not war itself, but rather the commemoration of war.[49] The memory of

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[46] James K. Hoffmeier, *Israel in Egypt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 42; Paul Hinlicky, "The Theology of the Divine Warrior in the Book of Joshua," *Word & World* 37 (2017): 271–80.

[47] Waltzer, "War and Peace in the Jewish Tradition," in *The Ethics of War and Peace*, ed. Terry Nardin, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 97.

[48] Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena Zur Geschichte Israels* (Norderstedt: Hansebooks, 2016).

[49] Anthony David Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 218–253.

those who died, and how the people won the war, becomes part of the biblical story, as in the destruction of Jericho by Joshua. Refraining from war is not to be abused to a pacifist extreme that renders a nation defenceless—a proverbial doormat for others.[50] Rather, the balance between war and peace is to be a mechanism for self-defence and preservation.[51] The awaited messiah will be either for war or for peace.[52] Theories of war and peace were developed in anticipation of the coming of a messiah.

2.4 Micah 4, a Kingdom at Peace, and a Potential Messianic Role

Micah describes a peaceful kingdom whose people are serving their God (Micah 4:1–4).[53] Micah portrays the Assyrians' captivity of the Northern Kingdom as a punishment for iniquity, and Micah sees a similar fate in store for Judah. Micah 4:1–4 describes a future "in days to come" when the people will be living in a kingdom of peace that contrasts with the present.[54] Scott suggests that Micah 4 represents a future messianic kingdom of peace sitting under a tree.[55] Micah 4:1–4 (NRSV) reads:

> In days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it,/ and many nations shall come and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us

[50] Some nations may use peace may be used by people as a way to disarm nations making them not capable of defensive measures within an attack.

[51] For more scholarship on the use of war as self-defence in Jewish thought, see Elliot N. Dorff, *To Do the Right and the Good: A Jewish Approach to Modern Social Ethics* (Philadelphia: Jewish 46 Publication Society, 2002), 174; William Loader, "What Light Does Matthew's Use of Mark in Matthew 1–4 Throw on Matthew's Theological Location?" *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72 (2016): 1–11.

[52] Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 311.

[53] Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 216.

[54] John Goldingay, *Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 2:388; Konrad Schaefer, *Psalms* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001), 174.

[55] Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 350; Abernethy, Andrew T. *God's Messiah in the Old Testament: Expectations of a Coming King* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020).

> his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,/ He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;/ but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

According to Micah 4, God brings a message of *shalom* (peace) through a peaceful people. There are some who disagree that Micah 4:1–4 references a Jewish messiah. Some say that the text is referring to God as seen in Micah 4:7, not a human king. For instance, the Jewish Study Bible, 2nd Edition, explains Micah 4:3 in the following way:

> The one who will judge is the Lord. Some medieval commentaries, however, identified the judge with the Messiah (Ibn Ezra, Radak) and thus reformulated to some extent the image of the ideal period. In its biblical context, however, this passage depicts a messianic age without a personal messiah.[56]

Joseph Fahey contends that Micah 4 sees a peace founded on God's shalom through justice.[57] Those who listened to Jesus's sermon and expected an understanding of a messianic age as seen in Micah 4 were seeking peace. One school of thought includes David H. Stern, who emphasises the divine preeminence of the Lord within the messianic expectations; thus, he cites the declaration of Isaiah 9:5–7, in which the Messiah is called by name, "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." Stern believes that other elements of the Bible point to Micah 4 as a peace saying. Stern also cites Jeremiah 23:5–6, and Micah 5:1(2).[58]

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[56] Adele Berlin and Marc Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1199.

[57] Joseph J. Fahey, *War and the Christian Conscience* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008), 32.

[58] David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary* (Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1992), 213. See also Fischer's discussion of YHWH and Micah 4 regarding divine power, Irmtraud Fischer, "World Peace and 'Holy War' -- Two Sides of the Same Theological Concept: 'YHWH as Sole Divine Power' (A Canonical-Intertextual Reading of Isaiah 2:1-5, Joel 4:9-21, and Micah 4:1-5)," In *Isaiah's Vision of Peace in Biblical and Modern International Relations: Swords into Plowshares*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 151-65.

Berlin and Brettler differ from Stern:

> Thus, it is not clear whether the Davidic king whose birth and rule are described (vv. 5–6) has already been born (if the verbs are a regular past tense) or will be born in the future (prophetic past). If the former, the v. probably refers to Ahaz's son Hezekiah, as many modern and rabbinic commentators believe (though other possibilities exist depending on the date of the passage). Most later readers (both Jewish and Christian) understood the passage to describe an ideal future Davidic ruler, i.e., the Messiah.[59]

Berlin and Brettler's explanation regarding Micah 4 support the idea that the messianic understanding is an unknown in the text; however, many support the idea that Micah 4 refers to a future messianic figure, after the date of Micah 4.

2.5 Isaiah 9, Kingship, and a Messianic Figure

The kingdom of peace in Isaiah 9 creates the imagery for a peaceful rule by the messianic figure.[60] The Jewish prophecy of משיח indicates the typology of the Davidic messianic leader.[61] Isaiah 9:5–6 states:

> For a child has been born to us,/ A son has been given us./ And authority has settled on his shoulders./ He has been named,/ 'The mighty God is planning grace;/ The Eternal father, a peaceable rule'/ In token of abundant authority/ And of peace without limit/ Upon David's throne and kingdom,/ That it may be firmly established/ In justice and in equity/ Now and evermore./ The zeal of the Lord of Hosts/ shall bring this to pass.[62]

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[59] Berlin and Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible*, 784.

[60] Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels* (New York: The New York Press, 2012), 72.

[61] H. Wildberger, "Die Thronnamen des Messias, Jes. 9,5b," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 16 (1960): 314–32. There is research that shows how the authorship of biblical metaphors compares the earthly and divine kingship in such a way that the human descriptions of kings and messiah figures are metaphorical and exaggerated, see, Marc Zvi Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989).

[62] In this dissertation the Jewish Publication Society Hebrew Scriptures translation is used throughout (except where otherwise indicated). See JPS *Tanakh* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2008).

Isaiah 9 portrays a peaceful Hebrew messiah.[63] The messianic leader in the prophecy of Isaiah 9 is a Jewish leader within the concept of a Jewish statehood, not worldwide, according to Scott.[64] Mark McEntire suggests that Isaiah 9:1–7 is a political response that is related to a spiritual crisis.[65] The Syro-Ephraimite War (8th century BCE) and its aftermath created a scenario ripe for oracles of salvation.[66] This prophecy provides a משיח figure for the Jewish people only, thus excluding the Gentile nations.

Acknowledging that משיח has been identified in multiple sources is important. There have been many others in Jewish history who have been identified as messianic figures before Jesus lived. According to Flavius Josephus, messianic figures include Simon of Peraea, who was the slave of Herod the Great; Athronges, who was a shepherd and led an insurrection against Herod Archelaus; Menahem ben Judah, who was the leader of the Sicarii; and Simon bar Kokhba.[67] Understanding Jesus's messianic claim would be part of the cultural reception for the listeners to the Sermon.[68] It can be accepted that some people were looking forward to a messianic figure during the time of Jesus while others were not. Saldarini points out:

> Christian interpreters have often attributed to 1st century [CE] Judaism a univocal belief in an eschatological, political, nationalistic messiah. In reality,

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[63] Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament,* 302; Michael Flowers "The Two Messiahs and Melchiedek in 11QMelchizedek," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 7 (2016): 194–227; Greg Goswell, "The Shape of Messianism in Isaiah 9," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 77 (2015): 101–10.

[64] Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament*, 302.

[65] Mark Harold McEntire, *A Chorus of Prophetic Voices: Introducing the Prophetic Literature of Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015), 205–15.

[66] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*: *A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 247–48; H. G. M. Williamson, "Messianic Texts in Isaiah 1–39," in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 257–58.

[67] See Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), 17.278–284.

[68] Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament,* 310; Francois P Viljoen, "A Call for Peacemaking: A Perspective from the Sermon on the Mount," *In Die Skriflig* 55 (2021): 1–8.

> not all Jews believed in an afterlife or an apocalyptic ending to the world. Of those who did, some expected a messianic figure, and some did not.[69]

Bartelt correctly suggests that during the time of Jesus very different and divisive views and expectations of a messiah existed: unity in messianic expectation was not possible.[70] N.T. Wright comments that when a king was a militaristic figure, which is what Judas looked for in a messianic figure, it shaped the view of what a messianic figure should be.[71] Wright's suggestion implies that Jesus's views about nonviolence were in contrast to those held by many Jewish people at his time and that many of the people listening to Jesus had the propensity to revolutionary behaviour. This is not indicated in the text of the Sermon itself.

2.6 Peace and the Kingdom of God in the Teachings of Jesus

The Kingdom of God theme in the New Testament is a theme of peace.[72] The Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God have very similar literary historical beginnings originating before the writing of the Sermon on the Mount.[73] Geza Vermes suggests that the Kingdom of

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[69] Anthony J. Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 168.

[70] Andrew H. Bartelt, "The Centrality of Isaiah 6 (–8) within Isaiah 2–12," *Concordia Journal* 30 (2004): 316. For an examination on messianic expectations during the Second Temple period, see Hermann Lichtenberger, "Messianic Expectations and Messianic Figures in the Second Temple Period," In *Qumran-Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth et al. (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 9–20. For more information on early Christian eschatology, see Alexander Steward, "The Temporary Messianic Kingdom in Second Temple Judaism and the Delay of the Parousia: Psalm 110:1 and the Development of Early Christian Inaugurated Eschatology," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 59 (2016): 255–70.

[71] N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 194.

[72] The research surrounding "Kingdom of God" discussions far exceeds the limits of this dissertation. For research in the area of Kingdom of God and its meaning in relation to peace, *see* L. D. Chrupcala, *The Kingdom of God* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2007).

[73] For information on the Kingdom of Heaven in terms of peace and pacifism in terms of the Sermon on the Mount, see Philip Suciadi Chia, "The Word Ekklēsia in Matthew and Its Implication for Social Justice," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 51 (2021): 24–32; Charles Nathan Ridlehoover, "The Logic of Matthew 6.19-7.12: Heavenly Priorities in the Kingdom of Earth," *New Testament Studies* 66 (2020): 582–600; Kent E. Brower, "The Secret of the Kingdom of God: The Literary and Theological Achievement of the Evangelist Mark," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 42 (2020): 47; Joseph S. O'Leary, "N. T. Wright:

Heaven during the time of Jesus was a reference to the righteous kingdom and contrasted with the evil Roman Empire.[74] There is a difference between the good kingdom and the Roman kingdom in that the good kingdom is a Jewish kingdom.[75] In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus states, "…but strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" Matthew 6:33 (NRSV). The Jewish kingdom is God's kingdom, and this seems to imply that God's kingdom is superior to the Roman's.

Jesus's Jewish roots would include the concept of a kingdom of God, developed before the first century CE.[76] Vermes further asserts, "The kingdom of God was neither invented by John the Baptist nor by Jesus. It grew out of old biblical traditions where it had been developing over centuries."[77] The interpretation of the kingdom of God morphed over

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Interpreting the Interpreter Collected Essays of N. T. Wright Interpreting Scripture: Essays on the Bible and Hermeneutics Interpreting Jesus: Essays on the Gospels Interpreting Paul: Essays on the Apostle and His Letters," *Reviews in Religion & Theology* 28 (2021): 122–30; Dorothy Jean Weaver, "'Suffering Violence' and the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt 11:12): A Matthean Manual for Life in a Time of War," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 67 (2011): 1-11. For modern applications of this concept to modern principles such as modern warfare see Gregory A. Boyd, "A Cruciform Response to Terrorism," *Philosophia Christi* 18 (2016): 119–27. For feminist readings and the role of pacifism on women see Joshua Little, "A New Family: Jesus and the Coming of the Kingdom of God Reorient the Role of Women in God's Mission," *Priscilla Papers* 34 (2020): 12–18. For more on the kingdom, *see* Herman N. Ridderbos, *Coming of the Kingdom* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1962); There are different opinions as to why in the text of Matthew there is a difference between 'Kingdom of Heaven' versus the use of 'Kingdom of God' in the literary structure of Matthew. For more scholarship on these differences, *see* Jonathan T. Pennington, *Heaven and Earth in the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009). Pennington argues that Matthew is contrasting the "heavenly kingdom" from the "earthly kingdom." Matthew's preference for the kingdom of heaven is part of this contrast, emphasizing all that is good and from God versus the evil of the earthly kingdom. It is also worth noting that Luke has a Sermon on the Plain, which corresponds somewhat with Matthew's Sermon on the Mount.

[74] Geza Vermes, *Christian Beginnings from Nazareth to Nicaea, AD 30 – 325* (London: Penguin, 2012), 41.

[75] For the crucial role of Jesus in the kingdom of God as the restoration of human vicegerency, *see* Dan G. McCartney, "Ecce Homo: The Coming of the Kingdom as the Restoration of Human Vicegerency," *Westminster Theological Journal* 56 (1994): 1–21.

[76] *See* John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 484. For a well-written account of New Testament influence of the first century, *see* N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013).

[77] Vermes, *Christian Beginnings from Nazareth to Nicaea, AD 30–325*, 40. There are very few instances of the 'kingship/kingdom' of God in Jewish literature surrounding the time of Jesus. *See* O. Camponovo, *Konigtum, Konigsherrschaft und Reich Gottes in den Fruhjudichen Schriften* (Fribourg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984); Anne Moore, *Moving Beyond Symbol and Myth: Understanding the Kingship of God of the Hebrew Bible Through Metaphor* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

time, even assuming a monarchical view with "the ruler of Israel, the Israelite nation as God's people, and the Jewish king as ultimately God's lieutenant ruling over all the nations of the earth."[78]

The kingdom of God was a kingdom over Jews and the term is used interchangeably with "Kingdom of Heaven" in the Gospel of Matthew (e.g. Matt 19:24–25). Early attempts to keep Jewish believers unified under a single monotheistic God influenced the definition. Judaism teaches that monotheism originates during the time of Moses. The monotheistic ideology changed and developed through the exile. In the 1830 publication by Fredrich E. Schleiermacher, it was believed that many Jews held the understanding that God's providence was over Jews and not Gentiles; however, if they lived in Israel then they were subject to the laws of the Jewish people.[79]

Understanding the meaning of "Kingdom of God" in ancient society involves an understanding of the roles of cults and cultures. These cultures helped define this perception. Assmann describes monotheism and paganism in the relation to cults and cultures:

> To speak of Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Greek, and Roman 'religions' means to reconfigure—or even distort—the historical phenomena according to a perception of reality proper to monotheism but alien to 'paganism.' There were no 'religions' in pagan societies, only 'cults' and 'cultures.' 'Religion,' like 'paganism,' is an invention of monotheism.[80]

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[78] Ibid., see Eckhard J Schnabel, "Biblical Theology from A New Testament Perspective," *Journal of The Evangelical Theological Society* 2 (2019): 225–49, for a discussion the Kingdom of God in within writings constructed before the birth of Jesus.

[79] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhang dargestellt* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1960), 130.2; Ananda Geyser-Fouche and Young Namgung contend that Israel had lost hope once taken from Israel to Babylon and that hope is restored by returning to the land (Ananda Geyser-Fouche and Young Namgung, "The Deuteronomic View of History in Second Temple Judaism," *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 40 (2019): 1–7.

[80] Jan Assmann, *Of God and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 10.

The messianic era establishes the Hebrew God as king. There was a need to rescue the people of Israel and return them back to God's authority since the people were under foreign rule. The perception of the king as an individual varied between each sect of Judaism according to their concept of messiah. Some, such as the Zealots,[81] held a militaristic and non-peaceful view of foreign kings who were seen as a threat to a Jewish monarch.[82] Vermes explains that a militant view would make the God of the Jews stronger and supreme over foreign gods.[83]

With the expansion of the people's understanding of a messiah came also a mandate of obedience to Torah.[84] Saldarini writes:

> Although the pious and often apolitical rabbis conceived of the establishment of God's realm, it would happen, not through the power of the sword, but through total submission to the Law of Moses. This was to happen—to use their own words—through the acceptance of the yoke of the Torah.[85]

Torah observance was the mechanism that ushers in a Kingdom of God. Torah similarly is the yoke of Jesus, a concept expressed in Matthew 11:29. The discussion in Matthew is not about the validity of Torah or whether one should follow Torah. The discussion in Matthew is over which teacher is the appropriate one to follow. In the Greek, Matthew 11:29 reads, "ἄρατε τὸν ζυγόν μου ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καὶ μάθετε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ὅτι πραΰς εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ, καὶ εὑρήσετε ἀνάπαυσιν ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὑμῶν." The text states (NRSV): "Take my yoke upon

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[81] For a discussion on Zealots and politics, *see* Miguel Vatter, "Roman Civil Religion and the Question of Jewish Politics in Arendt," *Philosophy Today* 62 (2018): 573–606.

[82] Vermes, *Christian Beginnings from Nazareth to Nicaea, AD 30–325*, 40–41.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 163; Robert G T. Edwards, "Proverbs 8, Christological Controversies, and the Pre-Existence of the Son and Torah in the Third and Fourth Centuries," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period* 51 (2020): 67–96.

[85] Vermes, *Christian Beginnings from Nazareth to Nicaea, AD 30–325*, 41, 2.

you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." The verse indicates that Jesus expected that people would follow him.

2.7 Keeping the *Mitzvoth* and the Audience of the Sermon on the Mount

How the leaders of the time understood משיח and anticipated the entrance of משיח dictated how the leaders understood peace at the time. Some Jews obeyed and observed the *mitzvoth*, also known as the commandments.[86] This is accomplished by keeping the law or commandments of God through observance. The Great Commission in Matthew defines and contextualises the teaching for Matthew's audience. Matthew 28:19–20 (NRSV) reads, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Here Jesus's says that keeping his commandments, along with baptism, is part of being a Christian disciple.

The people engaged by the Great Commission are following the practices of Jesus, observing the law of Moses. Obedience to the law or *mitzvoth* is understood in the statement attributed to Jesus, "teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" [Matthew 28:20]. Jesus instructed people, and they were required to be obedient. Saldarini continues, "The Matthean audience of the Sermon on the Mount relates to the nations (Gentiles) not through a theory of supersessionism, not developed until the 2nd century, but through law (*mitzvoth)* observance."[87] Those listening to the Sermon of the Mount have the potential to be

[86] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 165; Henry Ansgar Kelly, "Love of Neighbor as Great Commandment in the Time of Jesus: Grasping at Straws in the Hebrew Scriptures," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 60 (2017): 265–81.

[87] Ibid., 199. Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski suggests that modern Christianity needs to be studied through anti-supersessionist theology in order to remove the whiteness and bias in theological study, see Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, "Towards an Anti-Supersessionist Theology: Race, Whiteness, and Covenant," *Religions* 13 (2022): 129

Torah-observant and to use that lens to define nonviolent resistance.[88] They would interpret the teachings of Jesus as Jewish in nature, not Gentile, nor as a Pauline community might.

This dissertation explores the impact of this discourse of Jesus on the Galilean audience, which consisted of both Jews and Gentile. Since the Sermon, including Matthew 5:38–42, was delivered in a public area, it reached a mixed audience. The text clearly does not say Jesus delivered the sermon in a synagogue or in a Temple but outside in the vicinity of Capernaum ("he went up the mountain" Matt 5:1; Matt 8:1, 5 assuming 8:5 follows immediately from 8:1–4).[89] In his expository Sermon Jesus was Jewish. An understanding of the Jewish law and prophets helps to reveal this fact as well as revealing what Jesus came to accomplish.

Jesus states: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill" [Matthew 5:17 (NRSV)]. At this time, before the development of Rabbinical Judaism, Jesus observed both the law and the prophets. Jesus neither annulled nor diminished any aspects of the law but rather clarified the discrepancies in its observance among the variety of Jewish denominations.[90] If Jesus was creating a

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[88] Recent scholarship by Stiles suggests that the Matthean community was part of the first century interpretation of Jewish scholarship of the time, which this dissertation would agree with. See more conservative scholarship supporting Jewish law-abiding communities in Matthew, see Rudolf K. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1968); Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew,* translated by Percy Scott (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963); Günther Bornkamm, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963); Roger Mohrlang, *Matthew and Paul: A Comparison of Ethical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); J. Andrew Overman, *Matthew's Gospel and Formative Judaism: The Social World of the Matthean Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); David C. Sim, "The Gospel of Matthew and the Gentiles," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 57 (1995): 19–48; *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998); "The Social Setting of the Matthean Community: New Paths for an Old Journey," *HTS Teologiese Studies – Theological Studies* 57 (2001): 268–280; and Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*.

[89] The mountain was probably in the vicinity of Capernaum (Matt 8:1, 5), assuming 8:5 follows immediately from 8:1–4. For a broad understanding of geographical occasions from Matthew 8, see Mark Lau Branson, "Matthew and Learning Communities," *Journal of Religious Leadership* 15 (2016): 37–68.

theology contrary to current Jewish thought, his reception by the Jewish community may have been less well received, and his legacy would have dissipated and disappeared like the hundreds of other messiah figures that came before and after him. Jesus's teachings are in line with the keeping of the Torah, including his teachings regarding peace and peace ethics. It would be against the law and the prophets for Jesus to develop a new philosophy surrounding peace and pacifism that was not in keeping with the prevailing Jewish political and intellectual thought of his time.[91]

From the sociological perspective, there was an influx of Gentiles into Judaism, possibly from Antioch of Syria.[92] The addition of new members from the Diaspora also created a new understanding of peace from Greek and Roman philosophies that misunderstood Jesus's fulfillment of Torah and the prophets. Christianity often tries to define how Jesus *fulfilled* Torah. These various methods to define how are common done "by confirming it, by adding to it, by bringing out its full originally intended meaning, by

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[90] Donald Senior, "Viewing the Jewish Jesus of History through the Lens of Matthew's Gospel," in *Soundings in the Religion of Jesus: Perspectives and Methods in Jewish and Christian Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 81–95; Francois P Viljoen, "Jesus' Teaching on the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount." *Neotestamentica* 40 (2006): 135–55; Jean-Marc Chouraqui. "Réflexions d'un Juif Sur Jésus," *Théophilyon* 6 (2001): 125–62. Tucker contends that Jesus was a radical observer of the law, see Tucker S. Ferda, "The Historical Jesus and the Law: The Form of His Activity and the Impact of Social Reputation," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 80 (2018): 62–80.

[91] For further studies on pacifism and Just War, see Stanley Hauerwas, "Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Pacifism, Just War, and Peacebuilding," *Interpretation* 75 (2021): 177–78; Roland Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960); Ellen Ott Marshall, "Pacifism and the Question of Responsibility," *Political Theology* 21 (2020): 192–206; Daniel H. Weiss, "Christians as Levites: Rethinking Early Christian Attitudes toward War and Bloodshed via Origen, Tertullian, and Augustine," *Harvard Theological Review* 112 (2019): 491–516. For further views on the strengths and the weaknesses of Christian Pacifism, see Daniel Dombrowski, *Christian Pacifism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); for the pros and cons against Just War Theory, *see* Andrew Fiala, *The Just War Myth: The Moral Illusions of War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008). For a background discussion and very detailed study of the general term of pacifism, see, Andrew Fiala, "Pacifism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2010). Edward N. Zalta, ed.: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pacifism/.

[92] Donald Senior, "Viewing the Jewish Jesus of History through the Lens of Matthew's Gospel," in *Soundings in the Religion of Jesus: Perspectives and Methods in Jewish and Christian Scholarship*, ed. Bruce Chilton, Anthony Le Donne and Jacob Neusnera (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 81–95; Daniel K. Eng, "The Antioch Assumption: Did Jews and Gentiles Actually Worship Together in Antioch?" *Evangelical Review of Theology* 42 (2018): 268–79.

extending its demand,` and by teaching the eschatological will of God."[93] All of these are good suggestions but they do not provide a comprehensive view of how Jesus fulfilled the Torah. It is unlikely that Jesus acted outside of the parameters of the Torah.[94] Boyarin contends that Jesus was a Jew who kept the commandments—"Jesus kept kosher, which is to say that he saw himself not as abrogating the Torah but as defending it."[95] Jesus could not have spoken against observance of the *mitzvoth* if he was keeping and advocated keeping the details of Torah. The image of a Jesus who kept the law provides a better basis for understanding the contemporary perception of his sayings as they relate to both the written and oral Torah.

2.8 Chapter Conclusion

The Hebrew Bible depicts God as both a warrior God and a God of people. The imagery of YHWH as a warrior God in 2 Samuel 5:25 resembles Ugaritic Baal, killing for national self-preservation is required in 1 Samuel 15, and the failure to kill for national preservation results in Haman being a threat to future generations. After both David and Solomon, both the Northern and Southern kingdoms failed to develop active military offensive war strategies and largely developed defensive strategies, as illuminated in Deuteronomy 17:16. This included limitations on military equipment, including horses and chariots. Even though kings did amass large amounts of wealth, it was not using war and a war ethos, especially against foreign lands. Solomon becomes an arms dealer to amass wealth and influence within the region. This was not the case by the 8th to 6th centuries BCE when

[93] Douglas Moo, "Law," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel Green, Jeannine Brown, and Nicholas Perrin (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992), 457.

[94] Benjamin L. White, "Justin between Paul and the Heretics: The Salvation of Christian Judaisers in the Dialogue with Trypho," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 26 (2018): 163–189.

[95] Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels*, 103.

they become vulnerable to neighbouring invaders thus requiring a recasting of YHWH as a warrior God for self-preservation. By the time of Jesus, the Jewish nation was not preparing for war or national defence; thus, they lived under Roman rule. The need to fight for self-preservation was not as prominent; thus, different views of a messianic figure developed in the context of who ruled the Jewish nation. The impact of Micah chapter 4 would usher in a messianic age with peace, and this outlook formed the Jewish understanding of peace and pacifism, and Isaiah 9 would provide a typology the future messianic leader. The teaching of peace and the Kingdom of God in the book of Matthew reflects these intellectual developments of peace and war from the Hebrew Bible. Jesus's Jewish roots exemplify keeping the *mitzvoth* and in such, his statements about peace in Matthew reflect this tradition from the Hebrew Bible about building a kingdom based not on human wealth or success but God. Jesus was partially assimilated in a Roman community and held a uniquely Jewish viewpoint in his political outlook. As such, Jesus impacted the Galilean audience, which consisted of both Jews and Gentiles.

CHAPTER 3

THE QUMRAN COMMUNITY, REPENTANCE, AND THE TWO MESSIAHS

3.1 Introduction

Most of the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls have been dated to periods prior to that of the ministry of Jesus, and so form an important resource for understanding ideas about Messiah and peace that are likely to have been in circulation at the time of Jesus. Within these collections are different *Pesharim* that make comment about the apocalypse and salvation.

This chapter will introduce some key features of the Qumran community while looking at the connections of the Qumran Community with the Dead Sea Scrolls within the concept of peace. This chapter will then highlight what is revealed in the documents about their concept of repentance, especially in terms of the view of repentance in terms of peace through rituals. The chapter will then develop a concept of messianic peace within the Hebrew Bible with the messianic figures associated with the line of David and the line of Aaron and how these figures feature in the writings preserved by the Qumran community. It concludes with a discussion on the role of the scrolls and Jesus's listeners to the Sermon on the Mount.

3.2 Qumran Community and the Dead Sea Scrolls

The Qumran Community produced the Dead Sea Scrolls and stored them. By examining different aspects of the scrolls, an image of one of the strands of Judaism that surrounded Jesus emerges.[96] For Scheffler, "…the resemblances that Dupont-Sommer

[96] For scholarship on how the use of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament can be used in harmony of scholarship see G. J. Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (London: SPCK, 2005); Matthew P. Monger, "Dead Sea Media: Orality, Textuality, and Memory in the Scrolls from the Judean

detected do not represent real connections between Qumran and early Christianity"[97] Scheffler argues that the Qumranites were Essene scribes that expected a Davidic political messiah.[98] There is evidence that a community of Essenes also lived in Jerusalem, in the Essene Quarter, as well as in other towns and villages across Judea and Galilee.[99] The Qumran scrolls are not all from one tradition, but from different traditions written at different times.[100] The geographical location of the Qumran community in the Judean Desert south of the Dead Sea speaks to the economic and political climate during the time of Jesus.[101] There is great evidence showing that caves have revealed previous theological finds and there are more to find.[102] The views of Judaism changed theologically as the religion matured and the

Desert." *Dead Sea Discoveries* 28 (2021): 131–33; Matthew Goldstone, "The Love of Neighbour in Ancient Judaism: The Reception of Leviticus 19:18 in the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, the Book of Jubilees, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the New Testament," *Journal of Theological Studies* 70 (2019): 354–56; Matthew Chalmers, "Samaritans, Biblical Studies, and Ancient Judaism: Recent Trends," *Currents in Biblical Research* 20 (2021): 28–64; Schiffman, Lawrence H., "Jewish Law in the Gospels in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 51 (2021): 226–33; Donald C. McIntyre, "The Testing of Jesus in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Intertextual Hermeneutics," *Eleutheria* 5 (2021): 90–112.

[97] Eben Scheffler, "Putting Qumran, Jesus and His Movement into Relief," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72 (2016): 2–3.

[98] Ibid. Tantelvskij suggests that the Essenes are defendants of King David's father, Jesse. Igor R. Tantelvskij, "Etymology of 'Essenes' in the Light of Qumran Messianic Expectation." *Qumran Chronicle* 8 (1999): 195–212.

[99] Bargil Pixner, "Jerusalem's Essene Gateway: Where the Community Lived in Jesus' Time," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 23 (1997): 22-66.

[100] Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem*, 5. Van der Schoor suggests that some of the scrolls could be written formally and some informally. See Hanneke van der Schoor, "The Assessment of Variation: The Case of the Aramaic Levi Document," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 28 (2021): 179–206.

[101] For more in-depth discussions and research about the geographical area in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were found and the impact that the geography has on the historical understanding see Devorah Dimant, "The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance," in *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness: Papers on the Qumran Scrolls By Fellows of the Institute of Advanced Studies in the Hebrew University, Jerusalem*, ed. Devorah Dimant and Lawrence Schiffman (Leiden: Brill, 1995): 23–58; Jesper Høgenhaven, "Geography in the Visions of Amram Texts (4Q543-547)," In *Vision, Narrative, and Wisdom in the Aramaic Texts from Qumran*, ed. Mette Bundvad and Kasper Siegismund (Leiden, Brill ,2020), 119–36.

[102] There are other theological finds that have and will emerge from the Dead Sea Scrolls found and any future scrolls discovered. For more scholarship about the implications of future discoveries, see, J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); R. Zimmermann, *Messianische Texte aus Qumran: Königliche, priesterliche und prophetische Messiasvorstellungen in den Schriftfunden von Qumran* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998).

Jews suffered under different political powers such as Babylon and Rome. The Dead Sea Scrolls assist in understanding Christianity, illuminating various Jewish sects and the various groups of Jews during the Hellenistic and Roman periods within Judea.[103] Christianity follows the same intellectual Jewish thought found in these scrolls.[104] Many similarities have been discovered between Matthew and 4Q521.[105]

The Sermon has similarity of thought regarding sectarianism and apocalypticism with 4Q521.[106] Scroll 4Q521 is translated by Martínez and Tigchelaar:

> 1 [for the heav]ens and the earth will listen to his anointed one, 2 [and all th]at is in them will not turn away from the precepts of the holy ones. 3 Strengthen yourselves, you who are seeking the Lord, in his service! [Blank] 4 Will you not in this encounter the Lord, all those who hope in their heart? 5 For the Lord will consider the pious, and call the righteous by name, 6 and his spirit will hover upon the poor, and he will renew the faithful with his strength. 7 For he will honor the pious upon the throne of an eternal kingdom, 8 freeing prisoners, giving sight to the blind, straightening out the twis[ted.] 9 And

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[103] Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem*, 36. Further research is suggesting that further insight is still being discovered from the Dead Sea Scrolls as we gain more archaeology and academic progression. Crawford details how archaeology is supporting the new scroll fragment discovery. See Sidnie White Crawford, "Khirbet Qumran and Ain Feshkha Iva: Qumran Cave 11Q; Archaeology and New Scroll Fragments," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 28 (2021): 122–24.

[104] This dissertation will not explore in detail how fragments from the scrolls found in the Qumran community do not connect with other Apocryphal works such as Ezekiel Apocryphon. B.G. Wright has provided ground-breaking connections showing how the scrolls found in Qumran are not connecting to Apocryphal works, see B. G. Wright, III, "Qumran Pseudepigrapha and Early Christianity: Is 1 Clement 50:4 a Citation of 4QPseudo-Ezekiel (4Q385 12)?" in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. M. E. Stone and E. G. Chazon; (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 183-93. In this work, further evidence is presented showing that the Qumran materials did not influence future Christian apocrypha. The Qumran scribes preserved scrolls before Jesus' time. For more on the isolation of Qumran ideals, see N. Wieder, *The Judean Scrolls and Karaism: A Reproduction of the First Edition with Addenda,* Corrigenda and Supplementary Articles (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2005). For more on how the Dead Sea Scrolls influenced Christianity, see John Sietze Bergsma, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Revealing the Jewish Roots of Christianity* (New York: Image, 2019).

[105] Charles H. Talbert, "Matthew 11:2–24," *Interpretation* 64 (2010): 406–408; Eisenman and Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered,* 119; Puech Émile, "L'Attente Du Retour D'élie Dans L'Ancien Testament Et Les Écrits Péritestamentaires: 4Q558 Et 4Q521," *Revue de Qumran* 30 (2018): 3–26; Arstein Justnes, *The Time of Salvation: An Analysis of 4QApocryphon of Daniel Ar (4Q246), 4QMessianic Apocalypse (4Q521 2), and 4QTime of Righteousness (4Q215a)* (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 2009; Hans Kvalbein, "Die Wunder Der Endzeit: Beobachtungen Zu 4Q521 Und Matth," *Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Älteren Kirche* 88 (1997): 111–25; John Sietze Bergsma, *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Revealing the Jewish Roots of Christianity* (New York: Image, 2019).

[106] Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem*, 36–37.

> for[e]ver shall I cling [to those who h]ope, and in his mercy […] 10 and the fru[it of …] … not be delayed. 11 And the Lord will perform marvellous acts such as have not existed, just as he sa[id,] 12 [for] he will heal the badly wounded and will make the dead live, he will proclaim good news to the poor 13 and […] … […] he will lead the […] … and enrich the hungry. 14 […] and all … […][107]

Scroll 4Q521 shows a view of an apocalyptic period, possibly with a messianic redemption. The adaptation of apocalyptic imagery by Christianity after Jesus followed the Pharisees.[108] Similar allusions to God's Spirit protecting the meek connect the traditions.[109] With an expectation of a messianic figure who would offer liberation, the audience of 4Q521 had an apocalyptic expectation. This is similar to those who interpret Jesus as a Messiah. Eisenman and Wise translate 4Q521 as "The Heavens and the earth will obey [their] Messiah."[110] This translation offers a messianic promise as a theme that existed before Jesus.[111]

To determine if the views of apocalypticism are founded in philosophy or realism, we can look at the different types of Jews that existed at the time of Jesus. We know from Josephus that Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots and Sicarii Jews existed. Three of these sects are described as philosophical in nature: Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes.[112] It is most likely that Essenes lived in the Qumran Community, we are not able to say if they had any authorship of these texts or help in the preservation of these text written by the wider body of

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[107] Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 1045.

[108] Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem*, 37; Some apocalyptic books used in Christianity are Daniel, Amos, and Zephaniah. See David Flusser, Azzan, Yadin, and David. Bivin, *Judaism of the Second Temple Period. Vol. 1, Qumran and Apocalypticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

[109] Eisenman and Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*, 119.

[110] Ibid., 23; Puech, *Revue de Qumran*, 3–26.

[111] The scrolls are dated from radiocarbon dating from 33 CE plus or minus 200 years.

[112] *See* Flavius Josephus, *The Works of Flavius Josephus* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2000).

Jews.[113] The people living in Qumran maintained the scrolls, but the documents found in Qumran reveal distinctive traditions in Judaism represented by the various authorship traditions. The crises surrounding the revolt against Rome from 67 to 70 CE caused those responsible for the scrolls to hide them hastily.[114] Joan Taylor writes that the "Essenes according to Philo of Alexandria reside in communes, own no individual property shared all monetary income in a common fund."[115] In other work investigating the role of the *Mikvah* in Qumran, Joan Taylor explains that the Essenes were recognised as a legitimate group among the Jews before the fall of the Temple.[116] Alison Schofield and James C. Vanderkam suggest that the Dead Sea Scrolls are from the pre-Hellenist Zadokite priesthood.[117]

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[113] See Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 39, for a discussion of the authorship of the Dead Sea Scrolls. For a discussion of the Essenes and sectarians in Qumran, see Florentino García Martínez and Wilfred G. E Watson, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). A difference exists, separating the Essenes and the sectarians that settled at Qumran. See Erik W. Larson, "Dead Sea Scrolls," *Salem Press Encyclopedia*, 2020.

[114] Joan E. Taylor, *The Essenes, the Scrolls, and the Dead Sea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 195.; Sarit Anava et al., "Illuminating Genetic Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Cell* 181 (2020): 1218.

[115] Joan E. Taylor, *The Immerser* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmands, 1997), 16–17.

[116] Taylor, *The Essenes, the Scrolls, and the Dead Sea*, 195; Recent archaeology shows how a 2015 discovery in Ein Kerem, Jerusalem, Israel, found a 2000-year-old *mikvah* under the floor of the house. This site and discovery is interesting due to the placement of the *mikvah*, being it was once a home site that had a *mikvah* access. The function of the *mikvah* bath, although seen in the city areas and in excavations near synagogues, demonstrates how the religious practices of ritual purity extended into the home and private lives of the areas in which people lived. This city is attributed to the birth of John the Baptist. See, Megan Sauter, *Secret Mikveh Discovered Under a Living Room Floor*, [online] Biblical Archaeology Society, 2015, Available at: <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/news/secret-mikveh-discovered-under-a-living-room-floor/>. For scholarship about the Essenes as seen by Josephus' writing as historical accuracy, see David S. Willams, "Josephus and the Authorship of War 2. 119-161 (On the Essenes)," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 25 (1994): 207–12; Kenneth Atkinson, "Josephus the Essene at Qumran?: An Example of the Intersection of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Archaeological Evidence in Light of Josephus's Writing," *Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia* 10 (2012): 7–35.

[117] Alison Schofield and James C. Vanderkam, "Were the Hasmoneans Zadokites?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124 (2005): 73. See also George J. Brooke, "Dead Sea Scrolls Scholarship in Oxford: Past, Present and Future," *Revue de Qumran* 32 (2020): 177–93; George J Brooke, "Dead Sea Scrolls Scholarship in Oxford: Past, Present and Future," *Revue de Qumran* 32 (2020): 177–93. Scholarship varies with the concept regarding the Zadokites present before moving to Qumran or did the Zadokite priests move after the community was established. Frevel suggests that ritual in early Judaism was evident in the practices of the Essenes. See Christian Frevel, "The Texture of Rituals in the Book of Numbers: A Fresh Approach to Ritual Density, the Role of Tradition and the Emergence of Diversity in Early Judaism" (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 317–38. Vermes suggests that the Zadokite priests moved to Qumran after the temple in Leontopolis and the

Not knowing the authorship does not diminish the fact that the scrolls help shed light on Jesus's era.[118] The scrolls show diversity of thought and theology.[119] Jassen believes that the sectarianism of the community "was formed as the result of disagreements over the ritual and cultic maintenance of the Temple, which compelled the community to withdraw from the centre of Jewish life in Jerusalem."[120] The Qumran community opposed corruption in the Jerusalem Temple introduced by the Hellenised Hasmoneans and Zadokites.[121] Disagreements about Temple sacrifice in Jerusalem ultimately spurred the group to move out of Jerusalem, later forming the Qumran community.[122] The Qumran community separated from the Jerusalem community in order to maintain a priesthood that was ritually pure and which would preserve the world, unlike the compromised Sadducean priesthood during the time of Jesus.[123] Jassen contends that the violent encounters were never documented in the

migration is second century BCE, *see* G. Vermes, "The Leadership of the Qumran Community: Sons of Zadok-Priests-Congregation," *GeschichteTradition-Reflexion. Festschrift für Martin Hengel zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. H., Cancik, H. Lichtenberger, and P. Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 1.375–84. This is confirmed by Metso who examined 4Qs and places it earlier in the scroll's development, see S. Metso, *The Textual Development of the Qumran Community Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) and F. M. Cross, Jr., "The Early History of the Qumran Community," *New Directions in Biblical Archeology*, ed. D. Freedman and J. Greenfield (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1971), 70. This is contrary to the views of Baumgarten, see, A.I. Baumgarten, "Who were the Sadducees? The Sadducees of Jerusalem and Qumran," *The Jews in the Hellenistic Roman World: Studies in Memory of Menahem Stern*, ed. I. Gafni, A. Oppenheimer and D. Schwartz (Jerusalem: Historical Society of Israel, 1996), 393–412.

[118] Eisenman and Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered,* 75.

[119] Eisenman and Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered,* 75; Maxine L. Grossman, "Community Rule or Community Rules: Examining a Supplementary Approach in Light of the Sectarian Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism*, (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 303-30.

[120] Alex Jassen, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Violence: Sectarian Formation and Eschatological Imagination," *Biblical Interpretation* (2009): 13; Jonas Machado, "Qumran e as Identidades Plurais No Judaísmo Antigo," *Estudos de Religião* 34 (2020): 105–29.

[121] Bruce McComiskey, "Laws, Works, and the End of Days: Rhetorics of Identification, Distinction, and Persuasion in Dead Sea Scroll 4QMMT," *Rhetoric Review* 29 (2010): 225.

[122] For more information on the early hypothesis about the Qumran-Essene community that originated after the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls see Eleazar Lipa Sukenik, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls of The Hebrew University* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press of the Hebrew University, 1955). Josephus identifies the Essenes in *The Life; Against Apion*, 10–12; BJ 1.78–80, 2.113, 2.119–61, 2.56, 3.11, 5.145; AJ 13.171–72, 15.371–79, 18.18–22.

Qumran community. However, those outside the Qumran community were considered to be "sons of darkness".[124] Those who were not members of the community were fated for destruction. Schofield and Vanderkam believe that the Qumran community was directly opposed to the Hasmonean high priests, believed to be the *Wicked Priest*.[125] This differs from Eshel Hanan, who concludes that the *Wicked Priest* is Jonathan the Hasmonean (152 BCE to 143 BCE).[126] The Qumranites remained separate from the Hasmoneans and sought the reform of the Temple's system. Taylor cautions to not jump to automatic conclusions regarding the Essenes as pacifist or vegetarian.[127]

In the Qumran ideology violence was regarded as something to be avoided. Jassen states that violence did not exist in the community and was only part of the eschatological literature that foresaw a final battle.[128] Punishment would happen at the *eschaton*. Tukasi identifies a later date for an eschatological determinism in the Qumran writings from 1QS

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[123] McComiskey, 223; George J Brooke, "Patterns of Priesthood, Priestliness and Priestly Functions in Some Second Temple Period Texts," *Judaïsme Ancien* 4 (2016): 1–21; A. Sgonnova, "Messiah, King, Prophet: Priestly Ideology in the Jewish War by Josephus Flavius and in Intertestamental Literature," *Vestnik Pravoslavnogo Sviato-Tikhonovskogo Gumanitarnogo Universiteta, Seria I. Bogoslovie, Filosofia, Religiovedenie,* (2019): 105–18.

[124] Jassen, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Violence: Sectarian Formation and Eschatological Imagination," *Biblical Interpretation* 17 (2009): 12.

[125] Schofield and Vanderkam, "Were the Hasmoneans Zadokites," 80. This is supported by Regev in that Qumranmic literature departs from Sadducean halakha, see Eyal Regev, "Were All Priests the Same? Qumranic Halakhah in Comparison with Sadducean Halakhah," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 12 (2005): 158–88.

[126] Eshel Hanan, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hasmonean State* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 42. The identity of the Wicked Priest as Jonathan is supported by Hans Burgmann. See Hans Burgmann, "Who Was the 'Wicked Priest," *Folia Orientalia* 25 (1988): 41–44.

[127] Taylor, *The Essenes, the Scrolls, and the Dead Sea*, 341. See also Spencer Harrington, "Vegetarian Essenes," *Archaeology* 52 (1999): 30.

[128] Jassen, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Violence," 9. Scholarship indicates that it is premature to confirm that pacifism was part of the community of Essenes based on Philo and Eusebius, see Cecil Roth, "Qumran and Masadah: A Final Clarification Regarding the Dead Sea Sect," *Revue de Qumrân* 5 (1964): 81–87. Batsch suggests that the Dead Sea sect did indeed relate to the Jewish people but that Serek hayyaḥad (Rule of the Community [1QS]) from cave 1 does not reflect pacifism that erroneously was developed from Philo and Eusebius, see Christophe Batsch, "Le `pacifisme Des Esséniens': Un Mythe Historiographique," *Revue de Qumran* 21 (2004): 457–61.

4:18–19.[129] According to the text, God destroys injustice and replaces it with peace and righteousness. Nonviolence was supported because they were not the ones who would bring justice, that would be the work of God at an *eschaton.* The community might have expected a violent end to the world, but they did not advocate aggressive behaviour nor contribute to a violent society.

Early in Essene scholarship, both Jewish and Christian scholars believed that the Essenes influenced the development of the early Christian church. One such example of this scholarship was Heinrich Graetz (1870) who, according to Elukin, contended that Jesus utilised "Essene principles" ("essaische Grundsatze") and was "a member of the Jewish sect of the Essenes." Elukin further contends that Jesus did not want to create a new religious movement that became Christianity but to improve or reform the problems of Judaism during Jesus's life.[130] Timothy Wardle explains that "Jesus and John the Baptist have commonalities with the Qumran community."[131] Jesus and John the Baptist shared similar views on full baptism by immersion that was similar to the Essene method of full immersion, that it was required for conversion to Judaism and ritual purity[132] This is supported by Jewish theologian Kaufman Kohler.[133] Just as the Essenes looked for a messianic figure, John the Baptist and

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[129] Emmanuel O. Tukasi, *Determinism and Petitionary Prayer in John and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 34.

[130] Donald A. Hagner, *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus: An Analysis and Critique of Modern Jewish Study of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Académie Books, 1984), 62; See Heinrich Hirsch Graetz, *History of the Je*ws *to the Completion of the Babylonian Talmud* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1893).

[131] Timothy Wardle, "Jesus and the Temple: The Crucifixion in its Jewish Context," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 60 (2017): 409–11.

[132] See Jonathan M. Elukin, "A New Essenism: Heinrich Graetz and Mysticism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59 (1998): 135–48; Joel Marcus, "John the Baptist in History and Theology: A Summary," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 19 (2021): 3–7.

[133] Kaufmann Kohler, *The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1929).

Jesus spoke of these a messianic age, just as the Essenes did.[134] Jesus was "an earnest, gentle, moral figure who emerged within the Essene community."[135] Elukin suggests that "he was drawn to the Essenes, and the people of Galilee were drawn to his Essene teachings."[136] The concept of having a messiah figure in the Essene community fits into their expectation of *mashiachim.* The *mashiachim* therefore would fit into the eschatology of the Qumranites because the *mashiachim* would witness not only the destruction of the Roman oppressors, but a final war.[137] This would fit both Jesus and other messianic figures.

Other Jewish apocalyptic views were similar to those of the Qumran community, even though they are not from the community's library. There is an exchange between good and evil in 2 Enoch as the patriarch Enoch goes to heaven; however, 2 Enoch does not share the similar views of *mashiach* as found in post-Jesus literature such as Revelation.[138] 2 Enoch has many similarities to the book of Revelation.[139] Other literature such as The Book of Jubilees has quite a different feel about it compared with 1 or 2 Enoch or Revelation. Talmon suggests that Jubilees is an example of peace literature prevalent before Jesus.[140]

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[134] Donald A. Hagner, *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus*, 150; Patrick Madigan, "Jesus, the Essenes, and Christian Origins: New Light on Ancient Texts and Communities," *Heythrop Journal* 61 (2020): 1028–29.

[135] Jonathan M. Elukin, "A New Essenism: Heinrich Graetz and Mysticism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59 (1998): 135–48. See also Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jews* (South Brunswick: T. Yoseloft; 1967–73); Simon J. Joseph, *Jesus, the Essenes, and Christian Origins: New Light on Ancient Texts and Communities* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018).

[136] Elukin, "A New Essenism: Heinrich Graetz and Mysticism," 137; Eben Scheffler, "Putting Qumran, Jesus and His Movement into Relief," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72 (2016): 1–10.

[137] Jassen, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Violence," 13; Pieter B Hartog, "The Qumran Pesharim and Targum Jonathan to the Prophets: Rethinking Their Relationship," *Aramaic Studies* 19 (2021): 25–40.

[138] Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C Allison and John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus In Context*; Mirosław Stanisław Wróbel, "The Eschatological Spirituality of 'the Sons of Light' in Qumran," *Verbum Vitae* 37 (2020): 347–63.

[139] Jassen, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Violence," 13; Rivka Ulmer, "Apocalypticism in the Homiletic Text of Pesiqta Rabbati: Catastrophic Events at the End of Time," *Journal for the Study of Judaism: In the Persian Hellenistic & Roman Period* 50 (2019): 101–39.

Even in the Scrolls, the images of what a messianic figure represents is varied. They may represent different views from different authors or different communities. The messianic leader from Aaron's lineage is identified in 1QS 2:19–22. The messianic leader from the Davidic line is identified in Psalms 132:11.[141] One messianic figure that was anticipated by the Jews during the time of Jesus was a משיח who brings spiritual renewal, is born from the lineage of Aaron, would usher in worldwide peace.[142] There is thus some similarity between the peace sayings found in the Sermon and the expectations of a messianic figure from the lineage of Aaron. Talmon contends that because there were various views of a messianic figure in circulation, individuals among those listening to Jesus may have looked for different qualities.[143]

The earliest Christians were keenly aware that the *parousia* (second coming) was delayed.[144] The scroll 4Q246 refers to an eternal kingdom initiated as a result of the *parousia*.[145] We have only a small piece of the document to examine; however, it discusses how the messianic era will establish peace.[146] Column ii of 4Q246 paints the following picture:

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[140] Talmon, "Waiting for the Messiah," 111; Atar Livneh, "'Love Your Fellow as Yourself': The Interpretation of Leviticus 19:17-18 in the Book of Jubilees," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 18 (2011): 173–99.

[141] Geza Vermes, *The Real Jesus* (London: SCM, 2009), 129.

[142] Talmon, "Waiting for the Messiah," 111; The vision of an anointed king in Hebrew is משיח and the Greek it is *Christos*. For information about the Messiah of Aaron lineage, see Dong-Hyuk Kim, "'The Messiah of Aaron and Israel': Do We See Single or Double?" 24 (2018): 190–213.

[143] Talmon, "Waiting for the Messiah," 195.

[144] Wayne Baxter, "From Good News Tt Gospels: What Did the First Christians Say About Jesus," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 62 (2019): 400–4.

[145] Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*,1045; André Caquot, "Deux Textes Messianiques de Qumrân," *Revue d'histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 79 (1999): 155–71.

[146] T. C. Vriezen and A. S. van der Woude, *Ancient Israelite and Early Jewish Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 689; Bill Loader, "The New Dead Sea Scrolls: New Light on Messianism & the History of the Community," *Colloquium* 25 (1993): 67–85.

> 1 He will be called son of God, and they will call him son of the Most High. Like the sparks 2 that you saw, so will their kingdom be; they will rule several year[s] over 3 the earth and crush everything; a people will crush another people, and a province another provi[n]ce. 4 Blank Until the people of God arises and makes everyone rest from the sword. Blank 5 His kingdom will be an eternal kingdom, and all his paths in truth. He will jud[ge] 6 the earth in truth and all will make peace. The sword will cease from the earth, 7 and all the provinces will pay him homage. The great God is his strength, 8 he will wage war for him; he will place the peoples in his hand and 9 cast them all away before him. His rule will be an eternal rule, and all the abysses.[147]

The document 4Q246 sheds light on the expectations of the messianic era prevalent just before the Sermon was delivered. Andrew Lawler contends that the view of the messiah in the scrolls helps the modern person understand more clearly the state of Judaism during the time of Jesus.[148] Since the Essenes lived in what is now known as the Essene Quarter and in Qumran, these scrolls help illuminate the state of messianic expectations for the listener of the Sermon, from the Qumran Community, if they were at the Sermon on the Mount. However, it is doubtful that the Sermon on the Mount was preached in either Qumran or Jerusalem. According to Matthew, Jesus had been in Galilee prior to delivering this address and the next place he entered afterwards was Capernaum, also in Galilee.

3.3 Repentance

Understanding repentance in the minds of Jesus's audience helps to understand the influence the concept of repentance had on the development of Jesus's peace sayings.[149]

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[147] Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 1045.

[148] Andrew Lawler, "Who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls," *The Smithsonian*, January 2010: 40–47.

[149] E. P. Sanders argues that repentance taught by Jesus focused on the distinction between moral repentance and ritual repentance. The use of the *mikvah* is a ritual function of repentance while the change of a character is a moral repentance. For more scholarship see Geoffrey Scarre, "Political Reconciliation, Forgiveness and Grace," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 24 (2011): 171–82; James P. Danaher, "Out of Context: The Gospel According to Jesus," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 35 (2011): 265–75; E. P. Sanders, "Jesus and the Sinners," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament 19* (1983): 5–36; E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985), 174–211; E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), 226–37. Alan J. Torrance, "Forgiveness and Christian Character: Reconciliation, Exemplarism and the Shape of Moral Theology," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 30 (2017): 293–313. N. H. Young suggests that this does not

Jewish ethical and political thought at Jesus's time was connected to *Mishna Avot* through the understanding of the definition of repentance within the Dead Sea Scroll community. The concept of repentance runs deep in Jewish intellectual thought, which is why the *mikvah* baths were in Jerusalem and Qumran, dating from before the time of Jesus. In this dissertation there is no attempt to define fully repentance in Judaism; this has been done in other works and studies.[150] Being ritually clean not only comes from an immersion in a ritual bath, but from the acknowledgment of the sin and an endeavour to eradicate the sinful behaviour from one's actions. Understanding the idea of repentance in the community that used the Dead Sea Scrolls provides insight into how the communities surrounding Jesus interpreted his sayings from the Old Testament.

Repentance plays a role in the way in which people viewed God, and how they treated other people. The people of Qumran had *mikveh* baths in their community. These were for ritual bathing as part of spiritual cleansing and repentance.[151] These large number of water immersion pools reflect that they are not for personal hygiene. The plurality of baths suggest that they are for holy purposes in accord with the people's religious beliefs.[152] According to

change the need in the Protestant tradition to have repentance then forgiveness of sins in that order, see, N. H. Young, '"Jesus and the Sinners," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 24 (1985): 73–5. There is much scholarship on the views of repentance and forgiveness of sin that far exceeds the scope of this dissertation.

[150] For a discussion of Jewish repentance theology from the medieval period, see Elisheva Baumgarten, "Appropriation and Differentiation: Jewish Identity in Medieval Ashkenaz," *Association of Jewish Studies Review* 42 (2018): 39–63.

[151] It is worth noting that the role of animal sacrifices in the Temple is far beyond the scope of this dissertation. The atonement of sin through blood sacrifice is not explored here; however, the change of character in terms of repentance and ritual purity is discussed.

[152] Frederick F. Bruce and Stephen Pfann, "Qumran," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 16, 2nd edition (Jerusalem: Keter, 2007), 770; Jonathan Klawans, "Washing in Water: Trajectories of Ritual Bathing in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 127 (2007): 551–52; Boaz Zissu and Amir Ganor, "Horvat 'Ethri—A Jewish Village from the Second Temple Period and the Bar Kokhba Revolt in the Judean Foothills," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 60 (2009): 90–136; Yonatan Adler, "Second Temple Period Ritual Baths Adjacent to Agricultural Installations: The Archaeological Evidence in Light of the Halakhic Sources," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 59 (2008): 62–72.

Arnost Zvi Ehrman, "*mikva'ot* can be interpreted to mean ritual baths."[153] Ritual immersion fundamentally must have a "total immersion of the body in a ritual bath (*mikveh*) or flowing river water."[154] The people of the community saw repentance and change as part of their cultural fabric as recorded in The Community Rule scroll (1QS III:6–9):

> For it is through the spirit of true counsel concerning the ways of man that all his sins shall be expiated, that he may contemplate the light of life. He shall be cleansed from all his sins by the spirit of holiness uniting him to His truth, and his iniquity shall be expiated by the spirit of uprightness and humility. And when his flesh is sprinkled with purifying water and sanctified by cleansing water, it shall be made clean by the humble submission of his soul to all precepts of God.[155]

1QS III:6–9 clearly introduced a concept of cleansing. This concept was used in connection with water as well as a special cleansing of the soul. The early holiness texts are part of the community who used the ritual baths. Markus Bockmuehl furthers contends that there are many different texts found in Qumran that focus on a 'call to repentance' for Israel:

> Early Essene texts, including parts of the Damascus Document (e.g., CD 1:1—4, 16:1–2), the War Scroll (e.g., 1 QM 10:9–10; 12:13–14; 13:7–9; 17:8) and certain non-sectarian liturgical documents (e.g., 4 QDibHam3 3:l–2.iii.3–l–2.iv.l2 4QPrQuot 21–28.vii8f.; 4QPrFetes 97–98.i.5–7) seem to take for granted a universal call to repentance as well as the election and eventual salvation of ethnic Israel as the holy covenantal people of God.[156]

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[153] Arnost Zvi Ehrman, "*Mikva'ot,"* in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 14 (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 2007), 224.

[154] According to *New Brown Driver Briggs Gesenius Hebrew English Lexicon* (BDB), mikveh (מִקְוֶה) is the Hebrew word the meaning "to gather." See Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. Briggs, "מִקְוֶה," The New Brown Driver Briggs Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1979), 876. Adler suggests that textual and archaeological evidence suggest that immersion emerged during the first century BCE from the Hellenistic hip bath, see Yonatan Adler, "The Hellenistic Origins of Jewish Ritual Immersion," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 69 (2018): 1–21.

[155] Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 101.

[156] Markus Bockmuehl, "IQ S and Salvation at Qumran," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism: Vol. 1, The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism. Eds.* D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 388–89. This is supported by Bilhah Nitzan. *"The 'Repentance' in the Dead Sea Scrolls / יהודה מדבר במגילות 'תשובה',"* Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies / *דברי הקונגרס העולמי למדעי היהדות יב* (1997): 175–83.

For the Essene community, the actions taken for repentance included immersion. The Essenes held strong views on repentance. They believed that repentance and righteousness must be together in order to have made the immersion effective. Melgar suggests that the writings of 1QM demonstrate how the liturgies are part of a warrior who is preparing for battle:

> 1QM 10 begins a set of liturgies that are a transition point between the War of Divisions (1QM 2–9) and the War against the Kittim (1QM 15–19). 1QM 10 contains two distinct pieces: lines 1–8a include a priestly speech to encourage the warriors prior to the war, and lines 8b–18 consist of a song that celebrates God and Israel as the chosen people.

These forms of celebration are done with songs and speeches within 1QM writings. It is further explained how cleansing is done with ritual water cleansing. In the Community Scroll it is stated (IQS V:13–15):

> They shall not enter the water to partake of the pure meal of the men of holiness, for they shall not be cleansed unless they turn from their wickedness: for all who transgress His word are unclean.[157]

Wickedness and cleansing are intrinsically connected. Those listening to the Sermon were aware of the community of people, such as those following John the Baptist, that were calling for repentance and cleansing through water. It can be safely assumed that the baptism at Qumran, like the baptism of John, was not for initiation purposes.[158] The type of cleansing related to the water immersion is thus related to the heart's repentance.[159] Joan E. Taylor observes:

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[157] Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin, 2004), 101.

[158] William Sanford LaSor, *Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 271; Joel Marcus, "Response to the Respondents: Competition, Qumran and Supersessionism," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 19 (2021): 99–133.

[159] J. G. Crossley contends that when Jesus and John the Baptist called for repentance that it was תשוכה meaning passion with a moral sense to cease doing a sin. The result is a call to follow the Torah. J. G. Crossley, "The Semitic Background to Repentance in the Teaching of John the Baptist and Jesus," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 2 (2004), 138–57. This is also in in the DSS *Rule of the Community* in 1QS 5.1, 14 and 6.15 and carries the moral element of doing what is right and following the ethical principles of the Bible. It can

> The point of correlation between John's baptism and the initial immersion at Qumran is probably not these constituted initiation rites, but the idea that immersion is pointless without prior cleansing of the heart (the inner self) through the repentance and the practice of righteousness.[160]

The Qumran community and the Dead Sea Scrolls illuminate the need for a person's change both through action and intent. The inner changes were exemplified in the lifestyle led by those in the community.[161]

The views of repentance in the Pseudepigrapha are evident during the Second Temple period. As discussed, 1 Enoch has expectations of messianic deliverance.[162] There is an overlapping of time between the authorships of the Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament.[163] Pseudepigraphal writings can illuminate the thinking of the Jewish people who listened to the Sermon. David DeSilva also contends that Ben Sira and Tobit influenced how Jesus delivered a message of peace and love.[164] DeSilva believes that the nonviolence

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be noted that Philo describes repentance as keeping the law and returning to monotheism, see, P. Borgen, Philo, John and Paul: New Perspectives on Judaism and Early Christianity (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987); E. Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1996), 203.

[160] Joan E. Taylor, "John the Baptist and the Essenes," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 47 (1996): 278.

[161] It can be accepted that not all people listening to the Sermon on the Mount held the common view of repentance. It can be assumed that not all people in Qumran had the same views over the time of residence. For more information on how the view of repentance changed from Judaism to Christianity, see, D. A. Lambert, 'Topics in the History of Repentance: From the Hebrew Bible to Early Judaism and Christianity' (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2004), 99–146; Hayah Katz, "'He Shall Bathe in Water; Then He Shall Be Pure': Ancient Immersion Practice in the Light of Archaeological Evidence," *Vetus Testamentum* 62 (2012): 369–80; David A Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[162] 1 En 71:14 identifies the Son of Man as Enoch, which confirms that the Parables of Enoch originated among Jews, not Christians. It would be impossible for a Christian to identify Enoch as the Son of Man.

[163] See Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 171; Simon David Butticaz, "The Construction of Apostolic Memories in the Light of Two New Testament Pseudepigrapha (2 Tm and 2 Pt)," *Annali Di Storia Dell'Esegesi* 33 (2016): 341–63.

[164] David A. DeSilva, *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 12. Ben Sira 1:18 (NRSA) "The fear of the Lord is the crown of wisdom, making peace and perfect health to flourish." Tobit 13:10 (NRSA) "Acknowledge the Lord, for he is good, and bless the King of the ages, so that his tent may be rebuilt in you in joy. May he cheer all those within you who are captives, and love all those within you who are distressed, to all generations forever."

teachings in Matthew 5:38–42 connect with Tobit.[165] There are more connections between Tobit and the sayings of Jesus in regard to the authority of Torah in one's life.[166]

There are other writings and ideas that may have influenced Jesus. Shifmann suggests that the Book of Jubilees contains valuable historical insights.[167] The book of Jubilees may have had many translations that have altered it after a Hebrew writing origin. VanderKam suggests that the first translation was into Greek and Syriac. It subsequently was translated from the Greek into Latin for the later Christian church as well as Ethiopic.[168] Vanderkam contends that the translation remains reliable.[169] Schiffman states that it is "possible that the work was written shortly before the Maccabean revolt of 167–164 BCE. It is nevertheless to be dated no later than 140 BCE."[170] Those who were listening to Jesus were likely familiar with the ideas in Jubilees, either from reading it or through oral tradition. The Book of Jubilees provides a historical and cultural context to reading the peace and ethical statements in the Sermon. In Jubilees it is asserted that the Kingdom of Peace extinguishes evil:

> Reference to the death of the patriarch provided the author with the opportunity to offer a minor apocalypse in chapter 23 in which the history of the people of Israel from Abraham to the Maccabean period is treated, a period that, according to the author, is to be followed by the eschatological kingdom of peace in which evil shall no longer be found.[171]

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[165] DeSilva, *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude*, 12. See also Fabian Tilling, "'It Is Right to Keep the Secret of a King' (Tobit 12:7)—the King's Secret as a Metaphor for the Mysterium Dei in Origen," *Journal of Ancient Christianity* 23 (2019): 101–13.

[166] Ibid., 70. See also Loren T Stuckenbruck, "Melchizedek in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 41, (2018): 124–38.

[167] Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem*, 392.

[168] James C Vanderkam, *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (Missoula: Scholars, 1977). See also Matthew Phillip Monger, "4Q216 and the State of Jubilees at Qumran," *Revue de Qumran* 26 (2014): 595–612; Ibid, "4Q216--A New Material Analysis," *Semitica* 60 (2018): 309–33.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Schiffman, *Qumran and Jerusalem*, 392. See also Lindsey A. Askin, "A Contradictory Text: Authorship, Redaction, and Interpolation in Jubilees," *Biblische Notizen* 175 (2017): 15–33.

[171] T. C. Vriezen and A. S. van der Woude, *Ancient Israelite and Early Jewish Literature*, 579.

Thus, it is evident that many in the Maccabean period looked forward to a Kingdom of Peace. The authors of the Book of Jubilees may not have had a belief in an afterlife. Vriezen and van der Woude point out that Jubilees does not have a concept of a resurrection of the dead and does not embrace the messianic figure.[172] The readers of the Book of Jubilees would have anticipated a Kingdom of Peace but not embraced the idea of a messiah.

3.4 משיח and Peace in the Hebrew Bible

This section explores the role of משיח *(mashiach* or messiah) in the Hebrew Bible, and what it implies about non-violence. In many of these texts, non-violence was used primarily as a strategy for self-preservation in the light of oppressive governments.[173] The expectation of a משיח being more peaceful in nature was evident in the writings of the day of Jesus. The biblical model of a משיח and a peaceful kingdom is reflected in the idea of peace evident in the *Mishna Avot*. Given the likelihood that at least some of the original audience of the sayings found in Matthew 5 had some expectations of a משיח figure, it is appropriate to explore the roles of peace and violence from the perspective of a משיח to discover what these expectations might be, and how they might influence Jesus's audience's understanding of what Jesus said.

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[172] Ibid.

[173] By the time of Jesus, there were failed attempts at a political overthrow through a משיח of occupying and ruling kingdoms over the Jewish nation led to a shift in the role that a משיח would liberate people. Therefore, the justice, peace, and union with God which fills the Hebrew scriptures was an accurate view at the time of Jesus according to L'Heureux. See Conrad L'Heureux, "Understanding the Old Testament Prophecies," *Bible Today* 23 (1985): 51–59. See also Mitchell for a discussion of the connection to messiah, the Hebrew Bible, and pseudepigrapha: David C. Mitchell, "Firstborn Shor and Rem: A Sacrificial Josephite Messiah in 1 Enoch 90.37-38 and Deuteronomy 33.17," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 15 (2006): 211–28.

The Hebrew word משיח means "anointed one." There were both Jewish kings and pagan kings who are referred to as "anointed one" during the biblical era.[174] Furthermore, in the Hebrew Bible references to a משיח, the referenced person is not necessarily a king but could be a priest or a prophet.[175] Indeed, the Hebrew word משיח is seldom used in an eschatological sense in the Hebrew Scriptures. According to Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, after the beginning of Babylonian exile in 586/587 BCE, people did not seek out a messianic figure.[176] During the time of Jesus, there was a resurgence of the messianic ideology because of Roman oppression.[177] According to Boyarin, many in Jesus's Jewish audience would have believed that world peace could be introduced by a messianic figure.[178]

Two typologies of the משיח lineage would have been available to those listening to the Sermon: one from the House of Aaron, the other from the House of David. Daniel Boyarin suggests that the House of Aaron was understood to bring a messianic figure who will change and restore the priestly line through a spiritually restored High Priest.[179] Eisenman and Wise suggest that a messianic figure from the line of David will be militaristic in nature, speaking

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[174] For example the Jewish kings: Saul (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1; 15:1, 17); David (1 Sam 16:3, 12–13; 2 Sam 2:4, 7; 3:39); Solomon (1 Kgs 1:34, 39, 45); Jehu (1 Kgs 19:16; 2 Kgs 9:3, 6, 12; 2 Chr 22:7); Joash (2 Kgs 11:12; 2 Chr 23:11); Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 23:30); Zedekiah (Lam 4:20); generic Jewish monarchs: Ps 2:2; 18:51; 20:7; 28:8; 84:10; 89:39, 52; 132:10, 17; and Cyrus, king of Persia, Isa. 45:1.

[175] See the following Priests: Lev 4:3, 5, 16; 6:15. Prophets: 1 Chr 16:22; Ps 105:15.

[176] Adela Yarbro Collins and John Joseph Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); It can be evident with the development of later books such as 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Ben Sira, that the imagery of a messianic figure diminished as well as the eschatology for salvation.

[177] Peter Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World* (London: Routledge, 2006), 124; Mehdi Estakhr, "The Journey of the Magi: Its Religious and Political Context," *World History Bulletin* 32 2016): 24–31.

[178] Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels* (New York: The New Press, 2012), 72. For messianic texts for peace, see Isa 11:1–9, Isa 42:1–4, and Isa 53. See also Peter J Judge, "Violence and Nonviolence in the Sermon on the Mount: Jesus' Call for Attitude Adjustment," *The Bible Today* 55 (2017): 13–19.

[179] Daniel Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels* (New York: The New Press, 2012), 72.

of war more than peace.[180] In the *Aggadic Midrash Pesikta Rabbati*, this second type of Jewish messianic figure is said to find its origin in Ephraim, the son of Joseph, who was adopted by Jacob (Gen 48:5).[181] It is worth noting that the *Psalms of Solomon* is the earliest literature outside of the Hebrew Scriptures to look for a militant Davidic messiah figure.[182] There are other Jewish texts written after Pompey's conquest (63 BCE), which follow the militant imagery of the Psalms of Solomon. The militant imagery coupled with an image and a hope for a Davidic messiah provided the counterpart (and hope) to the Roman Pompey.[183]

It is the Davidic militant-style messiah that is linked with eschatological thinking in the 1st century.[184] The messiah that follows the Davidic line and who rules in a future day of

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[180] Robert H Eisenman and Michael Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1992), 17. This is also supported by Collins who suggests that the followers of Jesus and listeners to the Sermon expected more militance and less peace, see John Collins, *Jesus, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 100-19. See also Hermann Lichtenberger, *Messianic Expectations and Messianic Figures in the Second Temple Period* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 9-20; Shim'on Fogel, "Shimshon Ki-Meshiaḥ: Mabaṭ Nosaf," *Jewish Studies, an Internet Journal* 11 (2012): 11.

[181] Pesiq. Rab. 1:7; 1:9; 1:10; 1:12; 1:15; 1:17; 1:19; 1:20; 11:22; 13:3; 15:20; 15:25; 15:35; 15:36; 15:39; 21:2; 32:11; 33:33; 33:37; 34:3; 34:5; 34:7; 34:8; 35:8; 36:2; 36:3; 36:5; 36:8; 36:9; 37:3; 37:4; 37:5; 37:6; 51:14; 51:26. All citations refer to Rivka Ulmer, Pesiqta Rabbati: *A Synoptic Edition of Pesiqta Rabbati Based upon all Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and the Editio Princeps*, vol. 1 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1997); vol. 2 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1999); vol. 3 and index (Lanham: University Press of America, 2002; repr., 2009). For more scholarship on the Messiah in *Midrash Pesikta Rabbati*, see Messiah in Pesiq. Rab. including: Bernard J. Bamberger, "A Messianic Document of the Seventh Century," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 15 (1940): 425–31; Michael A. Fishbane, "Midrash and Messianism: Some Theologies of Suffering and Salvation," in *Toward the Millennium: Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 57–71; Arnold Goldberg, *Erlösung durch Leiden. Drei rabbinische Homilien über die Trauernden ¨ Zions und den leidenden Messias Efraim* (*Pesiqta Rabbati* 34.36.37) (FJSt 4; *Frankfurt am Main: Gesellschaft zur Förderung judaistischer Studien*, 1978); David G. Mitchell, "Messiah ben Joseph: A Sacrifice of Atonement for Israel," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 10 (2007), 77–94; Rothstein, David, "Cultic Offerings of Foreigners: The Exegetical Logic Informing Pesiqta Rabbati's 'Exclusivist' Interpretation of Lev 22:17-25 and Related Biblical Passages," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 62 (2018): 100–16.

[182] Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); see Song of Solomon 3:8.

[183] Kenneth Atkinson, "Responses," in *The Psalms of Solomon: Language History, Theology*, edited by Eberhard Bons and Patrick Pouchelle. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 175–91; Lee Martin McDonald, "Non-*Canonical" Religious Texts in Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 73–87.

[184] For scholarship regarding messianism in the first century, Nathan C Johnson, "The Passion According to David: Matthew's Arrest Narrative, the Absalom Revolt, and Militant Messianism," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 80 (2018): 247–72; Kenneth Atkinson, "The Militant Davidic Messiah and Violence against Rome: The Influence of Pompey on the Development of Jewish and Christian Messianism," *Scripta Judaica*

the Lord was expected to accomplish the restoration envisaged in Isaiah 11:6–9.[185] Novenson appropriately distinguishes between the royal ideologies in the Hebrew Bible and the various messianic aspirations.[186] Novenson demonstrates that the messianic language used in the literature coincides with the discussion of kings. The literature looks to a figure who will save, protect, and be God's representative of peace.

3.5 The Qumran Writings Envisage Two Messiahs

The writings at Qumran appear to envisage two messianic figures. One messianic figure is from the lineage of Aaron and the second messianic figure is from the lineage of David. As James VanderKam says:

> The more prominent messiah is the priestly one—the messiah of Aaron. The second and apparently lower ranking messiah is the lay one—the messiah of Israel. Precisely what the [Qumran] messiahs would do, other than officiate at the messianic banquet, is not clear.[187]

The idea of two messiahs is found primarily in the Manual of Discipline (IQS) and the Damascus Covenant (CD).[188] The premise of a two-messiah theory rests on the notion that there is a dual priestly and royal leadership model in such examples such as Moses and Aaron

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Cracoviensia 9 (2011): 7–19; John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 121–23; William Horbury, *Messianism among Jews and Christians: Twelve Biblical and Historical Studies* (London: T&T Clark, 2003); James W. Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and Synagogue: A Study of the Origins of Antisemitism* (New York: Hermon, 1974), 22–25.

[185] See a discussion of Targum dating and relevance to the Davidic line in Martin McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible; A Light on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 310–14. For more on the Greek usage in Targum in regards to dating, see Richard C. Steiner, "On the Use of Greek Translations in Dating the Shift from Targum Proto-Jonathan to Targum Yerushalmi in Ezekiel," *Textus: Annual of the Hebrew University Bible Project* 28 (2019): 145–56.

[186] Matthew V. Novenson, *Christ among the Messiahs: Christ Language in Paul and Messiah Language in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[187] James C. VanderKam, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christianity," in *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Random House, 1992), 196.

[188] The Community Rule (1QS) (S*erekh ha-Yahad)* was one of the first scrolls to be found near Qumran. For more discussion of CD and 1QS, see Kengo Akiyama,"Reproof in CD 9:2-8 and 1QS 5:24-6:1: A Note on a Curious Omission," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 24 (2017): 301–6.

in the Pentateuch, the king and high priest within the monarchy before the exile, and Joshua and the High Priest in Zechariah 4:14. For example, 4Q266, which is dated from the first century CE, suggests that there are two distinct messiahs: a Teacher of Righteousness and a convert, Zadok.[189]

There is discussion of a משיח in the literature that serves as commentaries to Isaiah and Habakkuk. A further discussion of a משיח occurs in the Qumran commentaries called *pesharim.*[190] The *pesharim* on Isaiah, Zechariah, Psalms and compendiums of messianic proof texts provide a two-level meaning for interpretation. These two levels of learning include a deeper spiritual meaning and a plain reading.[191] Having a deeper spiritual understanding and a literal understanding allows for broader reading of the text.

Jewish scholars such as Moshe Reiss suggest that a משיח in the Jewish tradition extends back to Isaiah 44:23–28.[192] Developing a definition of משיח in Isaiah provides a

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[189] Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint, "Introduction," in *Eschatology, Messianism and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature*, edited by Craig A. Evand and Peter W. Flint (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 1–9.

[190] Examples of *pesharim* found in Qumran Cave 1 are Micah and Habakkuk with 1Q14, Zephaniah with 1Q15 and Psalms with 1Q16. For further studies on the connections of Micah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah with the scrolls, see, J. H. Charlesworth, *The Pesharim and Qumran History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 5–6.

[191] It is worth noting that 4Q171 Fragment 1is the Qumran *pesharim* found at Qumran that details a messianic salvation while Pesher Isaiah and Pesher Habakkuk as well as the War Scroll address a more apocalyptic view of a messianic figure. The different *Pesharim* offer different focuses. For example, continuous *pesharim* are 1QpHab: (Habakkuk Pesher), 1Q14 (Pesher Micah), 4Q161–165: 4QpIsa a–e (Isaiah Pesher), 4Q166–167: 4QpHos a–b (Hosea Pesher), 4Q169: 4QpNah (Nahum Pesher), 4Q170: 4QpZeph (Zephaniah Pesher), 4Q171 & 173: 4QpPs a–b (Psalms Pesher), 4Q172 (Unidentified Pesher), 4Q247–4Q (Pesher on the Apocalypse of the Weeks). There are also many thematic *Pesharim* which are identified as 4Q252 (Genesis Pesher), 4Q174: 4Qflor (Eschatological Commentary A/Florilegium), 4Q177 (Eschatological Commentary B), and the use of 11Q13: 11QMelch (the Melchizedek Midrash) as apocalyptic. For more discussion, see David Katzin, "A Paradigm for Identifying the Use of Scriptural Allusion in Lemma-Based Exegesis Within the Qumran Library Using 4QpPs a (4Q171)," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 87 (2016): 61–92.

[192] Moshe Reiss, "Cyrus as Messiah," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 40 (2012), 159–162; See Oswald T. Allis, *The Unity of Isaiah: A Study in Prophecy* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1950), 55. See also supporting research, Moshe Reiss, "Cyrus as Messiah," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 40 (2012): 159–62. For further research on Isaiah and messianic prophecy, see Anthony Ferguson, "Isaiah 11 as Predictive Messianic Prophecy," *Presbyterion* 46 (2020): 75–89; Jeannine K. Brown, "Jesus Messiah as Isaiah's Servant of the Lord: New Testament Explorations," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63 (2020): 51–69.

foundational understanding of the role of a messiah. How משיח is viewed –either as a literal read or future messianic figure, allows for variable interpretations of what a משיח is. Becker further believes that Cyrus was the shepherd spoken of in Isaiah 44:28, which states, "who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose'; and who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be rebuilt,' and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'"[193] Becker notes that in the book of Chronicles, the author claims that earthly power was transferred to Cyrus and also that the Davidic royal throne was transferred to Cyrus (2 Chron 36:23 and Ezra 1:1–4).[194] Klaus Baltzer believes that Cyrus was given the status of the new David figure by the writers of Isaiah.[195] In early Judaism there was speculation about whether Cyrus the Great (600–530 BCE) was the messiah.[196] After the fall of the Temple, Rabbi Akiba was asked if he was the messiah and Bar Kokhba was asked if he was the awaited messiah.[197]

The understanding of משיח as a single person or dual person underwent changes, especially after the time of Jesus and after the fall of the Temple. By the time of Rabbinic Judaism, משיח was understood as a single person.[198] This view, however, must come to terms

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[193] Reiss, 159.

[194] Joachim Becker, *Messianic Expectation in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), 52–53.

[195] Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55, ed. by Peter Machinist.* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001).

[196] Reiss, "Cyrus as Messiah," 159. For further discussion on who Cyrus was and the role that Cyrus had on the Davidic messianic lineage, please see Antoon Schoors, *I Am God Your Saviour: A Form-Critical Study of the Main Genres in ls. XL–LV* (Leiden: Brill, 1973); Rheinhard G. Kratz, *Kyros im Deuterojesaja-Buch* (Tiibingen: Mohr, 1991); Peter D. Miscall, *Isaiah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 110; Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 2:414. The transition of the Cyrus image as a messianic figure occurred during the Second Isaiah period: see, Robert R. Wilson, "The Community of the Second Isaiah," in Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 53–70; Edgar W. Conrad, "The Royal Narratives and the Structure of the Book of Isaiah," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 41 (1988): 67–81. For information on who Akiba ben Joseph was see "Akiba Ben Joseph" *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, (March 2021).

[197] Matthew V. Novenson, "Why does R. Akiba acclaim Bar Kokhba as Messiah," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 40 (2009): 551–572. For more information on the role of Jewish political messianic ideals after Bar Kokhba, see B. Havel, "Aspects of Development of Jewish Political Messianic Idea after the Bar Kokhba Revolt," *Obnovljeni Zivot* 75 (2020): 215–27.

with the rabbinic texts that refer to two messiah figures. In the Jewish tradition, there are two redeemers and each one is considered a משיח.[199] Talmud Sukkah 52a states:

> הא הספידא מאי עבידתיה פליגי בה רבי דוסא ורבנן חד אמר על משיח בן יוסף שנהרג וחד אמר על יצה"ר שנהרג
>
> [Apropos the eulogy at the end of days, the Gemara asks: For] what is the nature of this eulogy? [The Gemara answers:] Rabbi Dosa and the Rabbis disagree concerning this [matter.] One said [that this eulogy is] for Messiah ben Yosef who was killed [in the war of Gog from the land of Magog prior to the ultimate redemption with the coming of Messiah ben David.] And one said [that this eulogy is] for the evil inclination that was killed.

Both Messiah ben Yosef and Messiah ben David ushered in the Messianic era. These two different messianic figures are known as *Mashiach ben Yosef* and *Mashiach ben David*. Talmud Sukkah 52a is composed of multiple layers. It begins with an introduction to Zechariah 12:12. The first layer are the comments and remarks by rabbinic commentators in both Hebrew and Aramaic. The Hebrew passages represent oral traditions deriving from Israel in the Tannaitic period, before 200 CE. The Aramaic passages are the Babylonian redactor's comments and date from the Amoraic period, between c. 200 and 450 CE. In comparison to Talmudic sources, Marvin Sweeney asserts that Isaiah chapters 40, 55 and 59 do not have the term "Davidic king" because the dynasty had ended and was superseded by

[198] Eisenman and Wise, The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered, 18.

[199] See Sukah 52a; 52b; Zohar I:25b; Ibid... II:120a, III:153b, 246b and 252a.

Cyrus as Yahweh's anointed (messiah).[200] There have been only a few scholarly attempts to integrate the Christian Messianic figure into rabbinic discourse.[201]

The adaptation of the Christian Messiah into rabbinic discourse is evident in the Jewish literature. Apocalyptic literature deals with the discussion of an end-of-time era. A connection between a Christian Messiah figure and Jewish messianism originates in apocalyptic literature. Jewish messianism originated in apocalyptic literature, where the latter originated during the intertestamental period.[202] Lee, Hughes and Viljoen explain how the two lines of messianic thought developed different views of a messiah and that these views contribute to, but differ from, Jesus's teachings in the Gospels:

> It seems that the Qumran community has two conceptions of the messiah. One of them is that the messiah will come from the shoot or branch of David (e.g.

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[200] Marvin A. Sweeney, "The Reconceptualization of the Davidic Covenant in Isaiah," *in Studies in the Book of Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A. M. Beuken ed. J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten and Marc Vervenne* (Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1997), 41–61. See also, Marvin A Sweeney, *Reading Prophetic Books*: *Form, Intertexuality, and Reception in Prophetic and Post-Biblical Literature* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014). Sweeny also discusses Isaiah and perspectives on Zion, see Marvin A. Sweeney, "Swords into Plowshares or Plowshares into Swords? Isaiah and the Twelve in Intertextual Perspective on Zion," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 34 (2018): 97–110. For a discussion of Isaiah and witness as messiah, see A Zawadzki, "Israel as Messianic Wisdom in Isa 55:3-5 and Her Witness among the Nations. An Exegetical and Historical Study," *Collectanea Theologica* 86 (2016): 5–50.

[201] See Holger Zellentin, "Rabbinizing Jesus, Christianizing the Son of David: The Bavli's Approach to the Secondary Messiah Traditions," in Discussing Cultural Influences: Text, Context, and Non-Text in Rabbinic Judaism, ed. Rikva Ulmer (Lanham: University Press of America, 2007), 99–127.

[202] Kenneth Atkinson, *An Intertextual Study of the Psalms of Solomon: Pseudepigrapha, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen, 2000), 49; Atkinson identifies 4Q252, 4Q174, 4Q161, 4Q285, and 4Q246 as prooftexts with violent messianic figures; John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 63. The study of 4Q161 and the messianic expectations has causes widespread scholarship between Isa 11:1–5 and 4Q161. For more substantial research on the John M. Allegro, "Further Messianic References in Qumran Literature," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 75 (1956): 177–82; Adam S. van der Woude, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Qumran* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1957), 75–82; Jacob Liver, "The Doctrine of Two Messiahs in Sectarian Literature in the Time of the Second Commonwealth," *Harvard Theological Review* 52 (1959): 158, 160–1; Kenneth E. Pomykala, "The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism: Its History and Significance for Messianism," *Society for Biblical Literature: Early Judaism and its Literature* 7 (1995): 197–203; John J. Collins, *The Sceptre and the Star: Jewish Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grandrapids: Eerdmans, 2010): 57–8; Martin G. Abegg Jr, "The Messiah at Qumran: Are We Still Seeing Double," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 2 (1995): 136; Richard J. Bauckham, "The Messianic Interpretation of Isaiah 10:34 in the Dead Sea Scrolls, 2 Baruch and the Preaching of John the Baptist," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 2 (1995): 202–16; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The One Who is to Come* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 99; See also research on messianic mysticism in the DSS: John J Collins, *Is There Mysticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2018), 61–80.

> 1QSa 2:11–22; 4Q174, 3:11–13; 4Q252, 5:1–5). The other one is that the messiah will be the interpreter of the Law (e.g. 4Q174, 3:12). The Damascus Document mentions the interpreter of the Law, a title given to the messianic priest. As seen in large Qumran texts (the Commentary on Habakkuk, the Rule of the Community and the Rule of Congregation), the Qumran community anticipates the appearance of two messiahs. The Qumran messiah has different functions according to his different names, such as Judah, who indicates the Teacher of Righteousness, and Menahem, who indicates the suffering servant of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The concept of the messiah in the Qumran community differs from the concept of the messiah revealed through Jesus' teaching in the Gospel. The coming of Melchizedek is also connected to messianic expectations in Qumran texts.[203]

With the understanding of two different משיח views in Judaism at the time of the Common Era, a clear understanding does not become evident at that point. Judaism and its messiahs at the beginning of the Common Era are problematic because of the multiplicity of Jewish thought. There was a multitude of Jewish sects and Jewish messianic expectations at this time, and all were different.[204] The role of a Jewish משיח extended beyond just the area around the Qumran community. The boundaries in which a משיח was defined went beyond geography and to people groups. Shaye Cohen contends that the wide range of meanings assigned to the Greek term *Iudaei* may be geographical as well as denoting people groups. [205] The wide group of people that have the name *Iudaei* extends the definition of *Iudaei* beyond Jewish persons. Christians and Jewish people were called *Iudaei*.[206]

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[203] Sang-Mong Lee, Gerald T. Hughes and Francois P. Viljoen, "Forgiveness in The Intertestamental Period," *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 33 (2012), 34.

[204] See Jacob Neusner, *Judaisms and their Messiahs at the Turn of the Christian Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[205] Shaye J. D. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 190–91.

[206] See Steve Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaizing, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 38 (2007), 457–512. In Steve Mason and Philip F. Esler, "Judaean and Christ-Follower Identities: Grounds For A Distinction," *New Testament Studies* 63 (2017): 493–515, *Ioudaios* is identified as being more than just a geographical designator for a people group but as an ethnic designation. The ethnic designation is difficult to separate the Jewish and Jewish Christians. The people are religious groups within a geographical region. Mason and Esler contend that even early Christians from the region could be identified as *Ioudaios*. Furthermore, Mason and Esler contend that Early Christians had no such recognised place that was their own ethnic geography and place because they were Jewish in origin. The Pope

In the *Iudaea* province, Josephus indicates that when the Zealots formed during the Census of Quirinius in 6 CE, people turned against the Roman rulership of the *Iudaea* Province in search of a deliverer. They were looking for a משיח. The hostile relationship between Rome and the Jewish people was a repeated theme. The relationship between the Romans and Jewish people was openly hostile between 37 and 41 CE.[207] Before the fall of the Temple, people within the *Iudaea* Province were referred to as *Iudaei*, and the people Josephus described as *Iudaei* are said to have taken part in this break with Rome. The result was that the people in *Iudaei* looked toward both of the two different branches of messianic deliverance.

After Jesus's death, Christianity developed the "world ruler" or "star" prophecy as part of the interpretation of משיח. The star prophecy looks at the *Mashiach ben Yosef* and *Mashiach ben David* prophecies and suggests that Numbers 24:7 means that a *star* will rise out of Jacob and a *scepter* out of Israel. During the time of Jesus, there is no certainty that this was the most common explanation during the time of Jesus. This contributes to the adaptation of the interpretations after the death of Jesus. The star theology of Numbers 24:17

discussed *Iudaei* and the problems associated with calling Jews people of *Iudaei*, see Pope Benedict XVI, "Grace and Vocation without Remorse: Comments on the Treatise De Iudaeis," *Communio* 45 (2018): 163–84.

[207] The notion that an inevitable revolt is found throughout scholarship. For history about the build-up of tension that led to the Roman Jewish War see Caryn A. Reeder, "Wartime Rape, the Romans, and the First Jewish Revolt," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 48 (2017): 363–85. Heather Kane-O'Donovan, "Class Relations during the Roman-Jewish War," *Journal of Theta Alpha Kappa* 25 (2001): 29–46; E. Schürer, The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979). For more information about Jews under Roman rule in in different periods of history, see E. M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule from Pompey to Diocletian: A Study in Political Relations* (Leiden: Brill, 1976). For a review on the political revolutionary climate at the time of Jesus was like before the fall of the Temple, see D. Rhoads, *Israel in Revolution in 6–74 CE: A Political History Based on the Writings of Josephus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976). For a deeper look into the historical understanding of the Roman and Jewish society at the time of Jesus, see T. Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and his Society* (London: Duckworth, 1983); M. Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome AD 66–70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Jonathan J. Price, *Jerusalem Under Siege: The Collapse of the Jewish State 66–70 C.E.* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); J. S. McLaren, *Power and Politics in Palestine: The Jews and the Governing of their Land 100 BC–AD 70* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991). See Ireneusz. Luc "The Archaeology of Attrition Warfare: The Galilean War of Vespasian and Titus (May-November, 67 A.D.)," *Ethos: Kwartalnik Instytutu Jana Pawla* 31 (2018): 229–50.

may not have had the same prophetic interpretation and people during Jesus's life may not have expected it to be fulfilled in Jesus.[208] If has become an interpretation to define משיח.

The Qumran writings all contain the influences of the intellectual thought behind the definition of a משיח. *The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness* (War Scroll) as well as 4Q174 show similarities to the converging messianic lineages.[209] This is why there are still varied interpretations of משיח across *Iudaea* after the death of Jesus, still. In the Qumran writings, Kim postulates, "… in addition, the Branch of David is identified with the Davidic Messiah in 4Q252 5:1–7. This identity creates two titles, 'the Messiah of righteousness' and 'Branch of David.'" Horgan contends that the words for kingdom in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages are not specific, but denote something abstract.[210] The abstract definition of משיח feeds a multiplicity of interpretations. Scott also comments that "in the ancient world, 'kingdom' referred to lordship, rule, reign, or sovereignty, not primarily to a geographical area."[211] This concept of a 'lordship' could affect the theological understanding of those listening to Jesus when he gave discourses on the Kingdom of Heaven. The control over the people is not limited to a region. The messianic figure will

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[208] Ortlund, G., "Resurrected as Messiah: The Risen Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 54 (2011): 749–66. The Star theology shows a lineage of David to Jesus as a messianic lineage following the book of Chronicles. For more scholarship in the cultic in Chronicles and the connection between kings, *see* Jozef Tino, *King and Temple in Chronicles: a Contextual Approach to their Relations* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010), 147–161. See Tracy J McKenzie and Jonathan Shelton, "From Proverb to Prophecy: Textual Production and Theology in Proverbs 30:1-6," *Southeastern Theological Review* 11 (2020): 3–30. See Abegg for a discussion of messianic hope and DSS: Martin G Abegg, "Messianic Hope and 4Q285: A Reassessment," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113 (1994): 81–91.

[209] *See* George J. Brooke, *Exegesis at Qumran: 4QFlorilegium in its Jewish Context* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2013), 85–98. 1QM follows similar form and function as 4Q174 (Florilegium) and 11Q13 (1 lQMelchizedek). For a discussion on the authorship of 4Q174.

[210] *See* Maurya P. Horgan, "Isaiah Pesher 4 (4Q161 = 4QpIsaa)," in Pesharim, Other Commentaries, and Related Documents, vol. 6B of *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Texts with English Translations* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 83–97.

[211] Julius J. Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 297. Collins suggests that Maccabean revolt was a response to the kingdom in rule, or the Seleucid kingdom, which did not have geography, see John Collins, *Revolt and Resistance in the Ancient Classical Worlds and Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 189–201.

ultimately rule the region of Israel forever.[212] A משיח from the Davidic lineage was to be a king of Israel upon his return. A משיח of the Levitical lineage was to be from the line of Melchizedek.[213] The people looked for hope within a world that did not have political hope. People wanted a messianic figure who would solve their problems, and this definitely influenced their view of nonviolent peace sayings.[214] It is worth noting that the *Mishna* contains no definition of a משיח according to these terms, even by 220 BCE.[215] Furthermore, the *Mishna* uses the term משיח to mean "anointed priest." The משיח as a warrior and a person of peace sets the tone for the interpretation of the Sermon for those present. Jesus would have been evaluated by his listeners from the viewpoint of his being either an anointed priest or a warrior. These views are evident in the Qumran writings.

3.6 The Dead Sea Scrolls and Jesus's Listeners

The Essene community practiced nonviolent restraint; however, they did produce an apocalyptic *War Scroll* which described how violence would manifest itself in the war against the Kittim.[216] Josephus (War 2:567) identifies a man joining in a revolt named Judah as an Essene. In *Quod Omnis Probus Liber Sit* 78, Philo establishes that the Essenes are

[212] Richard Bauckham, *The Jewish World around the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 346. In the intertestamental writing of 1QM 10.1–8a, the prophetic interpretation of scripture creates theme of conflict and a political tension. Peter von der Osten-Sacken originally labelled these lines as a florilegium and a collection of proof-texts for a messianic conflict. See Peter von der Osten Sacken, *Gott und Belial: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Dualismus in den Texten aus Qumran* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 60–61.

[213] Bauckham, *The Jewish World around the New Testament,* 311; see also George J. Brooke, "Patterns of Priesthood, Priestliness and Priestly Functions in Some Second Temple Period Texts," *Judaïsme Ancien* 4 (2016): 1–21.

[214] Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament,* 311.

[215] Jacob Neusner, William S. Green and Ernest Grerichs, *Judaisms and their Messiahs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[216] Jassen, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Violence," 13.

nonviolent pacifists. Jassen noted that the Essenes refrained from robbery.[217] Weitzman suggests that The *War Scroll* has a similarity to 4Q491–497, 4Q471, 4Q285, and 11Q14.[218] The 4Q285 scroll and the 1QM scroll are the only Qumran scrolls that have both the word 'war' and the word 'price' in them, suggesting that they are not completely for military use.[219] Weitzman notes that these scrolls discuss political violence.[220] In comparison, Roman war manuals included precise military strategies and tactics on how to attack and to defend against an opposing army. This is different from the *War Scroll* which was not written as a guide for warfare and does not contain instructions on tactics of warfare.[221] Russell Gmirkin compared the discussion of weaponry, tactics, and military formations in the *War Scroll* to those of Roman armies before and after the reforms of Marius, dated 104–103 BCE. By doing so, Gmirkin has postulated that the date of the *War Scroll* falls in the Roman Period between 63 BCE and 1 BCE.[222] Jean Duhaime dates the authorship *War Scroll* at around 100 BCE. Disagreement among scholars abounds regarding the type of training and weaponry mentioned in the *War Scroll*.[223] contends that the account of Zoroastrianism in Plutarch's *De*

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[217] Jassen, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Violence," 13; The Essenes sought replacement of the Hasmonean priestly line with a Zadokite. The view was that the temple was corrupted by the Sadducees and that a new High Priest would restore the line.

[218] Steven Weitzman, "Warring against Terror: The War Scroll and the Mobilization of Emotion," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 40 (2009), 215.

[219] Józef Tadeusz Milik, "*Milki-sedeq et Milki-resa' dans les anciens écrits juifs et chrétiens*," *Journal for Jewish Studies* 23 (1972): 143.

[220] Steven Weitzman, "Warring against Terror: The War Scroll and the Mobilization of Emotion," 216.

[221] For insight comparing the War Scroll with the military techniques of the Roman Army, *see* R. Gmirkin, "The War Scroll and Roman Weaponry Reconsidered," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 3 (1996): 89–129; see Kyung S. Baek, "The Sword-in-the-Mouth of Jesus the King: Declaration of War and Peace in the Gospel of Matthew," 2016, 354–63.

[222] Russell Gmirkin, "The War Scroll and Roman Weaponry Reconsidered," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 3 (1996): 89–129.

[223] Jean Duhaime, "The War Scroll from Qumran and the Greco-Roman Tactical Treatises," *Review de Qumran* 13 (1988): 133–51; this dissertation adopts a Roman dating of this scroll.

Iside et Osiride 45–47 can inform on some of the dualistic ideology seen in 1 QM.[224] Weitzman suggests:

> This essay aims to rethink the role that the War Scroll played in early Jewish military practice by reading it in light of Greco-Roman theories of how to deploy emotion in battle. Military thinkers like Xenophon and Julius Caesar recognized troop psychology as an important tactical variable that could be manipulated through ritual and supernatural portents. The War Scroll mirrors these practices in a way that supports reading it as a similar effort to manipulate troop psychology arising under the influence of—and perhaps in reaction against—Greco-Roman military practice. [225]

Weitzman suggests that the War Scroll is about troop morale and emotion. The scroll lacks the promise and concept of a messianic figure as well. E. P. Sanders stated the problem, "What is most striking about the sect's messianic expectation is that there is no Davidic messiah in the *War Scroll*." Sanders went on to say that one would certainly expect to find the messiah taking the leading role in the war against darkness.[226] The *War Scroll* envisages a war in which success does not rest on a Davidic messiah.

The culmination of Jewish literature in the Dead Sea Scrolls is in harmony with the later writings *Mishna Avot.* There is a similar intellectual influence that connects the thought. The writings in the Dead Sea Scrolls show a messianic influence of nonviolence, as advocated by Jesus.[227] Jesus's actions reflect the contemporary thought of the day regarding nonviolence. There was an expectation of a messiah from the line of David; however, this is not evident in the *War Scroll.*[228] At least some Jewish believers took the position that war

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[224] John J. Collins, "The Mythology of Holy War in Daniel and the Qumran War Scroll: A Point of Transition in Jewish Apocalyptic," *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1975): 596–612; Federico M Petrucci, "Argumentative Strategies in the 'Platonic Section' of Plutarch's De Iside et Osiride (Chapters 45-64)," *Mnemosyne* 69 (2016): 226–48.

[225] Steven Weitzman, "Warring against Terror: The War Scroll and the Mobilization of Emotion," 218.

[226] E. P. Sanders, *Judaism: Practice & Belief 63 BCE – 66 CE* (London: SCM, 1992), 296.

[227] Hanan, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Hasmonean State*, 181.

[228] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 126–7.

was to be avoided on ethical grounds.[229] These views expressed in the Dead Scrolls may have been apocalyptic but were nonviolent with צדקה.[230]

3.7 Chapter Summary

The Dead Sea Scrolls are dated before the life of Jesus and are examples of different Jewish traditions. The writings were held by the residents of Qumran and the exact authorship is debatable. The scrolls define concepts of messianism, conflict, and peace for the people who wrote them. These concepts influence the Christian writers and the intellectual thought that carried from Jewish understanding into the birth of Christian understanding. The rise of Hellenistic and Roman periods shaped the way this transmission was preserved and written down.

Within these collections are different *Pesharim* that make comment about the apocalypse and salvation. The text 4q521 is an example of sectarianism and apocalypticism that resembles the thoughts of the writers of these scrolls. The discussions within the scrolls of the *Wicked Priest* are critiques of the Hasmonean high priests and the people of Qumran are opposed to the views of the Sadducees and the Hasmoneans. The Sadducees and Hasmoneans are the controlling power at the cultic temple in Jerusalem. Scrolls such as 4Q246 provided the expectations of a messianic figure within this Qumran collection.

This chapter contends that repentance is connected with the Jewish rituals practiced, such as *mikvah.* Figures in the life of Jesus such as John the Baptist and the actions of Jesus's baptism illustrate a concept of people is required to purify leaders who are wicked. These actions of repentance would change a person in action and in intent. A repentant person is

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[229] Ibid.

[230] *See* Martin Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judea: The Origins of the Jewish Revolt against Rome AD 66–70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 20–21; and Jonathan J. Price, *Jerusalem Under Siege: The Collapse of the Jewish State, 66–70 C.E.* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 33, 186.

essential to identify the messianic redeemer of the people who would either be associated with the line of David and the line of Aaron and how these figures feature in the writings preserved by the Qumran community. The two identified lineages of a messianic leader are part of the eschatology of the writers of Qumran and play a part defining if the people submit to a ruler peacefully or revolt against a ruler with violence. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the role of the scrolls and Jesus's listeners to the Sermon on the Mount indicating that the listeners would be aware of the Qumran community, as well as the Essenes, especially since in Jerusalem an entire area was dedicated to them.

CHAPTER 4 MONEYLENDING AND ETHICS IN TORAH

Regarding moneylending, the Torah provides an understanding into the narrative surrounding nonviolent resistance. The passages in the Hebrew Bible concerning compassion in collateral and debt compassion help to clarify the background conceptions of ethics and peace that would have been available to many in the audience of the Sermon on the Mount. The rules surrounding interest collection for Jews and Gentiles differ. The viewpoint of compassion and debt relief in the Torah as defined in this dissertation comes from a foundational understanding of Matthew 5:38-42. This chapter explores the source material in the Hebrew Bible concerning debt and collateral.

4.1 Different Rules Regarding Interest for Jews and Gentiles

Since the Torah regulates the moneylending for Jews; thus, Jesus would have been obliged to follow those same monetary regulations in his ministry. These rules for moneylending are foundational for understanding Matthew 5:38-42 in terms of borrowing and debt. Jesus would have acted in a manner that coincided with the Jewish views about moneylending and collateral during the Second Temple period. During this time period, Jews cannot charge interest to Jews. A Jewish person could lend money to gentiles. Furthermore, a Jewish person could collect interest only on a gentile's loan, and not a Jewish person's loan. Jewish moneylending laws were established before the Second Temple time, dating from the Laws of Moses. They were practiced within the Jewish communities even when different empires ruled over them.

In this background, Deuteronomy 15:3 it is states, "You may dun the foreigner; but you must remit whatever is due you from your kinsmen." Based on this, although a loan

could be given to Israelites, collection in case of a default was prohibited.[231] The foreigner, who was under different legal scrutiny, was looked upon with a different view of ethics in fiscal matters compared to the Jewish individual who would have had different terms for a loan.

The rule to not charge interest to Israelite people was significant in protecting people from long-term indebtedness to others and to prevent them from being made slaves.[232] The Jewish person was prohibited from charging interest on a loan to another Jewish person, to include an increase of a person's food production. The protection for the people was put in place so that someone could not impact future food supplies. Leviticus 25:37 states, "Do not lend him your money for interest, or give him your food for increase" ("לֹא-תִתֵּן לוֹ, אֶת-כַּסְפְּךָ לֹז בְּנֶשֶׁךְ; וּבְמַרְבִּית, לֹא-תִתֵּן אָכְלֶךָ."). The prohibition of interest being charged by an Israelite to another Israelite applies to both money and goods. English translations use the word interest to translate two distinct Hebrew words. In Leviticus 25:37, there are two Hebrew words translated as 'interest:' נֶשֶׁךְ *neshek* and *marbeit* מַרְבִּית. נֶשֶׁךְ and מַרְבִּית are not separate, and both entail a feeling of 'biting', since נֶשֶׁךְ is similar to מַרְבִּית and מַרְבִּית is similar to נֶשֶׁךְ.[233] נֶשֶׁךְ literally means bite.[234] מַרְבִּית references the lenders profit they make from charging interest. The Hebrew word meanings have similar connotations because it is the pain that the interest

[231] *See* full text for the verse: Deut. 15:1ff "At the end of every seventh year you must make a remission of debts. This is how it is to be made: everyone who holds a pledge shall return the pledge of the person indebted to him. He must not press a fellow-countryman for repayment, for the LORD's year of remission has been declared. You may press foreigners; but if it is a fellow-countryman who holds anything of yours, you must renounce all claim on it."

[232] This discussion does not address the importance of assisting and alien or stranger in the midst of the community as found in Lev 25:35: "If your brother-Israelite is reduced to poverty and cannot support himself in the community, you must assist him as you would an alien or a stranger." This discussion revolves around defining the righteous and charitable person.

[233] Meir Tamari, *Al Chet: Sins in the Market Place* (Brooklyn: The Judaica Press, 1996). See George J. Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2005).

[234] The play on words to feel the bite of interest is noted in the translation.

causes that is in question. This is supported by Exodus 22:25 (NRSV) which states, “Exact no interest from them [fellow Israelite people].” Ultimately, by not charging interest, people in need were protected.

When lenders cannot lend with interest, the people cannot borrow money with interest in Deuteronomy 23:20 (JPS):

לֹא־תַשִּׁיךְ לְאָחִיךָ נֶשֶׁךְ כֶּסֶף נֶשֶׁךְ אֹכֶל נֶשֶׁךְ כָּל־דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר יִשָּׁךְ׃

> 20 Thou shalt not lend upon interest to thy brother: interest of money, interest of victuals, interest of anything that is lent upon interest.

Thus, the Torah stipulates that one cannot borrow with interest, and one cannot lend with interest, so both parties have equity of responsibility—one person is not stronger than another person. This rule prevents the borrower of money from being a slave to the lender of money. In conclusion, the charging of interest to those who are considered a brother or of the same faith was frowned upon as forbidden by Torah. However, loans made to foreign people are not under the same rules in Torah.

4.2 Compassion and Debt Relief

The discussion of charging interest was introduced in the dissertation previously. The Torah provides reasoning on compassion and debt relief. A Jewish person may charge interest to a Gentile. Deuteronomy 23:21(JPS) states:

לַנָּכְרִי תַּשִּׁיךְ וּלְאָחִיךָ לֹא תַשִּׁיךְ לְמַעַן יְבָרֶכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכֹל מִשְׁלַח יָדֶךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ׃ ס

> 21 On loans to a foreigner you may charge interest, but on loans to another Israelite you may not charge interest, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings in the land that you are about to enter and possess.

The text depicts that God wants to bless the undertakings in the land of the Jewish people.

Deuteronomy 23:20, 21 prohibits charging interest to countrymen while allowing interest to be charged to gentiles.[235] If the Torah had not made both parties accountable, an unequal and unjust scenario would have been created regarding moneylending. The Jewish people could leverage and loan away their property ownership to foreign lenders for money. Consequently, the lender and the borrower both have a duty of care to one another not to lend or borrow with interest. A protection for the Jewish person's monetary interest becomes important. This is distinct from the permission for Jews to lend with interest to gentiles, as this does not violate a duty of care for one's countrymen.[236] This compassion towards a fellow Jew and not towards the Gentile also is part of the understanding of Matthew 5:38-42 (discussed later in this dissertation). The law in Deuteronomy 23:21 that permits interest to be charged to foreigners is accepted as the 198th *mitzvah* (out of the 613 *mitzvoth*, or commandments of Judaism). It is the obligation of every Jew to help one another and assist fellow Jews.

Another example of compassion in lending is the guideline for loans and collateral given in Exodus 22:26.[237] Interestingly enough, the verse does not seem to say anything about the obligation of the borrower to return the money for which he has offered his cloak as collateral. One must have morality and ethics with lending. Exodus 22:26 is similar to both

[235] Scholarship indicates that Deuteronomy 23:21 should not indicate that interest can charge interest but should charge interest to a foreigner, see Hans-Georg von Mutius, "Die Zinsgestezgebung in der Septuaginta zu Deuteronomium 23,21—Ubersetzungs- und Sachprobleme aus nicht drittmittelgestutzer Forschungsperspektive," *BN NF* (2014): 19-24.

[236] For more information on how the New Testament does not make a claim to the morality of usuary and how usuary, see Robert P. Maloney, "The Teaching of the Fathers On Usuary: An Historical Study on the Development of Christian Thinking," *Vigiliac Christianae* 27 (1973): 241-65.

[237] Exodus 22:26 is part of the section of laws referred to as Covenant Code laws in which they are formulated to regulate actions towards poor people, see *Miroslav Varso,* "Interest (Usury) and its Variations in the Biblical Law Codices," *Communio Viatorum* 50 (2008): 323-38. Eli Eduarto suggests that the Covenant Code is part of the Elohim narrative, see Eduardo Eli, "The Presence of the Covenant Motif in Hosea: An Intertextual Approach for the Last Oracle in the Book," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 45 (2017): 34–42.

Proverbs 20:16 and Proverbs 27:13. Proverbs 20:16 advises that one should take a garment for collateral from a stranger and in parallel structure, to take a pledge in the case of a foreigner.[238] Proverbs 27:13 provides a similar example, specifying that the lender should take the garment from the person who is acting as the surety for the borrower, not from the borrower. The identity of the borrower may not necessarily be known to the lender. The lender may presumably keep the garment that belongs to the surety if the lender does not repay the loan. In both cases, the wisdom of taking a pledge from an unfamiliar person is inscribed. While nothing is said about the length of time one could keep the garment, it is implied that it can be for the duration of the loan, since the requirement to return the garment before the sun sets seems only apply to fellow Israelites, also expressed as one's "neighbour" in Exodus 22:26.

The Jewish *Bet Dien,* going back to Deut 16:18, is the standard tribunal for Torah interpretations.[239] During the time of Jesus, which is much later than the period of Deut 16:18, the use of the Sanhedrin was still in practice as a Jewish court. By the time of the Sermon, deciding how to adjudicate differences equitably and with justice while under Roman rule was important. Exodus 22:25–26 states, "If you take your neighbour's garment in pledge, you must return it to him before the sun sets; it is his only clothing, the sole covering for his skin. In what else shall he sleep? Therefore, if he cries out to me, I will pay heed, for I am compassionate." The Hebrew text reads "׃אִם־חָבֹל תַּחְבֹּל שַׂלְמַת רֵעֶךָ עַד־בֹּא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ תְּשִׁיבֶנּוּ לֽוֹ." A main focus in this text is the biblical interpretation of שַׂלְמָה which translates as "outer garment" in Deut 24: 10-13.

[238] Proverbs 20:16 "Take his garment that is surety for a stranger; and hold him in pledge that is surety for an alien woman;" Proverbs 27:13 "Take his garment that is surety for a stranger; and hold him in pledge that is surety for an alien woman."

[239] A *beth din*- Hebrew: בית דין *Bet Din*, "house of judgment" is a rabbinical court of Jewish law.

Thus, Exodus 22:25–26 codifies how clothing and attire are to be used as loan collateral. Collections on loan defaults when clothing is the collateral become part of the discourse of Jesus's sermon.[240] The rule against keeping a person's garment was important for Torah in order to protect the social rights of people; consequentially, in Torah there is provision to protect those who are at risk of further harm. In Deuteronomy 24:17 the Torah states, "Nor shall you take a widow's garment as pawn." The Hebrew reads " לֹא תַטֶּה מִשְׁפַּט גֵּר יָתוֹם וְלֹא תַחֲבֹל בֶּגֶד אַלְמָנָה׃", with בֶּגֶד *begged*, the word translated garment, but *begged* implies undergarments or bottom-layer clothing. The difference in the Hebrew words indicates the difference between garments of clothing: בֶּגֶד as undergarments and שַׂלְמָה, *salmah*, which is outer clothing only. The nuances of בֶּגֶד as undergarments and שַׂלְמָה as outer clothing only would have been understood by Jesus when delivering the Sermon. Widows could not be given credit based on collateral and the level of debt of the widow or the level of wealth was not used as a deciding factor to preclude pledges for loans given to widows. It was forbidden in order to protect this class of citizen.

The law relating to widows' loans shows compassion in dealing with a vulnerable person. If a widow, or any person, were to be stripped naked, this would constitute a great injustice.[241] Having a proscription on the basic things used for health and safety provides the community with a stronger protection against starvation and being left without clothing.

The Torah safeguards applied to loans afford protection from the loss of tools and devices that are used in creating meals. Deuteronomy 24:6 states, "A hand mill or an upper

[240] Roland H. Worth Jr, *The Sermon on the Mount: Its Old Testament Roots* (Mahwah: Paulist, 1997), 212–13; Klaus Dieter Issler, "Lending and Interest in the Ot: Examining Three Interpretations to Explain the Deuteronomy 23:19-20 Distinction in Light of the Historical Usury Debate," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 59 (2016): 761–89.

[241] Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison Jr and John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus in Context* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 12.

millstone shall not be taken in pawn, for that would be taking someone's life in pawn." In the Hebrew, the text reads "לֹא־יַחֲבֹל רֵחַיִם וָרָכֶב כִּי־נֶפֶשׁ הוּא חֹבֵל". The focus is on the word רֶכֶב (rekhev), which does mean millstone; however, the word can also mean a chariot-wheel piece. The context of רֶכֶב in the text would at least indicate that the collateral could not be anything that is like a millstone, wheel, or anything which functions as an instrument for meal preparation. Deuteronomy 24:6 limits creditors. Creditors cannot take the functional kitchen utensils for collateral, thus ensuring that a borrower's ability to create meals is not compromised. To take the items used for preparation of food as collateral is bad because it attacks the human's existence, נֶפֶשׁ *nefesh*, which is his soul. The text parallel's the essence of a human's soul and existence; consequentially, the impact of taking a collateral from their essential resources is to rob them of their soul's well-being.

If a person has surrendered their בֶּגֶד and שַׂלְמָה, then the ethical actions of the creditor are subject to public scrutiny. The public has the capacity to humiliate the creditor. Worth suggests that the nudity of a borrower who has lost their בֶּגֶד and שַׂלְמָה demonstrates to others how the person who made a bad loan is unethical.[242] As an additional safeguard to protect people against repossession of collateral, Deuteronomy 24:10 states, "When you make a loan of any sort to your countryman, you must not enter his house to seize his pledge." In the Hebrew, it reads, "כִּי־תַשֶּׁה בְרֵעֲךָ מַשַּׁאת מְאוּמָה לֹא־תָבֹא אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ לַעֲבֹט עֲבֹטֹו׃." The Hebrew text highlights the word מַשָּׁאָה, *mashaah*, which translates as a loan of debt. The boundaries are set to deny repossession of an item when it is collateral. This law does not address lending to someone who has no collateral to offer, apart from widowers.

Loans given to Israelite people by Israelite people are to be interest-free loans.[243] This

[242] Worth, *The Sermon on the Mount: Its Old Testament Roots*, 216–17.

interest-free loan, if it is a garment, must be returned each night to the borrower. The biblical mandate to give back a cloak nightly protected both creditors and debtors. The creditor does not get shamed by those seeking to shame them and the debtor will retain dignity as well as warmth at night. Berlin and Brettler contend that Amos 2:8 ("They lay themselves down beside every altar on garments taken in pledge; and in the house of their God they drink wine bought with fines they imposed" (NRSV)) and Job 22:6 ("For you have exacted pledges from your family for no reason, and stripped the naked of their clothing" (NRSV)), are a critique of money-lenders because "the poorest debtors might have nothing left but the cloaks they slept in."[244] Pledges must be returned. Deuteronomy 24:13 states, "As the sun sets, you shall surely return the pledge to him." The Hebrew text reads, " הָשֵׁב תָּשִׁיב לוֹ אֶת־הַעֲבוֹט כְּבֹא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וְשָׁכַב בְּשַׂלְמָתוֹ וּבֵרַכְךָ וּלְךָ תִּהְיֶה צְדָקָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: ס." The focus of the Hebrew is שַׂלְמָה and the blessings will be tzadakah צְדָקָה, which is a focus on a charitable and righteous benefactor.

By protecting the borrower with rules protecting tools used in the craftsmanship of one's trade or articles of clothing, the community practices justice. It is imperative to return collateral used in a loan if the items are needed for health and safety at night. Each morning the person must return the items as collateral again and they must be returned each night. Not doing so will expose a lender as greedy.[245]

4.3 Chapter Summary

The passages in the Hebrew Bible concerning collateral and debt compassion help to clarify the background conceptions of ethics and peace that would have been available to

[243] Ibid., 213. Similar to this lending principle, Islamic banking operates on this principle today. If the loan is for a business investment, the bank is entitled to a share of profits.

[244] Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, "Deuteronomy," in *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 157.

[245] Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity International, 2001), 142.

many in the audience of the Sermon on the Mount. Collateral debt and compassion for those in debt are part of the Jewish ethics towards people and this standard is different for a Jew and Gentile. How a person controls another person who is indebted demonstrates how compassion and ethics are understood. Jesus would have been knowledgeable on these rules of collateral and debt. Jesus would have adapted them to his local context at the time he lived, especially since he has spoken about them in the Sermon on the Mount.

With the Hebrew Bible, rules pertaining to charging interest to a fellow Jew are forbidden, but one is permitted to charge the Gentile interest. The Hebrew Bible provided for the ability to charge interest to a foreigner of the land. There is compassion in lending to a fellow believer and Exodus 22:25-26 extends this compassion to collateral with garments. A person is protected from defaults on a loan against collateral used for sleeping. As well, there is compassion commanded for widows in Deuteronomy 24:17. All who lend to people could not keep their בֶּגֶד and שַׂלְמָה overnight. This chapter explores the source material in the Hebrew Bible concerning debt and collateral, and finds that בֶּגֶד and שַׂלְמָה, one cannot shame a person and must treat them with dignity and *tzadakah* צְדָקָה.

CHAPTER 5 MISHNA AVOT, ETHICS, AND INTELLECTUAL THOUGHT

An examination of certain texts in *Mishna Avot* relating to charity, justice, peace, and the Torah helps identify important strands of the ethical thought of Judaism during the time of Jesus by looking at texts attributed as contemporary to Jesus. Mishna *Avot* includes intellectual thought that originates in wisdom literature.[246] These sayings in the Avot provide an insight into the intellectual thought attributed to people who were alive near the time of Jesus, or soon thereafter. The purpose of Mishna Avot is to provide common advice to people for daily living, especially in the realm of ethical understanding. In addition, *Mishna Avot* provides unique insights into and understanding of the Oral Traditions of Judaism from notable sages before the time of Jesus, during Jesus's lifetime, and after the time of Jesus.[247] The examination of literature such as *Mishna Avot* is appropriate since it reveals oral traditions of the Jewish people and any commonality of thought in the ethics of the time with Jesus's teaching may be assessed. One example from the wisdom literature about the need to seek wisdom is found in *Mishna Avot* 1:4, which states: "Yosi ben Yoezer of Zeredah said: Let your house be a meeting house for the sages, and sit in the dust of their feet, and drink in their words with thirst."[248] Yose ben Yoezer lived approximately 150 years before Jesus;

[246] Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah*, 9. For more information see Robert Alter, The Wisdom Books: Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

[247] An earlier footnote has already noted that Rabbinic sages are grouped together in "periods," beginning with the period of the *Zugoth* (ca. 170 BCE – 30 CE), the *Tannaim* (ca. 10 – 220 CE), the *Amoraim* (200 – 500 CE), the *Zavoraim* (500-600), the *Geonim* (589 – 1038 CE), etc. The most famous of the *Zugoth* (pairs), were Hillel (ca. 110-10 BCE) and Shammai (ca. 50 BCE – 30 CE). Other *Zoggoth* include Joshua ben Perachiah and Nittai of Arbela (from the time period of Hyrcanus), and Shemaiah and Abtalion (from the time period of Hyrcanus II). The debates between the house of Hillel and the house of Shammai are frequently entered into by the *Tannaim* and recorded in many rabbinic sources. Prominent *Tannaim* of the first generation (ca. 40 BCE – 80 CE) include Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, Shimon ben Gamliel, and Judah ben Baba, as well as Gamaliel the Elder (or Rabban Gamaliel I; died ca. 52 CE), who was grandson of Hillel, and was president of the great Sanhedrin is Jerusalem. Nitai of Arbela, Shemaiah and Abtalion, and Hillel are among the sages named in citations from *Mishna Avot* found in this and later chapters. Traditions ascribed to them would be highly likely to be in circulation in Pharisaic circles at the time of Jesus, as well as many of the other traditions cited in *Mishna Avot*.

[248] Rami Shapiro, *Ethics of the Sages* (Woodstock: Skylight Paths, 2006), 7.

however, his sayings are part of the sages who became revered during the time of Jesus. The thought of the sages who spoke before Jesus helped form the thoughts and ethical viewpoints of those who survived the destruction of Jerusalem and the writing of literature that formed both the New Testament and Apocryphal writings. During the Hasmonean era in which Yose ben Yoezer flourished (i.e., well before the time of Jesus), different Torah scholars and rabbis were sent into exile by Antiochus Epiphanes,[249] leaving fewer rabbis remaining to instruct the people.[250] By the time of Jesus's ministry, sending Rabbis into exile ended, and people resumed the practice of Rabbis teaching in the local synagogues.

The rabbis had to learn to adapt to different cultures in the Diaspora.[251] Maccabaeus wanted to remove Hellenism from the land and restore the Jewish kingdom. By the time of Jesus, archaeology finds scrolls and books written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.[252] Greek or Latin was probably more common in court circles both in Jerusalem, Sepphoris and Tiberius, and the other larger cities, dominating in the Decapolis and probably also in Caesarea Maritima. The Hellenization of the culture was a challenge to the Jewish religious rites during Jesus's era.[253] Before Jesus, even the High Priests had adopted Greek names,

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[249] Jonathan A. Pomeranz, "The Rabbinic and Roman Laws of Personal Injury," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 39 (2015): 303–31.

[250] Ibid.

[251] Jews in Diaspora may have spoken Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. One example of this is the Epistle of Jeremiah written in Hebrew by someone with knowledge of Mesopotamia religious practice. For more detailed studies on Hebrew Apocrypha from Diaspora, see G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005).

[252] Yitzhaq Magen et al., "The Hebrew and Aramaic Inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim," *Qadmoniot* 33 (2000): 125–32; Tamara Morsel-Eisenberg, "Anxieties of Transmission: Rabbinic Responsa and Early Modern 'Print Culture,'" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 82 (2021): 377–404.

[253] For a discussion on the Greek influence on the region, see Seung M. Hah, "Intercultural Missional Leadership: Theological Foundation and Biblical Narratives," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 75 (2019). The Gospel narratives show the contention of the Greek influence into region and wrestle with the influence. For more information on the difference in the source materials highlight how the role of Greek influence was being pervasive in the culture, see Matthias Konradt, "Die Sendung Zu Israel Und Zu Den Völkern Im Matthäusevangelium Im Lichte Seiner Narrativen Christologie," *Zeitschrift Für Theologie Und Kirche* 101 (2018): 397; Martin Henry, "Christianity and Hellenism," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70 (2005):

indicating the extent of their assimilation.[254] The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes (who practiced ritual purity through the use of the *mikvah*, or ritual bath, and withdrew themselves from political life), as well the Herodians and the Sicarii Jews all had disagreements on the best practice of religion. The *Mishna Avot* reflects the changing world of Judaism in which some practiced nonviolent resistance while at the same time suffering under Hellenization.

5.1 *Mishna Avot* 6:4 and a Torah-Filled Life

Mishna Avot 6:4

כַּךְ הִיא דַּרְכָּהּ שֶׁל תּוֹרָה, פַּת בְּמֶלַח תֹּאכַל, וּמַיִם בִּמְשׂוּרָה תִּשְׁתֶּה, וְעַל הָאָרֶץ תִּישַׁן, וְחַיֵּי צַעַר תִּחְיֶה, וּבַתּוֹרָה אַתָּה עָמֵל, אִם אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה כֵן, (תהלים קכח) אַשְׁרֶיךָ וְטוֹב לָךְ. אַשְׁרֶיךָ בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְטוֹב לָךְ לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא:

This is the way [to toil in] Torah: eat bread with salt and drink a small amount of water and sleep on the ground and live a life [whose conditions will cause you] pain and in Torah you toil; if you do so "happy shall you be, and it shall be well with you"(Psalms 128: 2) – happy shall you be in this world, and it shall be well with you in the world to come.[255]

Avot 6:4 suggests that happiness rests in observing Torah and practising restraint. *Mishna Avot* teaches self-restraint and self-restraint reflects the role of Torah in one's life. Hillel was a significant person in the development of Oral Tradition.[256] Hillel is quoted in the *Avot* as saying, "a boor cannot fear sin; and an ignorant man cannot be pious, nor can the shy

366; Frank Byron Jevons, "Hellenism and Christianity," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 1 (1908): 169–88; Eric M. Meyers, "The Challenge of Hellenism for Early Judaism and Christianity," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 55 (1992): 84–91.

[254] The Hellenised names of the High Priests were Jason and Menelaus.

[255] *Pirkei Avot 1:12*.

[256] The writings of Hillel have been looked at for how he was interpreting the *Torah* at his time, and especially in its relationship to the Hellenism of his day. For more discussion of the Rhetoric developed by Hillel during the Hellenistic time and Jesus, see, Alan Corré's *Understanding the Talmud* (New York: KTAV, 1975). This does not mean that Hillel is Hellenistic. For more insight into how the Oral Law lead to biblical exegesis similar to Jesus' day, see Judah Goldin, "Hillel the Elder," *Journal of Religion* 26 (1946): 263–277. For recent scholarship on the similarity of Roman Law and Hillel having similarities in divorce, see Yair Furstenberg, "Provincial Rabbis: Shaping Rabbinic Divorce Procedure in a Roman Legal Environment," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 109 (2019): 471–99.

person learn, nor can the impatient person teach. One who engages excessively in business cannot become wise. In a place where there are no men, strive to be a man" (*Mishna Avot* 2:6). To understand the word גַּס (boor), in the *Mishna*, it is important to look at עם הארץ. The definition of עם הארץ is literally 'people of the land.' *Mishna Avot* 2:6 has diverse interpretations. Toperoff suggests "authorities differ as to the precise meaning of *am haaretz*, but as it follows the boor, it obviously means an ignorant person or one who disregards the *Halakha* [or the ethical walk]."[257] The broader view is that גַּס is an ignorant person.[258] The understanding of ethical principles and living an ethical life in line with Torah is therefore a desirable quality in a person, acquired by training. *Mishna Avot* 2:6 presents a person who studies Torah and shows the characteristic of restraint. It must be noted that nothing in scripture suggests that the listeners to the Sermon were intellectual—they could have been simple farmers. Matthew 5:1 describes the listeners as ὄχλους (crowds).

Mishna Avot 2:10 discusses a second example of practising personal restraint regarding anger.[259] Anger, as a reaction of an individual, must be qualified. Anger for those versed in *Mishna Avot* must be moderated and controlled. This is especially true in in relation to foreign powers. *Mishna Avot 2:10* gives a list of instructions:

> הֵם אָמְרוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים. רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר, יְהִי כְבוֹד חֲבֵרְךָ חָבִיב עָלֶיךָ כְּשֶׁלְּךָ, וְאַל תְּהִי נוֹחַ לִכְעֹס. וְשׁוּב יוֹם אֶחָד לִפְנֵי מִיתָתֶךָ. וֶהֱוֵי מִתְחַמֵּם כְּנֶגֶד אוּרָן שֶׁל חֲכָמִים, וֶהֱוֵי זָהִיר בְּגַחַלְתָּן שֶׁלֹּא תִכָּוֶה, שֶׁנְּשִׁיכָתָן נְשִׁיכַת שׁוּעָל וְעֶקְיצָתָן עֶקְיצַת עַקְרָב, וּלְחִישָׁתָן לְחִישַׁת שָׂרָף, וְכָל דִּבְרֵיהֶם כְּגַחֲלֵי אֵשׁ

> They each said three things: Rabbi Eliezer said: 'let the honour of your fellow be as dear to you as your own. Do not easily become angry. Repent one day

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[257] Toperoff, *Avot*, 92.

[258] Kravitz and Olitzky, *Pirke Avot*, 21; See also Elisha Qimron,צד = גס. "אלישע קימרון," *Lěšonénu: A Journal for the Study of the Hebrew Language and Cognate Subjects / לשוננו: כתב-עת לחקר הלשון העברית והתחומים הסמוכים לה* מ (1975): 79.

[259] Joslyn-Siemiatkoski contends that Avot 2:10 -2:14 show a shift in teachings indicating a participation in the Rabbinic movement occurring. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski also indicates that these teachings could be contemporary to Jesus or Jesus' followers, see Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah*, 144.

> before your death [which could be at any time]. Warm yourself before the fire of the sages, but be careful of their glowing coals lest you be burned, for their bite is the bite of a jackal and their sting the sting of a scorpion and their hiss the hiss of a serpent, and all their words are like coals of fire' (*Avot* 2:10).

The advice given is not to become angry quickly. This integral part of human character is part of the management of temperaments as well as nonviolent response to other people. The opposite is to become easily angered. People will be less likely to respond quickly with anger once willing themselves to act with moderation; self-restraint enables the avoidance of acting in anger. Lieber comments from his work on *Pirkei Avos Treasury* by saying, "We must be levelheaded enough to assess whether the incident actually sparked true cause for outburst. We should actively attempt to find reasons not to be angry."[260] The *Mishna* was not admonishing those listening to the Sermon to have no anger, but not to be quick to anger. Anger must be controlled in order to be wise and to avoid political aggression. The Jewish ethical and political thought at Jesus's time in *Mishna Avot* encompasses teaching self-restraint.

5.2 *Mishna Avot* 1:4, 2:7, and Seeking Torah

Mishna Avot 2:7

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, מַרְבֶּה בָשָׂר, מַרְבֶּה רִמָּה. מַרְבֶּה נְכָסִים, מַרְבֶּה דְאָגָה. מַרְבֶּה נָשִׁים, מַרְבֶּה כְשָׁפִים. מַרְבֶּה שְׁפָחוֹת, מַרְבֶּה זִמָּה. מַרְבֶּה עֲבָדִים, מַרְבֶּה גָזֵל. מַרְבֶּה תוֹרָה, מַרְבֶּה חַיִּים. מַרְבֶּה יְשִׁיבָה, מַרְבֶּה חָכְמָה. מַרְבֶּה עֵצָה, מַרְבֶּה תְּבוּנָה. מַרְבֶּה צְדָקָה, מַרְבֶּה שָׁלוֹם. קָנָה שֵׁם טוֹב, קָנָה לְעַצְמוֹ. קָנָה לוֹ דִּבְרֵי תוֹרָה, קָנָה לוֹ חַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא:

> He [Rabban Gamaliel the son of Rabbi Judah Hanasi in the 3rd century] was accustomed to say: The more flesh, the more worms. The more possessions, the more worry. The more wives, the more witchcraft. The more maidservants, the more lewdness. The more man-servants, the more theft. The more Torah, the more life. The more sitting [and studying], the more wisdom. The more counsel, the more understanding. The more charity, the more peace. One who

[260] Moshe Lieber, *The Pirkei Avos Treasury* (Brooklyn: Mesorah, 1997), 1:106.

> has acquired a good name has acquired for himself. One who has acquired words of Torah has acquired for himself the life of the World to Come.[261]

Seeking wisdom and counsel is paramount in *Mishna Avot* 2:7, which also suggests that having Torah is important to a happy life. Stemberger discusses that the style of Tractate *Avot* is written similar to wisdom literature.[262] *Avot* is most similar to Proverbs. Alouf suggests that "instead of binary parallelisms there are often tripartite wisdom sentences."[263] These tripartite wisdom sentences provide a common core of understanding that those who are writing and reading the *Mishna Avot* pull from a pre-existing concept. Alouf further suggest that "material in *Avot* is similar to the Greek χρεία, *chreia*, which is a witty saying preceded by a brief narrative context."[264] Saldarini suggests that *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* contains a wisdom element present in other wisdom literature.[265] In *Mishna Avot* 1:4 there is a commonality with Jesus's ministry in the exhortation by the early Maccabean, Yose ben Yoezer,[266] to sit at the feet of a rabbi. This sage advocates learning wisdom from teachers. In

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[261] *Pirkei Avot* 2:7.

[262] Günter Stemberger, *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: The Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean World* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 307. See also Manfred R. Lehmann, "Jewish Wisdom Formulae: Ben Sira, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Pirke Avot," In *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies, Div A: The Bible and the World*, 159–62. Jerusalem, 1994; Aaron Koller, "The Self-Referential Coda to Avot and the Egyptian-Israelite Literary Tradition of Wisdom," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 8 (2017): 2–25.

[263] Hilla Nava Alouf, "'Halokh ve-daber': Elijah the Prophet as a bearer of wisdom in rabbinic literature" (PhD Diss, New York University, 2017), 44.

[264] Ibid, 45.

[265] Anthony Saldarini, *Scholastic Rabbanism: A Literary Study of the Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* (Chico: Scholars, 1982).

[266] Rami Shapiro, *Ethics of the Sages* (Woodstock: Skylight Paths, 2006), 7; Sefaria.org translates the verse as "Yose ben Yoezer, man of Tsreida, and Yose ben Yochanan, man of Jerusalem, received from him. Yose ben Yoezer says, 'May your house be a meeting house for Sages, become dirty in the dust of their feet and drink their words thirstily.'" See *Pirkei Avot 1:4* (2018). *Sefaria.org*. Retrieved 22 March 2018, from https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.1.4).

Luke 10:39 (NRSV) it is written that Martha "… had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying".[267]

5.3 *Mishna Avot* 1:7 and Being Socially Astute

Mishna Avot 1:7

> נִתַּאי הָאַרְבֵּלִי אוֹמֵר, הִרָחֵק מִשָּׁכֵן רָע, וְאַל תִּתְחַבֵּר לָרָשָׁע, וְאַל תִּתְיָאֵשׁ מִן הַפֻּרְעָנוּת׃
> Nitai of Arbel says: "Distance [yourself] from a bad neighbour, do not befriend an evildoer and do not despair of punishment."

Mishna Avot 1:7 provides advice given as a proverb to distance oneself from an evildoer. Such teachings of the *Mishna* are similar Christianity's teaching.[268] Peter Schäfer contends that after Judaism and Christianity split ideologies, Judaism was seen as a parent to Christianity.[269] Philip Alexander notes that if one can connect the common thread overlapping and common amongst the different Jewish groups, then one can determine where divergence began to separate Christianity from Judaism and when Christianity parted from Judaism.[270] This similar theme that occurs in both the *Mishna Pirkei Avot* and the New Testament is the concept that a person should be mindful of how they are seen and judged by others, such as Matthew 7:1–6. It is possible that the *Mishna Avot* (completed circa 200 CE) was written in response to Christian neighbours:

> It could have been done in view of rising Christianity. The purpose might have been to demonstrate that Judaism is not an exclusively nomistic religion, but also possesses ethical-theological values and principles which are of equal

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[267] Rami Shapiro, *Ethics of the Sages* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths, 2006), 6. Culpepper contends that Avot 1:4 is similar to the teaching of Jesus found in the Sermon on the Mount, see Culpepper, 85. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski explains that the differences between Christian views are that Jesus is the path and Jewish teachings here are that Torah is to be sought, see Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah,* 76.

[268] Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah,* 84.

[269] See Peter Schäfer, *Mirror of His Beauty: Feminine Images of God from the Bible to the Early Kabbala* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 217–43.

[270] Philip S. Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," in *Jews and Christians: the parting of the ways, A.D. 70 to 135: The Second Durham-Tübingen Research Symposium on Earliest Christianity and Judaism* (Tübingen: Paul Siebeck, 1992), 2.

> importance. Hence it could have been an apologetic move against Christian attacks on Pharisaic Nomism as being the essence of Judaism.[271]

However, it is contested whether by 200 CE Christianity had made such a major impression on the world that Rabbinic Judaism and *Mishna Avot* would have felt compelled to combat it. Even if the *Mishna Avot* is a response to Christian neighbours, it does not mean that the words and concepts do not predate the redaction of the text.

During and before the Second Temple period, avoiding confrontation with people in authority involved creating a physical proximity and legal separation between oneself and another person. Some people such as Bar Kokba confronted Rome and were met with wrath. To preserve life, *Mishna Avot* 1:10 suggests "Love work; hate authority; and do not become too well known to the ruling power." Avot 1:10 is referenced to Shemaiah, who converted to Judaism and is said to be a distant descendant of King Sennacherib. It is good wisdom to have a good work ethic by not working too much or too little so as to avoid being scrutinised by the rulers over you. It is evident from Shemaiah's wisdom that his advice is to avoid being someone who raises suspicion. Jesus's own actions show that he tried to follow this: even when healing people he would say not to tell anyone [Matt 27:12]. Those seeking to have only a spiritual leadership could submit to Roman authority, whereas those who sought a Messiah from the line of David could not submit to Roman leadership. For example, the pacifist Essene community, the Pharisees who followed Hillel's teachings, and the Sadducees who followed Shammai (not Shemaiah as mentioned above) each developed different views on non-confrontation.

5.4 *Mishna Avot* 1:12 and Seeking Nonconfrontation

Mishna Avot 1:12

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[271] Alexander Guttman, "Abot: Its Place in Rabbinic Literature," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 41 (1950): 189.

הִלֵּל וְשַׁמַּאי קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. הִלֵּל אוֹמֵר, הֱוֵי מִתַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן, אוֹהֵב שָׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שָׁלוֹם, אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת וּמְקָרְבָן לַתּוֹרָה:

Hillel and Shammai received from them. Hillel says, 'Be of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving the creatures and bringing them closer to Torah.'[272]

According to tradition, Hillel (הלל) was born in Babylon in 110 BCE and died in 10 CE in Jerusalem, while Shammai was born in 50 BCE and died in 30 CE.[273] The significance of *Mishna Avot* 1:12 is in the action of being peaceful, and *Mishna Avot* 1:12 presents Aharon as one who loved and pursued peace. The quote also expresses the idea of loving creatures but discussion of that is beyond the scope of this dissertation. There is an element of love given to animals because of the sacredness they have.[274] The basis for the rabbinic view that Aaron embodied these attributes is in Malachi 2:6: "He walked with me in peace," which was

[272] *Pirkei Avot 1:12*. (2018). *Sefaria.org*. Retrieved 22 March 2018, from https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.1.12.

[273] The exact dating of Hillel and Shammai is left to the Oral Tradition, but we know from other writings that it overlapped with Herod the Great. It is assumed that the two houses of leadership existed until the destruction of the Temple. For more information on identifying who Hillel and Shammai are, see E. Schuerer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, vol. II, revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Black (Edinburgh: 1982), 362–63; G.F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era* (Cambridge:1946), 1:313; L.H. Feldman, "The identity of Pollio, the Pharisee, in Josephus," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 49 (1958): 53–62; I. Ben-Shalom, *The School of Shammai and the Zealots' Struggle against Rome* (Hebrew), (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1993), 289–92. There were many differences in theology and Torah interpretation for both Hillel and Shammai. It has been suggested by scholarship that the House of Shammai is wealthy aristocratic in nature while the House of Hillel was poor and pacifist in nature. For more information on the dates and life of Hillel and Shammai, see Moshe Simon-Shoshan, "'These and Those Are the Words of the Living God, but …': Meaning, Background, and Reception of an Early Rabbinic Teaching," *Association Jewish Studies* 45 (2021): 382–410. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski cautions that drawing parallels to Hillel's teachings and Jesus' teachings should be done with care because scholars will often try and draw theological conclusions about the superiority of Hillel or Jesus over one another. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski gives good advice that non-supersessionist theology should be the voice during comparison, see Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah*, 101. This dissertation takes this comparative model with care.

[274] It is noteworthy to state that during the time of *Mishna Avot 1:12* the priests in charge were from the line of Aaron; thus, they held a spiritual ordination from Aaron. This means that the line of Aaron would transmit the sin offering to an animal by laying hands on the neck of the animal on offering sacrifice. This was abolished with the downfall of the Temple and the transfer of Jewish leadership to the Pharisees. *Avot 1:12* shows the sacredness of the animal who will receive the sin offering.

interpreted by the rabbis as referring to Aaron (*Sanhedrin* 6b).[275] Similar peace sayings in *Mishna Avot* 1:18 easily prompt similar discussions of peace and justice.

5.5 *Mishna Avot* 1:3 and Examining Giving

> *Mishna Avot* 1:3
> אַנְטִיגְנוֹס אִישׁ סוֹכוֹ קִבֵּל מִשִּׁמְעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אַל תִּהְיוּ כַּעֲבָדִים הַמְשַׁמְּשִׁין אֶת הָרַב עַל מְנָת לְקַבֵּל פְּרָס, אֶלָּא הֱווּ כַּעֲבָדִים הַמְשַׁמְּשִׁין אֶת הָרַב שֶׁלֹּא עַל מְנָת לְקַבֵּל פְּרָס, וִיהִי מוֹרָא שָׁמַיִם עֲלֵיכֶם:
> Antigonos, man of Sokho, received from Shimon the Righteous.[276] He would say, 'Do not be as servants who are serving the master in order to receive a reward, rather be as servants who are serving the master not in order to receive a reward; and may the fear of Heaven be upon you.'[277]

Mishna Avot 1:3 provides critique on how people are giving and taking because our motivation for helping other people determines whether we have integrity. An awareness of *Mishna Avot* 1:3 among the Jewish audience of Jesus's Sermon would affect their perception of reward, punishment, and service received by others.[278] The sayings of Antigonos convey that a person should serve without expecting reward. To understand ethical service, one can look at how one gives to another person. Selfless giving does not mean you allow someone else taken advantage of you. A person should not become a doormat to another person under false religious doctrine or guidance. Those who heard the Sermon would have been acquainted with the concept that service to a person or to Rome would not bring a reward. A

[275] The Sanhedrin 6b states "Rather, the judge must assure that the true judgment will prevail at all costs and metaphorically pierce the mountain, as it is stated: "For the judgment is God's" (Deuteronomy 1:17). And similarly, Moses would say: Let the judgment pierce the mountain. But by contrast, Aaron, whose role was not that of a judge, was a lover of peace and a pursuer of peace, and he would apply peace between one person and the other, as it is stated: "The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found in his lips; he walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and turned many away from iniquity" (Malachi 2:6)." Culpepper contends that Avot 1:12 follows in the peace sayings of the Beatitudes and influences b. Ber. 64a, see Culpepper, 96.

[276] Simeon the Righteous is either Simon I (310–291 or 300–273 BCE), son of Onias I, and grandson of Jaddua, or Simon II (219–199 BCE), son of Onias II.

[277] *Pirkei Avot 1:12*. (2018). *Sefaria.org*.

[278] Joslyn-Siemiatkoski suggest that the Greco-Roman culture used the word *peras* as reward and refers not to money but to food rations to slaves, see Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah*, 63.

person must be obedient to both the state and to Torah without an expectation of reward. When a person gives to another, they are to be giving without regard to personal gain but for the benefit of the person they are helping. Some translations of *Mishna Avot* 1:3, מְנָת עֲלֵיכֶם לְקַבֵּל פְּרָס, render as "let the fear of Heaven be upon you."[279] The use of the word 'fear' can be confusing because it could insinuate dread. This is not the case. Rather the word suggests that "something is full of awe, wonder, and the might of God."[280] There is a dilemma about why a person is good and whether the action based on fear and punishment because if a person is only obedient due to fear of punishment, it does not actually determine if the character of a person is 'good'. E. P. Sanders believes that reward-and-punishment theology is not the guiding principle found in Jewish ethics in *Mishna.*[281] A person is not calculating that if they do a quantifiable amount of goodness, then they will receive a similar equitable reward in return. *Mishna Avot* 1:3 teaches that the actions and choices a person make ethically should not be based on reward and punishment from God: "Calculation of gain and loss should not determine the ethical act; nevertheless, all human acts are played out before God."[282] Although obedience of a person could be founded on fear (Deut 11:26–28; 28:15ff), the obedience of a person should not be founded on fear but on following Torah.

5.6 *Mishna Avot* 4:12 Reverence

Mishna Avot 4:12
רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן שַׁמּוּעַ אוֹמֵר, יְהִי כְבוֹד תַּלְמִידְךָ חָבִיב עָלֶיךָ כְּשֶׁלְּךָ, וּכְבוֹד חֲבֵרְךָ כְּמוֹרָא רַבְּךָ, וּמוֹרָא רַבְּךָ כְּמוֹרָא שָׁמָיִם:

[279] Kravitz and Olitzky, *Pirke Avot,* 3.

[280] Toperoff, *Avot,* 9. See also Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah,* 66 to understand how fear of God is different between Christianity and Judaism in terms of punishment.

[281] E. P Sanders, *Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[282] Kravitz and Olitzky, *Pirke Avot,* 3.

> Rabbi Elazar ben Shamua says: Let the honour of your student be dear to you as your own, and the honour of your fellow like the reverence of your teacher, and the reverence of your teacher like the reverence of Heaven.

The Jewish thought expressed in *Mishna Avot* after Jesus's time reveals the importance of respecting others. This concept of respect would be present in the Jewish audience's understanding of the Sermon. The command to love one's neighbour is in the Oral Law, defining social interaction in various circumstances surrounding disputes, money disagreements, anger outbursts, and even expressions of joy. The respect for a neighbour as seen in *Avot* 4:12 is the same whether Gentile or Jew based on a student-teacher relationship. Respect equates with how a person treats another human being.

Respect must be afforded to other people, and this respect is not limited to a person. The respect afforded other people is also relevant to property and chattel. *Mishna Avot* quotes Rabbi Yosi*: "*Let the property of your fellow be as dear to you as your own. Qualify yourself for the study of Torah, for the knowledge of it is not yours by inheritance. Let all your deeds be done for the sake of Heaven."[283] Actions must be upright and principled. Respecting others includes treating their property with respect as well. The application of *Mishna Avot 4:12* to Matthew 5:38–42 would suggest that the attitude of those listening the Sermon would be one of respect for Jesus as a teacher.

5.7 *Mishna Avot* 5:8 and Justice

At the time of Jesus, retributive justice was valued in the teachings of the people as seen in the Hebrew Bible. The concept and term "retributive justice" crystallised after the destruction of the Temple; however, the premise and values of retributive justice are the core

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[283] *Pirkei Avot* 2:17.

and underlying concepts imperative to interpreting and applying *lex talionis* as well as understanding equality in the Sermon on the Mount. Retributive justice is a corrective theory of justice; it argues that the wrong that has flourished needs to be expunged with retributive punishment.[284] A modern working definition of retributive justice is system of justice fixated on a need to negate wrong and reassert right.[285] The working justification for punishing the guilty is not based on the possible benefits or utility it will yield for the future. According to Jeffrie Murphy's reading of *Mishna*, the criminal, or more importantly, his crime, deserves the punishment. Society has the right to punish him/her, and according to this theory of justice the criminal an expectation of such.[286]

In the light of the Sermon, retributive justice allows for equality in retribution, and as a comparison, grace and forgiveness, are important to the rehabilitative justice by God extended to humanity. Theologically, one's understanding of God's retributive justice defines how a person understands God and atonement.[287] An elaboration of retributive justice is beyond the scope of this dissertation: suffice to say that a broad foundation of retributive justice based on the interpretation of God's character guides the hermeneutics of both the Bible and *Mishna Avot.* The task of defining retributive justice is uncomfortable and Joel

[284] The notion of the notion of divine retribution in Tannaitic literature is present in the development of Jewish retribution as found in the *Avot.* These questions of divine retribution are being wrestled with in these early writings on who would God punish people, when does God give rewards to people, who gets rewarded, and why would they get a reword. See Francesco Zanella, "Defining Identity through Divine Retribution in Tannaitic Judaism," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 23 (2020): 1–18.

[285] Jonathan Allen, "Balancing Justice and Social Unity: Political Theory and The Idea of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission," *The University of Toronto Law Journal* 49 (1999): 3:315–353. For a discussion of retributive justice and restorative justice, see Heidi Jokinen, "New Wineskin of Conflict Resolution: Conditions of Change in the Parable on Wineskin," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 50 (2020): 22–34; Lerato L.D Mokoena, and Esias E. Meyer, "Jehu's Violent Coup and the Justification of Violence," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 75 (2019): 1–6.

[286] See Jeffrie Murphy, *Philosophy of Law*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989).

[287] John Owen, *A Dissertation on Divine Justice, The Works of John Owen* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 10:487; T. Vail Palmer Jr., "Theorising a Quaker View of the Atonement," *Quaker Studies (Quaker Studies Research Association)*, 16 (2011): 105–23.

Green and Mark Baker, for instance, state in *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, that "The 'wrath of God' is, for Paul, not an effective response on the part of God, not the striking out of a vengeful God. As we have indicated, Paul's concern is not with retributive punishment."[288] Theologians such as Stephen Travis characterise the wrath of God as the natural outworking of divine consequences ensuing from sinful actions.[289] Goldingay clarifies what sin is within Leviticus:

> The problem with sin in Leviticus is not that sin involves infidelity or disloyalty to God which makes God angry but that sin pollutes, stains, and spoils, and thus makes people or things repulsive. The problem that sacrifice thus deals with is not anger but revulsion or rather repulsiveness.[290]

The concept of retributive justice would thus be centred, not on the concept that God is angry with someone and desires that they are punished, but rather that the person is repulsive and cannot be brought into the presence of goodness.

Understanding who *Mishna Avot* 5 is attributed to helps connect the origins of *Mishna Avot* 5 with very early writings similar to the time of Judah Ha-Nasi.[291] *Mishna Avot* 5:8 records a discussion about sin and the tithes and offerings one brings to the Temple for seven different categories of sin. *Mishna Avot* states:

> *Mishna Avot* 5:8
> שִׁבְעָה מִינֵי פֻרְעָנֻיּוֹת בָּאִין לָעוֹלָם עַל שִׁבְעָה גּוּפֵי עֲבֵרָה. מִקְצָתָן מְעַשְּׂרִין וּמִקְצָתָן אֵינָן מְעַשְּׂרִין, רָעָב שֶׁל בַּצֹּרֶת בָּאָה, מִקְצָתָן רְעֵבִים וּמִקְצָתָן שְׂבֵעִים. גָּמְרוּ שֶׁלֹּא לְעַשֵּׂר, רָעָב שֶׁל מְהוּמָה וְשֶׁל בַּצֹּרֶת בָּאָה. וְשֶׁלֹּא לִטֹּל אֶת הַחַלָּה, רָעָב שֶׁל כְּלָיָה בָּאָה. דֶּבֶר בָּא לָעוֹלָם עַל מִיתוֹת הָאֲמוּרוֹת

[288] Mark D. Baker and Joel B. Green, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011), 121–22.

[289] Stephen H. Travis, *Christ and the Judgment of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2009), 74–86.

[290] John Goldingay, "Your Iniquities Have Made a Separation between You and Your God," in *Atonement Today: A Symposium at St John's College, Nottingham* (London: SPCK, 1995), 51. For more information on the role of sin in the Book of Leviticus, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1998).

[291] For a discussion of the attributes of *Avot* 5 as a whole, see Derrett's discussion about *Mishna* influencing Buddhism before 200 C.E.: J. Duncan M. Derrett, "Mishnāh, 'Avôt 5: 13 in Early Buddhism," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 67 (2004): 79–87.

בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁלֹּא נִמְסְרוּ לְבֵית דִּין, וְעַל פֵּרוֹת שְׁבִיעִית. חֶרֶב בָּאָה לָעוֹלָם עַל עִנּוּי הַדִּין, וְעַל עִוּוּת הַדִּין, וְעַל הַמּוֹרִים בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁלֹּא כַהֲלָכָה:

> Seven kinds of punishment come to the world for seven categories of sin: [When] some of [the people] give tithes, and others do not give tithes, a famine from drought comes; and some go hungry, and others have plenty. [When] they all decide not to give tithes, a famine from tumult and drought comes. [And when they decide, in addition,] not to set apart the dough [offering], a famine of annihilation comes. Pestilence comes to the world for the death penalties set forth in the Torah that are not given over to the court [to carry out]; and for [violation of the laws governing] the produce of the Sabbatical year. [The] sword comes to the world for the delay of justice, and for the perversion of justice, and because of those who interpret the Torah counter to the accepted law.[292]

When the text in is read terms of retributive justice and in the knowledge that God has no pleasure in punishing people, a better understanding of justice and equality emerges.[293] A listener to the *Mishna Avot* understands that they must care for others as part of tithing. The Oral Law creates a climate of helping and doing good to others (one's neighbours). *Mishna Avot* 2:7 states: "He [Hillel] also saw a skull floating on the surface of the water. He said to it: because you have drowned others, you were drowned, and in the end, those who have drowned you will themselves be drowned."[294] In a dramatic fashion, Hillel demonstrates that when people do bad things to others, they also will have negative things happen to them in turn. Toperoff notes that "Rashi in Suk. 53a explains that the skull had been severed from the body with the victim identified as a robber who was himself murdered by other brigands."[295] In the *Mishna's* attempt to justify such harsh ethical actions it is claimed that the person who drowned was a robber; however, that was not in Hillel's statement, but it was a theology created to justify that bad things only happen to bad people. The comment about the floating

[292] *Pirkei Avot* 5:8.

[293] See Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah,* 248.

[294] *Pirkei Avot* 2:7.

[295] Toperoff, *Avot,* 95. Golden suggests that justice should be deliberate, see Judah Goldin. "Be Deliberate in Judgment" *Tarbiz* (1993): 617–19.

skill may have been personal to Hillel.[296] Hillel chose not to disclose the character or morality of person who died; rather, he chose only to say that bad things that happen to people are retributive in nature. Toperroff contends that *Avot* 2:7 teaches retributive justice.[297] The very basic level of retribution is present in Hillel's statement: "you were killed because you killed others, and those who killed you will themselves be killed" and retribution must have a point in which it stops between people.[298] The attitude of *doing to other people what they have done to you* has become part of human nature. If people are rude to you, you return their rudeness. Greed elicits greed. If people are in a loving and supportive environment, then their actions will reflect that same situation. Retributive justice in *Mishna Avot* resonates through Jesus's time and the Oral Law.

In relation to the neglect of these mitzvot, *Mishna Avot* identifies pestilence as the punishment for failing to give the poor man's tithe and other gifts of produce, and for neglecting observance of the Sabbatical year: This *Mishna* indicates that at least during certain eras, these laws were not observed by a majority of the Jewish population.[299]

5.8 *Mishna Avot* 1:10 and Not Creating Problems for Leadership

Mishna Avot 1:10:

שְׁמַעְיָה וְאַבְטַלְיוֹן קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. שְׁמַעְיָה אוֹמֵר, אֱהֹב אֶת הַמְּלָאכָה, וּשְׂנָא
אֶת הָרַבָּנוּת, וְאַל תִּתְוַדַּע לָרָשׁוּת

> Shemaiah and Abtalion received [the oral tradition] from them. Shemaiah used to say: love work, hate acting the superior, and do not attempt to draw near to the ruling authority [government].[300]

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[296] Kravitz and Olitzky, *Pirke Avot*, 22.

[297] Toperoff, *Avot*, 95.

[298] Eliyahu Touger, *Maimonides Pirkei Avot* (New York: Moznaim, 1994), 83.

[299] Shemuel Safrai and M Stern, *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974), 311.

[300] *Pirkei Avot 1:10*. (2020). *Sefaria.org*.

As mentioned before briefly, Jewish ethical thought at Jesus's time was connected to *Mishna Avot* through the understanding of how people should avoid conflict and love work.[301] The *Mishna Avot* lays a basis for the attitude to government to be adopted by Jewish people during the time of Jesus. That one should avoid being under the spotlight of the government, "known" or "familiar" to the government is fundamental to Jewish ethical teaching, as is the idea that people are to avoid laziness. *Mishna Avot* 1:10 discusses work and authority and, in doing so, creates an understanding that those in political control should not be questioned by people who are subservient. Jesus taught a principle of *loving one's neighbour.* This same principle is found in Leviticus 19:18, which states, "Love your neighbour as yourself," and this is most likely the source of what Jesus said.

Mishna Avot describes a situation in which workers are pressed by a taskmaster in order to prevent laziness in the workforce. *Mishna Avot* 2:15 states:

> רַבִּי טַרְפוֹן אוֹמֵר, הַיּוֹם קָצָר וְהַמְּלָאכָה מְרֻבָּה, וְהַפּוֹעֲלִים עֲצֵלִים, וְהַשָּׂכָר הַרְבֵּה, וּבַעַל הַבַּיִת דּוֹחֵק
>
> *Rabbi Tarfon said: the day is short, and the work is plentiful, and the laborers are indolent, and the reward is great, and the master of the house is insistent.*[302]

There is an assumption that people will be lazy, as Rabbi Judah in *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah* 70:20. Hard work and ethical living are imperative. The ethical response for a Jewish listener to the Sermon is to shun laziness, overcoming it with practical industry.

5.9 *Mishna Avot* 3:2 and Matthew 25:40—Peace as Submission

Mishna Avot 3:2

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[301] Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah,* 89.

[302] *Pirkei Avot 2:15*. (2020). *Sefaria.org*. Retrieved 28 October 2020, from https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.2.15.

רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל אוֹמֵר, הֱוֵי קַל לְרֹאשׁ, וְנוֹחַ לְתִשְׁחֹרֶת, וֶהֱוֵי מְקַבֵּל אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם בְּשִׂמְחָה

Rabbi Ishmael said: be suppliant to a superior, submissive under compulsory service, and receive every man happily.

Matthew 25:40
καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐρεῖ αὐτοῖς Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ἐφ᾽ ὅσον ἐποιήσατε ἑνὶ τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων ἐμοὶ ἐποιήσατε.[303]
And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

Mishna Avot 3:2 discuss peaceful actions and Matthew 25:40 addresses loving one's neighbour. Both speak about peaceful actions towards other people. Peaceful submission has a foundation in the Torah's laws about regard for authority. How a person responds ethically to a ruler in charge over them, including a king, shows how they relate to others around them in society. Herring states, "the status of nonhalakhic authority can be discussed in the first place in the context of the laws of the king. Deuteronomy 17:14–20(A)."[304] Torah limited the powers of the king. "Peace only" has been seen frequently as a view of submission. These views support the idea that "Jesus's teaching in substance is not radically divergent from that recorded in *Mishna Avot*. Just as the traditions attributed to the rabbis of *Mishna Avot* emphasise the importance of keeping the Torah, so Jesus embraces the Torah."[305] The *Mishna Avot* does teach submission to authority and those in power over you.

Avot 3:2 and Matthew 25:40 suggest that people should treat all people fairly. The traditions in *Mishna Avot* attributed to Rabbi Yishmael (born 90 CE in Galilee) teach that one should act cautiously against an oppressive government. Rabbi Yishmael created the Thirteen

[303] All Greek Bible verses are from Barclay M. Newman, *The UBS Greek New Testament: A Reader's Edition* (Tubingen: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2001).

[304] Basil F. Herring, *Jewish Ethics and Halakhah for our Time* (New York: KTAV, 1984), 128. See also Herring on a discussion about Halakah and Jewish Ethics, Basil F. Herring, *Jewish Ethics and Halakhah for Our Time* (New York: KTAV, 1984). For a discussion on Jewish ethics and *halakhah*, see Deborah Barer, "Ethics and Halakhah: Reframing the Question," *Journal of Jewish Ethics* 5 (2019): 180–206.

[305] Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *"Moses received the Torah at Sinai and handed it on (Mishna Avot 1:1): the relevance of the written and oral Torah for Christians," Anglican Theological Review* 91 (2009): 443–466.

Hermeneutic Principles to interpret Torah, and part of this teaching was embedded in all people studying Torah for generations after.[306] The ethical statements of *Mishna* became the rationale for people to wait patiently for political change. *Mishna Avot* advises against standing out from the crowd. As previously quoted in *Mishna Avot* 1:10, [Shammai] said: "Love work; hate authority; and do not become too well known to the ruling power." This admonishment to love work and hate authority is connected to Micah 4:1–4 and the prophecy of a peaceful kingdom. Scott contends that Micah 4:1–4 is a messianic prophecy about a peaceful people following Torah and that people are not learning war.[307] Micah 4:1–4 (NRSV) reads:

> In days to come, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised up above the hills. Peoples shall stream to it,/ and many nations shall come and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem,/ He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;/ but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.

The kingdom heralded by the messiah brings peace. This peace makes redundant the need to learn the art of warfare. The peace brought is heralded by the messiah as the leader. Fahey contends that the kingdom of peace described in Micah 4 is based on justice and there is no

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[306] Moshe Lieber and Nosson Scherman, *The Pirkei Avos Treasury* (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1995). For more on the Thirteen Hermeneutic Principles, see Aviram. Ravitsky, "Talmudic Methodology and Aristotelian Logic: David Ibn Bilia's Commentary on the Thirteen Hermeneutic Principles," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 99 (2009): 184–99.

[307] Scott, *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament,* 350. For more on the biblical principles of war and peace, see Paul Kalluveettil, "The Warrior God and the Prince of Peace: Biblical Perspectives on War and Peace," *Journal of Dharma* 27 (2002): 291–308.

bloodshed.[308] Justice is the virtue understood for the peace. Justice found in the *Avot* was pivotal to the author of Matthew's understanding of a peaceful kingdom during the time of the Sermon.

The type of person characterised in Micah 4 is similar to the submissive character in *Mishna Avot* as a person who is willing to submit to authority. The role of submission in *Mishna Avot* can be seen further in the role in which a person feels valued and plays a part in the peace process. In the *Avot*, it is said that "Hillel used to say: If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am for myself only, what am I? And if not now, when?" (1:14). People must be self-aware of their own actions and likewise aware that other people could be deceitful.

Although the Old Testament has violence and peace as essential parts of the narrative, peace and submission are also taught. Many stories in the Old Testament are quite violent. Neville states:

> Since violence is so much a part of … the biblical record, is it not implausible to suggest that the Bible envisages peace as primary? Not only does it contain stories of violence between humans, as in the case of Cain's primal killing of his brother Abel, but it also envisages God responding to human violence with overwhelming violence, as in the case of the liquidating flood.[309]

The eschatological violence (as seen in other passages such as *4 Ezra*) ushers in the messianic era.[310] The book of 4 *Ezra*, though written in Hebrew and Aramaic, has no original copy, even though the early church cited the book, we have not found the original source.[311] In

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[308] Joseph J. Fahey, *War and the Christian Conscience* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008), 32.

[309]David J. Neville, "Toward a hermeneutic of shalom: reading texts of teleological terror in peace perspective," *Word & World* 34 (2014): 339–348.

[310]Michael E. Stone, "Coherence and Inconsistency in The Apocalypses: The Case of 'The End' in 4 Ezra," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 (1983): 232.

[311] The violence in *4 Ezra* depicts a violent reckoning for God at the end of time and this is juxtaposed with the actions of humankind, who cannot fight back. This violence precedes a season of peace in the messianic era. See Rivka Ulmer, "Apocalypticism in the Homiletic Text of Pesiqta Rabbati: Catastrophic Events

these apocryphal texts the Jews are seen to be ushering in a messianic figure. A similar view is given in 2 *Baruch*. Richard Bauckham states:

> Early Christianity was both continuous and discontinuous with first-century Judaism. Its theology shared many features of contemporary Jewish thought, though these were given a distinctively Christian character by their relationship to Christianity's unique faith in Jesus Christ. As in the case of many other issues, an adequate account of the understanding of the delay of the parousia in early Christianity must reflect both the continuity and the discontinuity with Judaism.
>
> In some respects the problem of the delay of the parousia was the same problem of eschatological delay which had long confronted Jewish apocalyptic eschatology; in other respects it was a new and distinctively Christian problem, in that the End was now expected to take the form of the parousia of Jesus Christ in whose death and resurrection God had already acted eschatologically.[312]

The challenge to create a peaceful kingdom of submission based on a Parousia of Jesus Christ is possible albeit diverse even though Judaism and Christianity shared a similar thought. It must be noted that at the time of Jesus some Jews, like the Samaritan woman in John 4, believed still in the prophets and the messianic era, and Jesus. Bauckham contends that "Judaism and New Testament religion are really the same" in that they share common origins and ethical paradigms [313,] Sandmel does accurately state that "Judaism and Christianity became different religions over time," and as the time progressed further from Jesus so did the understanding of resistance.[314] Matthew is of course not the earliest book in the New Testament but it carries the eschatological theme. This prominence contrasts with views of

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at the End of Time," *Journal for the Study of Judaism: In the Persian Hellenistic & Roman Period* 50 (2019): 101–39.

[312]Richard Bauckham, "The Delay of the Parousia," *Tyndale Bulletin* 31 (1980), 1.

[313] Ibid. See also, Pablo Gadenz, "Law and Ethics in Early Judaism and the New Testament," *Biblica* 100 (2019): 466–69.

[314] David Fox Sandmel, "The Christian Reclamation of Judaism," 251–63. Cosentino discusses issue of Pauline Christianity diverging form Jewish origins, see Augusto Cosentino, "Jewishness and Non- (Or Anti-) Jewishness in the Pauline Corpus," *Henoch* 38 (2016): 221–32.

pacifism and peace found in Matthew 5:38–42 in which a peaceful image of non-resistance or submission is depicted by Jesus.

The rabbis often had to interact with the Roman authorities for the sake of the Jewish community, and this interaction required peaceful submission. This became problematic because prominent rabbis who became official liaisons to the Roman government had the ability to protect their own lives and the lives of fellow Jews if any of them said or did anything that angered the Roman government while often having to speak in ways that would not upset the Roman leadership.

The traditions attributed to the rabbis also address the abuse of power observed in the Roman Empire. The warnings in *Avot* 1:10 about not being noticeable to the government are based on bitter personal experience. The Romans did entice members of the Jewish community to serve as informants against their fellow Jews. Some Jews became collaborators with the Romans and were paid hefty bribes to do so. However, when the Romans no longer needed these Jewish collaborators or had the smallest suspicion about their loyalty, they were ruthlessly eliminated. This ethical principle of being scrupulous with authority is applicable from *Mishna Avot* 2:3: “Be careful in dealing with the ruling power; for they draw no one near to themselves except for their own interests. They appear as friends when it is to their advantage, but they do not stand by an individual in his time of need.” Yet even under Rome, the rabbis understood the necessity of the political system and the need for government to help control society. *Mishna Avot 3:2* points out that “each person would swallow their neighbour alive.” Human beings could very possibly destroy each other if there were no authority in place to prevent it.

The rabbis realised that realistically they had no way of amassing a large army to use against the Roman forces; they also had no financial means to organise the Jewish community effectively against Rome. This left them with but one option—to be submissive

to Rome while working quietly behind the scenes asking God to intervene and treating everyone with love and respect.

5.10 *Mishna Avot* 2:4 and the Role of Community

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, עֲשֵׂה רְצוֹנוֹ כִּרְצוֹנְךָ, כְּדֵי שֶׁיַּעֲשֶׂה רְצוֹנְךָ כִּרְצוֹנוֹ. בַּטֵּל רְצוֹנְךָ מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנוֹ, כְּדֵי שֶׁיְּבַטֵּל רְצוֹן אֲחֵרִים מִפְּנֵי רְצוֹנֶךָ. הִלֵּל אוֹמֵר, אַל תִּפְרֹשׁ מִן הַצִּבּוּר, וְאַל תַּאֲמִין בְּעַצְמְךָ עַד יוֹם מוֹתְךָ, וְאַל תָּדִין אֶת חֲבֵרְךָ עַד שֶׁתַּגִּיעַ לִמְקוֹמוֹ, וְאַל תֹּאמַר דָּבָר שֶׁאִי אֶפְשָׁר לִשְׁמֹעַ, שֶׁסּוֹפוֹ לְהִשָּׁמַע. וְאַל תֹּאמַר לִכְשֶׁאִפָּנֶה אֶשְׁנֶה, שֶׁמָּא לֹא תִפָּנֶה:

> He [Rabban Gamaliel, son of Juda ha Nasi] used to say: do His will as though it were your will, so that He will do your will as though it were His. Set aside your will in the face of His will, so that he may set aside the will of others for the sake of your will. Hillel said: do not separate yourself from the community, Do not trust in yourself until the day of your death, Do not judge your fellow man until you have reached his place. Do not say something that cannot be understood [trusting] that in the end it will be understood. Say not: 'when I shall have leisure I shall study;' perhaps you will not have leisure.

The view during the time of Jesus was to not withdraw oneself from the larger community of people.[315] This view of the community is found in the sayings of the *Avot* in regard to remaining separate from the community in which one resides. The communitarianism mindset in the *Avot* determines how people act ethically with justice and equality amongst themselves. *Mishna Avot* 2:4 quotes Hillel, stating, "do not abandon community."[316] There may have been communities who lived out away from society such as the Essenes, but they still congregated together for community connection. *Mishna Avot* 2:4 demonstrates the thinking about community near the time of Jesus. Hillel flourished immediately prior to Jesus, and his words were widely discussed in Pharisaic circles, and so could be known to those who heard Jesus. For those who apply *Avot* into their life, the

[315] Joslyn-Siemiatkoski suggests that Avot 2:4 is similar to Christian thought in that followers of Jesus must submit to God's authority, see Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah,* 127.

[316] Shapiro, *Ethics of the Sages,* 21.

encouragement is to become part of a community.[317] This was evident with the people who surrounded Jesus, they became part of his community. When writing the Talmud, Rashi (also known as Shlomo Yitzhaki) explained that it is the duty of a person to help community as well as study Torah.[318] Rashi's view is consistent that Torah is important; however, one must ensure that the community is taken care of. The New Testament stories in Matthew 10:2–4 show the evident mindset of being in community and studying under Jesus. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem described in Matthew 21:8–11 is an example of a community in support of Jesus. In this action followers of Jesus practiced the precepts found in *Avot* 2:4. The followers of Jesus in each example did exactly that—follow Jesus.

5.10.1 *Mishna Avot* 3:12 and Peaceful Work

רַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל אוֹמֵר, הֱוֵי קַל לְרֹאשׁ, וְנוֹחַ לְתִשְׁחֹרֶת, וְהֱוֵי מְקַבֵּל אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם בְּשִׂמְחָה׃

> Rabbi Ishmael said: be suppliant to a superior, submissive under compulsory service, and receive every man happily.

The Oral Traditions in *Mishna Avot* 3:12 show an attitude of compliance and submission to superiors. The *Mishna* imparts that people should be patient with the ruling government, and this practice would keep violent uprising in check. Interestingly enough, during the time of Jesus, the high priest Ishmael ben Elisha (Ishmael ben Elisha ha-Kohen) is the grandfather of Rabbi Yishmael, to whom *Mishna Avot* 3:12 is attributed.[319] The guidance in *Mishna Avot* is very appropriate with respect to how the Jewish people responded to the Roman leadership ruling over the Jewish people. The character of a person is what allows

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[317] Toperoff, *Avot,* 89.

[318] Kravitz and Olitzky, *Pirkei Avot,* 22.

[319] Barukh A. Levine, *The JPS Commentary: Leviticus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 130.

submission to an oppressive ruler and is what allows patience. The people listening to the Sermon would be learning just such patience. This view of obedience to government permeated Jewish thought during the time of Jesus and was in juxtaposition to a revolutionary stance. However, it should also be noted that there were Jews who were strong advocates of rebellion and war against Rome; *Mishna Avot* and Jesus represent those Jews who wanted submission and not rebellion.

5.10.2 *Mishna Avot* 3:2 and the Role of Praying

> רַבִּי חֲנִינָא בֶן תְּרַדְיוֹן אוֹמֵר, שְׁנַיִם שֶׁיּוֹשְׁבִין וְאֵין בֵּינֵיהֶן דִּבְרֵי תוֹרָה, הֲרֵי זֶה מוֹשַׁב לֵצִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וּבְמוֹשַׁב לֵצִים לֹא יָשָׁב. אֲבָל שְׁנַיִם שֶׁיּוֹשְׁבִין וְיֵשׁ בֵּינֵיהֶם דִּבְרֵי תוֹרָה, שְׁכִינָה שְׁרוּיָה (תהלים א) אָז נִדְבְּרוּ יִרְאֵי יְיָ אִישׁ אֶל רֵעֵהוּ וַיַּקְשֵׁב יְיָ וַיִּשְׁמָע וַיִּכָּתֵב סֵפֶר זִכָּרוֹן (מלאכי ג) בֵּינֵיהֶם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר לְפָנָיו לְיִרְאֵי יְיָ וּלְחֹשְׁבֵי שְׁמוֹ. אֵין לִי אֶלָּא שְׁנַיִם, מִנַּיִן שֶׁאֲפִלּוּ אֶחָד שֶׁיּוֹשֵׁב וְעוֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה, שֶׁהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא קוֹבֵעַ לוֹ שָׂכָר, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יֵשֵׁב בָּדָד וְיִדֹּם כִּי נָטַל עָלָיו (איכה ג)
>
> Rabbi Hanina, the vice-high priest said: pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for the fear it inspires, every man would swallow his neighbour alive. R. Hananiah ben Teradion said: if two sit together and there are no words of Torah [spoken] between them, then this is a session of scorners, as it is said: "nor sat he in the seat of the scornful…[rather, the teaching of the Lord is his delight]" (Psalms 1:1); but if two sit together and there are words of Torah [spoken] between them, then the Shekhinah abides among them, as it is said: "then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another; and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name" (Malachi 3:16). Now I have no [scriptural proof for the presence of the Shekhinah] except [among] two, how [do we know] that even one who sits and studies Torah the Holy One, blessed be He, fixes his reward? As it is said: "though he sit alone and [meditate] in stillness, yet he takes [a reward] unto himself" (Lamentations 3:28).

Mishna Avot 3:2 suggests that prayer for welfare of the government promotes peace in the community. Prayer can be offered in a group of people, and then the presence of the Lord is with them. In Matthew 18:20 (NRSV) Jesus says, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." This has a strong parallel to *Mishna Avot* 3:2 where the Shekinah is said to abide among those who are speaking the Torah. *Mishna Avot* 3:2 states: "Pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for fear of it, each person would swallow their neighbour alive," which suggests that prayer protects people against the

tyranny of government. As a people prays for the government's stability, anarchy is also at a low. When people are praying for their government, they have some control, through the act of prayer, over their own lives by presenting petitions to God, even if they are effective or not. There is a psychological impact on the person praying that liberates them from a feeling of powerlessness. Having people feel as if God hears your prayers empowers them when they feel hopeless. When a person is praying for the government, there is a tendency not to feel alienated from the government's decision-making. Jews have historically been loyal to governments throughout history.[320] Throughout history, when Jews have prayed for peace in all things (while not in a state of rebellion themselves) as found for example in Matthew 6:9–13 with its prayer for unity, they were an actual asset to the ruling government. Prayer for the welfare of the government became a factor in peaceful submission and a method to prevent rebellion amongst the people.

5.11 Chapter Conclusion

Jewish ethical and political thought at Jesus's time is connected to *Mishna Avot*. The concepts of charity, justice, and peace tell a story in the Torah. The Torah scholars before the time of Jesus such as Yose ben Yoezer helped build the foundation of Torah instruction that became the *Mishna*. Some of these teachings include *Avot* 6:4 and the instruction to live a Torah-filled life. The instruction in the *Avot* builds happiness and further in *Avot* 2:6 the concept of restraint is presented with Torah observant people. The *Avot* also teaches that seeking wisdom and truth is found in Torah; thus, it was emulated by people learning from rabbis, including those like Mary who sat at Jesus's feet.

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[320] Toperoff, *Avot,* 138.

Another ethical and political correlation from *Avot* and Jesus is found in *Avot* 1:7 in that one must be socially astute. An individual should not be gullible. A kingdom of peace with peaceful citizenry represented a goal of the Jewish nation at the time of Jesus through the concept of nonconfrontation in *Avot* 1:12. These non-retaliatory concepts formed the premise of ethical thought. Reverence as identified in *Avot* 4:12 is the foundation of respecting others. The chapter further develops that in order to be respecting others and be non-retaliatory that retributive justice would be the foundation using these core values of non-retaliation, restraint, wisdom, and truth. Different aspects of ethics regulated and defined how the Jewish people lived their lives: they were to lend money ethically, adhere to ethics in war, and ultimately be a people of compassion. It was demonstrated that *Mishna Avot* influenced society by strongly advocating wisdom and counsel, separation from evildoers, and being a peacemaker and in doing so, not creating problems for leadership. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the similarity of *Avot* 3:12 and Matthew 25:40 and showing the similarity between the two texts while providing respect for all people in the actions done within the community one lives in through work and prayer.

CHAPTER 6 *LEX TALIONIS* IN THE HEBREW BIBLE, ROMAN LAW, AND MISHNAH

6.1 Introduction

An early criterion of legal justice was known as "*lex talionis,"* which creates a standard of retributive punishment for injury. As noted in this dissertation, the legal criterion of *lex talionis* has had many cultural and political views from empires surrounding the Jewish nation in Torah and the Jewish nation refined it for their context. The principles of Matthew 5:38–42 (see also Matt 5:17, 19, 21, 27, 31, 33, 43 for similar thought) coincide with the Roman views of *lex talionis* contained in the Roman Twelve Tablets dating from 450 BCE. [321] The *lex talionis* from the Twelve Tables in Roman law defines retaliatory justice.[322] The Latin from the Twelve Tables in Roman law says, *Si membrum rupsit, ni cum eo pacit, talio esto*.[323] Warmington translates this text, "when anyone breaks a member of another, and is unwilling to come to make a settlement with him, he shall be punished by the law of retaliation."[324] The *lex talionis* allows for a settlement of money under the Roman law and allows for retaliation when a solution has not been reached.

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[321] See Charles E. Cruise, "A Methodology for Detecting and Mitigating Hyperbole in Matthew 5:38-42," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 61 (2018): 83–103; Lesley Adkins and Roy Adkins, *Handbook To Life In Ancient Rome* (New York: Facts on File, 2009) and Harvey J Kugelmass, *Lex Talionis in the Old Testament* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1985), 1. The laws of *Lex Talionis* predate the time of Jesus and were first written down in 450 BCE on the eighth tablet of the Roman Twelve Tablets. For a discussion on how the Code of Hammurabi predates the Pentateuch, see James Bennett Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994), 526.

[322] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42*, 97; Yakir Paz, "The Torah of the Gospel: A Rabbinic Polemic against The Syro-Roman Lawbook," *Harvard Theological Review* 112 (2019): 517–40.

[323] E. H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin, Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 477.

[324] S. P. Scott, *The Civil Law—Including the Twelve Tables, The Institutes of Gaius, The Rules of Ulpian, The Opinions of Paulus, The Enactments of Justinian, and the Constitutions of Leo:*

In the Twelve Roman Law Tablets, the concept of retaliatory justice is a guiding principle.[325] The concepts of the Roman Twelve Tablets are uniquely intertwined with Matthew 5:38–42 in terms of legal authority and responsibility towards other human beings. The concepts in Matthew 5:38–42 are part of Jesus's discussion on human conflict. The principles of Jesus's morality were difficult for the common person. Reinhold Niebuhr saw Jesus's ethics as transcending human possibility with love connected with moral perfection, as found in the Sermon.[326]

6.2 *Lex Talionis* in the Hebrew Bible

Lex talionis occurs in three places in the Hebrew Bible: Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20 and Deut 19:21. Vod Rad contends that the talion in Deuteronomy, "occupies merely a modest position" because of the influence of the rest of Torah.[327] The Torah provides a different version of a talion with Leviticus 24:20 being the shortest version of the talion. In the Hebrew Bible, the text reads שֵׁן, עַיִן תַּחַת עַיִן, שֶׁבֶר תַּחַת which may be translated as "fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth". A longer version is found in Exod 21:22–25:

22 וְכִי־יִנָּצוּ אֲנָשִׁים וְנָגְפוּ אִשָּׁה הָרָה וְיָצְאוּ יְלָדֶיהָ וְלֹא יִהְיֶה אָסוֹן עָנוֹשׁ יֵעָנֵשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר יָשִׁית עָלָיו בַּעַל הָאִשָּׁה וְנָתַן בִּפְלִלִים׃

23 וְאִם־אָסוֹן יִהְיֶה וְנָתַתָּה נֶפֶשׁ תַּחַת נָפֶשׁ׃

24 עַיִן תַּחַת עַיִן שֵׁן תַּחַת שֵׁן יָד תַּחַת יָד רֶגֶל תַּחַת רָגֶל׃

Translated from the Original Latin, Edited, and Compared with All Accessible Systems of Jurisprudence Ancient and Modern (Cincinnati: Central Trust Company Publishers, 1932), 7.

[325] James F. Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2005), 97. For recent scholarship about the Tablets, see Matthias Armgardt, "Why a Paradigm Change in Pentateuch Research Is Necessary. The Perspective of Legal History," *Supplement to the Akkadian Dictionaries* 2 (2019): 79–91.

[326] See Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1935).

[327] Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy* (London: SCM, 1988).

25 כְּוִיָּה תַּחַת כְּוִיָּה פֶּצַע תַּחַת פֶּצַע חַבּוּרָה תַּחַת [328]

> When people who are fighting injure a pregnant woman so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no further harm follows, the one responsible shall be fined what the woman's husband demands, paying as much as the judges determine. If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (NRSV)

The Hebrew Bible presents the legal concept that the punishment should fit the crime.[329] The Hebrew Bible introduces that idea that a talion would extend into areas of women's unborn children and as well as to the hands, feet, eyes, teeth, and hands of people. If a person was to have the exact action done in return to them for a damage, they would cut a hand off for stealing. Much later did a monetary valuation that allowed for exacting justice without causing harm to occur.

6.3 Retribution in *Mishna Avot* compared to *Lex Talionis*

Retribution in *Mishna Avot* compares to *lex talionis* and determines how people respond to conflict. *Mishna Avot* 1:7 states, "Nittai the Arbelite said: Keep far from an evil neighbour, and do not associate with the wicked; and do not despair about retribution." Berlin and Brettler argue that the scales of justice under Jewish law for crime and punishment balance and fit.[330] The value of justice found in Jewish law is the premise of equality in

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[328] *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: With Werkgroep Informatica, Vrije Universiteit Morphology; Bible. O.T. Hebrew*. Werkgroep Informatica, Vrije Universiteit (Logos Bible Software, 2006), Ex 21:22–25.

[329] One might cite the Laws of Hammurabi by means of comparison. For example, "209 If an awilu strikes a woman of the awilu-class and thereby causes her to miscarry her fetus, he shall weigh and deliver 10 shekels of silver for her fetus. 210 If that woman should die, they shall kill his daughter. 211 If he should cause a woman of the commoner-class to miscarry her fetus by the beating, he shall weigh and deliver 5 shekels of silver. 212 If that woman should die, he shall weigh and deliver 30 shekels of silver. 213 If he strikes an awilu's slave woman and thereby causes her to miscarry her fetus, he shall weigh and deliver 2 shekels of silver. 214 If that slave woman should die, he shall weigh and deliver 20 shekels of silver" Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1997), 123. These laws prescribe different penalties depending on the social status of the women involved.

[330] Adele Berlin, Marc Zvi Brettler and Michael Fishbane, *The Jewish Study Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 154. Nittai the Arbelite was vice-president of the Sanhedrin under the nasi Joshua ben

retribution. Worth argues that "In the world that Israel lived, vengeance was the rule of the day … they were being told that they could exact nothing more than justice."[331] Being treated fairly would be seen as desirable by Jesus's audience. Reiser suggests that Jesus was speaking about an eschatological judgment for the world.[332] This view of judgment founded in such reckoning defines the viewpoint of eschatology and retribution; however, this view created fear in many people. Fahey contends that attributing revenge to the Law of Talion is more negative than intended.[333] The Jewish idea of keeping a distance from an evildoer expressed in *Mishna Avot* could be viewed from the perspective of either a person's holiness or their imminent judgment. Allison suggests that Jewish apocalyptic believers accepted this eschatological view.[334] Cohen notes that a person's holiness or imminent justice would not allow a person to do wrong to others in fear of being punished divinely.[335] *Mishna Avot* (1:12) also teaches that "Hillel and Shammai received (Torah) from them. Hillel said: Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow creatures and bringing them near to the Torah." Bringing people to Torah was part of the pursuit of peace.

Perachyah at the time of John Hyrcanus (r. 134–104 BCE). See also comparison to Talion and Samson narrative: Helen Paynter, "Revenge for My Two Eyes: Talion and Mimesis in the Samson Narrative," *Biblical Interpretation* 26 (2018): 133–57.

[331] Roland H Worth, *The Sermon on the Mount* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 231.

[332] Marius Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997).

[333] Joseph J. Fahey, *War and the Christian Conscience* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), 74. For a discussion on the violence of retribution according to the Yahweh tradition, see Lerato Mokoena and Esias E. Meyer, "Jehu's Violent Coup and the Justification of Violence," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 75 (2019): 1–6.

[334] D. C. Allison, *Resurrecting Jesus: The Earliest Christian Tradition and its Interpreters* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 56–100.

[335] Beryl D. Cohen, *Jacob's Well: Some Jewish Sources and Parallels to the Sermon on the Mount* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1956), 58. For a discussion about the apocalypse and holiness, see Raymond L Sickinger, "Apocalypse Now: Magic and the Millennium," *Journal of Popular Culture* 34 (2001): 183.

Cohen states that perhaps, like Matthew, the writer of *Mishna* anticipated punishment, even 'Gehenna.'[336]

The role of retribution could be political or communal, and both the *Lex Talionis* and the theology of retribution in *Mishna Avot* give counsel about this. *Mishna Avot* warns against the misuse of communal and political power. As already mentioned, in *Mishna Avot* 3:2 it is stated that "Rabbi Haninah, the vice-high priest, said: Pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for fear of it, each person would swallow their neighbour alive." The limitations of the power afforded to the community and to the political party are in balance in *Mishna Avot.* Jesus's reference to *lex talionis* in Matt 5:38 has commonalities with *Mishna Avot* 3:2.

Matthew 5:38–42 is an outflowing of contemporary Jewish discussion on non-violence and retaliatory justice.[337] David Stern agrees that *lex talionis* and Matthew 5:38–42 are connected. Later sayings in *Mishna Talmud* carry the intellectual thought of the Sermon, especially in *Bava Kama* 8:1:

> One who wounds his neighbor is liable to pay the following five things: damage, pain, healing, loss of time, and disgrace. "Damage." – If he blinds one's eye, cuts off his hand, or breaks his leg, the injured person is considered as if he were a slave sold in the market, and he is appraised at his former and his present value. "Pain." – If he burns him with a spit or with a nail, if even only on the nail (of his hand or foot), where it produces no wound, it is appraised how much a man his equal would take to suffer such pain. "Healing." – If he caused him bodily injury, he must heal him; if pus collected by reason of the wound, he must cause him to be healed; if, however, not by reason of the wound, he is free. If the wound heals up and breaks out again, even several times, he must cause it to be healed; if, however, it once heals up thoroughly, he is no more obliged to heal it. "Loss of time." – The injured person is considered as if he were a watchman of a pumpkin field, as he was already paid the value of his hand or foot. The disgrace is appraised with

[336] Cohen, 1958

[337] James G. Crossley, *Review* of *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42*," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 26 (2006): 50. See also, Francois P. Viljoen, "A Call for Peacemaking: A Perspective from the Sermon on the Mount," *In Die Skriflig* 55 (2021): 1–8.

> consideration of the station and rank of the one who causes as well as of the one who suffers it.[338]

Bava Kama 8:1 looks at the concept of retaliation for damages and provides just and ethical methods to compensate for wrongdoing. This is a divergence from causing 'harm for harm' towards another person. This progression of justice within *Bava Kama* 8:1 is continuity between the Hebrew Scriptures and the understanding found in New Testament texts. David Fox Sandmel suggests that the development of *Mishna Bava Kama* shows a similarity to both the Old Testament and the New Testament.[339] *Bava Kama* 8:1 demonstrates how *lex talionis* has limitations on retribution. Stern further suggests that the view of Judaism found in *Bava Kama* 8:1 and the New Testament are foundationally the same.[340]

At the time of the Sermon, there would be similar thoughts to justice and harm. Even though both religions had a similar foundation, by the time the *Avot* was written, the religions had become very different in their interpretation of a messianic figure.[341] Vermes teaches contrary to Stern and suggests that Matthew 5:38–42 is exaggerated in nature.[342] According to Vermes, Matthew 5:38–42 is good but not morally required.[343] Long contends that the 'eye

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[338] *Bava Kama* 8:1.

[339] David Fox Sandmel, "The Christian Reclamation of Judaism," *Judaism* 54 (2005): 251–63.

[340] Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary,* 31.

[341] Ibid. For a discussion of the Judaism, culture, and Matthew, see Vien Nguyen, "Matthew and the Torah: An Analysis of Matthew 5:17-20," *Journal of Biblical Theology* 3 (2020): 5–35.

[342] Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew,* 35.

[343] Vermes, 36. See also, Gerald W. Schlabach, "'Confessional' Nonviolence and the Unity of the Church: Can Christians Square the Circle" *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 34 (2014): 125–44; Matthew S Goldstone, "The Structure of Matthew's Antitheses in Light of Early Jewish, Christian and Rabbinic Sources," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40 (2017): 214–35.

for an eye' legal principle should instead focus on the concept of how revenge should not be a person's motivation.[344]

During the *Mishnaic* period, the *Mishna* continues to develop the doctrines of retribution and pacifism by limiting the powers of individuals to judge others. The doctrine of pacifism was taught and extended through *Mishna Avot* 4:15 which states, "Rabbi Yannai said: Neither the well-being of the wicked nor the sorrows of the righteous are in our power [to understand fully]." When interpreting the Sermon on the Mount, which was delivered in a climate of Roman oppression, it is important to consider his political doctrine of pacifism. These issues were extremely urgent in the Rabbinic period, and the rabbis had to incorporate them in the *Mishna Avot.* Jeffrey Cohen argues that punishment from Rome was overly harsh; thus, at the time of the Sermon pacifism was a common teaching in order to protect human life.[345] The Jewish listener would have known that the Roman view of retribution was to seek merciless justice and this view was juxtaposed with the *Mishna* writers. *Mishna Avot* 2:3 references Rabban Gamaliel the son of Rabbi Judah Hanasi regarding trusting the ruling power, "Be careful in dealing with the ruling power; for they who draw no one near to themselves except for their own interests. They appear as friends when it is to their advantage, but they do not stand by an individual in his time of need." It is evident that those

[344] Long, P. J. *Do Not Retaliate – Matthew 5:38–42* (Grand Rapids: Newstex, 2018). For a discussion on violence found in Matthew 5 and the biblical response from 200 BCE to 200 CE, see Emmanuel O. Oyemomi, "Biblical and Theological Response to Global Violence: An Exegetical Analysis of Matthew 5:43-48," *BTSK Insight* 15 (2018): 175–91.

[345] Jeffery M. Cohen, "Shmuel HaKatan and the Political Background to Avot 4:19," *Judaism* (1995): 171–180. There are over fifty instances in two Talmuds that have writings ascribed to *Tanna D'Bei Shmuel,* which means a Tanna from the House of Shmuel. This resulted in the terms *Tanna D'Bei Shmuel, Tannei Shmuel, or Matnita DeShmuel*. All of these sayings come from Palestinian tannaitic halakhah and lend themselves to dating the sayings before the fall of the Temple. For a discussion on Matthew 5 and being perfect, see Mark Laynesmith, "Difficult Texts: Matthew 5.48 -- Are Christians to Be Perfect," *Theology* 124 (2021): 117–19.

who listened to the Sermon on the Mount did not derive their view of pacifism solely from Jesus but, rather, they drew on a comprehensive code of ethics found in *Mishna*.

6.4 The Function of Roman Law in Society

Roman legal tradition created a division between the public and private applications of law. Under Roman rule Roman law took precedence over Jewish Law: in the Roman legal system the *Mishna Avot* was not superior to Roman law, but rather, it was considered inferior. Cicero (106–43 BCE) is one of the earliest sources in the Roman legal tradition that, Russell claims, "implies a tripartite division in which public, private, and sacred are each distinct."[346] Cicero predates the earliest sources of the legal division in the Christian theological tradition of Justin Martyr (100–165 CE) and Irenaeus (130–200 CE) and provides pre-Christian understanding of how law is separated between public and private and Roman and Jewish people. In the Jewish theological tradition, there is merely a primitive distinction between moral, civil, and ceremonial duties (or spheres of life or thought) rather than a completely formed division of the law. Philo (a Hellenised Alexandrian Jew) (20 BCE–50 CE) and Josephus (37–100 CE), are remembered as being, respectively, a philosopher and a historian. They shed light on the historical and legal understanding of the time. As in the Roman legal tradition, Philo's rudimentary division between spheres of life or thought is related to an explicit public/private distinction, "with a view to the due performance of any public or private duty."[347] Public adherence to the Roman law could be different from that which was done in private, where compliance to Jewish law could be legitimised.

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[346] Amy Russell, *The Politics of Public Space in Republican Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016). The concept of forgiveness and pardon in the Roman legal system is discussed, see Iva Pushkarova, "Pardon in Roman Legal Tradition," *Ius Romanum* 2 (2020): 721–41.

[347] Philo, "Deus 17," *Works of Philo*, 159.

In his comprehensive 1966 study of Roman Law, *Jewish and Roman Law: A Comparative Study,* Boaz Cohen explained the purpose of comparing Roman law and rabbinic law. Cohen explained as follows:

> It is to determine whether there was any mutual indebtedness, and if little or no connection between their legal creations is discoverable, then to illumine dark corners in sundry branches of the law by opening up new vistas and perspectives afforded by the aggregate of analogies and contrasts.[348]

The Siege of Jerusalem by Pompey the Great occurred in 63 BCE. Following the conquest of Jerusalem, Roman law superseded Jewish law.[349] Until 70 CE, the majority of Jews in Judea and the region of Palestine could not access Roman courts of law because they were not Roman citizens. [350] Rabello explains that only Roman citizens could bring a lawsuit against Romans and non-Romans in court.[351] Jonathan Pomeranz suggests that "rabbinic law diverges from biblical and Second Temple precedent, but is similar to Roman law in the areas of *nezek* (loss of value as a slave as a result of physical injury) and *boshet* (damages for humiliation)."[352] For a Roman in a Roman court suiing a non-Roman, there was a legal benefit to them knowing the law. The Jewish defendant often would become aquatinted with

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[348] Boaz Cohen, *Jewish and Roman Law: A Comparative Study* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America Press, 1966), 13–14.

[349] Morton Scott Enslin, *Christian Beginnings Part I* (New York: Harper, 1956), 129. For more discussion about the priority of laws at the time, see Yifat Monnickendam, "Biblical Law in Greco-Roman Attire: The Case of Levirate Marriage in Late Antique Christian Legal Traditions," *Journal of Law and Religion* 34 (2019): 136–64.

[350] Alfredo Mordechai Rabello, "Civil Justice in Palestine from 63 BCE to 70 CE," in *Classical Studies in Honor of David Sohlberg, Yaakov Petroff, and David Schaps,* ed. Ranon Katzoff (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1996), 305.

[351] Ibid.

[352] Jonathan A. Pomeranz, "The Rabbinic and Roman Laws of Personal Injury," *Association of Jewish Studies Review* 39 (2015): 303.

Roman law for self-defence in these Roman courts when being sued.[353] The Roman model of citizenship on tannaitic *halakha* impacted the legal rights of Jews.

There are ways in which non-Romans could gain citizenship and one of those methods was a slave who was manumitted.[354] Myers and Sanders explain how manumitted Jews taken by Romans after the Great War gained citizenship.[355] During the lifetime of Jesus, before the fall of the Temple, the Roman Prefects had all authority over the people of Judaea and Samaria (6 CE to 41 CE) as well as over the area known as Idumea which is on the southern border of Israel.[356] Agrippa I was an autonomous king from 41 to 44 CE (the Herod of Acts 12). Procurators ruled over Judea from 44 to 70 CE, after the life of Jesus. [357] They were succeeded by legates after the fall of Jerusalem. The Roman procurator had full authority; however, on matters for which the Roman law did not have a ruling, the authority was left to the *Sanhedrin.*[358] The *Megillat Taanit* (the Scroll of Fasting) was an Hasmonean Period scroll (written 41 CE to 70 CE) and the commentary written in Hebrew added to the *Taanit* at a later date is known as *Scholion*. "Scholion O" is the Oxford manuscript, "Scholion P" is the Parma manuscript. They were combined in the 9th or 10th centuries CE. The

[353] Roman society allowed for freed citizens and wealthy people to gain citizenship rights. This developed more for Jews in Roman society.

[354] For a discussion regarding Roman manumitted slaves and citizenry see Christina Kokkinia, "Freed Slaves and Roman Imperial Culture" (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[355] Ben F Meyer and E. P Sanders, *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983). For more information about freedom and manumission, see Katharine P. D Huemoeller, "Freedom in Marriage? Manumission for Marriage in the Roman World," *Journal of Roman Studies* 110 (2020): 123–39; Walter Scheidel, "Free-Born and Manumitted Bailiffs in the Graeco-Roman World," *The Classical Quarterly* 40 (1990): 591–93.

[356] Morton Scott Enslin, *Christian Beginnings Part I*, 129. See also Yigal Levin, "The Religion of Idumea and Its Relationship to Early Judaism," *Religions* 11 (2020): 1–27; Michał Marciak, "Idumea and the Idumeans in Josephus Retelling of the Bible," *Revue Biblique* 126 (2019): 235–53.

[357] Hans Dieter Betz, *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 93. See also Alexis Bunine, "When Was Felix Appointed as Governor of Judea?" *Biblica* 101 (2020): 411–30.

[358] Betz, *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount*, 17–36.

Scholion explains that the Boethusians (a Second-Temple sect from the Sadducees) understood "an eye for an eye" as a literal application.[359] The commentary found in the *Tannit* is attributed to the *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael* and Babylonian Talmud with the final attribution of this literal interpretation of an eye for an eye to Rabbi Eliezer b. Hyrcanus.[360] John Cook explains that the Roman law during the redaction of *Mishna* created two legal categories to deal with injury to property and person. One of these was grounded in the document of Roman law, *Lex Aquilia* (passed in the early 3rd century BCE), to remedy physical damage to property (this includes slaves, and, later it included children who were legally in the power [*potestas*] of their fathers).[361] During the time of Jesus, Roman law would have utilised the *edictum generale de iniuriis aestimandis* to evaluate the extent of injuries. Subjects of Rome would have known this edict. When dealing with a maiming, the legal guidance for Roman courts from the *Twelve Tables* was to impose either a literal talion or a monetary equivalent.[362] The edict of *edictum generale de iniuriis aestimandis* (the general command of evaluating injuries) replaced the previous statutes for personal injury in the Twelve Tables, the Romans' earliest code of law to be written down and found, from the mid-5th century BCE.[363]

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[359] The term "*O Scholion*" comes from Vered Noam, who discovered that the manuscripts of *Megillat Ta'anit* contained two completely separate commentaries (scholia) on Megillat Ta'anit; see Vered Noam, "In the Wake of the New Leaf of Megillat Ta'anit and Its Scholion," *Tarbiz* 77 (2008): 411–24.

[360] Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, *Masekhta de-nezikin*, to Exodus 21:24, 402; B. Bava Kamma 83b.

[361] John. A. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome, 90 B.C. – A.D. 212, Aspects of Greek and Roman Life* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 198–99.

[362] James F. Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42* (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 97. See also David Blanco Cortina, "Proporcionalidad y Sanciones Transicionales Análisis Del Modelo de Castigo de La Jurisdicción Especial Para La Paz," *Revista de Derecho* (2019): 164–92.

[363] Plescia, "Development of Inuria," 281–82.

The rabbinic law was similar to the Roman *Lex Aquilia*. As previously noted, *Mishna Bava Kamma* (Chapter 8) stipulates the rabbinic laws of damages for harm inflicted by one person on another. Jonathan Pomeranz explains:

> This passage lists five types of payment for which a person who injures his fellow may be liable: injury—the loss of value to the person were he a slave; pain—the amount of money that a person with similar pain tolerance would want in order to suffer that amount of pain; medical expenses; recuperation time—the amount of income that the victim lost by being unable to work (though he is paid only as a guard for a cucumber field and not for any difficult labour, since his loss of value as a slave already takes into account the plaintiff's inability to perform difficult manual labour); humiliation—an amount of money, unspecified in the first *Mishna*, for the slight to the plaintiff's honour that he incurred when he was attacked.[364]

Mishna Bava Kamma (Chapter 8) is similar to the laws of *iniuria* (that replaced the Twelve Tables) and had their origins in *lex talionis*.[365] The punishment for violation of Roman law was codified and often harsh. *The Twelve Tables* codified penalties for maiming and assaults.[366] Even in the Mosaic courts, called the *Beit Din*, after 63 BCE, physical assault crimes came under a monetary compensation system.[367] As the powers of the Jewish courts to use physical punishment diminished, the use of monetary compensation increased in Judaism.[368]

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[364] Jonathan A. Pomeranz, "The Rabbinic and Roman Laws of Personal Injury," *AJS Review* 39 (2015): 303.

[365] Alan Watson, "Personal Injuries in the XII Tables," Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis 43 (1975): 213. See also Barbara Ellen Logan, "Pedagogy and Punishment: Distinguishing between Erudire and Iniuria in Roman Education and Law," *Journal on European History of Law* 10 (2019): 157–61.

[366] Andrew Borkowski, *Roman Law* (London: Blackstone, 1994), 323.

[367] See e.g., Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, *Masekhta de-nezikin*, to Exodus 21:24, 401–402; The rabbis claim that the biblical verses stating "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" actually mean that the victim of a physical assault is entitled only to monetary compensation. The *Beit Din* in ancient times was the Jewish court of law, and it was the building block of the legal system in the Biblical Land of Israel.

[368] Watson explains that, like the rabbinic law, the Roman laws found in the *Lex Aquilia* and in the laws of *iniuria* replaced an earlier law, in the Twelve Tables, which was based around a version of the *lex talionis*. The laws of *Lex Aquilia* provide monetary retribution if: (1) a person has maimed another's limb, (2) if he has broken or bruised a freeman's bone with hand or club, or (3) if he has done simple harm [to another]. Alan Watson, "Personal Injuries in the XII Tables," 213; also, Andrew Halpin, "The Usage of Iniuria in the Twelve Tables," *The Irish Jurist* 11 (1976): 344–54.

In Roman law, Aulus Gellius (circa 125–180 CE) reported that Favorinus made several disagreements regarding the impossibility of executing a talion with an intent to change the intent of *lex talionis* in Roman law.[369] Davis asserts that Roman law sought to quantify justice to be exacted.[370] Judaism had to adopt financial fines in the *Beit Din* instead of physical punishment.[371] Rome had legal jurisdiction and the rabbis preached against the use of *Beit Din* courts, and several cases have been discovered in which these courts overruled the decision of a rabbinic court.[372] Ultimately, the Roman law clipped the power of the Jewish courts.

6.5 Roman Codes of Ruling and Governance Similar to *Lex Talionis*

In Roman Law there are codes and rules of governance from the Second Temple era that are similar to *Mishna*. Roman Laws developed during the same political and cultural period that *Mishna Bava Kamma* developed; thus, there are overlaps in which the intellectual similarity develops the same way. Major research conducted by Boaz Cohen made connections between Roman law and Jewish law.[373] Jonathan Pomeranz argues that the development of Roman law specifically influenced how the *Mishnaic* law of personal injury

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[369] John Carew Rolfe, *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius, The Loeb Classical Library* (New York: W. Heinemann and Putnam's Sons, 1927), 413. See also, Federica Battaglia, "An Aulus Gellius Commentary on Masurius Sabinus," *Tijdschrift Voor Rechtsgeschiedenis/Legal History Review* 84 (2016): 97–148.

[370] James F. Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism*, 97.

[371] Ibid.

[372] For *Mishna* regarding the role of Jewish courts and non-Jewish courts see *bGit. 88b, pShab. 1:3, 3c–d; Meg. 3:1, 74a; bBB58a–b.* See also, Amiha Radzyner, "We Act as Their Agents and the Prohibition of Judgement by Laymen: A Discussion of Babylonian Talmud Gitten 88b," *AJS Review* 37 (2013): 257–83.

[373] Boaz Cohen, *Jewish and Roman Law: A Comparative Study* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America Press, 1966), 13–14. See also, Christine Hayes, "Roman and Jewish Law: Looking for Interaction in All the Right Places," *Law & History Review* 37 (2019): 955–59.

would be developed, specifically, it was because of a similar cultural and political culture between at the time of writing.[374]

Pomeranz contends that rabbinic law diverged from biblical and Second Temple precedent in three areas. Pomeranz writes:

> Rabbinic law diverges from biblical and Second Temple precedent but is similar to Roman law in the areas of *nezek* (loss of value as a slave as a result of physical injury) and *boshet* (damages for humiliation). The Bible knows of no monetary payment for *boshet* and its basic provision for personal injury involves the *lex talionis* (an eye for an eye), not the restitution to the victim of his loss of value as a slave. The payment for *boshet* is absent in the Jewish literature of the Second Temple period as well, and while Josephus reports that the law allows the plaintiff to choose monetary compensation in place of the talion, no Second Temple source eliminates the talion outright.[375]

The *Lex Talionis* did not prescribe a value of restitution for a victim; however, the practice entered future Jewish Mishnaic writing. Roman law protected people with a higher social class or status. In Roman law, *iniuria* was aggravated (*atrox*) if it was inflicted on a magistrate, a parent, or one's patron.[376]

Roman law around the time of the *Mishna* had two main legal provisions that dealt with injury which are similar to *Lex Talionis*.[377] Pomeranz suggest that to make claims of injury in Roman law, "a free person had an action for *iniuria*, insulting behaviour that harmed another person either physically or by using words. The Roman laws of *iniuria* developed

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[374] Jonathan A. Pomeranz, "The Rabbinic and Roman Laws of Personal Injury," *AJS Review* 39 (2015): 303–331.

[375] Ibid., 305.

[376] Theodor Mommsen, Paul Krueger, and Alan Watson, *The Digest of Justinian* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985); see Joseph Plescia, "The Development of Inuria," *Labeo* 23 (1977): 281. For more information, see Barbara Ellen Logan, "Pedagogy and Punishment: Distinguishing between Erudire and Iniuria in Roman Education and Law," *Journal on European History of Law* 10 (2019): 157–61.

[377] John. A. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome, 90 B.C. – A.D. 212, Aspects of Greek and Roman Life* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), 198–99. For a discussion on the similarity between the Noahide Law development and the connections with Roman understanding, see Matthew P. Van Zile, "The Sons of Noah and the Sons of Abraham: The Origins of Noahide Law," *Journal for the Study of Judaism: In the Persian Hellenistic & Roman Period* 48 (2017): 386–417.

through a series of praetorian edicts"[378] Joseph Plescia's work on Roman law explains how claims of tort law were adjudicated, "Whoever brings a law-suit for *iniuriae,* let him clearly report all the specific facts which caused the *iniuriae,* and let him propose a penalty of not less than what was the bail."[379] Pomeranz suggest that the development of Roman Law indicated that "striking another person's face was considered *atrox* (aggravated) *iniuria* and was dealt with especially harshly."[380] Pomeranz also suggest that provisions (47.10.7.8) for *iniuria* were covered under the *Lex Cornelia de Iniuriis* of 81 BCE which gave people civil rights to protect them from forced home invasion.[381]

6.6 Jewish Citizenry Living Under Roman Law

Jewish subjects living in Roman territory were subject to Roman Law but had certain rights restricted. The power of Jewish law was limited while the reach and power of Roman law covered both Jews and Romans. During the Tannaitic Period (10 CE–220 CE) the Jews had less autonomy from Rome and their practice of the rabbinic law was restricted.[382] Jewish rabbis lived under Roman law and had to be equitable in justice according to both laws. The role of honour in the Roman Empire influenced the rabbis and the values of the Jewish

[378] Pomeranz, 306

[379] Joseph Plescia, "The Development of Inuria," *Labeo* 23 (1977): 281; Otto Lenel, *Das Edictum perpetuum. Ein Versuch zu dessen Wiederherstellung* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1883), 320. For further discussion on Roman and Tort Law, see M Stuart Madden, "The Graeco-Roman Antecedents of Modern Tort Law," *Brandeis Law Journal* 44 (2006): 865–910.

[380] Pomeranz, 304.

[381] Ibid

[382] Shaye J. D. Cohen, "The Place of the Rabbi in Jewish Society of the Second Century," in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity*, (New York: Journal of Theological Studies Press, 1992), 161. For further discussion of Rome and Jewish thought during the Tannaitic period, see Yael Wilfand, "'How Great Is Peace': Tannaitic Thinking on Shalom and the Pax Romana," *Journal for the Study of Judaism: In the Persian Hellenistic & Roman Period* 50 (2019): 223–51.

people as they became eligible for Roman citizenship.[383] After the incorporation of Judea and Galilee into direct Roman administration under the Roman Empire in 6 CE, Jews lived with partial autonomy until 28 CE when the Jews lost the right to judge their own people, including capital offenders. After this, Jewish ethics developed against a background of Roman law.

Accessibility of Roman citizenship to Jews was limited before the time of Jesus. Before the year 70 CE, the majority of Jews in the region known as Palestine did not have citizenship in the empire; therefore, they could not have direct access to the Roman courts. If a Jewish person was suing a Roman citizen, the Jewish person could sue them in a Jewish court or in a Roman court only if the defendant was Roman.[384] Since the Roman system had a better protection for Roman defendants, those who brought suit against Roman defendants would quickly become acquainted with the Roman system of law. Roman and Jewish jurisprudence overlapped, and a Roman view developed within the Jewish interpretation.

The integration of the local rabbis into the Roman Empire helped mediate Roman law for the community's Jewish residents. Schwartz contends that the rabbis were very different from the Romans and not part of the normal elite class of the Roman Empire.[385] Hayim Lapin emphasises the "fundamental embeddedness" of the rabbis in the structure of the Roman Empire, describing the rabbinic movement as "an urban provincial movement within its

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[383] Jon E. Lendon, *Empire of Honour: The Art of Government in the Roman World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[384] Alfredo Mordechai Rabello, "Civil Justice in Palestine from 63 BCE to 70 CE," 305. For a discussion of the importance of a Roman citizenship, see Alexander Weiss, "In the Crucible of Empire. The Impact of Roman Citizenship upon Greeks, Jews and Christians," *Historische Zeitschrift* 311 (2020): 183–84; Sean A Adams, "Paul the Roman Citizen: Roman Citizenship in the Ancient World and Its Importance for Understanding Acts 22:22-29," In *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, 309–26 (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

[385] Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 163

Roman imperial setting."[386] Lapin further argues that the rabbinic movement will be understood better if "assumptions of Judaean or Jewish exceptionalism" are set aside and "the rabbinic movement is examined as one modality of the provincial construction of local, particularistic identity formation in the Roman Empire".[387]

Rabbis imagined that in order to understand the Jewish religion, Roman generals disguised themselves and hid covertly in the Jewish courts as Jews to learn rabbinic law and to send the new knowledge back to Rome.[388] In Judea, the Romans deemed that the whole Torah was pleasant and praiseworthy. This story sounds like a story lacking truth and validity and used as propaganda. Roman generals probably did not disguise themselves as Jews but does explain the rabbinic concern of the day about how Romans were trying to undermine their legal system and their desire to understand Jewish law more clearly. The impact of Roman law on the development of Jewish law could therefore be linked to the rabbis' attempts to convince the Romans (or themselves) of the justice of their legal system.[389]

6.7 Justice and Self Defence in *Lex Talionis*

The extent to which *lex talionis* was applied changed over time. Joachim Jeremias suggests that by the time of Jesus, *lex talionis* was not disproportionate.[390] David Daube

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[386] Hayim Lapin, *Rabbis as Romans: The Rabbinic Movement in Palestine, 100–400 CE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3

[387] Ibid. For discussion on the role that the rabbinic power played under Roman power, see Moshe Simon-Shoshan, "Did the Rabbis Believe in Agreus Pan? Rabbinic Relationships with Roman Power, Culture, and Religion in Genesis Rabbah 63," *Harvard Theological Review* 111 (2018): 425–50.

[388] Lapin, *Rabbis as Romans: The Rabbinic Movement in Palestine, 100–400 CE.*

[389] Sifrei Devarim, *Ve-zot ha-berakhah*, pis. 344, to Deuteronomy 33:3, 401.

[390] Joachim Jeremias, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 28. For more discussion of the concept of 'love your enemy' and retribution, see Nestor M. Ravilas, "Precarious Life, Justified Aggression, and Ritualized Violence: Is There a Place for 'Loving Your Enemy' in a World of Violence," *Asia Journal of Theology* 31 (2017): 82–98.

contends that the talion began to lose its sting with the introduction of monetary fines.[391] Proportional retaliatory justice in the form of violent resistance, in the form of lethal force, would be allowable for the sake of self-defence and protection of property. In Exodus 22:2 it is stated: "If a thief is caught breaking in and is struck a fatal blow, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed." It seems that the law allowed for protection of property and life in the face of an attacker.[392] This would permit resistance against an evil person.[393] The question as to how much a penalty would cost for an action or crime developed over time.[394]

The talion in *eye and tooth* was not enforced literally by Jesus's time. Davis explains

> The formula itself is stated without the first Old Testament element 'life for life' as it had already been separated from the entire formula in the Jewish exegesis and debate. The next two elements in line, 'eye' and 'tooth,' are then given prominence in the equation. They represent an ethic of proportional and retaliatory justice.[395]

Those who were familiar with Torah among Jesus's audience would understand the practical application of justice in Matthew 5:38–42. Jesus did not contradict *lex talionis* or abrogate it.[396] Matthew 5:38–42 extrapolates justice into daily life scenarios. *Lex talionis* is about

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[391] David Daube, *Studies in Biblical Law* (New York: Ktav, 1969). For further discussion on the modern discussion on the change in lex talionis becoming spiritualised in Christianity with a concept of a sin punishment and that a different approach has developed since the monetary interpretation, see Nestor M Ravilas, "Precarious Life, Justified Aggression, and Ritualized Violence: Is There a Place for 'Loving Your Enemy' in a World of Violence," *Asia Journal of Theology* 31 (2017): 82–98.

[392] D.W. Greig, "Reciprocity, Proportionality, and the Law of Treaties," *Virginia Journal of International Law* 34 (1994): 295–403.

[393] James F. Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 110.

[394] Antony Duff and David Garland's essay, "Introduction: Thinking about Punishment," in *A Reader on Punishment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[395] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism*, 140.

[396] D. A Carson, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 189. See also Mateusz Kusio, "Apocalypse on the Mount: The Relationship Between Matthew 5:18 and 27:45, 51b," *The Biblical Annals* 11 (2021): 79–97.

equality, not revenge.[397] Those who heard Matthew 5:38–42 would understand that justice is only given when the one who commits a personal injury is held accountable.

Actions taken in self-defence and retaliation in the Second Temple period closely reflect *Mishna* Avot and have very limited authorised uses. There is a difference between nonviolent self-defence by an individual and violence used in self-defence. Robert Guelich makes a convincing case that Jesus is citing in particular the passage in Deuteronomy 21:10–14. His argument is based on four lines of evidence in which parallels are seen with Matthew's position on the rights of people under an oppressive ruler.[398] As to how Jesus's statement relates to the OT law, Guelich also feels that Jesus is not superseding but setting aside the Old Testament command, calling for a new starting point in human relationships in which evil is no longer primarily a controlling force. He concludes:

> The fifth Antithesis strikes at the very basis of legal justice. The Law's explicit basis for such justice, the *lex talionis*, stands over against Jesus' demand of not seeking legal vindication from the evil one in court. In other words, the implications of this Antithesis, like the third (5:31–32), set aside rather than supersede the Old Testament Law. Taken legalistically, such a demand would lead to anarchy. Taken in keeping with the other Antithesis, however, this one also calls for behavior commensurate with a totally different starting point in human relationships. Rather than perceiving these relationships as controlled by legal justice, and thus presupposing the presence of evil and the need for such justice, Jesus called for relationships in which evil was no longer the controlling factor.[399]

The command not to resist is primarily intended as foregoing one's rights for legal redress for an offense, rather than a general call for nonresistance. In *halakha*, lethal force is allowed in

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[397] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism*, 168.

[398] Robert A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Foundation for Understanding* (Waco: Word Books, 1982), 219. For similar thought, see M.I. Rey, "Reexamination of the Foreign Female Captive: Deuteronomy 21:10-14 as a Case of Genocidal Rape," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 32 (2016): 37–53; David Resnick, "A Case Study in Jewish Moral Education: (Non-)Rape of the Beautiful Captive," *Journal of Moral Education* 33 (2004): 307–19.

[399] Ibid., 224.

self-defence.[400] *Mishna Berakot* 62b (8) states: "if a man comes to kill you, rise early in the morning and kill him first." This allows the use of deadly force in self-defence only and does not give unlimited authorization for the use of force. *Mishna* sought to ensure that preventative self-defence was legal.

Benno Jacob contends that the Sermon is not an argument against a Jewish interpretation of a literal talion requirement but is a polemic against the classical pagan morality found in Greek and Roman writings, attitude, and law. Thus, this vulgar morality was reflective of the average person's ethics and is what the Sermon on the Mount condemns.[401]

The premises in *Berakot* 58a and 62b as well as *Tannit 25b* revolve around the intent of a person and how well they practice self-control.[402] Matthew 5:38–42 is concerned with the actions of a person and how they react. Matthew 5:43 crystallises these actions in the context of love. The *Avot* further suggest that the attitude we have towards other people will help justice prevail. Finkelstein suggests that for justice to occur we must practice making peace and follow the command to love one's neighbour.[403] *Mishna Avot* 1:7 states: "Do not conspire to prevent the truth or exploit another, and in time, justice will prevail, for evil cannot succeed alone. Do not despair because justice is slow; do justice yourself and work for justice in your community, and in the end, evil will fall before it."[404] If people are naturally

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[400] *Berakot* 58a, 62b.

[401] Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1992), 658.

[402] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism*, 111.

[403] Louis Finkelstein, *The Pharisees: The Sociological Background of Their Faith* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962), 216.

[404] Shapiro, *Ethics of the Sages*, 8. The Hebrew reads, "נַתַּאי הָאַרְבֵּלִי אוֹמֵר, הִרְחֵק מִשָּׁכֵן וְאַל תִּתְיָאֵשׁ מִן הַפֻּרְעָנוּת וְאַל תִּתְחַבֵּר לָרָשָׁע רָע, וְאַל תִּתְחַבֵּר לָרָשָׁע"

good and loving people in their community, justice will naturally occur. Doing justice and allowing truth to be explored is tantamount to allowing a love of one's neighbour.

6.8 A Similar Interpretation of *Talion* in the Talmud

There are two different sources of Talmud, which are based on two different Oral Traditions, but they were very similar. One set of Oral Traditions finds expression in the Jerusalem Talmud and the other in the Babylonian Talmud. The composition of these different writings occurred after the time of Jesus. In each collection of rabbinic text, there are writings on *lex talionis*. During the time period of Jesus's ministry, scholars uniformly assume that even if the Roman authorities may have occasionally turned a blind eye to Jewish administration of punishments, they maintained all legal criminal jurisdiction.[405] After the fall of the Temple, Rome removed all authority from the Jewish people and made them recognizable only as a group of people.[406] Lach suggests that the rabbinic interpretation was influenced by Roman Law, and states:

> The rabbinic interpretation of the biblical law is if a man wound his fellow man, he thereby becomes liable on five counts: for injury, for pain, for healing, for loss of time, and for indignity afflicted. During this entire period it remained a private wrong, and it was up to the injured party whether or not he would press his claim and demand judgment in the form of a money payment.[407]

In both the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmudim, there is an allowance for injuries to be sorted out privately before becoming a state matter. This was helpful, especially during Roman times, because there was an Oral Law standard in which private matters could be

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[405] G. Alon, *The Jews in their Land in the Talmudic Age, 70–640* (Jerusalem, 1984), 539–40.

[406] Emil Schürer et al., *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1987), 2:220.

[407] Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament* (Hoboken: KTAV, 1987), 104.

solved without going to the public court. Instone-Brewer suggests that "Rabbinic Judaism was split between the literal *talion* (retaliation) and fiscal punishment."[408] This was possibly due to the different influences on Rabbinic discourse of the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmudic writings.[409] A literal application of talion, Davis concludes, was visible in Talmud. Davis states, "The strongest evidence that a literal interpretation of the *Lex Talionis* was a viable viewpoint in Judaism comes from R. Eliezer [*b. B. Qam. 83b–84a; Mek. Nexikim Exodus. 21*] and Philo [*Spec. Leg. 3.181–183*]."[410]

The Palestinian and Babylonian *Talmudim* both address *lex talionis.* In the Palestinian Talmud, *y. Baba Qamma* 8.1, the "eye for an eye" standard is replaced by a monetary punishment. This is the primary text of the *Gemara*[411] on the issue of the *lex talionis* in connection with wounding or maiming. It is in the fourth division of the *Mishna* called *Nezikin* (i.e., Damages). As quoted previously:

> If a man wounded his fellow, he thereby becomes liable on five counts: for injury, for pain, for healing, for loss of time, and for indignity inflicted. 'For injury'—thus, if he blinded his fellow's eye, cut off his hand, or broke his foot, [his fellow] is looked upon as if he was a slave to be sold in the market: they assess how much he was worth and how much he is worth now. 'For pain'—thus, if he burnt his fellow with a spit or a nail, even though it was on his finger-nail where it leaves no wound, they estimate how much money such a man would be willing to take to suffer so. 'For healing'—thus, if he struck him he is liable to pay the cost of his healing; if by reason of the blow ulcers arise he is liable [for the cost of their healing], but if they did not arise by reason of the blow, he is not liable. If the wound healed and then opened and healed again and again opened, he continues liable for the cost of his healing; but once it is properly healed he is no longer liable to pay the cost of his healing.

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[408] David Instone-Brewer, *Traditions of the Rabbis from the Era of the New Testament Volume 2a* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), 34.

[409] It is worth noting that we do not find much literature or discussion about Mesopotamian Jews who were in exile and the influence they had on the writing of the Bible. For a discussion on the impact that Mesopotamian Jews had on the Babylonian Talmud, see J. Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia* (Leiden: Brill, 1969). There could be some influence from Jews living north of the Mesopotamia area and north of Babylon on the writing of the *Mishna* as well.

[410] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism,* 98.

[411] The Gemara, which is an Aramaic word meaning "to study and to know" is a collections of commentary writings on Jewish law dating from around 200 to 500AD.

> 'For loss of time'—thus, he is looked upon as a watchman of a cucumber-field, since he has already been paid the value of his hand or foot. 'For indignity inflicted'—all is in accordance with [the condition of life of] him that inflicts and him that suffers the indignity. If a man inflicted the indignity on a naked man, or a blind man, or a sleeping man, he is [still] liable; but if he that inflicted the indignity was asleep he is not liable. If a man fell from the roof and caused injury and inflicted indignity, he is liable for the injury but not for the indignity, for as it is written, and she putteth forth her hand and taketh him by the secrets—a man is liable only when he acts with intention [of causing injury] (m. B. Qam. 8.1).

Cohen argues that in the *Nezikin* section of Talmud, *lex talionis* has changed to monetary justice. He explains how the jump could be made from the *lex talionis* to financial compensation. Cohen states:

> Secondly, there is corrective justice. With regard to the redress of wrongs committed by man against his fellow, the principle of retaliation formulated in Lev 24:19 'As he did, so shall it be done to him' was accepted in principle as a general rule in antiquity. The rabbis interpreted this principle as compensation because a consistently strict application of the rule would lead to the violation of the intent and purpose of the law.[412]

The Babylonian Talmud, *b. Ketubot* 32a–33b, also suggests the use of a monetary penalty for the talion. Davis contends that punishment by means of fiscal penalties reinforced non-retaliatory actions.[413]

In his research on early Judaism, Finkelstein focuses most of his attention on beliefs of Pharisees and Sadducees. From the *Mishna* compiled in late 2nd century or early 3rd century (cf. b. B. Qam. 8), he argues that the rabbinic tradition was to use monetary damages and not a literal talion. This was the actual legal practice at least at that time and explains the Sadducees' role in the talion. He writes:

> The *Mishna* thus clearly indicates that the Talmudists interpreted "an eye for an eye" to mean "the value of an eye for an eye." The whole Rabbinic tradition supports this interpretation. How old it is, and whether it was limited to the

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[412] Boaz Cohen, *Law and Tradition in Judaism* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1959), 207.

[413] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism,* 98.

> Pharisees, the predecessors of the Rabbis, but rejected by their opponents, the conservative Sadducees, is unknown. The only writer who discusses this question is the author of *Megillat Ta 'anit*, who claims that the Sadducees rejected the interpretation. But his evidence is completely without value. He wrote centuries after the Sadducees ceased to exist, and his interpretations of other passages have been proven to be utterly unhistorical.[414]

In another work, Finkelstein reflects that the Pharisees are less literal than the Sadducees in their interpretation of the talion. The Pharisees, upon which Jesus was influencing, were less literal in how to exact punishment. The Sadducees discussion according to Finkelstein revolves around the principle of being a witness. He writes:

> The basic issue between the Pharisees and the Sadducees concerned the principle of the *lex talionis*. According to the Sadducees, false witnesses, found guilty, suffered the injury they had inflicted on their victim. The Sadducees based their position on Deuteronomy 19:21 But this harsh punishment could hardly be justified for unsuccessful attempts to inflict injury. Therefore, when the decision was not carried out on the accused, the witnesses should not suffer the prescribed punishment. The Pharisees (as will become clear) rejected the literal interpretation of the *lex talionis*. The penalty exacted by them was monetary compensation, reasonably imposed even though the conspiracy of the witnesses had been discovered in time to save the accused.[415]

The Pharisees were less literal with applying the talion as a strict punishment. The Sadducees interpreted the actions of the talion more literally than the Pharisees, without variance in punishment.

6.9 Chapter Conclusion

The early criteria for *lex talionis* were a standard for retributive punishment for an injury. Matthew 5:38-42 follows this formula for retribution from both the Hebrew Bible and

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[414] Louis Finkelstein, *An Eye For An Eye* (New York, 1936), 211–212.

[415] Louis Finkelstein, *The Pharisees* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), 696–697; Enoch Cobb Wines makes a good observation that Deuteronomy 19 does not create a standard in which a person can retaliate against another person because that would make a person a judge and avenger over another; thus, and imbalance of authority and justice would occur between two people. See Enoch Cobb Wines, *Commentaries on the Laws of the Ancient Hebrews: With an Introductory Essay on Civil Society and Government* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1855). By allowing the courts to be the adjudicators of civil strife, it kept the scales of figurative justice balance, see, Duncan Kennedy, *A Critique of Adjudication* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

the Roman Twelve Tablets. In the Hebrew Bible the *lex talionis* formula is in Exod 21:24, Lev 24:20, and Deut 19:21. These passages provide for a *talion* response for injuries for fractures, eyes, teeth, hands, and bodily damage. The same concept of retribution carries into *Mishna Avot* 1:7 and people keeping distant from one another and into *Mishna* Avot 1:12 balancing retribution with loving another person. Matthew 5:38-42 represents the intellectual thoughts of the Hebrew Bible and *Mishna Avot*. The same concept of retribution carries also into the *Mishnaic* period; thus, solidifying a common understanding of retribution continually from the Hebrew Bible through the Sermon on the Mount, and up until the writings of the *Avot.* The concept of retribution and ethics influenced the political doctrine of pacifism extending through Matthew 5:38-42 and further through the writings of *Mishna* such as *Avot* 2:3. Justice within self-retaliation become the cornerstone of Jewish thought regarding *lex talionis* by the time of Jesus. Justice before Jesus was 'proportional retaliation' and after Jesus the standard becomes 'justice' with a distinct difference between nonviolent defence and violence used in defence. Nonviolent defence is about changing character. A person being assaulted has power against the aggressor. Nonviolent defence is how one responds- not by demanding an exact measure of flesh but having the discernment for deterrence to violence through equitable measures that will exact justice without being violent. This is attainable by making the use of force unacceptable for the person using force against another person. Both *Mishna and* Matthew 5:38-42 explain how preventative self-defence was legal.

Lex talionis was in the Roman society, and the laws of Rome superseded Jewish laws and authority regarding retribution. Rome's laws became the way of life for Jews at the time of Jesus for how people interacted and sought legal justice in the court. Jesus's teachings and the teachings of Jewish teachers as they became Roman citizens were highly influenced by Roman ethics and law. Jewish law of *lex talionis* was only applied if Roman law did not apply to a legal case; thus, Matthew 5:38-42 would speak to the law which is in rule at the

time— that being Roman Law. In the case of Roman Law (*Lex Aquilia* and The Twelve Tablets), protections were given to slaves and citizens as well; therefore, Jews had legal protection to some degree. This chapter affirms how later *Mishna Bava Kamma* and *Avot* resemble the earlier Roman laws. By the time of Aulus Gellius, Roman Law sought to quantify damages done in *lex talionis* as did Jewish *Mishna* by having financial punishments instead of exacting a *talion.*

This chapter sought to show how Roman codes are similar to *Lex Talionis* in the *Mishna*. *M. Bava Kamma* is similar to Roman laws showing how intellectual thought and development is similar during the development of pacificist ideology, specifically in the areas of restitution and *iniuria.* Since the Jewish citizens lived under Roman law during the Tannaitic Period, they had less freedoms and the rabbis had to comply with Roman authority over them. The rabbis who did not teach in accordance with Roman law were moved away from the area; thus, the teachings people received both reflected pro-Roman views and the justice through the courts was primarily from Roman jurisprudence.

Matthew 5:38-42 is concerned about the actions of a person, how they react, and is this action just and equitable. A person whose rights are being abrogated by another person can act differently by responding differently. A person's intent for when reacting to physical provocation defines if the person acts justly. A person is not submitting if they do not use violence in retaliation, a nonviolent reply would shift the balance of power for the aggressor. If a person is morally just and not with evil intent, then the person acts in justice without malice towards another person. *Lex talionis* in Matthew 5:38-42 and *Mishna* suggest being proactive with one's rights when in a controversy; ultimately, by the *Mishnaic* period, this was quantifiable by financial quantification. The essence of this was how Jesus taught in Matthew 5:38-42 that a person should not seek an exact retribution but a nonviolent alternative that abrogates violence and demands equity from wrongdoing.

CHAPTER 7 צדקה AS JUSTICE

The concept of justice/righteousness connects the ethical and political thought of Jesus to *Mishna Avot.* Understanding the Hebrew word for justice helps to understand the ethics of Jewish people who lived during the Second Temple period. Understanding צדקה will give a deeper understanding to the Sermon on the Mount as explored later in this dissertation. Justice is assumed to be the meaning of צדק (righteousness, justice*)* as used in Deut 16:20 (JPS).[416] This Hebrew word, *tzedek*, or justice, has a strong social component. Deut 16:20 famously states "justice, justice shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Jewish Publication Society). The Hebrew root of צדק, like the Roman root of justice, means upright, straight.[417] In Jewish literature, the word is used to indicate righteousness and social justice. The root צדק *tz-d-k* is the word of צדקה. Although the use of צדקה has different meanings in the interpretation, the most common and accepted use of the word is in the context of charity. The root word connotes merciful acts of charity. Since צדקה is one of the מִצְוָה *mitzvoth*, or commandments, it is an act of justice. The Jewish ethical and political thought at Jesus's time that is connected to *Mishna Avot* defines justice as charity.

7.1 צדקה (*tzedek*)

צדקה is the charity that is mandated in the Bible.[418] The Hebrew word צדקה literally translates with a meaning focusing on justice or righteousness but is commonly applied to

[416] The Christian Bible and the Jewish Torah have different verse numbers for the passage.

[417] Edmund Perry, "The Meaning of 'Emuna' in the Old Testament," *Journal of Bible and Religion* (1953): 253.

[418] The Hebrew צדקה is translated as ἐλεημοσύνη in the LXX of Deuteronomy 6:25 and 24:13. This topic is dealt with in the context of the LXX Isaiah and the idea of צדקה translation in Seulgi L. Byun, *The Influence of Post-Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic on the Translator of Septuagint Isaiah* (London: Continuum, 2017), 35–65. For scholarship explaining how the translation from the Hebrew to the Greek causes problems

signify the charity which a person has towards another. Nelson suggests that צדקה means a person is 'in the right."[419] Pitkänen suggests that the meaning of צדקה is better rendered as 'fidelity' or 'community solidarity.'[420] In modern Jewish practice, צדקה means action attributed for giving charity to others. צדקה translates as a person's righteousness or godliness. The righteousness of a person is witnessed in their actions; thus, Jill Jacobs contends that צדקה existed to support those within a community that need help or support such as food.[421] Steven Silbiger suggests that צדקה implies how our actions towards those around us should be: "the word for charity in Hebrew is צדקה, from the root word t*zedek* meaning 'justice' or 'righteousness.' This definition as understood in the Hebrew connotation implies that the act of giving is 'justice' and 'righteousness' which are desired obligations in obeying [God]."[422] The translation of צדקה into languages such as Greek and Latin has caused differences in the word's application. This has flowed on into translations in other languages such as English. The LXX (Septuagint) translation renders צדקה as ἀγάπη, with agape focusing on love, goodwill, or morality of benevolence.[423] It does not use צדקה with δικαιοσύνη, a form of *dikaios*, which means righteousness.

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linguistically, see, Staffan Olofsson, "Consistency as a Translation Technique," in *Translation Technique and Theo-logical Exegesis: Collected Essays on the Septuagint Version* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 55–56; David Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings: Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

[419] Richard D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 87.

[420] Pekka Pitkänen, "Eckart Otto, Deuteronomium 1–11:Erster Teilband: 1,1–4, 43; Zweiter Teilband: 4, 44–11,32" In *Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures X: Comprising the Contents of Journal of Hebrew Scriptures, vol. 13* edited by Christophe Nihan and Ehud Ben Zvi, 577–583 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2017).

[421] Jill Jacobs, *There Shall Be No Needy* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 2009), 13.

[422] Steven Silbiger, *The Jewish Phenomenon* (Lanham: M. Evans, 2009).

[423] Jacobs, *There Shall Be No Needy*, 43. This is supported by a look of צדקה in the Septuagint, Jean Maurais, "Righteousness and Mercy in Greek Deuteronomy: On the Translation of צדקה by Ἐλεημοσύνη," *Journal of Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 52 (2019): 107–17.

The word צדקה was interpreted differently in the Latin Vulgate Bible, which was completed in the late 4th century CE. Silbiger contends that צדקה became *caritas*. Silbiger states, "When it is translated to the Latin [383 CE], which developed after the time of Jesus and the Latin *Vulgate* Bible… the word charity [becomes] the Latin word *caritas*, meaning *love.*"[424] Telshukin suggests that *caritas* means "a donation made out of affection."[425] This would imply that the person giving had to have an ulterior purpose other than pure altruism but this is not the case. Rather it means that a person will give without reward. A person who has to beg for charity loses something valuable in the process, they lose their self-respect and dignity; thus, צדקה will allow the beggar to keep their dignity.

An examination of the audience of the Sermon (namely their perceptions of charity and mutual respect and how they applied the concept of human dignity in the local context) reveals a better understanding of these people. As has been noted above, the word צדקה represents one's charity. In order to define צדקה in the context of real-life application, the book of *Bava Bathra* 9a defines how צדקה was understood.[426] *Bava Bathra* 9a focuses on charity: "charity is equal in importance to all the other commandments combined."[427] Oral tradition recommends courses of action to its listeners, testifying to a strong view of charity and mutual care and responsibility in society.

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[424] Silbiger, *The Jewish Phenomenon*, 38.

[425] Joseph Telushkin, *A Code of Jewish Ethics* (New York: Bell Tower, 2009), 156.

[426] Telushkin, *A Code of Jewish Ethics*, 156. Modern use of the term still is similar, see Rainer Barzen, "The Meaning of 'Tzedakah' for Jewish Self-Organization within a Non-Jewish Environment," *Iggud: Selected Essays in Jewish Studies* (2005): 7–17.

[427] Yasaif Asher Weiss, *Talmud* Bavli, (Brooklyn: Mesorah, 2009), 95.

Maintaining human dignity is part of charity. Human dignity means a person can live without begging off others. Jesus's sermon typifies the charitable acts for which Judaism is known. Jacobs writes:

> The concept of human dignity is well-ingrained throughout Judaism. Those listening to the Sermon would identify the charitable acts of Jesus through such activities as feeding people, healing people, and listening to people. The book of Genesis describes human beings as created '*b'tzelem Elohim,'* in the image of God.[428]

If a person is heartless to the downtrodden, then it reflects in their character. The character of the person is evident in how a person treats others. Jesus treated people with compassion through healing and caring for the sick.

7.2 צדקה (Charity) and Community Support to the Poor

In The Second Temple period charity to the poor was valued, as evidenced in *Mishna Avot.* Although the Bible does not use the word צדקה to mandate monetary support to the poor, it has acquired that meaning. The rabbis in the early *Avot* era used צדקה to signal charity in the community, especially when Jews no longer had the Temple. The צדקה became a unifying factor that helped communities to survive. Jacobs suggests that since the intent behind צדקה was already established in practice and form by the rabbis, it would have been observed early in the Common Era during the time of Jesus.[429]

צדקה is related to the tithing cycle of the early Temple structure, especially in the מִשְׁכָּן [430] and the First Temple. The concept of tithing is connected to צדקה because of who it benefits.

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[428] Jacobs, *There Shall Be No Needy,* 12.

[429] Jacobs, *There Shall Be No Needy,* 43.

[430] The מִשְׁכָּן was the portable sanctuary that the Israelites carried with them in the wilderness found in Exodus 25.

Deuteronomy requires the giving of a tithe every three years for benefit of the Levite, the foreigner or traveller, the orphan and the widow. The Torah states:

> Every third year you shall bring out the full tithe of your produce for that year, and store it within your towns; the Levites, because they have no allotment or inheritance with you, as well as the resident aliens, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, may come and eat their fill so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work that you undertake (Deut 14:28–29, NRSV).

In rabbinic texts, the tithe of Deut 14:28–29 is called עָנִי מַעְשֵׂר, "the poor man's tithe," a tithe for the charitable purpose of helping the poor. In defining charity, צדקה, the amount that a poor person gave was not considered a way to determine if they were giving to God with faith. צדקה in connection with עָנִי מַעְשֵׂר considered the poor in society and the need to take care of them. When given the context of the New Testament stories of the widow's offering (Mark 12:41–44; Luke 21:1–4), the historical context of the story sheds light on those around the widow. The rich were to take care of the poor. The story of Jesus and widow's mite sheds light on the widow's contribution. עָנִי מַעְשֵׂר, specifically צדקה, is about the ethics of the behaviour we show towards others by doing good and loving the community around us.

In the Jewish community the way in which a person helps others is a measure of that person's ethical standards. *Mishna Avot* 2:4 states: "Hillel said: 'Do not separate yourself from the community; and do not trust in yourself until the day of your death. Do not judge your fellow until you are in his place.'" Not working with the common good in mind reveals a lack of a sense of community. Remaining in community means remaining in a Jewish lifestyle.[431] According to the Oral Law from the time of Jesus found in the traditions recorded in *Mishna Avot*, a person is to focus on the community around them rather than being self-centred.[432] Shapiro suggests "working for the welfare of the community aligns the community behind you, strengthening your efforts and maximizing results. And while your

[431] Philip Blackman, *Ethics of the Fathers* (Gateshead: Judaica, 1979), 48.

[432] Eliyahu Touger, *Pirkei* Avot (Brooklyn: Moznaim, 1994), 80.

success will depend on the support of the community, the credit will be yours nonetheless."[433] Jesus fed his community.[434] Jesus healed his community. These acts of charity to the community were not self-serving in nature or done to generate personal wealth; on the contrary, they taught a lesson about focusing on the community.

7.3 צדקה and Helping the Underprivileged

The *Mishna Avot,* through its understanding of צדקה, focuses on and supports those who are underprivileged in society; furthermore, this aligns with the ministry of Jesus.[435] צדקה supports those who are underprivileged and lacking care, who are the poorest and hungry. צדקה supports redistribution of charity. For example, if your crop yields new grapes, when you give צדקה from your increase, the person who does not have grapes will now have grapes. [436] Giving food as צדקה to those who do not have any is different from giving of first fruits as tithes and offerings. Contrarily, we do not know if the *Tannaim* wealthy, according to Alyssa Gray, gave money to local synagogues and the synagogue redistributed the wealth of if the wealthy person had to give charity personally to a person in need.[437] The *Seder Zeraim* further shows how the offerings of produce sustained more than just one's own household: there is a sustentation of the Cohen priests, the Levites, and the poor. These

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[433] Shapiro, *Ethics of the Sages*, 20.

[434] See *Matthew 14:14–16* "When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.'"

[435] Worth, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 215. It is worth noting that in Judaism, there is not a virtue or a focus on being poor, as in a 'vow of poverty' for a person. See Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 1992). Judaism does not teach to seek poverty but to avoid it and did not focus on asceticism.

[436] Yaakov S. Licht, "Sedaka," *Encyclopedia Biblica*, 6:679–681.

[437] Alyssa M. Gray, "Redemptive Almsgivings and the Rabbis of Late Antiquity," JSQ 18 (2011): 144–84.

offerings constitute the mandated ten percent of the increase in one's wealth. צדקה was different and provided for help for the underprivileged.[438] Deuteronomy 15 and צדקה form a program of giving every three years. צדקה was often linked and connected with the concept of justice, or משפט. The common phrase משפט וצדקה can be translated as "justice and righteousness [to all]".[439] According to Jacob Licht, these two words are often synonymous, conveying similar meanings, as exemplified by the Israelite kings which could reference God in that manner as the supreme sovereign.[440]

7.4 צדקה and Moneylending

Looking at the biblical rules for moneylending creates the understanding for interpreting Matthew 5:38–42 in regard to the ethics of lending loans to Jews, especially if they are to be interest free. The views about lending found in Matthew 5:38–42 are set in the historical context of loan-giving, which guides the interpretation that Jesus gives. The Torah stipulates that loans are to be interest free for fellow Jews (Deut 23:19–20; Matthew 5:42;

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[438] Shaye J.D. Cohen, *The Rabbi in Second-Century Jewish Society, in The Cambridge History of Judaism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3:936.

[439] Moshe Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (Jerusalem: Magnes and Fortress, 1995), 25.

[440] Licht, *Encyclopadia Biblica* 6:681; יעקב בזק. "למשמעות הצמד 'משפט וצדקה' במקרא," *Beit Mikra: Journal for the Study of the Bible and Its World / בית מקרא: כתב-עת לחקר המקרא ועולמו* לב (ב) (ק"ט), no. ט (1987): 135–48; Steven Boyd, "The Biblical Case Against Counter-Social Justice: YHWH's Demand for Justice and Righteousness," *The Journal of Ministry & Theology* 24 (2020): 29–59; William Domeris, "Justice or Righteousness?: Reading Matthew 5:6 in Context," *Conspectus*, *Conspectus* (2018): 83–100. The king mentioned in Isaiah 32 is utilizing משפט וצדקה in verse 16. Ezekiel 18:15 uses משפט וצדקה in reference to God as the sovereign over the people depicting in a kingly manner the role of God over the people. 1 Kings 10:9 describes Yahweh as the sovereign king. Ezekiel 33:14-20 states "**14** And if I say to a wicked person, 'You will surely die,' but they then turn away from their sin and do what is just and right— **15** if they give back what they took in pledge for a loan, return what they have stolen, follow the decrees that give life, and do no evil—that person will surely live; they will not die. **16** None of the sins that person has committed will be remembered against them. They have done what is just and right; they will surely live.**17** Yet your people say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' But it is their way that is not just. **18** If a righteous person turns from their righteousness and does evil, they will die for it. **19** And if a wicked person turns away from their wickedness and does what is just and right, they will live by doing so. **20** Yet you Israelites say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' But I will judge each of you according to your own ways." This verse utilises משפט וצדקה in terms of a wicked person returns improper loans given and does no evil, there is charity in their life.

Psalms 37:21).[441] The practice of moneylending reveals how people treat others in a community. Torah allows interest to the Gentile (Deut 23:19; Deut 23:20; Eze 18:8).[442] However, further *Mishna*ic development in b. Mak. 24a discourages charging interest on loans to a foreigner. There was a prescribed understanding which the Jewish moneylender was ethically bound to observe.[443] Even though the Jewish moneylender could charge interest to non-Jews, the ethical lender was not to take unfair advantage of such borrowers.

Compassion was shown in not charging interest to a fellow Jew. This practice provides a historical context to Jesus's Sermon when he addresses the concept of lending and repossession in Matthew 5:38–42. Charitable loans were to be made to those in penury whose dignity did not allow them to be "supported by others." In this manner they would be receiving aid while remaining on an equal social level to the lender (4.12–13).

In Matthew 5:42, however, Jesus highlights how debt from loans easily creates an unbalanced society, as it diminishes the charity of simply helping each other as loving neighbours. Matthew 5:42 was influenced by Proverbs 22:7, which states: "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is the slave of the lender." Those who borrow money are no longer free people according to *Tanakh*, as they become slaves to someone else. The Jewish *Mishna* balanced this with teachings about the responsible ownership of money. When someone lends money to another, the lent money is not the moneylender's in the first place. *Mishna Avot* 2:9 quotes Rabbi Shimon, stating, "Every borrowing is borrowing from God, as it is said, 'the wicked one borrows and does not repay, but the righteous one is gracious and

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[441] Worth, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 212.

[442] Levine and Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 12.

[443] See *Exodus 22:25 (*NRSV) If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them.

gives.’”[444] *Mishna Avot* quotes Psalms 37:21: “The wicked man borrows and does not repay; the righteous is generous and keeps giving.” It was ethical and just to repay debt.

7.5 Chapter Conclusion

The concept of justice is foundational to understanding Jesus’s teachings and their relation to *Mishna Avot*. Since צדקה is one of the מִצְוָה *mitzvoth*, or commandments, it is an act of justice. The Jewish ethical and political thought at Jesus’s time that is connected to *Mishna Avot* which defines justice as charity. The word צדקה is better defined as fidelity, which has become an action of ‘giving to others’ in modern practice. At the time of Jesus, צדקה was a person’s righteousness or godliness as witnessed in their actions and later translations from the LXX such as *agape and dikaios* and Vulgate with *caritas.* The listeners at the time of the Sermon would understand צדקה as meaning mutual respect and charity. Human dignity would be part of the part of צדקה. Matthew 5:38–42 would explain how human dignity would be part of a retaliatory response towards wrong doing.

צדקה also includes charity to the poor. Helping those who have less and benefiting the community was very important. Giving a tithe to the poor would provide a measure of a person’s ethical standards. Being a part of the community would provide this ethical understanding. In helping the poor, it included צדקה helping the underprivileged. Not only does equitable justice apply for retribution, it applies in how you treat other people who have not done you wrong. צדקה is part of being a righteous person to provide tithes and offerings. Finally, the chapter asserts that צדקה protects moneylending. Matthew 5:38–42 would be influenced by the rules of charitable lending: it is allowed to charge interest to foreigners and you are not allowed to charge interest to fellow Jews.

[444] Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai studied under Rabbi Akiva and was active after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

CHAPTER 8

PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

This chapter considers several sayings found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5—7) that relate to peace and nonviolent resistance. These sayings of peace and nonviolent resistance are foundational to Matthew 5:38-42. An understanding of ‘στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην, “turning the other cheek,” is widely but wrongly assumed to mean that a person should be passive. A better reading of the text can be done that protects human dignity for those who are being abused without submitting to more abuse. This chapter looks at various elements of the Sermon which provide a different reading of the text. The purpose of the phrase στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην provides for a remedy against strife and vengeance, which are against Jewish ethics. The understanding of στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην to mean a form of peace and pacifism rests on an interpretation of ἀντιστῆναι (resist) and πονηρῷ (evil, evil person).

8.1 The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount includes six antitheses that provide an ethical understanding, and divide the Sermon into sections.[445] These antitheses combine to set a moral and ethical compass for understanding Jesus’s message in the Sermon on the Mount.[446]

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[445] See, Joachim Jeremias, *The Sermon on The Mount* (London: The Athlone Press, 1961); H.K. McArthur, *Understanding the Sermon on the Mount* (London: Epworth Press, 1961); Ulrich Luz, *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005). See also Matthew S Goldstone, “The Structure of Matthew’s Antitheses in Light of Early Jewish, Christian and Rabbinic Sources,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 40 (2017): 214–35.

[446] For recent scholarship linking the Sermon on the Mount with the concept of virtue ethics, see William C. Mattison III, *The Sermon on the Mount and Moral Theology: A Virtue Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). There are some Christians who see the Sermon as being about a future kingdom of heaven yet to come. Rebecca Esterson, “Allegory and Religious Pluralism: Biblical Interpretation in the Eighteenth Century,” *Journal of the Bible and Its Reception* 5 (2018): 111–139. See also Charles Nathan Ridlehoover, “The Sermon on the Mount and Moral Theology: A Deontological Virtue Ethic of Response Approach,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 63 (2020): 267–80.

The text states that whoever practices and teaches "these commandments" (Matthew 5:19ff) will be inclined to practice chastity, and not reduce one's neighbour to the status of a sexual object (5:27–30).[447] This is extended further in the limitation put on grounds for divorce (5:31–33). Those who follow the law will also be eager for peace, not revenge (5:38–42).[448] Righteousness means being ready to love people unequivocally without expecting love in return (5:43–47).

The text states that whoever practices "these commandments" will "fulfill" the Law and the prophets (5:17), and by fulfilling the law and the prophets, they will have a special status with the Father in Heaven (5:45). Jesus further states *he* would fulfil the law and the prophets. Those who observe and teach the commandments shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:19).

For Przybylski, the sayings in Matthew 5:21–48 are a way to make a hedge or fence around Torah:

> It becomes evident that Matthew himself viewed them [the antitheses] as being representative of a new interpretation of the old law … One factor which suggests that the antitheses reflect a new interpretation of the old law is that it appears that Matthew is applying the rabbinic principle of making a fence around Torah in 5:21–48. Moore explains that this was a hermeneutical principle used to protect the law 'by surrounding it with cautionary rules to halt a man like a danger signal before he gets within breaking distance of the divine statute itself.'[449]

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[447] For scholarship on how Jesus lived the ethical values contained in the Beatitudes, see, Daniel M. Doriani, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Character of a Disciple* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2006).

[448] Some scholarship depicts these verses as a foreshadowing on future apocalyptic times. Although this may be tree, the focus on this dissertation is on the historical aspect during the life of Jesus. For more scholarship around the premise that the discussions are for a future period of peace, see, Herman N. Ridderbos, *Coming of the Kingdom* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 1962); David Brown, A. R. Fausset, and Robert Jamieson, *A Commentary, Critical, Experimental, and Practical, on the Old and New Testaments: vol. V* (London: William Collins, Sons, & Company, Limited, 1984). For a discussion of revenge according to Matthew and Leviticus 19:17-18, see Matthew S. Goldstone, "Rebuke, Lending, and Love: An Early Exegetical Tradition on Leviticus 19:17-18," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 136 (2017): 307–21.

[449] Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and His World of Thought*, 81; Przybylski uses the term, six antitheses, even though he does not agree with the meaning the term carries. See also Michael Morris,

Przybylski thus contends that the six-antithesis of the Sermon were intended to create a protection or hedge around the law. By way of contrast, Bornkamm argues that, while the first, second, and fourth antitheses could be understood as intensifying the law, the third, fifth, and sixth substantially modified *halakhic* stipulations.[450] This interpretation of the Sermon would sit well with a Jewish audience and interpretation because the understanding of Jewish ethics would be preserved in oral and written Torah.

8.2 Matthew 5:5: πραεῖς (mild or humble) in the Beatitudes

Matthew 5:5

5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσι τὴν γῆν.
5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. (NRSV)
The Beatitudes (Matt 5:3-12) which introduce the Sermon on the Mount

(Matt 5—7)[451] presents ethical choices in the sense of being, as for example, merciful as opposed to being unmerciful and the positive results and divine benevolence in response to

"Deuteronomy in the Matthean and Lucan Temptation in Light of Early Jewish Antidemonic Tradition," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 78 (2016): 290–301.

[450] Bornkamm, "Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew," 25; Élian Cuvillier, "Torah Observance and Radicalization in the First Gospel. Matthew and First-Century Judaism: A Contribution to the Debate," *New Testament Studies* 55 (2009): 144–59; Bradley Trout, "Matthew 5:17 and Matthew's Community," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 72 (2016): 1–6; Francois P. Viljoen, "Jesus' Teaching on the 'Torah' in the Sermon on the Mount," *Neotestamentica* 40 (2006): 135–55; Karin Bornkamm, "Umstrittener 'Spiegel Eines Christlichen Lebens' Luthers Auslegung Der Bergpredigt in Seinen Wochenpredigten von 1530 Bis 1532," *Zeitschrift Für Theologie Und Kirche* 85 (1988): 409–54.

[451] The Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17–49, the Lukan equivalent to the Matthean Sermon on the Mount) differs from the Sermon on the Mount in its literary structure and content. In the Sermon on the Plain, Jesus states, "Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets" Luke 6:22–23 (NRSV). The story in Luke extols a person who submits to abuse and implies that being abused is something to be desired. (This does not change the reading of Matthew's Jewish interpretation. This dissertation will not focus on the differences and source reasoning of Luke's account.) This is an explanation of how the Sermon was to the listener—being called children of God. The reward and how one gets the reward are different. This difference in how one gets the reward and the reward itself points to the writer's interpretation and cultural difference. Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament*, 77.

these choices with the use of πραεῖς. The Greek word translated "blessed", μακάριοι (*makarioi)*, is best translated as "happy".[452]

The Greek word πραεῖς in Matt 5:5 translates as a meek and humble person.[453] The translation would be more accurate as "happy are the meek and humble." In Matt 5:5 a meek person is 'happy' because they are fortunate. Raymond Collins explains that "the form of the Beatitudes communicates utilizing *macarisms* because it begins with the adjective *makarios*, followed by a relative or personal pronoun introducing a clause which describes a particular conduct or quality which prompted the praise of the person who is pronounced blessed."[454]

For Lachs, πραεῖς was not in the original text but was added later.[455] This author does not agree with Lachs. If the text was added into the Matthew account by later scribes who were trying to insert an interpretation into the Sermon to fit the theology of their day, then there would have been confusion over the meaning of *meekness* among those who listened of the Sermon, as I will point out in considering alternative translations of πραεῖς.

The Lukan Sermon on the Plain does not have the same discussion of meekness as Matthew, and even has four 'blessed' statements followed by statements of 'woes,' which leads to the question as to whether it was added in at a separate date in Matthew.[456] For the

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[452] Katharine Jefferts Schori, "The Pursuit of Happiness in the Christian Tradition: Goal and Journey," *Journal of Law and Religion* 29 (2014): 57–66.

[453] R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew, The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 160–61. McKnight, *Sermon on the Mount*, 32–36; W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew 1–7, International Critical Commentary* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2004), 431–34. See also W. Domeris, "Meek or Oppressed? Reading Matthew 5:5 in Context," *Acta Theologica* 23 (2016): 131–49.

[454] Raymond F Collins, "Beatitudes," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 1:629.

[455] Samuel Tobias Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary of The New Testament* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1987), 69.

[456] Wayne A. Brindle, "The Gospel of Luke," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43 (2000), 140; The Sermon on the Plain refers the Gospel of Luke, in 6:17–49 which is the Sermon on the Mount

Jewish listener to the Beatitudes, πραεῖς would not be a timid or shy person. The 'meek' person would be a humble person capable of receiving the Kingdom of Heaven but not a timid person, which speaks to Matthew's being a Jewish document.

In the New Testament, πραεῖς would be connected to one's actions. Having the attribute of meekness is similarly approved in the Hebrew Bible and the *midrash* (e.g., Psa 37:11, Prov 16:19, *b Shabb*. 30b, and *b Ned.* 38a). In the *Mishna Shabbat 30b*, the role of a meek person is to study Torah and if they do not study Torah, they will 'find death.'[457] Stassen and Gushee suggest that "Wherever the Greek word (here translated as 'meek,' or better, 'humble') occurs in the Bible, it always points to peacefulness or peacemaking."[458] Stassen and Gushee connect the Greek word πραεῖς to a person's peacemaking efforts, thus, a person's inherent ethical action is that which is πραεῖς, meaning humble or meek. πραεῖς indicates the peaceful or nonviolent nature of a person. The use of the word πραεῖς is diverse in the Greek New Testament. It occurs in Matt 5:5, 11:29 and 21:5, and in 1 Peter 3:4. In each of these uses, the nuances of the language suggest that πραεῖς means more than meek. It would be a good understanding of πραεῖς to say that biblical meekness is not the same as a physical weakness. For Danker and Bauer, it represents how God can be in control while

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in Matthew. For more information, see Michael Barram, "Jesus's Manifesto: The Sermon on the Plain," *Interpretation* 75 (2021): 352–53.

[457] Levine and Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 8; In Shabbat 30b, the text reads " נפשיה אחורי ביתיה אתא מלאך המות קם מלאך המות ולא יכיל ליה דלא הוה פסק פומיה מגירסא אמר מאי אעביד ליה הוה ליה בוסתנא סליק ובחיש באילני נפק למיחזי הוה סליק בדרגא איפחית דרגא מתותיה אישתיק ונח נפשיה. / What did David do? Every Shabbat he would sit and learn all day long to protect himself from the Angel of Death. On that day on which the Angel of Death was supposed to put his soul to rest, the day on which David was supposed to die, the Angel of Death stood before him and was unable to overcome him because his mouth did not pause from study. The Angel of Death said: What shall I do to him? David had a garden [bustana] behind his house; the Angel of Death came, climbed, and shook the trees. David went out to see. As he climbed the stair, the stair broke beneath him. He was startled and was silent, interrupted his studies for a moment, and died." (https://www.sefaria.org/Shabbat.30b). This is indicative in Jewish *Mishna* of the role that David has as a humble man who would study the Torah. When he was distracted, he found death. For a discussion of ritual and the character of the person doing ritual *M. Shabbat 30b* see Loren D Marks, Trevan G. Hatch, and David C. Dollahite. "Sacred Practices and Family Processes in a Jewish Context: Shabbat as the Weekly Family Ritual Par Excellence," *Family Process* 57 (2018): 448–61.

[458] Glen H. Stassen and David P. Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2003), 40.

exercising constraint or being harsh.[459] πραεῖς means more than weakness, it connotates self-control.

8.3 The Peacemaker: εἰρηνοποιοί,

Matthew 5:9:

9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

What it means to be an εἰρηνοποιοί and a child of God influences how one applies the Sermon. However, for the early listener, the meaning was not as our modern one commonly implies.[460] Understanding peace in terms of 'peacemaker' in the Sermon contextualises how the ancient listener would interpret Matthew 5:38–42. Lachs suggests that the 'peacemaker' in verse 9 relates to the unfortunates of society.[461] The Greek word used here, εἰρηνοποιοί, means "peacemaker." According to Lachs, εἰρηνοποιοί "is an adjective referring both to those who make peace and those who are peaceful."[462] This means εἰρηνοποιοί makes the sentence unclear. There are two possibilities for the meaning of εἰρηνοποιοί in Jesus's saying: (1) to refer to people who create peace or (2) to refer to people who are peaceful

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[459] Frederick W Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014); James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Royal, 2010), 60. For a recent discussion of Matthew 5:5 and πραεῖς, see Scott Turner, "Living by the Word: Reflections on the Lectionary," *The Christian Century* 134 (2017): 25. For a discussion of Matthew 11:29 and πραεῖς see M. Konradt, '"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me!" (Mt 11:29)," *Zeitschrift fur die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Alteren Kirche* 109 (2018): 1–31.

[460] Modern views of peacemakers develop from this context in the New Testament from the Beatitudes and 'peacemaker.' For some scholars, the goal of religion is to have people who are 'peacemakers' central to preventing conflict. For more scholarship on the role of modern peacemakers from a traditional read of the text (albeit not the focus of this dissertation) see R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000).

[461] Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament*, 77

[462] Ibid., 69. For a discussion on the term peacemakers and Matthew, see W. J. C. Weren, "Messianic Peacemakers: Intertextual Relationships between Zechariah 9-14 and the Gospel of Matthew," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 71 (2015): 11.

people themselves. Since μακάριοι *is* commonly translated to mean "blessed," it would be more appropriately translated as happy. A more linguistically accurate translation would be, *happy are the peacemakers* or *happy are the peaceful*.[463] There are similarities between Matthew 5:9 and εἰρηνοποιοί with *b. Ber. 64a* and *Pesiq. Rav Kah 18:6–9*.[464]

μακάριοι translated as happy or blessed changes how the Beatitudes are read. Lachs contends that εἰρηνοποιοί is best translated as happy and not a description of divine acceptance.[465] The translation of μακάριοι as "fortunate" feeds reward and punishment theology because then an assumption is made that one who is not seeking peace is unfortunate. A person would then only be fortunate if they are peaceful in this understanding; however, a divine acceptance and reward should not be conditional. In a reward and punishment theology the reward sought after would be peace.[466] Vermes suggests that εἰρηνοποιοί is synonymous with children of God and believes that those "who imitate the heavenly source of *shalom*, can successfully strive for peace on earth and deserve to be called sons of God."[467] As a result, those εἰρηνοποιοί are fortunate: Stassen and Gushee write:

> Peacemaker … is the right translation… for a positive action, reconciliation, is envisioned: the peacemakers seek to bring about peace. Since the previous Beatitudes concern social relations, surely the meaning here is social, not simply peace between individuals and God, as is frequently claimed.[468]

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[463] Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament*, 69; Levine and Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 10. For a discussion of the terms 'happy' vs. 'blessed', see also John Martens, "Calling All Sinners," *America* 213 (2015): 39.

[464] Levine and Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 10

[465] Ibid., 76.

[466] Juergernsmeyer contends that all religions have the capacity to have make peace or to make violence and that most people who do engage in violence are not doing so because of their religious preferences, see, Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[467] Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*, 157.

εἰρηνοποιοί does not necessarily refer to seeking peace with God. Peace is a social and society meaning. εἰρηνοποιοί relates to how someone responds to threats and others, be it through nonviolence. Nonviolence is founded in this understanding that εἰρηνοποιοί makes a happy society.

Matthew 5:5 discusses meekness while Matthew 5:9 discusses 'peacemaker' in terms of the Beatitudes; therefore, when the use of the word 'happy' occurs, it is comingled with values. Deciphering the value-ethics of meekness and peacemaker provide a better reading of Matthew 5:38–42 by having pacifistic ideologies. It is clear that Jesus was not providing a new ethic but was commenting on an ethic already understood at the time.

8.4 ἀντιστῆναι and πονηρῷ in Matt 5:39

Matthew 5:39:

> ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν μὴ ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ· ἀλλ' ὅστις σε ῥαπίζει εἰς τὴν δεξιὰν σιαγόνα, στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην.
>
> But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also (NRSV).

In Matthew 5:39, Jesus explained that his followers are to go beyond the requirements of the *mitzvoth* (not just "deeds" but here pertaining to the "commandments") and to live the Torah to its fullest, as sincerely as possible (Matt 5:17–20). The two key words in Matthew 5:39 are ἀντιστῆναι (resist) and πονηρῷ (evil, evil person). The translations and understanding of these words at the time of Jesus will determine how Jesus's teaching is applied to ethics and peace.

[468] Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 45. Moore further contends that there is an element of social concerns in the peace discussion, see: Osheta Moore, "Jesus Gets Our Grief," *Sojourners Magazine* 50 (March 2021): 12–13.

The meaning of the Greek verb ἀντιστῆναι is important to understanding Matt 5:38–42. The word has different meanings in different contexts. The contexts in the New Testament may differ from those of classical Greek stories. Historically, three general interpretations have developed in regard to the meaning of ἀντιστῆναι in Matthew 5:39, these being resistance, retaliation, and rebellion. The listeners to Jesus could have understood *Koine* Greek, which was a dialect of Greek spoken by many Jews during this the period of the New Testament, covering the time from 330 BCE to CE 330.[469] Matthew was a *Koine* Greek translation of Jesus's Galilean dialect of Aramaic. The Sermon was delivered in Galilee. Jesus could probably speak Greek (he grew up near Sepphoris) and might well have used it on some occasions, as in his exchanges with the Syro-Phoenician woman (here Jesus was the foreigner) and with Pontius Pilate. The word ἀντιστῆναι in ancient historical Greek writings has been employed variously to mean (1) "set against" (e.g., Thucydides 4.115, 5th century BCE); (2) "match with" (e.g., Plutarchus Theseus 1,1st /2nd century CE); (3) "stand against" (e.g., Ilias 20:70, no date given, Herodotus 6.117, 5th century BCE); (4) of things which turn out unfavourably (e.g., Thucydides 5.4); and (5) "resist or fight on" (e.g., Herodotus 5.72). In cases one and three, it is used in the context of battle.[470] In the

[469] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament with Scripture, Subject, and Greek Word Indexes* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 14–15. It is possible that up to five-million Jews lived outside Israel during the Second Temple period and would make pilgrimage and commerce with Jerusalem. Judea and Galilee were largely Jewish at this time period. Greek would have been known in the Decapolis, Caesarea Maritima, and most likely at Jerusalem, Sepphoris and Tiberius (which was the Capital of Galilee at the time of Jesus' ministry. For scholarship, see Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period: The Early Hellenistic Period (335-175 BCE) II The Coming of the Greeks*. Library of Second Temple Studies 48 (London: T & T Clark, 2008). Ibid., "A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period, Vol 1, Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 54 (2009): 590–92; Daniel Gerber, "Stanley E. Porter (Éd.), Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman, (Pauline Studies, 5) Leiden – Boston, Brill, 2008," *Revue d'histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 90 (2010): 428–29. For a discussion on koine Greek being spoken in a Galilean dialect, see Jonathan M. Watt, "Of Gutterals and Galileans: The Two Slurs of Matthew 26.73," In *Diglossia and Other Topics in New Testament Linguistics*, ed. Stanley Porter, 107–20. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

[470] Henry George Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 140.

Septuagint, ἀντιστῆναι is used to mean "to outweigh," "to stand against," "to stand in opposition to," "to withstand," or even "to resist."[471]

According to Walter Wink, nonviolent pacifism is a 'third way' that advocates nonviolent resistance. The concept of nonviolent resistance grows out of the verb ἀντιστῆναι, used in Matthew 5:39 but "which does not mean do not resist an evildoer," an impossible though regrettably common translation.[472] The use of the verb ἀντιστῆναι in Matthew 5:39 connotes "(with a negative) not using violence to resist evil."[473] An understanding emerges from Matthew 5:38–42 that one should not use violence when resisting an evildoer, especially in response to slapping. There are four examples in Matthew 5:38–42 that illustrate refusal to submit to an evildoer. These four examples are: (1) actions that refuse submission; (2) actions that assert human dignity; (3) actions that are designed to humiliate; and (4) actions that destroy.[474] Each one of these examples builds upon the years of Torah study done by students before their *Bar Mitzvah*, which provides a universal and common understanding of the Torah for all Jewish people studying with their sages.[475]

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[471] Johan Lust, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The Septuagint* (Stuttgart: Dt. Bibelges., 2000), 1.36.

[472] Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 99–101. Walter Wink claims that everything was created by God for good and now Jesus is working to redeem all of creation by nonviolent means. Kellermann's book review agrees with the views of Wink, see Wylie-Kellermann, Bill, and Henry French. "Book Review: Walter Wink: Collected Readings. Edited by Henry French," *Theological Studies* 76 (2015): 212–13.

[473] Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 127. For a discussion of Just War Theory and pacifism from Matthew 5:39 and violence to resist, see Gregory M. Reichberg, "Thomas Aquinas between Just War and Pacifism," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 38 (2010): 219–41.

[474] Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 127.

[475] For a discussion of the role of *bar mitzvah*, see Frederick E. Greenspahn, *When Brothers Dwell Together: The Pre-eminence of Younger Siblings in the Hebrew Bible* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1994). It is worth noting, since this dissertation studies *Mishna Avot*, that the earliest record of the *Bar Mitzvah* (*Mishna Avot* 5:21) reads, "He [Yehudah ben Teima] used to say: Five years [is the age] for [the study of] Scripture, Ten [is the age] for [the study of] Mishna, Thirteen [is the age] for [observing] commandments, Fifteen [is the age] for [the study of] Talmud, Eighteen [is the age] for the [wedding] canopy, Twenty [is the age] for pursuing [a livelihood], Thirty [is the age] for [full] strength, Forty [is the age] for understanding, Fifty [is the age] for [giving] counsel, Sixty [is the age] for mature age, Seventy [is the age] for a hoary head, Eighty

Jesus advocates the Jewish principle of love.[476] This was apparent in Jesus's action in the Temple where he overturned the tables but still loves people. Jesus would not have taught a totally violence-free message (nor a violence-free eschatology). This is evident in the predictions Jesus made about the end of days [Matthew 24]. Another example that demonstrates that Jesus was not completely passive is found in his views on the sacrifice: Jesus did not try to abolish animal killing (or blood sacrifices) as a statement of peace, since animal ritual slaughter was still active during the time of Jesus.

To understand the context of love and the principle of the third way as a response for Jesus to all nations, the apocalyptic ending is foretold in Matthew 24:7, where the text reads "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places." In the Greek, Matthew 24:7 reads "ἐγερθήσεται γὰρ ἔθνος ἐπὶ ἔθνος καὶ βασιλεία ἐπὶ βασιλείαν, καὶ ἔσονται λιμοὶ καὶ σεισμοὶ κατὰ τόπους." The word ἔθνος translates as 'nation.'[477] The call by Matthew to the Jewish leadership embodies Torah living. The translation of the word ἔθνος connects with Matthew 5:39 in that the Jewish audience in Matthew 5:39 is the nation being described in this apocalyptic foreshadowing. The Jewish culture of non-retaliation forms this nation identity.[478] Talbert contends that Jewish literature such as 1QS 10.17–20, *Joseph and Aseneth* 23:9, *b. Shabbat* 88b, and 2 *Enoch* 50:3–4 demonstrate non-retaliation.[479] Non-retaliation was neither a new concept nor a novel idea.

[is a sign of superadded] strength, Ninety [is the age] for [a] bending [stature], A hundred, is [the age at which one is] as if dead, passed away, and ceased from the world."

[476] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 52.

[477] Ibid.

[478] Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount*, 89.

[479] Ibid.; Exodus 23:4–5; Leviticus 19:18; Proverbs 20:22, 24:29.

David Bivin, as well as other scholars, interpret the Greek word ἀντιστῆναι as meaning 'to compete with.'[480] Bivin and Roy Blizzard limit this application to personal relationships, not to war or violence.[481] Bivin's understanding of this verse is arguably based on a proverb from Psalm 37:1, 8 (NRSV), "Do not fret because of those who are evil..." and "refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil;" and from Proverbs 24:19 (NRSV): "do not fret because of evildoers." *Midrash* also uses this language, stating that if your enemy rises early to kill you, that you should [instead of killing him first] give him food or drink.[482] The *midrash* in *b. Sanhedrin* 72a which is a portion of the Talmud comments on Exodus 22:2. A house-breaker should know they could be harmed or killed.

In Matthew 5:39, πονηρῷ has different meanings in the different translations. It has a meaning of "evil person" or even "evil." There is an assumption in English translations that πονηρῷ refers to a person. Some versions such as the KJV translate πονηρῷ as "evil". The Bauer-Danker Lexicon translates πονηρῷ as "wicked or evil-intentioned person, evildoer".[483] Overall, the evidence indicates that Matthew 5:39 uses πονηρῷ to refer to an individual. France does not like using πονηρῷ to mean intend evil because France contends πονηρῷ is used when a person is under threat. [484] Davies and Allison differ and feel that πονηρῷ is only

[480] David Bivin, Lois Tverberg and Bruce Okkema, *New Light on The Difficult Words of Jesus* (Holland: En-Gedi Resource Center, 2007).

[481] David Bivin and Roy Blizzard, *Understanding the Difficult Words of Jesus: New Insights from a Hebraic Perspective* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1994), 70.

[482] Burton L. Visotzky, "Midrash Proverbs 25," *Midrash on Proverbs* (New Haven: Yale University, 1992), 168; 9B. *Talmud Sanhedrin* 72a.

[483] Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *et al*. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BDAG),* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2014), *s.v. πονηρος*.

[484] Richard France, "The Gospel of Matthew," 220. For a discussion of the Greek used in Aristotle and 'Turn the other Cheek' see Erin Stackle, "Aristotle's Phronimos Should Also Turn the Other Cheek," *Philosophy & Theology* 29 (2017): 3–15.

an evil person and their response, whether under duress or not, is because the person is evil.[485]

To conclude this section, giving clarity to πονηρῷ is important because it gives context to ἀντιστῆναι, which means "resist". If πονηρῷ is an evil person only, then we would not understand why a person must ἀντιστῆναι. When we read ἀντιστῆναι with πονηρῷ and suggest that a person must feel threatened, then we can decipher Matthew 5:39 more clearly. Yoder believes that modern Christian attitudes towards pacifism influence how we define ἀντιστῆναι.[486] Jesus's statements on resisting and turning the other cheek are better seen from the perspective that ἀντιστῆναι requires someone to aggravate and escalate an argument. Matthew 5:39 (NRSV) states, "but I say to you, do not resist an evildoer… if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also." ἀντιστῆναι, 'resist,' does not encompass revenge. Vengeance is balanced with πονηρῷ. Nicoll asserts that either "evil-doer" or "the evil-doing or done" could be feasible as a translation because this is based on the preference of taking πονηρῷ as neuter rather than masculine. However it is acknowledged that this view of πονηρῷ is not accepted universally.[487] A modern interpretation of this text renders the sentence as, "but I say to you, do not retaliate revengefully by evil means."[488] Stansen and Gushee point out that πονηρῷ is "not an imperative in the Greek, but an infinitive—probably with implied imperatival meaning (in Koine Greek, the imperative may be used when

[485] W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew," 543.

[486] See J. H. Yoder, *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009); Yoder also teaches that pacifism is an expression of the Christian commitment to love and forgiveness. He teaches that in the Gospel of Luke, there is a commitment for the believer in Jesus to bring about peace upon earth, see John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1972, Revised Edition 1994). For more discussion on nonresistance to evil by force, see V.V. Emelianov, "Babylonian 'Sermon on the Mount," *Voprosy Filosofii*, 7 (2016): 148–61.

[487] W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 112.

[488] Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 137.

commanding or requesting).”[489] Stansen and Gushee also claim that Matthew 5:39 implies that πονηρῷ is “inclusive of actions that result in insult because there is intent of revenge in the action.”[490] From the other perspective, A. H. McNeile believes that πονηρῷ is neutral and it is not possible to refer to evil as a person, such as a human or an evil entity.[491]

8.5 Slapping and Turning the Other Cheek in Matt 5:39

The phrase στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην, “turning the other cheek,” is widely but wrongly assumed to mean that a person should be passive. The purpose of the phrase στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην, according to Errico, is to “provide a remedy against strife and vengeance when in a conflict.”[492] The understanding of στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην to mean a form of peace and pacifism rests on an interpretation of ἀντιστῆναι (resist) and πονηρῷ (evil, evil person). Davis points out that ἀντιστῆναι occurs fourteen times in the Greek New Testament and notes that the translations focus on three meanings: “(1) resistance, (2) retaliation, (3) violent rebellion or even armed revolt.”[493] William F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich suggest that the appropriate interrelation of ἀντιστῆναι is “to set one’s self against,

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[489] Ibid.

[490] Ibid. For a discussion on the word ‘fool’ in Christian and Rabbinic sources in the context of insult, see Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, “Matthew 5:22: The Insult ‘Fool’ and the Interpretation of the Law in Christian and Rabbinic Sources,” *Revue de l’histoire Des Religions* 234 (2017): 5–23.

[491] A.H. McNeile, *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew: The Greek Text with Introduction* (London: MacMillian, 1952), 68–69. For a discussion on alternative theories and the Babylonian influence into defining who is evil or an evil entity in terms of the Sermon, see V.V. Emelianov, “Babylonian ‘Sermon on the Mount,’” *Voprosy Filosofii* (2016): 148–61.

[492] Rocco A Errico, George M Lamsa and George M Lamsa, *Aramaic Light On Exodus Through Deuteronomy* (Smyrna: Noohra, 2008). There are other accounts in which the word στρέψον translated differently, see Emanuele Lelli, “Folklorica Ii,” *Quaderni Urbinati Di Cultura Classica* 101 (2012): 217–24. For recent application of Matthew 5:38-42 in the context of love and passive resistance, see Katja Ekman, “Enemy Love and the Reinvention of Identity,” *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 77 (2021): 1–7.

[493] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism*, 105.

to withstand, resist, oppose."[494] This definition is also supported by Danker and Bauer.[495] Robert H. Mounce believes ἀντιστῆναι focuses on non-retaliation, even against an abusive person, and this is supported by W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann.[496] The corpus of evidence, as assessed by Hans Dieter Betz, is for justice to prevail over evil.[497] Resisting thus revolves around not physical injury but an insult.[498] στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην therefore does not require someone to be a doormat for people who are repeatedly violent and insulting: they are to retain their dignity. This is opposed to another account of the story in Luke 6:29 (NRSV) that focuses more on turning the other cheek, while Matthew focuses more on ἀντιστῆναι. It is worth noting that in the RSV version of the Bible translation, In RSV Matt 5:39 and Luke 6:29 are virtually identical. The focus on the slap in both accounts clearly indicates that the slap done on the right check is a back-handed slap.[499] Levine and Buttler suggest that the

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[494] William F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); See Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009), 45.

[495] Frederick W Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of The New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

[496] Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew, New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 49.

[497] Hans Dieter Betz, "The Sermon on the Mount," in *Hermeneia* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 40: 280–284.

[498] Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament*, 104. For a discussion of non-retaliation in the context of the modern Nigerian church as applying Matthew 5L38-42, see Prince E Peters, "A Critical Look at Didache 1:4b and Its Reflection on the Non-Retaliation of the Nigerian Church," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 76 (2020): 1–8.

[499] It is worth noting that the use of the δεξιὰν is missing in in early Christian manuscripts as a 'slap on the right cheek' because the scribes had lost the meaning and intent of the 'slap on the right cheek.' The early scribal translators had lost the intent into what 'slap the right cheek' meant and introduced a concept of 'turn the other cheek' as an answer for δεξιὰν. Further examination of the primary texts will reveal the lack of δεξιὰν in D: Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis, *Quattuor evangelia et Actus apostolorum complectens Graece et Latine* 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1899); For an understanding of the K Codex (Bobbiensis), see, k: A. Jülicher, W. Matzkow and K. Aland (eds.), *Itala. Das Neue Testament in altlateinischer Überlieferung. I. Matthäusevangelium* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1972), 26. The earliest Syriac commentary by Ephrem the Syriac (306 CE to 373 CE) introduced a change in the commentary for Christianity with the generalization of 'whoever slaps you on the cheek' instead of 'right cheek.' For discussion of this, see Ephraem: L. Leloir (ed.), *Commentary on the Diatessaron 6.14 (Saint Ephrem, Commentaire de l'Evangile concordant: Texte Syriaque [Manuscrit Chester Beatty 70] folios additionnels [trans. L. Leloir; Leuven: Peeters, 1990], p. 68). sys: A.*

back-handed slap indicates that a cheek has been 'turned'. The question on the turn of the cheek is if the slap was violent and if the person turns a cheek, is the response nonviolent?[500]

There are multiple ways in which a person can slap someone. One type of slap is with the open-hand or front of the hand. The second type of slap is backhanded. The slap described in Matthew 5:39 is similar in manner to 1 Esdras 4:30 (NRSV), "and take the crown from the king's head and put it on her own and slap the king with her left hand" (NRSV). [501] To evaluate the totality of the textual story, one needs to know whether the person being slapped is an equal peer or a subordinate. If the slap committed is open-handed, it may indicate that the parties are social equals. On the other hand, if the slap is back-handed, then it could be inferred that the person being slapped has lower social status. Matthew 5:38–42 does not explicitly tell us the answer to this question, and it must be inferred. The assumption is that the protagonists in Matthew 5:38–42 are not on an equal social footing socially, and perhaps legally they are also not equal. This form of a 'slap' is performed with the right hand. In order to slap someone a second time with the left-hand after they 'turn the cheek,' a greater problem is encountered. For the most part, slapping with the left hand was avoided because the left hand was used for toiletry purposes, and because of this, it was a sign that someone was inferior to you. Stassen and Gushee state, "Jesus is saying, if you are slapped on the cheek of inferiority [as in being back-handed], turn to the

Smith Lewis (ed.), The Old Syriac Gospels or Evangelion da-Mepharreshê (London: Williams & Norgate, 1910).

[500] Levine and Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament,* 12. The recent address by Pope Francis called the Sermon a manual for peacemaking. For an example on how this response is part of natural law, see Gerald W. Schlabach, "A 'Manual' for Escaping Our Vicious Cycles: The Political Relevance of Enemy-Love," *Modern Theology* 36 (2020): 478–500.

[501] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42*, 142.

offender the cheek of equal dignity."[502] Being slapped back-handed was a sign of the victim's inferiority. Equal dignity was important to demand from a person who is slapping you. This view is supported by Richard Burridge, who states "'the right cheek' (Matt. 5:39; cp. Luke 6:29) entailing a more insulting backhanded blow dealt by a superior, like a master to a slave, or 'the religious elite with a dangerous preacher.'"[503]

Socially equal people would not strike each other with an openhanded slap. The slap on the right cheek was considered an insult and carried a double fine, according to *Baba Qammah* 8:6. The text of *Baba Qammah 8:6* quantifies how much a hit or slap is worth:

> If a man boxed the ear of his fellow, he must pay him a sela (four). Rabbi Judah says in the name of Rabbi Yose the Galilean: "A maneh (one hundred."
>
> If he slapped him he must pay 200 zuz.
>
> If with the back of his hand, he must pay him 400 zuz.
>
> If he tore at his ear, plucked out his hair, spat at him and his spit touched him, or pulled his cloak from off him, or loosed a woman's hair in the street, he must pay 400 zuz. This is the general rule: all is in accordance with the person's honor.

To receive a backhanded slap as an insult, may cause "one's first response to such an insult (to) be physical retaliation, a backhanded slap in kind."[504] The insulting backhanded slap, when juxtaposed with στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην, demands social justice because one person has power over another.[505] στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην , according to Davis, implies that it "was the most offensive, insulting and humiliating kind of slap."[506] Consequently, once

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[502] Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 139. For a similar concept of changing attitudes for a call to respond to violence differently, see Peter J. Judge, "Violence and Nonviolence in the Sermon on the Mount: Jesus' Call for Attitude Adjustment," *The Bible Today* 55 (2017): 13–19.

[503] Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 216.

[504] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42*, 142.

[505] Ibid.

[506] Ibid.

the cheek was turned, one would have to punch an offender in the face because there is no possible way to slap them again. Jesus's form of nonviolent retaliation would elicit non-violence, and if someone punched another violently, they would be liable under Roman tort law.

8.5.1 Slapping Submission in the Torah

There are examples in Torah found in Job 16:10 and in Lamentations 3:25–30 demonstrating slapping as a submission to an aggressor. In Job 16:10 the act of being slapped on the cheek creates a scene in which the person is violated. Job 16:10 reads:

> פָּעֲרוּ עָלַי בְּפִיהֶם בְּחֶרְפָּה הִכּוּ לְחָיַי יַחַד עָלַי יִתְמַלָּאוּן׃
> They have gaped at me with their mouths; they have struck me insolently on the cheek; they mass themselves together against me (NRSV).

In Job 16:10, the striking on a cheek is very similar to the action described in in Matthew 5:39 (στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην). Men slapped Job. Job does not strike back: his response is nonviolent and this reflects his character.[507] During his period of torment Job does not resist and according to Niebuhr, it should be with nonviolence.[508] The distinction is important for Niebuhr who in *Moral Man and Immoral Society* suggests that violence is not inherently evil.[509] Jesus also would have had many physical and verbal insults thrown at him during the

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[507] Cf. F. W. Danker, "Luke 16.16—an Opposition Logion," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 77 (1958): 231–243; S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1971), 200. For a discussion of violence and God according to Job, see Ken Brown, "How to Charge God with Murder: The Role of the 'Witness in Heaven' in Job 16," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 81 (2019): 16–32.

[508] Niebuhr, *Moral Man & Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*, 264. For further discussion of Niebuhr and nonviolence, see William Werpehowski, "Reinhold Niebuhr" In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, 178–91, eds Peter Scott and William Cavanaugh West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2019.

[509] Niebuhr presents pacifism with a dilemma be heretical or be irrelevant. Those that have attempted to apply the Jesus ethic to the social level are heretical, partly due to their misunderstanding concerning the nature and application of the Jesus ethic. The heretical pacifists attempt to justify their use of the Jesus ethic to the social realm by way of nonviolence. This misconstrues the nature of the Jesus ethic, which is one of non-resistance, not nonviolence and can be coercive on some levels. Proponents from both the Christian realist and pacifist camps that have sought to distance Reinhold Niebuhr from the just war position, and it is not my intent to provide a full analysis of Niebuhr, Yoder, and the alternative Christian realism. However, for instance, the

last few days of his life. This is a situation similar to Job's trials and there is a connection to striking on the cheek because Jesus did not retaliate.[510] The actions of slapping in Job and Matthew 5:39 both demonstrate "an insulting action."[511] Edgar Gibson notes that in the time of Jesus and of Job, smiting or striking a person on the cheek was an insult, and still is today.[512] Brown suggests that in the story of Job the Hebrew text describes slapping on the cheek as "an act of contempt, insult or reproach."[513]

The act of being slapped and hit on the cheek is also evident in Lamentations 3:25–30, which gives a parallel to the situation in Matthew 5:39 in which a person turns their cheek to a smiter. The question must be asked whether Jesus was alluding to this verse and, if so, why was this done. Lamentations 3:25–30 states:

טֹוב יְהוָה לְקֹוִו לְנֶפֶשׁ תִּדְרְשֶׁנּוּ׃
טֹוב וְיָחִיל וְדוּמָם לִתְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה׃
טֹוב לַגֶּבֶר כִּי־יִשָּׂא עֹל בִּנְעוּרָיו׃ ס
יֵשֵׁב בָּדָד וְיִדֹּם כִּי נָטַל עָלָיו׃
יִתֵּן בֶּעָפָר פִּיהוּ אוּלַי יֵשׁ תִּקְוָה׃
יִתֵּן לְמַכֵּהוּ לֶחִי יִשְׂבַּע בְּחֶרְפָּה׃ ס

The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.
It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.
It is good for one to bear the yoke in youth,
to sit alone in silence when the Lord has imposed it,
to put one's mouth to the dust (there may yet be hope),
to give one's cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults.

Christian realist John D. Carlson questions if Niebuhr is in the just war camp, see John D. Carlson, "Is There a Christian Realist Theory of War and Peace? Reinhold Niebuhr and Just War Thought," 133. Furthermore, the Mennonite pacifist John Yoder distinguishes realism and just war as distinct types, both in contrast to the pacifist position. See John Howard Yoder, "How Many Ways Are There to Think Morally About War?," *Journal of Law and Religion* 11 (1995): 83–107. This essay is a more refined presentation of Yoder's earlier work on typologies concerning the ethics of war, see Yoder, *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*, 27–41, chapter two is entitled "Refining Our Typology on the Ethics of War."

[510] Worth, *The Sermon on the Mount,* 246.

[511] Victor E. Reichart, *Job: With Hebrew Text and English Translation* (Hindhead: Soncino, 1946), 82.

[512] Edgar C.S. Gibson, *Book of Job Westminster Commentary Series* (Greenwood, SC: Attic, 1976), 119.

[513] Francis Brown et al., *The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015), 357–358.

Lamentations 3:25–30 provides an insight into the way ancient Israelites viewed the act of smiting. Giving one's cheek to the smiter and being the recipient of insults are connected. Gibson suggests that being hit on the cheek was part of an existing and pre-known understanding of shame.[514] Other translations of Lamentations 3:25–30 suggest patience is a virtue (JPS): "Let him sit alone and be patient, when he has laid it upon him. Let him put his mouth to the dust—there may yet be hope. Let him offer his cheek to the smiter; let him be surfeited with mockery." Patience is a virtue for a person who is smitten. It is noted that turning the other cheek is connected with shame in both Matthew 5:39 and Lamentations 3. Habel suggests that the verse is not about "swallow[ing] insults without retaliating", but more about having the patience to refrain from reacting.[515] If applied to the Sermon, this connects very well with having wisdom in how one responds, especially in the context of turning the other cheek. It becomes evident that στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην is not a new teaching proposed by Jesus. Worth contends that "Jesus did not originate some new doctrine in his teaching on nonretaliation but was faithfully presenting an approach voiced by the sages recorded in the Old Testament." [516] To look at Lamentations in more detail, Lamentations 3:30 uses the word לְחִי which has a root meaning "to be soft." This use of לְחִי is made in reference to the jawbone; thus, it is evident that when a person strikes or smites the לְחִי, the hitting is done in a way that it has a bruising effect. The לְחִי felt is done by the word, נָכָה (to smite or hit). This clearly shows that the hit causes bruising or pain to the jaw. Lamentations applauds the person who smitten. The victim is a not a weaker or subservient person and in practicing restraint the strong man is making a good choice.

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[514] Edgar C.S. Gibson, *Book of Job*, 249–50. For a view of Lamentations 3 and the role of sorrow.

[515] Norman C. Habel, *Jeremiah/ Lamentations,* Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 407.

[516] Worth, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 252.

8.5.2 Matthew 5:40 and Isaiah 50:6

Isaiah 50:6 (NRSV)

גוי נתתי למכים ולחיי למרטים פני לא הסתרתי מכלמות ורק:

I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

The messianic foreshadowing in Isaiah 50:6 depicts a person who is struck and who does not hide their face from insult.[517] The literary functions in Isaiah and Matthew 5:38–42 are similar. M.D. Goulder contends that the literary similarities are "too strong to be accidental: the '*but I say to you'* section is a *midrashic* expansion of Isaiah."[518] The literary function of Isaiah and the methods of writing are complementary, allowing the possibility that Jesus is engaging in *midrash* or Targum.

Isaiah 50:1 mentions finance and marriage, which connects with Matthew.[519] Interestingly enough, the section of the Torah portion that correlates with this *Haftorah* portion, is *Haftarat Eikev*. *Eikev* is Deuteronomy 7:12–11:25 and traditionally it is read with Isaiah 50 in the synagogue in week 46 of the year, which is six weeks before Rosh Hashana, the new year. There is a strong correlation between Jesus's sermon and the reading from haftorah, as he would have been providing exegesis and discussion for that week's Torah discussion in the synagogues.[520] Divorce is raised in Matthew 5:31–32: "It was also said, 'whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce,' but I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit

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[517] Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*, 253.

[518] M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1977), 293.

[519] See Isaiah 50:1 (NRSV) "Thus says the Lord: Where is your mother's bill of divorce with which I put her away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? No, because of your sins you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was put away,"

[520] *Haftorah* became into use after 168 BCE, but no one knows for certain its origins.

adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." This text, although controversial in modern times, has a metaphorical connection to Isaiah 50:1 through the act of adultery. Some argue that it is connected to the Temple Scroll (11Q19) because of the discussions of divorce.[521] Furthermore, Isaiah 50:1 states: "Thus says the Lord: 'Where is your mother's bill of divorce with which I put her away?'" The metaphorical connection between Matthew 5:40 and Isaiah 50:1 parallels the connection of God's relationship with Israel being broken with divorce and creditors. Isaiah 50:1 asks, "Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? No, because of your sins you were sold, and for your transgressions your mother was put away." This is similar to the view in Matthew 5:40, "and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well." In Matthew 5:40, Jesus reiterates Exodus 22:26 which states, "If you take your neighbour's cloak as a pledge, return it by sunset." Worth suggests that the Sermon does not have a new ethical paradigm but follows Isaiah,[522] while Carter concludes that Isaiah and Matthew 5:40 do not create new doctrines.[523] The distinctiveness of Jesus's sayings lies in the connection they provide between Isaiah and the contemporary Jew living under Roman rule.

8.5.3 Doctrine on War in Early Christianity

The doctrines of restraint and pacifism are not part of the ideology of military service. DeSilvia believes that the courts acted as a mechanism to balance the power for the

[521] J. A. Fitzmyer, "Divorce among First-Century Palestinian Jews," *Eretz Yisrael* 14 (1978): 103–10; J. R. Mueller, "The Temple Scroll and the Gospel Divorce Texts," *RevQ 10* (1979–1981): 247–75. See also, Casey Deryl Elledge, "'From the Beginning It Was Not so...': Jesus, Divorce, and Remarriage in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 37 (2010): 371–89; James R. Mueller, "The Temple Scroll and the Gospel Divorce Texts," *Revue de Qumrân* 10 (1980): 247–56.

[522] Worth, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 253.

[523] Warren Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 32.

Romans.[524] Matthew 5:39 provides greater limits than *lex talionis*. According to DeSilva, the victim "should not escalate a lawsuit but should not run away from it either."[525] The question about nonviolence and στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην factor into how violence is a part of the response. Bainton states that "from the end of the New Testament period to the decade 170–180 CE, there is no evidence whatever of Christians in the army… but by the time of Constantine, there were many Christians in the army."[526] As time progressed, Christianity developed an understanding of στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην from Matthew 5:38–42, and that understanding included more people serving in the army. Lee clarifies the role that people had in the army and states that our understanding was mistaken when he writes, "There seems to be a rather widespread notion that the Early Church was outspokenly pacifist during the first two centuries of its existence. Writers speak of the pacifism of the Early Church without explaining what they mean by the term; but many assume that they mean a refusal on the part of the Christian to take part in war."[527] This historical understanding of the requirement of military service and the interpretation of στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην seems not to have been a problem for the early Christian community until Marcus Aurelius (161–180 CE).[528] Although early adherents to Christianity may not have been active in the military,

[524] DeSilva, *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude*, 12. See also David E. Aune, "The Influence of Roman Imperial Court Ceremonial on the Apocalypse of John," *Biblical Research* 28 (1983): 5–26.

[525] DeSilva, *The Jewish Teachers of Jesus, James, and Jude*, 236–237.

[526] Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-Evaluation* (New York: Abingdon, 1960), 66; Patrick G Barber, "Christian Views of Military Participation Prior to the Reign of Constantine," *Restoration Quarterly* 53 (2011): 101–12. It is worth noting that during Constantine rule, Jews were only allowed to access the Temple Mount once a year and this influenced roles of occupation, see F. M. Loewenberg, "Did Jews Abandon the Temple Mount," *Middle East Quarterly* 20 (2013): 37–48.

[527] Umphrey Lee, *The Historic Church and Modern Pacifism* (New York: Abingdon, 1943), 50.

[528] James Moffatt, "War," in *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1919), 2:660.

it cannot be assumed it was from the Christian interpretation of στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην or a Jewish influence such as the pacifism of the Essenes.

There are examples however of pacifism in the early church that cannot be ignored, such as evidenced in Origen's refutation of Celsus. In the writings of Celsus in the second century, it was acknowledged that if everyone was a pacifist, people would be overrun by tyranny of others.[529] However, there were Christians in military service in Marcus Aurelius's Thundering Legion in 173 CE.[530] Tertullian believed that στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην teaches a form of pacifism beyond being a non-combatant. Tertullian wrote:

> Of course, if faith comes later, and finds any preoccupied with military service, their case is different, as in the instance of those whom John used to receive for baptism, and of those most faithful centurions, I mean the centurion whom Christ approves, and the centurion whom Peter instructs; yet, at the same time, when a man has become a believer, and faith has been sealed, there must be either an immediate abandonment of it, which has been the course with many.[531]

Tertullian's belief, from his interpretation of στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην, is that a convert to Christianity should cease being a soldier. This sort of interpretation would not allow for a nonviolent approach to conflict. Knut Willem Ruyter critiques Tertullian, "Does this mean a certain moderation in the position of Tertullian, implying now that some could remain in the army? That seems hardly the case; we know that an enlisted soldier was not released lightly, and that the penalty for desertion was death."[532] For Tertullian to state that a person should

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[529] Origen, *Contra Celsum 8.68* (London: Cambridge,1965), 504.

[530]Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-Evaluation* (New York: Abingdon, 1960).

[531] Tertullian, *De Corona Militis. The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1885).

[532] Knut Willem Ruyter, "Pacifism and Military Service in the Early Church," *Cross Currents* 32 (1982): 61.

stop being a soldier when they became a Christian may be something he believed to be desired but it was difficult to achieve.

There are many early Christians who discuss changing from being warriors to messengers of peace. Justin Martyr's dialogue with Trypho states, "And we who delighted in war, in the slaughter of one another, and in every other kind of iniquity have in every part of the world, converted our weapons of war into implements of peace—our swords into ploughshares, our spears into farmers' tools."[533] This is seen by Justin Martyr as fulfilment of prophecies of peace in Micah 4:3 and Isaiah 2:4. For Justin Martyr, being a Christian and turning the other cheek suggest a person who makes peace rather than warfare. For some such as Clement of Alexandria (150–215 C.E.), soldiering mimicked Moses and was held in esteem.[534] Clement wrote "If you were in the army when you were seized by the knowledge of God, obey the commander who gives just commands."[535] For Clement, you would not just resign the military service on conversion but would fulfill your obligations.

8.5.4 The Example of Jesus

The concept of turning the check is also seen in the account of Jesus on trial in John's gospel. Swartley says, "Jesus himself did not turn the other cheek when struck at his trial, but rather challenged the smiter, 'Why do you strike me?' (Jn 18:23)."[536] When the High Priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teachings, "Jesus answered, 'If I have spoken

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[533] Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* (New York: Christian Heritage, 1948).

[534] Darrell Cole, *When God Says War is Right: The Christian's Perspective on When and How to Fight* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook, 2002), 9. For more discussion of Jewish and Roman perspectives on fighting, see Maren R. Niehoff, "A Jew for Roman Tastes: The Parting of the Ways in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho from a Post-Colonial Perspective," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 27 (2019): 549–78.

[535] Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks 10.100.*2, 10.

[536] William Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War & Women* (Scottsdale: Herald, 1983), 101.

wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?'" This example demonstrates how a powerless human, such as Jesus, would act when slapped. He responded in a nonviolent way, questioning why he had been struck.

Jesus's actions demonstrate nonviolent action. Even if those around him do not fully espouse nonviolence, such as Peter carrying a sword for three years following him. The account suggests that Jesus submitted because he was resigned to his fate when he said, "Shall I not drink the cup which the father has given me?" (Jn 18:11), and this was a form of nonviolence.

According to Lachs, even forgiving someone without their asking for forgiveness demonstrates nonviolence.[537] There are other examples of Jesus's using nonviolent actions. One such was in the Garden of Gethsemane when Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant with his sword (Jn 18:10). Jesus healed the servant and told Peter to sheath his sword. For some to purport that people must turn the other cheek and allow injustice to occur, it is evident that στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην supports a scenario in which one person has power over another who is socially inferior. Davis further suggests that by στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην (turn the other also), the victim can utilise the court system, as alluded to in Matthew 5:38–42.[538]

8.6 ἱμάτιον and χιτῶνά and Pledges

Matthew 5:40 (NRSV):

> καὶ τῷ θέλοντί σοι κριθῆναι καὶ τὸν χιτῶνά σου λαβεῖν, ἄφες αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον
> 40 and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well

[537] Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament*, 104.

[538] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42*, 142.

Respect for human dignity and a fundamental right to equality is evident in the Torah and is the basis for the call for social equality in Matthew 5:40. There is a push not only for legal equality, but for justice for both rich and poor alike. In Matthew 5:40 there is a deeper understanding of justice than merely lawsuits and the giving of a cloak. The standards for loans and collateral are part of the interpretations of Matthew 5:40; thus, it is necessary to show how clothing and social equality are connected. Keener explains that keeping clothing and giving up clothing causing one to be nude is an aspect of social equality.[539] There is an overt understanding of providing collateral for loans being addressed by Matthew 5:40. Lachs refers to a situation in which someone is bringing a lawsuit ("if anyone would sue you and take your cloak"). Lachs contrasts this with the parallel account in Luke. Lachs says that "here it is clearly a legal action in tort or contract which is described," and this action being described as a breach of contract and the avoidance of a tort is important to the poor amongst us.[540] There are some that suggest that giving up a cloak (ἱμάτιον) and undergarment (χιτῶνά) causes a person to be naked.[541] Following the advice in Matt 5:40 might well leave the debtor naked, but it would not be legal for the creditor to accept and retain the cloak (Deut 24:12). There are many complications that arise from this scenario and the prohibitions connected to it. It becomes problematic to lend to people who are without assets or collateral. It also highlights the difficulty in lending clothing to people for clothing. D. A.

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[539] See Craig S Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009, 195; Keener remarks that nudity was an "intolerable dishonor in Palestinian society" and appeals to Gen 3:7, 10–11; 9:22; Jub. 3:21–22, 30–31; 7:8–10, 20; 1QS 7:12; Sifre Deut. 320.5.2; cf. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew 1–7* (ICC; New York: T&T Clark,1988), 545; Carson, *Matthew*, 190. Also, the OT prohibited taking a poor person's cloak since, as the outer garment, it served as a bed for the night (Exod 22:25–27; Deut 24:12–13). For a discussion about ἱμάτιον and the role of nudity and modesty, see Elizabeth Smith, "Himations and Fancy Hairdos: A Note on 1 Peter 3.3," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 42 (2019): 237–41.

[540] Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament*, 104.

[541] Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 195.

Carson suggests that lending to beggars would not happen because of these constraints.[542] W. D. Davies and Dale Allison suggest, "The import of the following sentences [vv. 40–42] is lost if one attempts to take them literally." Davies and Allison believe that Matthew 5:40 is a hyperbolic in nature, because Jesus often would use extreme examples. [543] Similarly, Claudia Claridge suggests that the hyperbole is "deliberate exaggeration for the sake of effect."[544]

The scenario of a lawsuit may be modelled on a real-life event, as Foster suggests it is "a quasi-legal prosecution by opponents."[545] Maybe this is a critique of the people closest to Jesus. It is understood that the text reads differently in Luke 6:29 (NRSV), "If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat, do not withhold even your shirt." In the Matthean account, a person can be litigated for their cloak, while Luke focuses on a person's responsibility. In Luke the focus is on the action of taking the garment, not seeking a solution. In Matthew the teaching is not a critique of the legal system but is solely about a debt owed and the ethics and justice of collecting a debt. The person suing for χιτῶνά has a right to sue if the χιτῶνά is debt collateral. This highlights the verse's focus, that the debtor is poor. The rich prosecutor can't reprocess the garment ἱμάτιον. The caveat is that if the outer garment (ἱμάτιον) were to be taken in pledge, it would have to

[542] D. A. Carson, *Matthew Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 190. The Sermon on the Mount follows a concept of precedent; thus, there is protection for people under previous law. For info on the Sermon on the Mount precedent, see J. Neoh, "The Rhetoric of Precedent and Fulfilment in the Sermon on the Mount and the Common Law," *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 12 (2016): 419–47.

[543] W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *Matthew 1–7* (New York: T&T Clark, 1988), 541.

[544] Claudia Claridge, *Hyperbole in English: A Corpus-based Study of Exaggeration* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 6.

[545] Paul Foster, *Community, Law and Mission In Matthew's Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 128.

be returned by sunset as it would double as a poor person's only blanket, as stated in Torah (cf., Ex 22:26–27; Deut 24:12–13).[546]

Jesus did not want people to be doormats to wealthy people or powerful people. Levine rightly suggests that "most people owned only two garments; to strip naked would uncover the judiciary injustice."[547] Jesus was protecting people from injustice. If injustice occurred, the public display of nudity would force the courts to uphold the law as part of a culture against nudity (Genesis 9:20–27; Leviticus 18:6–18).[548] Universally, this forces people to treat people with equality and respect, regardless of class or wealth.

8.7 To Compel: ἀγγαρεύσει as Nonviolent Resistance

Matthew 5:41:

καὶ ὅστις σε ἀγγαρεύσει μίλιον ἕν, ὕπαγε μετ' αὐτοῦ δύο

41 and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.

The concept of personal dignity is apparent in Matthew 5:41. Jesus states that if you are forced to go one mile that you are to go another. There is no certainty as to whether this is about voluntarily going another mile or being forced to go another mile. We are left with the statement, 'go another mile.[549]' Donald Hagner suggests that the literal meaning is about

[546] France, Richard, "The Gospel of Matthew," *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, 221.

[547] Levine, Amy-Jill, and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 12.

[548] Ibid.

[549] Rules of conduct for Roman Officers were mandated and ensured that Romans could not abuse their commission as an officer. To breech this commission as an officer could lead to fines and punishment. For more details on the military structure for military officers in the Roman Army, see J. P. Roth, *The Logistics of the Roman Army at War 264 BC – AD 235* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); R. Alston, "Roman Military Pay from Caesar to Diocletian," *Journal of Roman Studies* 84 (1994): 113–123; D. Armstrong, "Caesar's Art of War," *Classical Weekly* (1939): 291–293; P. J. Cuff, "Caesar the Soldier," *G&R* (1957): 29–35; L. J. F. Keppie, "Vexilla Veteranorum," *Papers of the British School at Rome* (1973): 8–17. For further scholarship on the amount of pay an officer could be fined from his yearly salary, see G. R. Watson, "The Pay of the Roman Army: Suetonius, Dio and the quartum stipendium," *Historia* 5 (1956): 332–340.

taking a second walk if you are forced to go one mile. [550] Some scholars, such as Gordon Zerbe, suggest that Roman soldiers were not permitted to make a person walk a second mile because of the rules and laws required of them as an officer for Rome; thus, when a person does walk a second mile, the abuser has lost control of the situation and is at risk for punishment from their military superiors.[551] For some scholars such at Betz, when someone has to walk an extra mile without being forced or obligated to walk the extra mile, there is an element of exposing the person who is forcing you to walk and this empowers the person walking to have control over their own situation.[552] Walter Wink posits:

> Why, then, does Jesus counsel these already humiliated people to turn the other cheek? Because this action robs the oppressor of the power to humiliate. The person who turns the other cheek is saying, in effect, "Try again. Your first blow failed to achieve its intended effect. I deny you the power to humiliate me. I am a human being just like you. Your status (gender, race, age, wealth) does not alter that fact. You cannot demean me."[553]

Some scholars believe that the victim of a cheek slapping or one who volunteers to walk an extra mile is relinquishing their honour here on earth but gaining honour in heaven.[554] There is a spiritual blessing achieved at the cost of a physical abuse. This author does not take the view that says it is acceptable to be abused on earth because God will reward you in the afterlife. This type of thinking feeds domestic violence. Marjorie Suchocki argues that

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[550] Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, 132.

[551] Gordon Zerbe, Non-Retaliation in Early Jewish and New Testament Texts: Ethical Themes in Social Contexts (Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 185.

[552] Hans Dieter Betz, *Essays On The Sermon On The Mount* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 290.

[553] Walter Wink, "Neither Passivity Nor Violence: Jesus' Third Way," in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 105; Walter Wink's work has been built upon by scholarship of subsequent writers such as R.H. Worth, *The Sermon on the Mount: Its Old Testament Roots* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1997); L. Desroches, *Allow the Waters: Anger, Fear, Power, Work, Sexuality, Community—and the Spirituality and Practice of Nonviolence* (Ottawa: Dunamis, 1996); J. Nelson-Pallmeyer, *Saving Christianity from Empire* (New York: Continuum, 2005).

[554] Craig S Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

contrary to the Christian tradition that views original sin as stemming from pride, violence is the origin of all sin.[555]

It is clear, according to Davis, that the "Old Testament *lex talionis* was to be implemented on a societal and governmental level in a judicial process for the nation of Israel."[556] How *lex talionis* is applied depends on the interpretation; thus, the evidence points to a Jesus who is telling people to seek equality and justice. There are some, such as Robert Tannehill, who contend that Matthew 5:41 is hyperbole: "We feel uneasy about interpreting the command to turn the other cheek literally. However, few interpreters attempt to explain why this is not literal language. Nor do they give a clear account of the nature and qualities of this language, if it is not literal."[557] If this text is hyperbole and not literal language, there remains less reason to 'spiritualise' the reward for abuse by saying that in the afterlife an abused person will be rewarded for enduring abuse on earth. Rather the text may be interpreted to mean that justice and equity are equally due to all people.

Matthew 5:41 does not deal with how governments operate but addresses individual behaviour. Davies says, "Certainly it is addressed to the community of disciples but only from the perspective of the victim or person offended… It is not directed specifically to the government, courts or judges on how to punish offenders or how to carry out law on a societal level."[558] The local non-citizens and subjects were often conscripted to do short-term labour for Roman soldiers. The practice of Roman soldiers using conscripted labour to carry

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[555] Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1995). Suchocki teaches in *the Fall to Violence* that suggests that process theology and relational theology are the core teachings for Suchocki.

[556] Davis, James F. *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42*, 138.

[557] Robert C Tannehill, *The Sword of his Mouth* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981).

[558] Davis, James F. *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42*, 138.

their pack was common when the Sermon was delivered.[559] Roman soldiers were allowed to force non-citizens and residents who are subject to Rome into labour when there was a need for it.[560] However, there were limitations to the amount of forced work that Roman soldiers could force upon the local populace. For example, a soldier could only force someone to carry his load for one mile. James Davis notes that at that time a mile "… literally means one thousand paces but became a fixed length of eight stades, equal to 4,454 feet or 1478 metres."[561]

Matthew 5:41 uses the word ἀγγαρεύσει, defined as "shall compel to go," in the context of forced labour over a distance of one mile. Roman soldiers had authority to commandeer horses, vessels, and men, as needed, into temporary service.[562] The application of ἀγγαρεύσει becomes part of the problem. For Levine and Brettler, the suggestion that a person would voluntarily go forward for another mile after being ἀγγαρεύσει would upset the status of power.[563] Jesus said that if one was forced to go one mile, go on for a second mile. Any subject of Rome could be called to service. This included beasts of burden, properties, and land. People were conscripted, and it caused agitation among the Jewish population because it was sometimes done upon the Sabbath. One example of such forced labour is the compulsion of Simon the Cyrene who had to carry the cross for Jesus on the way to Golgotha

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[559] For more research on the use of violence and war techniques with the Roman military officer and war techniques by the governments, see further research with A. Goldsworthy, *The Roman Army at War 100 BC – AD 200* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); V. D. Hanson, *Makers of Ancient Strategy: From the Persian Wars to the Fall of Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); J. Heurgon, *The Rise of Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); H. M. D. Parker, *The Roman Legions* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1958); S. E. Phang, *Roman Military Service: Ideologies of Discipline in the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); G. R. Watson, *The Roman Soldier* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1969).

[560] Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 12.

[561] James F. Davis. *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42*, 145.

[562] See Josephus, *Antiquities 13*, 2, 3.

[563] Levine, Amy-Jill, and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 12.

(Matt 27:32; Mark 15:21). There are very few examples of ἀγγαρεύσει in the New Testament in Matthew 27:32 and Mark 15:21, are the only instances of where this word is used. For a non-soldier to be compelled to carry a pack for the solder for more than a mile would constitute a definite breach of military protocol. [564] The regulation places a boundary and a limit on how much the solder may compel someone into service. David Stern suggests how a person responds reflects their character.[565] Davis interprets literally, saying, "Jesus recommends… with the present active imperative to go with him two."[566] W. D. Davies and Dale Allison do not take the same literalist approach and suggest, "The import of the following sentences [vv. 40–42] is lost if one attempts to take them literally. Jesus often resorted to extreme exaggeration in order to drive home his points and to get his hearers to ask questions and see their world from a new perspective."[567] Jesus is therefore not critiquing Rome but trying to shift the paradigm regarding how people respond to authority.

There lies a new way for a modern application of Matthew 5:41. The person compelled to go a mile is no longer the victim of oppression. The compelled person retains dignity, self-respect and some limited control over the situation. Wink describes the humour in the setting provided by Jesus: "Imagine the situation of a Roman infantryman pleading with a Jew to give back his pack! The humor of this scene . . . could scarcely have been lost on Jesus's hearers, who must have been regaled at the prospect of thus discomfiting their oppressors."[568] There is a balance between the ruling and the ruled. France contends that the

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[564] Ibid.

[565] David Stern, *Complete Jewish Bible* (Clarksville: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1998), 29.

[566] Davis, James F. *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42,* 145.

[567] Dale C Allison and W. D Davies, *Matthew* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 541.

[568] Walter Wink, *Jesus and Nonviolence* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 103.

followers of Jesus should not look at their rights but focus on the rights and needs of those around them.[569] It is not a good interpretation to say that 'loving your enemy' would call for you to carry your enemy's burden. You could refuse to carry someone's pack a second mile but still love them. The way you respond to carrying the pack a second mile determines your character.

8.8 Matthew 5:43–48 and Ἀγαπήσεις

Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη· Ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἐχθρόν σου
ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀγαπᾶτε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ⸀ὑμῶν καὶ προσεύχεσθε ὑπὲρ ⸀τῶν διωκόντων ὑμᾶς
ὅπως γένησθε υἱοὶ τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ⸀ἐν οὐρανοῖς, ὅτι τὸν ἥλιον αὐτοῦ ἀνατέλλει ἐπὶ πονηροὺς καὶ ἀγαθοὺς καὶ βρέχει ἐπὶ δικαίους καὶ ἀδίκους
ἐὰν γὰρ ἀγαπήσητε τοὺς ἀγαπῶντας ὑμᾶς, τίνα μισθὸν ἔχετε; οὐχὶ καὶ οἱ τελῶναι ⸀τὸ αὐτὸ⸁ ποιοῦσιν
καὶ ἐὰν ἀσπάσησθε τοὺς ⸀ἀδελφοὺς ὑμῶν μόνον, τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε; οὐχὶ καὶ οἱ ⸀ἐθνικοὶ ⸀τὸ αὐτὸ⸁ ποιοῦσιν
Ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ⸀ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ⸀οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν
43 "You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.'
44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
45 so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.
46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?
47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?
48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The passages about loving one's enemy and how you love your enemy are part of that definition of love found in the Sermon on the Mount. It is no coincidence that these verses about love are found after Jesus explores turning the other cheek and walking the extra mile. Matthew 5:43–48 provides an example of love connected to reconciliation. As the sixth antithesis in the Sermon, the literary form and structure follow the traditional antithetical

[569] France, Richard, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 222–223.

rhythm seen in the *midrash*.[570] These sayings are the oral traditions of the era of Jesus, according to Francois P. Viljoen, who contends that Jesus refers only to the Mosaic Law and the oral traditions of the scribes and Pharisees.[571] The sayings of the Sermon are not a response to the Old Testament and Hebrew Bible. Günther Bornkamm believes that all the six antitheses are responses to the Rabbinate, as a form of *Midrash*.[572] The *Midrash* is not revoking the Torah but embracing it fully, according to Overman and Ridderbos.[573]

Matthew 5:38–42 helps frame the discourse in Matthew 5:43–48 about loving your enemy as well as loving your neighbour. In Matthew 5:43–44, Jesus says, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." No law commands the hatred of enemies, conversely, Proverbs 25:21 suggests "If your enemies are hungry, give them bread to eat; and if they are thirsty, give them water to drink." This interpretation of the Torah provides a standard for good behaviour and good actions of people and how they treat both themselves and others. The Torah passage, "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord" (Leviticus 19:18) provides the foundational understanding of loving your neighbour as yourself. There is an implicit understanding that you would treat another person how you would expect to be treated by others. The preface, "you have heard it said" implies an oral saying. David Stern translates Matthew 5:43 as, "You have heard that our fathers were told

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[570] Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, 294.

[571] Francois P. Viljoen, "Jesus Halakhic Argumentation on The True Intention of the Law in Matthew," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 34 (2013). See also John P. Meier, "Did the Historical Jesus Prohibit All Oaths? Part 2," *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 6 (2008): 3–24.

[572] Günther Bornkamm, *Tradition and Interpretation In Matthew* (London: SCM Press, 1963).

[573] J. Andrew Overman, *Church and Community in Crisis* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1996), 82; Herman Nicolaas Bernhard Ridderbos, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 299.

'love your neighbour and hate your enemy.'"[574] The Stern translation focuses on the source of Jesus's statement as being the 'fathers,' which is akin to Oral Traditions. This saying about peace and love notably does not talk about hating an enemy. In Hebrew, the Leviticus 19:18 reads:

"לֹא־תִקֹּם וְלֹא־תִטֹּר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה׃

The use of the word אָהַב (ʿahab) demonstrates that the love one has is a strong human love for another person. It can be noted that in *Mishna* Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai employs Lev 19:18 twice in relation to striking and killing, as "select for him a quick death!"[575] Matthew 5:43 reads in the Greek, "Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη αγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίον σου καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἐχθρόν σου." The word αγαπήσεις from the root word αγαπαω means to have a fondness or affection for another person.[576] The Greek word here translated "hate" is μισήσεις, from the root word μισεω, which indicates the abhorrence of a person. This is used in conjunction with the word ἐχθρόν which is an enemy or hated or hostile person.

There is similar discussion about loving your enemies in Qumran 1QS 9. According to the Manual of Discipline scroll (also known as *The Community Rule*), the members of the community were to be taught "that they may love all the sons of light … and hate all the sons of darkness." (1QS 1:9–10).[577] We cannot definitely confirm that Jesus was aware of 1QS 9–10, but the similarity may be observed. The saying about loving one's enemies to which Jesus

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[574] Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 1229.

[575] J. N. Epstein and E. Z. Melamed, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai* (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1979), 169, 172; W. David Nelson, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2006), 277–78, 281–82. For further discussion on אָהַב, see Hikaru Kumon, "Did Ancient Israelites Fall in Love?: A Cross-Linguistic Semantic Approach to אהב," *Hebrew Studies* 62 (2021): 7–32.

[576] For a discussion on ἀγαπάω, please see Andrew R. Talbert, "The Synonymous Rendering of Aristotelian Φιλέω with Ἀγαπάω in the Gospel of John," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 16 (2020): 9–29.

[577] Geza Vermes "Manual of Discipline 1QS," *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin, 2004), 99. This follows the biblical verse of Psalms 139:22 "I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies."

referred differs from the written Torah of Leviticus 19:18.[578]

In Matthew 5:44 Jesus teaches that we should love and pray for our enemies and asks, "if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" (Matt 5:47 NRSV). The use of ἐθνικός is in reference to those who are not Jewish. The Jewish listeners would know that ἐθνικός are those who are not Jewish (sometimes termed "pagans" or "heathens").[579] Even with Jesus speaking Aramaic, those writing in Greek utilised these nuances. In the Greek Matthew 5:47, the text reads "καὶ ἐὰν ἀσπάσησθε τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ὑμῶν μόνον, τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε; οὐχὶ καὶ οἱ ἐθνικοὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ποιοῦσιν." In the Greek manuscript on which the KJV is based of Matthew 5:47, the word ἐθνικοὶ meaning heathen or Gentile is translated with the term τελώνης meaning publicans.[580] Those who are considered ἐθνικός are different from Jews. Jerome interpreted ἐθνικοὶ to be Jewish people who did not act or live in the expected manner of the community and included people such as tax-collectors and scribes.[581] If this were the case, ἐθνικός, in the context of loving the 'other,' is significant because ἐθνικός could be perceived as oppressors. For example, the Greeks and the Romans were ἐθνικός.

Fagenblat suggests a Jewish interpretation of ἐθνικός as meaning those who do not follow the way:

> It is possible to see Jesus' command to 'love your enemies' as belonging to the same tradition as Rabbi Judah's ruling. Therefore, when Jesus states, according to Matthew 5:43, 'you have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy,' he is not referring to a Pharisaic or proto-rabbinic view. More likely, he is referring to the composers of certain

[578] E.g., See Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Nashville: Word, 1993), 33:134; (Collegeville: 1991), 1:89.

[579] For a discussion of ἐθνικός, see Panos Koromvokis, "1915: Ο Εθνικός Διχασμός by George Th. Mavrogordatos," 37 (2019): 199–201.

[580] Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament*, 109.

[581] Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament*, 110.

> Dead Sea Scrolls, such as the Community Rule, who divide the world into those who follow 'the path for the wise' and therefore merit love and those other 'men of the pit' who deserve eternal hatred (1Qs9.21).[582]

There are connections of 'love your enemies' with the Community Rule and the Dead Sea Scrolls. David Stern suggests that there are connections with *Orchot Tzaddikim* 15:3.[583] The understanding of love, imparted through the example of Abraham, is explained in *Orchot Tzaddikim* 15:3

> He who performs his deeds with zeal demonstrates convincingly that he loves his Creator as a servant who loves his master and hastens to do His will. For zeal depends upon the heart of a man, as when a man cleanses his heart of all other thoughts that may be in it and clings to one thought only, then he makes himself alert and will no doubt succeed. Thus did Abraham do when he removed the love for his son from his heart and carried out the will of his Creator, nullifying his love for his son before his love for the Creator. Therefore, he made a point of rising early, for there was in his heart a great love for the Creator. Therefore, the Holy One, Blessed be He, swore to him that He would remember the binding of Isaac. For a man may do a very difficult thing for one he loves, although his heart troubles him in the doing. But Abraham and Isaac both acted out of the desire of their heart, for the degree of love that they felt for God was very great. Both of them cleaved unto the Lord in their thoughts until they were joined in a great unity. For their sole intent was to spread throughout the world the knowledge of the Unity of the Creator and to train mankind to love Him. As they lovingly performed the service of the Lord, may He be Exalted, and fulfilled His commandments, their physical nature was overcome; their minds cleaved to their love of the Creator of the world. Therefore, both of them acted with zeal.

The *midrash* sayings imparted many cultural norms and understandings. In *Orchot Tzaddikim* 15:3, the greatest thing a person can do is to act out of love for another person. It is part of the service to God. Love was such an overbearing mantra for Jews. Torah does not want them

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[582] Michael Fagenblat, "The Concept of Neighbour in Jewish and Christian Ethics," in *The Jewish Annotated New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 542. To better understand ἐθνικός in the Jewish context, see Justin Paley, "Reading 3 John Within a Jewish Framework: An Overdue Reconsideration of the Text," *Expository Times* 132 (2021): 421–25.

[583] Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 30; *Orchot Tzaddikim* is a German book on Jewish ethics from the 1400s.

to mistreat their enemies.[584] Matthew 22:37–39 (NRSV) states, "'He said to him,' 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" This passage provides a guide for treating others with dignity and respect.[585] This is further reflected in Matthew 5:44–48 which states:

> Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The concept of love is in both Jewish and Christian theology. Bultmann suggests that "no sense of scribal or rabbinic changes nor Jewish apocalyptic exaggerations exists in the method of love."[586] Both Hellenistic and Jewish literature at the time of Jesus have a similar approach of respecting an individual with love.[587] Matthew 5:44–48 directs the love statement towards Jewish people and Jewish followers of Jesus.[588] Vermes states: "The model is universal. The term 'enemy,' unless otherwise defined, normally suggests an outsider to the community of Israel... generally speaking, Jesus's vision does not stretch

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[584] Proverbs 24.17; 25.21; Josephus, *ag.Ap.2.211*.

[585] Levine and Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament,* 12; Matthew 22:37–39 quotes the Jewish prayer the *Shema* taken from Deuteronomy 6:4–9.

[586] Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 105.

[587] John Piper, "Love your enemies": *Jesus' Love Command in the Synoptic Gospels and the Early Christian Paraenesis: A History of the Tradition and Interpretation of Its Uses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 64, 91–92. See also Sara Raup Johnson, Rubén R. Dupertuis, and Chris Shea, *Reading And Teaching Ancient Fiction* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2018).

[588] Luke 6:27, however, differs in how a sinner is identified. Simply put, for Matthew a tax-collector was a despised person who was attributed as sinner. A tax-collector equated with a sinner in Matt 5:46 and tax-collectors were often Jewish. They were despised as collaborators, but Jesus accepted Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10). In Luke, people's occupations of characters are not usually named.

beyond the Jewish world."[589] In Vermes' view, the idea of love would not extend to ἐθνικός. Warren Carter argues that "The opening verb (in Matt 5:48) could be translated as a command ('be perfect'), a social-ethical consequence (in so living 'you will be perfect'), or an eschatological promise ('you will/may be perfect')." [590] The scope of the intended audience is still limited to Jewish people.

There is an argument that those who heard the Sermon were not ignorant farmers but were spiritually mature in Torah, even though the original audience to the Sermon would not be Matthew's readership written down. Maturity is defined by the action 'be perfect.' Matthew 5:48 (NRSV) reads, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" ("Ἔσεσθε οὖν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι ⸀ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμῶν ὁ ⸀οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν"). The Greek uses the word τέλειοι, meaning complete or perfect.[591] According to Levine and Brettler, τέλειοι, is unique to Matthew's account of the Sermon and suggests that τέλειοι, appears in the Letter of James because it is of Jewish authorship.[592] τέλειοι appears in Luke 13:32 and John 17:23 as well. In the Matthean story, an enemy is equated with tax-collectors, and Jesus used the story of Zacchaeus as recorded by Luke Zacchaeus was sinful and was not τέλειοι. Zacchaeus "is a person rejected and despised."[593] The person Zacchaeus would have been working for the state; thus, the perception of the people may be that as a tax-collector Zacchaeus is not trustworthy. According to Stern, "a tax collector was a despised person in the Jewish community because they worked for the oppressive state and also lined their own pockets

[589] Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew,* 157.

[590] Warren Carter, "Love Your Enemies," *Word & World* 28 (2008): 21

[591] Levine and Brettler, *The Jewish Annotated New Testament,* 12.

[592] Ibid.

[593] Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament*, 109.

with the people's money."[594] Tax-collectors stole and took unequally from people for personal gain without repercussions. Hutt explains that other views of tax collectors exist, "For the author of the Gospel of Luke and early Christians after him, Zacchaeus is both a Jewish and a Christian exemplar of an approved money changer. Not all money changers, according to these ancient Christian traditions, were to be criticised. Even if they served as money changers and tax collectors for the temple in Jerusalem."[595]

8.9 Chapter Conclusion

The Sermon on the Mount provides ethical and moral understanding which means in the context of Matthew 5:38–42, a person can act in a capacity of unequivocal love towards other people. In the Sermon, there are elements of Jewish ethics preserved in the antitheses and taught through the teachings of Jesus. These elements shed light on the compassion and care that are in contemporary Jewish thought at the time of Jesus. This chapter provides a better understanding of μακάριοι and πραεῖς. In Matthew 5:5, this chapter details how the Greek word translated "blessed", μακάριοι, is best translated as "happy" and πραεῖς best translates as a meek and humble person. The best understanding of Matthew 5:5 is "happy are the meek and humble." This further is understood with the teachings of a person's temperament. In the beatitudes, Jesus is also meaning that a person has self-control. In Mathew 5:9 the chapter explains the meaning of being a peacemaker according to εἰρηνοποιοί. Understanding peace in terms of 'peacemaker' in the Sermon contextualises

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[594] Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 30. See also Cecilia Wassen, "Jesus' Table Fellowship with 'Toll Collectors and Sinners,'" *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 14 (2016): 137–57.

[595] Curtiss Hutt, "Be Ye Approved Money Changers! Reexamining The Social Contexts of The Saying and Its Interpretation," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 131 (2012): 606. For more on the Roman system of taxation, see Darwin L., King and Carl J. Case, and Jared L. Roosa. "The Comprehensive Taxation System Existing during the Roman Empire," *Journal of Business & Accounting* 12 (2019): 64–78.

how the ancient listener would interpret Matthew 5:38–42. To use the word μακάριοι means a person is a happy person, not blessed. A εἰρηνοποιοί should be μακάριοι. A peacemaker is a happier person—there are values and ethics attributed to the character of this person and the comments of Jesus are not new ideologies but a core tenant of Jewish ethics of his time. This is further explained in the chapter by two key words in Matthew 5:39 which are ἀντιστῆναι (resist) and πονηρῷ (evil, evil person). How a person does ἀντιστῆναι can make them an evil person.

This chapter provides a clear understanding that three possible choices have been presented in classical Greek literature and understanding for ἀντιστῆναι. Plutarchus, Herodotus, and Thucydides take an approach that ἀντιστῆναι is for being set against or battle. In the Septuagint, ἀντιστῆναι is used to mean "to outweigh," "to stand against," "to stand in opposition to," "to withstand," or even "to resist." The chapter asserts that ἀντιστῆναι in Matthew connotes (with a negative) not using violence to resist evil. In the instance of Matthew 5:38–42, resistance will refuse submission, assert human dignity, refuse humiliation, and refuse to destroy, and these are common Jewish values and ethics as noted in *b. Shabbat* 88b, 2 *Enoch* 50:3–4, and other scrolls such as 1QS 10.17–20. When taken in context with an evil person, ἀντιστῆναι with πονηρῷ and suggest that a person must feel threatened, then the reader of the Sermon can decipher Matthew 5:39 more clearly. Ultimately, a modernised translation should read 'but I say to you, do not retaliate revengefully by evil means.' This would be the core reading of a peacemaker with non-violent resistance.

The phrase στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην, "turning the other cheek," is widely but wrongly assumed to mean that a person should be passive. Being passive has created a modern Christian response to the text accepting abuse from people who are abusers. The purpose of the phrase στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην provides for a remedy against strife and

vengeance, which are against Jewish ethics. The understanding of στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην to mean a form of peace and pacifism rests on an interpretation of ἀντιστῆναι (resist) and πονηρῷ (evil, evil person). The chapter asserts that the insulting backhanded slap, when juxtaposed with στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην, demands social justice because one person has power over others. Resisting thus revolves around not physical injury but an insult. στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην therefore does not require someone to be a doormat for people who are repeatedly violent and insulting: they are to retain their dignity.

A back-handed slap indicates that a cheek has been 'turned.' When an individual has been hit with the back of a hand, there is an intent to dehumanise and belittle the person being physically hit. In the passage of Matthew 5:38–42, the response to an aggressor is done through nonviolence. Socially equal people would not strike each other with an openhanded slap. The slap on the right cheek was considered an insult and carried a double fine, according to *Baba Qammah* 8:6; thus, in Jesus's time, a slap was insulting and required non-retaliatory response. The insulting backhanded slap, when juxtaposed with στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην, demands social justice because one person has power over another. In Job 16:10, the striking on a cheek is very similar to the action described in in Matthew 5:39 (στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην) as well as Lamentations 3:25–30. These accounts suggest being hit on the cheek is shameful. στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην is not a new teaching proposed by Jesus but extending Jewish wisdom into the current political response towards Rome.

The chapter further contends that Matthew 5:40 and Isaiah 50:6 are related. Isaiah uses the same literary functions as Matthew 5:40 showing how Jesus engages in *midrash or targum* in the Sermon and engages the imagery of slapping and pulling of a beard juxtaposed to peace and pacifism. Matthew 5:39 seems to indicate that nonviolence and στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην factor into how violence is used as response to slapping. The chapter continues to explain that Early Christianity allowed for military service and developed an

understanding of στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην from Matthew 5:38–42 to allow for warfare up until the time of Tertullian. Jesus himself did not seek violence when he was smitten and did not stop Peter from carrying a sword when following him, as evidence Peter cutting the ear off the High Priest's servants. στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην supports a scenario in which one person has power over another who is socially inferior to find the best nonviolent solution, even deterrence.

In Matthew 5:40 the focus is on the legal aspect of suing and the function a tunic has as collateral. This has implications for the equality of a person which the Jewish listeners would have understood. The concept of people's equality is founded on passages in Job 16:10, Isaiah 50:1, and Lamentations 3:30. The person suing for χιτῶνά has a right to sue if the χιτῶνά is debt collateral. This highlights the verse's focus, that the debtor is poor. The rich prosecutor can't reprocess the garment ἱμάτιον. The caveat is that if the outer garment (ἱμάτιον) were to be taken in pledge, it would have to be returned by sunset as it would double as a poor person's only blanket, as stated in Torah (cf., Ex 22:26–27; Deut 24:12–13). Matthew's use of ἀγγαρεύσει gives empowerment to those oppressed. Similarly, the regulation about use of a cloak (ἱμάτιον) and undergarment (χιτῶνά) for collateral protect the borrower from loansharking. Jesus's statement, στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην, was given to arouse a sense of accountability in the lender and to give protection to the nonviolent individual in a society where violence was common.

Jesus did not want people to be doormats to wealthy people or powerful people and Matthew 5:41 suggests that ἀγγαρεύσει is nonviolent resistance. The concept of personal dignity is apparent in Matthew 5:41. Jesus states that if you are forced to go one mile that you are to go another. There is no certainty as to whether this is about voluntarily going another mile or being forced to go another mile. ἀγγαρεύσει, defined as "shall compel to go," in the context of forced labour over a distance of one mile. Roman soldiers had authority to

commandeer horses, vessels, and men, as needed, into temporary service, and failure to comply placed an imbalance between the aggressor and the subject. There lies a new way for a modern application of Matthew 5:41 in terms of nonviolent resistance. The person compelled to go a mile is no longer the victim of oppression. The compelled person retains dignity, self-respect, and some limited control over the situation.

The chapter concludes with Matthew 5:43–48 and Ἀγαπήσεις saying that the Sermon on the Mount provides an example of love connected to reconciliation. As the sixth antithesis in the Sermon, the literary form and structure follow the traditional antithetical rhythm seen in the *midrash*. Matthew 5:38–42 helps frame the discourse in Matthew 5:43–48 about loving your enemy as well as loving your neighbour. The neighbour can be ἐθνικός in reference to those who are not Jewish or to Jews.

CHAPTER 9

ORAL LAW AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Now that consideration has been given to the various possible sources for the concepts available to those that heard the Sermon on the Mount—sources such as the Hebrew Bible, the Oral Law, the writings from Qumran—it is possible to address the purpose of this dissertation, which is to understand how the Sermon on the Mount—specifically the interpretation of the law of retaliation in Matthew 5:38–42—was influenced by Jewish thinking on non-violence resistance in Oral Traditions contemporary to Jesus, and which eventually found their way into *Mishna Avot*.

In this chapter the similarities between the Sermon and Jewish ethical statements current at the time of Jesus are assessed.[596] In particular, elements of Jesus's sayings relevant to pacifism and peace are investigated. The chapter suggests that Matthew 5:38-42 has wrongfully interpreted 'slapping' to be a doormat—that a follower of Jesus must submit instead of demand equality. Demanding equality is retaining one's integrity. The dissertation suggests that Jesus teaches that the response to slapping is not to be abused but to demand integrity and respect back from someone with wrongful power and authority over you.

9.1 Jewish Audience

The Sermon on the Mount is directed at people in a Jewish culture who are familiar with Oral Law. This dissertation holds that Jesus's religion was authentically Jewish and that

[596] In this dissertation I do not attempt to attribute different Beatitudes to Jesus and what Jesus said empirically. M. E. Boring has done research showing how the Q source and the first three Beatitudes are related, see, M. E. Boring, "The Historical-Critical Method's 'Criteria of Authenticity': The Beatitudes in Q and Thomas as a Test Case," *Semeia* 44 (1988): 9−44. For research on Jesus and Q, see Alicia J. Batten, "The Jesus Tradition and the Letter of James," *Review and Expositor: An International Baptist Journal* 108 (2011): 381–90.

the audience did not reject the Jewishness of Jesus. [597] The crowds affirmed Jesus as a teacher to them (Matthew 7:28).[598] In other words, Jesus was recognised as a rabbinical figure by those who listen to him speak.

Kennedy asks, "To whom did Jesus address the teachings of the Sermon? It has been assumed by some commentators, at least since the time of John Chrysostom (c. 347–407), that the Sermon is primarily addressed to the disciples and only secondarily to others."[599]

Whether the Greek text in Matthew 5:2 indicates that Jesus is addressing the disciples, or a larger group of people must be decided. In Matthew 4:25 it states, "And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan." The question could be asked if Jesus ascended a mountain to get away from the crowds for a break. The parallel passage in Luke has the address given after Jesus comes down from the mountain. The Greek states in Matthew 5:2 καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς λέγων which translates as "And he began to speak, and taught them, saying" (NRSV). The translation of the phrase ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς, '[he] taught them,' is commonly accepted to mean that Jesus taught others with authority. However, the text is ambiguous. Kennedy suggests:

> The textual basis for this conclusion is the 'them' (*autous*) of 5:2, for which the closest grammatical antecedent is the 'disciples' of 5:1. But this interpretation must be set against the 'them' of 7:28 in the closure of the speech, 'for he taught *them* [emphasis added] as one having authority,' where 'them' grammatically can only refer to the crowd as a whole. 'Them' in 5:2 can in fact also refer to the crowd, which is mentioned in 5:1. This interpretation is confirmed by 7:24, 'everyone then who hears these words.'

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[597] Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*, 184. For study into the Hellenistic backgrounds and Jewish backgrounds.

[598] John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Mentor, Message, and Miracles* (Doubleday, 1994), 2:238. See also George Philip, "Theological Education as Matthean Mission: Challenges from the Indian Context," *Journal of Biblical Theology* 4 (2021): 105–26.

[599] George Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 40.

> That the entire crowd constitutes the audience is further supported by the various categories of people mentioned in the Beatitudes and throughout: the poor, the grief-stricken, the meek, those contemplating divorce, all Jews who will pray.[600]

Kennedy's view that 'them' from the word (*autous*) has Jesus's addressing the 'crowd,' and not only his apostles or disciples.

This does not nullify the belief that the Jewish nature of the content of the Sermon on the Mount was spoken by an authentically Jewish rabbi to a crowd. The sermon was not directed primarily at the disciples. Davis supports the view that the Sermon was for the Jewish listeners; however, he suggests that the reason Jesus would focus on the disciples would be to avoiding critiquing the Jewish legal system and that through Jesus's Sermon, the person being legally offended has a voice.[601] The Sermon on the Mount does not provide a legal dictum or discourse on how to change a political system at the time of Jesus or even under future governments. The Sermon provides a context for an offended person to respond ethically and with justice.

The crowd that followed Jesus probably consisted of people from different towns (Matt 4:25). Jesus targets those who are broken and need healing and restitution. This is seen in verses such as Matthew 5:31, which states, "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce'" (NRSV). This admonition to give a certificate of divorce allows for people who need restitution from a marriage disagreement to find satisfaction through the dissolution of the marriage. The sermon also applies to people who pray:

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[600] Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 40.

[601] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism*, 167. For a discussion on the crowds Jesus addressed, see John W. Gladstone, "Three Bible Studies: Jesus, the Crowds and the Kingdom," *Religion and Society* 36 (1989): 44–51. See also Goldston on the First Matthean antithesis and early rabbinic interpretation, Matthew S. Goldstone, "Murder, Anger, and Altars: The First Matthean Antithesis in Light of Exodus 21:14 and Its Early Rabbinic Interpretation," *Novum Testamentum* 59 (2017): 339–54.

> Matthew 6:5–6, "And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (NRSV).

The person who prays is seeking a connection with God; thus, Jesus's aim is to seek those who are wanting a personal connection with the divine. The sermon applies to those in need. In Matthew 6:8 it states, "Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him." The premise is that the Father knows all needs, including retribution and punishment.[602]

The Sermon's connections to *Mishna Avot* are strengthened the fact that his original hearers as authentically Jewish.[603] It reflects writing addressed to Jewish recipients from the point of view of a Jewish author and reveals a uniquely Jewish Jesus and an audience who would have understood the Jewish background of the thoughts expressed by Jesus. [604] This Jewish connection ties him to the people who listened to him.[605] He was not creating a new or unique theology. The emerging group that follows Jesus remained Jewish, with only a minority of listeners being Gentile.[606]

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[602] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism*, 167. For an interpretation of the law and Rabbinic sources, see Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, "Matthew 5:22: The Insult 'Fool' and the Interpretation of the Law in Christian and Rabbinic Sources," *Revue de l'histoire Des Religions* 234 (2017): 5–23.

[603] Talbert, *Reading the Sermon on the Mount*, 3.

[604] Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew,* 20. For an understanding of the Sermon on the Mount and Jewish exegesis, see Serge. Ruzer, "'Love Your Enemy' Precept in the Sermon on the Mount in the Context of Early Jewish Exegesis: A New Perspective," *Revue Biblique* 111 (2004): 193–208.

[605] Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew,* 12.

[606] Bruce Chilton, Anthony Le Donne and Jacob Neusner, *Soundings in the Religion of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 82. Ibid. further states, "Jewish Christian adherents to Judaism were those who followed Torah completely but acknowledged Jesus (Yeshua) as the משיח. This view creates a split between Rabbinic Judaism and Proto-orthodox Christianity separated from Judaism sometime after the destruction of the Second Temple and those in scholarship contend there were many competing Jewish sects at this time."

The Jewishness of Jesus's audience was affected by three hundred years of Hellenistic influence.[607] Martin Hengel demonstrated that "all of Judaism from about the middle of the 3rd century BCE must, in the strict sense, be called 'Hellenistic Judaism."[608] Hengel pointed out a Jewish distinctiveness in the early imperial period (e.g., a focus upon Torah and apocalyptic fervour), and he held that Hellenistic civilization, on almost every level, influenced Judaism—economically, politically, culturally, literarily, philosophically, and theologically. Even after the time of Jesus, there was an assimilation of Greek Jews into the region of Galilee.[609] The people who heard the Sermon were oppressed by Rome, divergent in their Jewish views, and mainly poor.[610]

The audience of the Sermon on the Mount could have included a wider demographic than only Jewish believers (and non-believers) in Jesus, possibly with people who held

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[607] For scholarship regarding the Hellenistic influence of Judaism, see, G. Gardner and K.L. Osterloh *(eds.)*, "Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Pasts in the Greco-Roman World" *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 51 (2010): 106–107. For scholarship surrounding the Hellenistic reforms in Judea, see, John Collins, "Cult and Culture. The Limits of Hellenization in Judea," in *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture,* Eds. Craig Evans and Peter Fling (Leiden: Brill, 2005): 21–43; Anathea Portier-Young, *Apocalypse against Empire: Theologies of Resistance in Early Judaism*, 175–216; Martha Himmelfarb, "Judaism and Hellenism in 2 Maccabees," *Poetics Today* 19 (1998): 19–40; Peter Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World* (Abington: Routledge, 2013). For further scholarship on the topics of Hellenistic reform for the Jews, see, E. J. Bickerman, *The God of the Maccabees* (Leiden: Brill, 1979). See also Daniel Johansson, "The Dichotomy of Judaism and Hellenism Revisited: Roots and Reception of the Gospel," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 80 (2016): 101–12. Visotzky contends during the first three centuries CE that Hebrew was spoke only in the south and diminished into academia while Greek was spoken in the cities and Aramaic in the villages, see Burton L Visotzky, *Aphrodite and the Rabbis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016). Sota 7:1, 21b suggest that the Shema can be spoken in Greek which highlights the acceptance of Greek prayers in the Jewish service. Visotzky suggests that Greek was widely used in Jewish synagogue service.

[608] Martin Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2.Jh. v.Chr. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 10 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969), 193.

[609] See Walter Ameling, ed., *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis Kleinasien* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 414–422. Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, suggests that even Mishna Avot grew out of and was influenced by Hellenism, see Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, *The More Torah,* 13.

[610] For a discussion on how the poor people under Hellenism transitioned to Roman rule and the impact it had on divergent views in change, see, John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

polytheistic views among them.[611] Jesus, Viljoen contends, quoted the words of Torah as known by his contemporaries but added to or modified them in several instances.[612] This does not make Jesus less Jewish or more Jewish than other people, but it helps to understand how his intellectual thoughts were perceived by his listeners. The members of the audience of the Sermon were of eclectic philosophical origin and associated with various rabbinic, apocalyptic, revolutionary and different Jewish movements, which would later become the Jewish-Christian movement.[613]

Jesus's emphasis on love is in harmony with the Oral Law. Burridge states, "The centrality of love in Jesus's ethics even extends to the love of enemies. The Q-saying of Matt. 5:38–48 and Luke 6:27–36 goes beyond mere non-retaliation to require positive love for enemies."[614] Luke 6:34–35 (NRSV) teaches, "If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked." This questions the very foundation on why a person should lend. Following non-retaliatory pacifism is a basis for having true love for one another.

There can be little doubt that Jewish thought was incorporated into Jesus's teaching, and this chapter will go on to provide evidence that the peace and pacifist sayings of Jesus have precursors in Jewish Oral Law. Levine goes further when he states that the authors of the Synoptic Gospels focused on Jewish ideas:

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[611] Larry Hurtado, "Pre-70 CE Jewish Opposition to Christ Devotion," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 50 (1999): 33–34

[612] Viljoen, "Jesus' Teaching on the Torah in the Sermon on the Mount," 145.

[613] Anthony J Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 1–2.

[614] Betz, *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount,* 17.

> According to numerous apologetic volumes, all the New Testament authors are Jews: Paul is Jewish; Mark and Luke are Jewish; Matthew, John, the author of Hebrews, the author of Revelation, all Jews. The argument also insists that these authors are writing mostly to Jews or at least to communities comprising Jews and Gentiles. Thus, the books of the New Testament cannot be anti-Jewish; on the contrary, they are as Jewish as can be.[615]

The Jewish authors would have reflected the views held at the time.[616]

9.2 Sapiential Books and the Sermon

The Book of Matthew, the Sermon, and its connections to *Mishna Avot* reflect the influence of Jewish Wisdom surrounding the Jewish community and identity. Wisdom literature did not emerge until the establishment of the court under David, and more importantly, Solomon.[617] Wisdom literature departs from the suzerainty style of a covenant

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[615] Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007), 111. For a discussion on loving enemies in the context of ritualised violence, see Nestor M. Ravilas, "Precarious Life, Justified Aggression, and Ritualized Violence: Is There a Place for 'Loving Your Enemy' in a World of Violence," *The Asia Journal of Theology* 31 (2017): 82–98.

[616] Bernard J. Lee, *The Galilean Jewishness of Jesus* (New York: Paulist, 1988), 67.

[617] John Barton, "The Hebrew Bible: Formation and Character," In *Companion Encyclopedia of Theology*, 7–27 (London: Routledge, 1995); Katharine J. Dell, "How Much Wisdom Literature Has Its Roots in the Pre-Exilic Period?" In *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, 251–71 (London: T & T Clark, 2004); Douglas Sean O'Donnell, "The End of Ecclesiastes: An Introduction to an Enigmatic Book," *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* 21 (2021): 87–101.

king sitting on a throne telling people what to do through a prophet.[618] The wisdom literature fosters human emotions and relationships with the Divine.[619]

The Sermon on the Mount reflects closely the thinking of Jewish wisdom literature. Both foster relationships with the Divine. Betz explains:

> Those comparative texts standing nearest literally to the SM [Sermon on the Mount] are, in the first instance, those which belong to the Jewish Wisdom tradition. *Pirkei Avot*, with its commentary *Avot de Rabbi Natan,* and so-called *Manual of Discipline* from Qumran are formally related, though they derive from other Jewish movements.[620]

As Betz contends, while the writings of *Mishna Avot* are related but come from different Jewish movements, *Mishna Avot* does show a similarity to the Sermon on the Mount.[621] In other words, the Sermon and *Mishna Avot* contain similar intellectual thought and influence. Brad Young suggests that "these sayings and teachings of the then-contemporary rabbis

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[618] For more information regarding the imagery of the God as the king, suzerain, or a monarch and how these images began before the exile and continues into early Christian thinking, see Anne Moore, *Moving Beyond Symbol and Myth: Understanding the Kingship of God of the Hebrew Bible through Metaphor* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009). For the role of the prophet and how the role of the prophet ceased to be noted in Biblical writings early post-exilic period, see Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomenon to the History of Ancient Israel* (Cleveland: Meridian, 1965), 402–404; Yehezkel Kaufmann, *Toledot ha-'emunah ha-yisra'elit* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1955), 4:378–403; Frank M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 223; Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of the Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 16; David L. Petersen, *Late Israelite Prophecy: Studies in Deutero-Prophetic Literature and in Chronicles* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), 2–6. There are examples from the *Mishnaic* period that demonstrate how the Jewish view of prophets being an active and current tool in religion by the Second Temple period had diminished, see, M. Sotah 9:12; T. Sotah 13:2–3; B. Sanhedrin 11a; B. Yoma' 9b; B. Sotah 48b. For scholarship on how the role of the prophet was not part of Judaism at the time of the Second Temple, see Frederick E. Greenspahn, "Why Prophecy Ceased," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989): 37–49; Michael H. Floyd, *Introduction to Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second Temple Judaism* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2006), 1–25. The view that the role of a prophet was not active anymore post biblical time extended after the time of Jesus in the rise of the Early Church, see David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 103–106; Richard A. Horsley, "'Like One of the Prophets of Old': Two Types of Popular Prophets at the Time of Jesus," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47 (1985): 435–63.

[619] John P Meier, *Law and History In Matthew's Gospel* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1976), 71; Christian Schneider, "Divine Wisdom: The Christological Interpretation of Sapientia in Johannes von Tepl's Der Ackermann," *The German Quarterly* 87 (2014): 277–96; Joel S. Burnett, *Where Is God? Divine Absence in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010).

[620] Betz, *Essays on the Sermon on the Mount*, 22.

[621] Ulrich Luz and Rosemary Selle, *Studies In Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 221; Lawrence M. Wills, "Scribal Methods in Matthew and Mishnah Abot," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 63 (2001): 241–57.

provide significant parallels to the moral message of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount."[622] The *Avot's* strong parallels to the New Testament provide a cultural understanding for the Jewish community.

9.3 Viewing the Sermon on the Mount through a Jewish Lens

Viewing the Sermon in connection with *Mishna Avot* and through a Jewish lens builds on the fact that the audience to whom the sermon was delivered saw Jesus as a rabbi or teacher.[623] Jesus would have kept Torah. The passages of Oral Law found to correspond with the Sermon on the Mount provide a window to the world of Jesus.[624] As Joslyn-Siemiatkoski suggests, a Christian theology and interpretation of the Torah begins with the premises of Torah observance by Jesus and his earliest followers.[625]

It is helpful to examine the concepts of peace and pacifism within the sayings of Jesus outside of a Christian ideology and through a Jewish theology of the Torah; thus, a Jewish paradigm and lens of understanding will allow for Jewish hermeneutics of Jesus's peace

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[622] Brad H. Young, *Meet the Rabbis* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 120. In a book review by Ottenheijm on *Meet the Rabbis*, he affirms that the Sermon on the Mount has significant parallels to the Jewish and the rabbis found in *Mishna*. For Ottenheijm, Young's work is correct in suggesting that the Sermon on the Mount has moral foundations from Judaism and intellectual thought, see Eric Ottenheijm, "Meet the Rabbis: Rabbinic Thought and the Teachings of Jesus Brad H. Young," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 41 (2010): 147–48.

[623] See Hyam Maccoby, "Jesus the Pharisee," *Jewish Quarterly* 194 (2004): 39–42; In this article, Maccoby cuts through the anti-Pharisee bias in the New Testament to argue that Jesus was a part of this movement. For discussion of Jesus, pedagogy, and rabbis see Bart J. Koet, "About the Pedagogy of Jesus and the Later Rabbis: Birger Gerhardsson's Memory and Manuscript as a Contribution to New Testament Research," *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion* 73 (2019): 299–306.

[624] See Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 41–62; Adiel Schremer, *Brothers Estranged: Heresy, Christianity, and Jewish Identity in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 87–100.

[625] Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, "Moses Received the Torah at Sinai and Handed It On (Mishnah Avot 1:1): The Relevance of the Written and Oral Torah for Christians," *Anglican Theological Review* 91 (2009), 443. For a discussion on Jesus in the Talmud and how that reflects his observance, see Federico Dal Bo, "Jesus' Punishment in Hell in the Latin Translation of the Babylonian Talmud: A Passage from Tractate Gittin in the Extractores de Talmud," *Henoch* 40 (2018): 165–95.

sayings. *Mishna Avot* is integral to understanding the peace sayings of Jesus because the sayings will determine how his followers responded to Roman occupation. This author takes the view that Jesus was a Jewish leader who was followed by Jewish people because the people were looking for a messianic figure to deliver them from Roman occupation. The people wanted a Jewish משיח that led the people spiritually and politically. Jesus was this leader and he provided an ethical understanding of nonviolence in his leadership. Some people may quote Matthew 5:38–42 to advocate that people should follow governments blindly or to make people accept abuse blindly. This is not the purpose of this verse nor is it the interpretation put forth in this dissertation. Rather, Matthew 5:38–42 demands justice and equality. The Torah created categories of legal equality and equity between people on the basis of harm done. These concepts of equality and equity refine and reject the premise of the Mosaic Law because Jesus's decree of *loving your enemy* allows for a financial (as in paying a prescribed amount for a given offence rather than eye for an eye) and ethical means of attaining justice.

9.4 Nonviolence and Pacifism Embedded in the Sermon on the Mount

The view of nonviolence and pacifism is embedded in the Sermon on the Mount. There is a strong connection to the Mosaic history when Jesus speaks.[626] The Sermon, and specifically Matthew 5:38–42, would not have astounded the Jewish listeners with a new theology but rather by the new application of the familiar Mosaic teachings and their simple application to everyday life. The contents of the Sermon show that Jesus agreed with the ethics of his contemporaries.

[626] Stephen M. Wylen, *The Jews in the Time of Jesus* (New York: Paulist, 1996), 164. The Mosaic history extends into Talmud. See Jean-Marie Auwers, "Jesus in the Talmud and Ancient Rabbinical Literature," *Revue Theologique De Louvain* 47 (2016): 594–96. For a discussion of the Mosaic history in the broader Christianity, see Philip La. G. du Toit, "Reconsidering 'Law' in Hebrews," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 42 (2021): 1–7.

The connections between the Book of Matthew and *Mishna Avot* are evident in several places in the Sermon on the Mount. For example, the Beatitudes in the Sermon focus on poverty, hunger, persecution, the need of God, nonviolence pacifism.[627] The structure of the Sermon provides discourse on each of the themes within the context of Jewish ethics as understood by Jesus. Matthew 5:38–42, known as the fifth antithesis, examines nonviolent resistance.[628] The Jewish audience (which was familiar with the Torah) and even the Gentiles (who may have received it as an introductory primer) would have comprehended Jesus's instruction in these antitheses.[629] The antitheses expound upon the Mosaic Law and illustrate how Jesus actually confirmed the Torah and never diminished it. Hays interprets the antitheses accurately when he writes, "in most of the six antitheses, the teaching of Jesus constitutes an intensification – rather than an abrogation – of the requirements of the Law. The Law prohibits murder, but Jesus forbids even anger; the Law prohibits adultery, but Jesus forbids even lust."[630] In the Sermon Jesus was not abolishing the law but expounding upon it. Those who heard the Sermon would hear him aligning himself with Torah.

9.5 Nonviolence and Oral Law

There is a similarity of approach to nonviolence between Oral Law and Matthew 5:38–42. The practice of nonviolence was not new to the Sermon on the Mount and was a common understanding of Oral Law reflected in *Mishna Avot.* The Romans' method of crushing revolts by cruel violence created fear in the Jewish population. Recalling the quote

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[627] Anna Wierzbicka, *What Did Jesus Mean? Explaining the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables in Simple and Universal Human Concepts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 29. See also, Ian Lambert, "Introducing the Beatitudes: A Sermon Addressing Poverty of Spirit," *St Mark's Review* 227 (2014): 41–45.

[628] Culpepper contends that the purpose of the fifth antithesis is to break the spiral of violence in a situation by resisting evil or coercion, see R. Alan Culpepper, *Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2021), 116.

[630] Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 324.

in *Mishna Avot* 1:10, "[Shammai] and Avtalyon received from them. [Shammai] says, 'Love work, hate lordship and do not become familiar with the government," it is evident that *Mishna Avot* supports the idea that people should not be known by the government.[631] *Mishna Avot* 1:12 states that *"*Hillel and Shammai received from them. Hillel says, 'Be of the disciples of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving the creatures [loving mankind] and bringing them closer to Torah.'"[632] Avot 1:12 advocates loving and pursuing peace and adopting a nonviolent stance in the community.[633] Commenting on Avot 1:12 אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת (*Ohev et ha-beriyot*), Lehmann assumes that such honour or dignity due to God's creation encompasses all of humanity, and adds that the most noble principle of Judaism is love of one's fellow man.[634] Hillel taught that through love, people could have better lives.[635] The better lives of the people are founded in nonviolence. The sayings in *Mishna Avot* and those attributed to Hillel (d. 10 CE) were current at the time of the Sermon and Matthew 5:9 and have an impact on the intellectual development of the Sermon. The response of non-violence is an application of this intellectual thought by those listening to the Sermon. The sayings of *Mishna Avot* have a strong correlation with the response taken to violence as advocated in Matthew 5:39.

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[631] See Amram Tropper, *Wisdom, Politics, and Historiography: Tractate Avot in the Context of the Graeco-Roman Near East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 40–41 for scholarship regarding government.

[632] See in Hebrew *Pirkei Avot* 1:12
הִלֵּל וְשַׁמַּאי קִבְּלוּ מֵהֶם. הִלֵּל אוֹמֵר, הֱוֵי מִתַּלְמִידָיו שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן, אוֹהֵב שָׁלוֹם וְרוֹדֵף שָׁלוֹם, אוֹהֵב אֶת הַבְּרִיּוֹת וּמְקָרְבָן לַתּוֹרָה:

[633] Violence occurred frequently between Jews and Roman leadership. There are two examples, previously discussed: the Roman-Jewish War of 66–73 CE and the Bar Kochba Rebellion demonstrate the rising tension for the Jews under Roman occupation. See also, H.W. Basser, "B. Yoma 35B: Some Observations Concerning Divine Mediators and Rabbis," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 22 (2019): 133–51.

[634] Marcus Lehmann and Liepman Philip Prins, *The Lehmann-Prins Pirkei Avoth* (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1992), 3. For more on Judaism view of love of a fellow human, see Jonathan Sacks, "The Love That Brings New Life into the World," *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 15 (2015): 129–35.

[635] Brad H. Young, *Meet the Rabbis: Rabbinic Thought and the Teachings of Jesus* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007), 190.

Jews and Romans would have applied the principles in Jesus's Sermon very differently. Unlike the Jews, a Roman would not have as strong a feeling of being oppressed by the state. For the Jews under Rome, living peacefully meant staying alive. Rome appointed Romanised Jewish leaders from the Sadducees, such as the High Priest.[636] Jesus attacked both the Sadducees and the Pharisees equally, as in Matthew 23 where the condemnation, "Woe to you, Pharisees, scribes, and hypocrites" is repeated several times over.[637] Jesus demanded that all Jews in the community should follow Torah and the values contained therein.[638] In this passage, the story is told how Jesus attacks verbally this community of leaders for not following through or leading all of the Jews and converted Jews in all aspects of the law, calling them "blind guides." Saldarini believes that when Jesus was seen attacking the Pharisees, it caused disharmony among the crowds listening to him.[639] Those whom Jesus addressed were struggling to integrate fully into Roman society and now Roman leadership could scrutinise this minority sect of Pharisees.

The Roman imperial mission was embedded into the culture of the ruling factions in Judaism, particularly the Sadducees. The Pharisees, by going against the identity of the Roman imperial mission, were protecting their self-identity. The culture of the Jewish Pharisee movement saw nonviolence as the appropriate response to Rome. The Roman philosophy of rule was never well thought out, and such short-sightedness influenced how

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[636] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 48. For more discussion of Sadducean history and Roman influence, see John J. Ensminger, "The Sadducean Persecution of the Christians in Rome and Jerusalem, AD 58 to 65," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 30 (1988): 9–13.

[637] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 52.

[638] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 49. For more discussion of the roll of Judaism and Hellenization, see Richard Lee Kalmin, "Between Rome and Mesopotamia: Josephus in Sasanian Persia," In *Ancient Judaism in Its Hellenistic Context*, 205–42. Leiden, 2005.

[639] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 49.

Rome interacted with the Jewish people. Caroll Quigley contends that Rome seriously lacked any long-range plans for empire growth:

> These Roman ruling groups were not hampered by theories or ideologies, although quick with rationalizations. They never found logical obstacle to action, because they cared nothing for logic. In fact, they had no long-range idea of what they were doing – ever. It has often been said that the Romans had no plans of world conquest and that they became rulers of the world in fits of absent-mindedness, like England acquired its empire. This may be correct, but it means nothing. The Romans had no long-range plans for world conquest because they had no long-range ideas on anything.[640]

As much as the Roman mission for long-range plans for conquering the world never matured, they nevertheless held a tight grip on the Jewish community. The Jewish community, however, responded by to refusing to react by violence against the Roman imperial mission, at least until 66 BCE. The people of Jesus were moving away from *lex talionis* and to nonviolence as a response. Carter suggests:

> This community also rejects violence, a mainstay of Rome's imperial mission to 'rule the nations with your power' (Virgil, *Aen*. 6.851–53). The cycle of violence is broken not by matching violence with violence, nor by passivity, but by a third option. Instead of fight or flight, Matthew's Jesus advocates nonviolent resistance to evil (5:38–42).[641]

The Sermon on the Mount in the form delivered does not focus on the concept of legal reform, i.e., he was not saying that the government or courts should change how *lex talionis* was applied. Rome would not have allowed him to speak openly about fomenting governmental change. He spoke about ethical actions toward people who had no legal recourse—they were without legal rights. People needed to know how they could protect

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[640] Carroll Quigley, "Christ and Time: Swiss or Mediterranean," *The Social World of the Gospels* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 183. For more on *Virgil* see Anne Gosling, "Sending up the Founder: Ovid and the Apotheosis of Romulus," *Acta Classica* 45 (2002): 51–69. This is supported by Sabin Roman's research on the Western Roman Empires and the expansion of size, territory, and coinage, see Sabin Roman, and Erika Palmer, "The Growth and Decline of the Western Roman Empire: Quantifying the Dynamics of Army Size, Territory, and Coinage," *Cliodynamics: The Journal of Theoretical & Mathematical History* 10 (2019): 1–23.

[641] Carter, *Matthew and Empire*, 127.

themselves from others without aggravating the authorities. The development of a nonviolent resistance to evil builds upon the history and culture of the sages. Jesus was speaking to the people about not taking justice into their own hands—force the legal system or those in power over you to act with justice. The sages in *Mishna Avot* do not negate the sayings of Jesus, especially since Jesus's sayings are similar in nature to their ethical and moral precepts.

9.6 ἀντιστῆναι, *Lex Talionis*, and *Bava Kama*

The concept of ἀντιστῆναι, resistance, is in the Oral Law and has a connection to *lex talionis*. Crossley contends that Matthew 5:38–42 supports both nonviolence and the ideology of *lex talionis.*[642] David Stern suggests that *lex talionis* connects the Sermon's audience with *midrash.*[643] *Bava Kama* 8:1 idealises a compassionate people-group which corresponds to those to whom the message of the Sermon was directed. *Bava Kama* 8:1 itemises compensation for damages. This becomes a quantifiable measurement of harm done; thus *Bava Kama* 8:1 creates values for damages done to other persons. *Bava Kama* 8:1 illustrates how a person should act nonviolently to help others who have been hurt. Jesus explains resistance and *lex talionis* to the audience of the Sermon and does not focus on other methods of justice used for people who have done unintentional harm to others such the availability of cities of refuge. The cities of refuge were a provision to prevent people from

[642] James G. Crossley, "Book Review of *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42*," 50. See also Francois P. Viljoen, "A Call for Peacemaking: A Perspective from the Sermon on the Mount," *In Die Skriflig* 55 (2021): 1–8.

[643] David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary*, 29. Goldstone also agrees that Matthean Antithesis resembles early Rabbinic interpretation, see Matthew Goldstone, "Murder, Anger, and Altars The First Matthean Antithesis in Light of Exodus 21: 14 and Its Early Rabbinic Interpretation," *Novum Testamentum* 59 (2017): 339–54. Turan also suggests that there is a rabbinical parallel to the Sermon on the Mount and the rabbinic midrash legend of Oshaiah, wherein the similar use of the eye as a microcosm and indicator of the broader physical health of a person is explored, see Sinai (Tamas) Turan, "A Neglected Rabbinic Parallel to the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:22-23; Luke 11:34-36)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127 (2008): 81–93. See also Gary J. Dorrien, "Social Ethics and the Politics of Jesus," *Modern Believing* 62 (2021): 242–51.

taking violent retribution into their own hands, the equivalent of a lynch mob. The cities of refuge were intended to prevent miscarriage of justice. In Numbers 35:11 (JPS), the Torah states, "You shall provide yourselves with places to serve you as cities of refuge to which a manslayer who has killed a person unintentionally may flee." This city of refuge was a place that ensured that a person who unintentionally killed someone could avoid the retribution of the person seeking revenge.

Vermes describes retaliation by στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην in Matthew 5:39 as "hyperbolical" and states that the text is a "disavowal of vindictiveness"[644]. The intent of στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην and 'walking the extra mile' in Matthew 5:38–42 is, according to Vermes, a "supererogation of our ethical responsibilities to others."[645]

9.7 Matthew 5:38–42 and Slapping

Similarities between Oral Law and Matthew are evident from an examination of slapping and social equality found specifically in Matthew 5:38–42. Some wrongly see Matthew 5:38–42 as advocating complete non-violence but its purpose should be seen as self-preservation. Those listening to Jesus were probably simple people and not highly educated. The people listening may have been familiar with *Mishna Avot* 1:10, "to love your brother", and might also have understood the directive "to have justice" found in the *Avot* 2:7.

In numerous accounts in the Book of Matthew, Jesus's actions reveal a picture of his character that is socially just, taking care of his people's hunger and aligning them with the

[644] Vermes, 36

[645] Ibid. See also Culpepper, 117.

Levite cult. Stories placed after the Sermon convey a picture of a Jesus that increases and intensifies the argument for social justice (e.g. Matt12:10).[646]

Those who became Jewish followers of Jesus followed nonviolent resistance.[745] Borg writes, "As the peace party in Palestine, the Jesus movement thus rejected the path of violent resistance to Rome. The people of God were not to secure their existence through the force of arms or violence; faithfulness pointed to another way."[647] Those who followed Jesus adopted a philosophy of peace that was unique. As we have seen, the *Mishna Avot* 1:10 teaches nonviolence. Borg suggests, "[t]he spirit of resistance was countered" and those who sought conflict and those who sought resistance to the government came at odds.[648] There was a need for resistance but that need to have resistance did not excuse or authorise violence.

The Jewish rabbinic *midrash* known as *Sifra* examines Jewish intellectual thought about slapping.[649] In *Sifra*, we find the following interpretative highlight on Lev 19:17:

> Do not hate your brother in your heart [Lev 19:17a]. One might think you should not curse him, hit him, or slap him. The Torah therefore says… I only said hatred, which is in the heart. And from where do we know that if he rebukes him four or five times that he should rebuke again? The Torah therefore says you shall surely rebuke [Lev 19:17b]. One might think even if he rebukes him, and he is embarrassed, the Torah therefore says, and do not bear sin upon him [Lev 19:17c]. (*Sifra Qedoshim* 4:8; Rodgir Cohen's Translation)

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[646] Boris Repschinski, *The Controversy Stories in The Gospel of Matthew* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 107. For further discussion on Jesus and social justice topics, see Gary J Dorrien, "Social Ethics and the Politics of Jesus," *Modern Believing* 62 (2021): 242–51.

[647] Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision* (London: SPCK, 1994), 139.

[648] Ibid., 137–38.

[649] SIFRA (Aram. סִפְרָא), is a midrash halakha from the school of R. Akiva on the Book of Leviticus. The Aramaic word sifra means book. The role of 'love your brother' and 'do not hate' is very quintessential Jesus sounding and New Testament canon. There is a parallel and for the sake of brevity in the dissertation is not expounded more. For more understanding of Sifra, see Jacob Neusner, "Extra- and Non-Documentary Writing in the Rabbinic Canon of Late Antiquity: Non-Documentary Writing in Sifra, Sifré to Numbers, Sifré to Deuteronomy, Mekhilta Attributed to R. Ishmael, and Leviticus Rabbah," *The Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 10 (2007): 11–76. See also, Matthew S. Goldstone, *The Dangerous Duty of Rebuke: Leviticus 19:17 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2018.)

The interpretation follows a school of Rabbi Akiva, which allows for a dating of this passage Rabbi Akiva's life from 50 CE to 135 CE.[650] The understanding of such at the time of Rabbi Akiva, according to this *midrash*, would be to bear hatred. In Leviticus 19:17a, the admonition prohibits hatred in the heart; however, this is does not preclude having various expressions of hatred, or even anger. To express oneself through slapping, cursing, hitting, or other violent forms, would not be sanctioned in Jewish intellectual thought.[651] In the Hebrew, Leviticus 19:17 reads: לֹא־תִשְׂנָא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בִּלְבָבֶךָ הוֹכֵחַ תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עֲמִיתֶךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֵטְא. In English, Leviticus 19:17 reads: "You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbour, or you will incur guilt yourself." There is a directive to not have hatred in one's heart. Hatred could easily turn to violence. Similarly, the repetition of the root יכח (hiphil "rebuke") in the infinitive absolute plus imperfect structure תוכיח הוכח shows a constant 'rebuke' of the action. The final part of the verse implies that the result of hatred is that one becomes guilty of sin oneself.

Slapping on the cheek may not have been violent, but just physical. Jacob Chinitz states that the phrase is very often misunderstood in the Western mind as harsh when it is not intended to be.[652] The literature of the era shows how retaliation was perceived. *Mishna Avot* 2:15, 1:12, 1:10, 2:17, and 3:16 express Jewish understanding at the time of Jesus. Traditional Jewish thought embraces passive resistance. An alternative understanding proposed by Dorothy Jean is that the "command not to resist (a negative call to passivity) is turned into the

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[650] See Menahem Kahana, "The Halakhic Midrashim," in *Midrash and Targum, Liturgy, Poetry, Mysticism, Contracts, Inscriptions, Ancient Science and the Languages of Rabbinic Literature* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2006), 2:17–26. This dating for Akiva could possibly be during the period in which Matthew was written.

[651] For another rabbinic example of slapping engendering a particularly high level of humiliation, see m. B. Qam. 8:6. It is also possible that the three actions described correspond to different types of interpersonal relationships: superiors, peers, and inferiors see Walter Wink, "Neither Passivity nor Violence: Jesus' Third Way," in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament*, ed. Willard Swartly (Louisville: John Knox, 1992), 105).

[652] Jacob Chinitz, "An Eye for an Eye-An Old Canard," *Jewish Biblical Quarterly* 23 (1995): 79.

illustrative positive imperatives "turn," "let," "go," "give," and "do not reject," such that the command not to resist is in fact a call to action."[653] Weaver continues this theme when she says that she feels the strength of the contrast Jesus makes with his commands compared with the *lex talionis*:

> By placing the imperatives of 5:39b–42 in deliberate juxtaposition to the *lex talionis* ('eye in place of eye and tooth in place of tooth'), a law that is not merely violent but ultimately death dealing, Jesus repudiates the essential violence of the talionic principle and establishes the character of his own call to action, by contrast, as fundamentally life-affirming.[654]

Jesus did not to call the talion wrong in essence, but he showed how it should be used to create equality in society. Hans Dieter Betz suggests that Jesus wanted equal retribution. As such, he has well summarised what he refers to as the *ius talionis* ("law of equal retribution") from a historical perspective of Ancient, Greco-Roman, and Jewish laws.[655] This form of social equity refers to the degree of punishment meted out to a perpetrator. For Betz, *ius talionis* is a legal principle.[656] Craig Keener surmises that the Old Testament's *lex talionis* was primarily in place to avenge the victim's honour by punishing the perpetrator of the crime, and it was never in place to allow for the direct act of retribution by the victim, but rather it was designed for the court setting by which a legal sentence and execution could be made.[657] It must be noted that *lex talionis* in the Old Testament and the Code of Hammurabi

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[653] Dorothy Jean Weaver, "Transforming Nonresistance: From Lex Talionis to 'Do Not Resist the Evil One,'" in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New Testament, ed.* Willard Swartly (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 54.

[654] Ibid., 56. Culpepper also agrees indicating this is a transformative and radical call for reconsidering an offenders act, see Culpepper, 117.

[655] Hans Dieter Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount including the Sermon on the Plain* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 280–285. To define 'equal retribution' see, J.P. Mañalich, "Respect and Retribution: Legal Punishment in the Metaphysics of Morals," *Revista de Ciencia Politica* 38 (2022): 507–26.

[656] Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 280.

[657] Craig Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 195.

was not barbaric. Rather, it treated injuries seriously as criminal offences against individuals. Szlechter cites the laws of *Eshnunna* and *Lipit-Ishtar,* which predate the Old Testament and the Code of Hammurabi, which merely set fines, as only injuries against the kings or gods were treated seriously.[658] Hartley concludes that in some texts where the principle is stated it cannot be taken literally.[659]

Slapping is a form of power and control over another person. Violence and force can be used to create inequality between people Matthew 5:39 gives clarity about what is meant by 'turning the other cheek.' In this dissertation the author has explored how the purpose of the phrase στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην was to provide a remedy against strife and vengeance during a conflict. The understanding of στρέψον αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην as a form of peace and pacifism rests on a better understanding of ἀντιστῆναι (resist) and πονηρῷ (evil, evil person). The form and function of a slap were determined by the social status of a person. If the backhand was used, it was done by someone in power who was correcting another person. The response called for in retaliation is one of nonviolence. Other biblical verses indicate that the open-handed slap could be used for correction of affection.[660] In the context of Matthew 5:39, the person who is being slapped with an open hand has the social equity to stand as a peer of the person administering the slap. [661] In Matthew 5:39 the social status of both the slapper and the slapped is not explained; however, an assumption is that the people in dispute are social equals because of the cheek struck and hand used to strike. A

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[658] Emile Szlechter, *Les Lois d'Eshnunna* (Paris: Recueil Sirey, 1954). For a study of loan interest in the Code of Hammurabi, Laws of Eshnunna and the Hebrew Bible see Hee Sung Lee, "The Comparative Study of Loan Interest between ANE and OT," 77 (2016): 291–316.

[659] John E. Hartley, *Leviticus, Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word Books, 1992), 4:411.

[660] Matthew 5:39, Hosea 11:4, and 1 Esdras 4:30.

[661] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism and the Exhortation of Jesus in Matthew 5:38–42*, 142.

person could make the assumption that the two people in Matthew 5:39 are not social peers because a person would not randomly hit another social peer without provocation, unless they were using a left-handed slap. The use of the left-handed slap would also make slapping the person on 'the other cheek' very difficult owing to the proximity of the person doing the slapping and also from the functional use of the left-hand. It is customary that the left-hand was used for toilet purposes. It was 'dirty' and taboo. Furthermore, the social standing and ethnicity of the person slapping and being slapped are unknown. Stassen and Gushee contend that being slapped would be a sign of inferiority and thus one would not necessarily know the social standing and ethnicity of that person.[662] Being slapped with the back of a hand was demeaning for anyone from a lower social standing such as a slave, non-citizen, or women.

When given the possibility of being slapped with a backhanded slap or an openhanded slap, the best choice would be the backhanded slap mainly because the openhanded slap was only done between peers and equal people. Matthew 5:39 implies that having to 'turn your cheek' means the slap was done by a person who assumed they were of a higher social caste or class. Davis contends that a person who is insulted by means of a backhanded slap would want to retaliate with the same type of slap; however, this would be an impulsive reaction.[663] When a person of a different social class or status backhands another on the left cheek, the response is to turn the right cheek toward them. This empowers the person being insulted through the slap to demand equality and justice.[664] By Jesus's directing people to turn the 'other' cheek, it may be assumed that the slap was very offensive and humiliating.[665] The

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[662] Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 139.

[663] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism*, 142.

[664] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism*, 142

justice accorded to the person being slapped is unique to Jesus's teachings: it would be difficult to repeat the same slap again without changing from a backhand slap to a forehanded open slap. Social justice has been demanded and extracted in an unjust situation. The only recourse would be for the aggressor either to punch to the face or use a left-handed slap—both were regulated by Roman law.

In the New Testament, the book of John tells the story of 'cheek-slapping' at the trial of Jesus. "When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" (John 18:22,23). Swartley points out that "Jesus himself did not turn the other cheek when struck at his trial, but rather challenged the smiter, 'why do you strike me?' (Jn. 18:23)."[666] The initial response of Jesus constitutes a nonviolent response to an aggressor. This typifies Jesus acting in a nonviolent response to those who abuse him. Peter's actions, described in John 18:10 (NRSV), were quite different from Jesus's actions and he was admonished: "Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?" There is a time at which one should 'turn the other cheek' and a time when one should not turn the cheek. Burridge contends that in the Matthew 5:39 an insult is intended. Burridge states that "While Luke suggests simply being hit in the face, Matthew's specification of 'the right cheek' (Matt. 5:39; cf. Luke 6:29) entails a more insulting back-handed blow dealt by a superior like a master to a slave or 'the

[665] Davis, *Lex Talionis in Early Judaism*, 142. See also Walter T. Wilson, "A Third Form of Righteousness: The Theme and Contribution of Matthew 6.19-7.12 in the Sermon on the Mount," *New Testament Studies* 53 (2007): 303–24.

[666] William Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War & Women* (Scottsdale: Herald, 1983), 101.

religious elite with dangerous preacher.'"[667] Turning the cheek is an ethical response to mistreatment by an abuser. What is not evident in the Matthew 5:39 account is how justice is served when a person sues another through the legal system. Davis contends that the court provides a means to seek legal retaliation without resort to physical contact.

9.8 Matthew 5:40, *Mishna Avot,* and Roman law

The commonalities between Matthew 5:40 and *Mishna Avot* were both influenced by Roman Law. The Mosaic Law must balance and take into account the legal customs of the region.[668] The people of Judea lived under Roman occupation. Living under Roman occupation subjected the Jewish people to the Roman Laws of the land. Only religious matters were left to the *Sanhedrin*.[669] Matthew 5:40 states "καὶ τῷ θέλοντί σοι κριθῆναι καὶ τὸν χιτῶνά σου λαβεῖν, ἄφες αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ ἱμάτιον." An English translation of this reads, "and if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well." Giving someone your tunic and your cloak is not about benevolence. Udoh contends that "because the [Jewish] law did not permit taking away a man's cloak overnight, for fear he might freeze to death while sleeping [Exodus 22.26–27; Deut. 24. 12–13]," there is an element of justice, ethics, and mercy in the actions of person.[670] Legal protections were in place for money-borrowers.[671] The same ethical guidelines existed for both the collection of money and the

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[667] Richard A. Burridge, *Imitating Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 216.

[668] See James Douglas Grant Dunn, *Jews and Christians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009).

[669] Michael L. Satlow, "Beyond Influence: Toward a New Historiographic Paradigm," in *Jewish Literatures and Cultures: Context and Intertext* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2008), 40. For a discussion of Jesus and the role of the Sanhedrin, see Dan Jaffé, "History of a Marginal Disciple: The Figure of Jesus in the Talmud, a New Paradigm," *Revue Des Études Juives* 177 (2018): 1–22.

[670] Burridge, *Imitating Jesus, 216.*

[671] Religious law protected citizens in *Pirkei Avot* 2:14, Psalms 37:21 and Proverbs 22:7.

lending of money. The legal system needs to distribute justice, not arbitrary human action. Burridge writes:

> Jesus tells his hearers to hand over their [cloaks] also. While this has traditionally been seen as a call to being meek and submissive, interpreters like Wink and Carter see it more as nonviolent resistance to evil: By standing naked before one's creditor who has both garments in his hand, one shames and dishonors the creditor. Nakedness exposes, among other things, the greed and cruel effect of the creditor's action and the unjust system the creditor represents.[672]

Burridge suggests that the use of nudity will shame and dishonor a malicious creditor. There is evidence of the existence of an internal Jewish system of taxation during the Second Temple period acknowledged by the Roman Empire, most of which was used to sustain the Temple, the priests, and the Levites. Furthermore, a tax exemption granted by Caesar for the Sabbatical Year indicates Jewish observance of this mitzvah. The poor man's tithes and other produce gifts are best understood as components of this Jewish taxation framework.[673]

Rome imposed heavy taxation. Initially some poor individuals worked hard to pay the taxes while wealthier individuals paid their tax burden without difficulty. In regard to the legal court system, Allison contends that Jesus's words extended beyond the court and into the lives of people. Allison states, "It is true that 5:40 refers to the court; but Jesus is not here delivering laws for the court to follow. Jesus provides further understanding of *lex talionis* by suggesting that it is illegitimate for his followers to apply the *lex talionis* to their private problems."[674]

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[672] Burridge, *Imitating Jesus*, 216. For further research on the role of nudity and shame in the Greco-Roman Judaism, see Michael Poliakoff, "They Should Cover Their Shame': Attitudes toward Nudity in Greco-Roman Judaism," *Notes in the History of Art* 12 (1993): 56–62.

[673] Fabian E Udoh, *To Caesar What Is Caesar's* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006), 31.

[674] Dale C. Allison, *The Sermon on the Mount* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 93.

It is evident from the work of both Wink and Carter that the justice system was intended to be morally and ethically non-retaliatory. The *Mishna* balances the philosophy of non-aggression in the face of a debt collector and causing someone humiliation for their debt, such as in *M. Bava Kamma* 8:1. The *Mishna Avot*, with the sayings of the sages Rabbi Joshua, Rabbi Yosi, and Rabbi Shimon, advocates generosity in giving while avoiding evil. In *Avot* 2:9 it is stated:

> He said to them: Go out and see which is the evil path which a man should avoid. Rabbi Eliezer said, an evil eye. Rabbi Joshua said, an evil companion. Rabbi Yosi said, an evil neighbour. Rabbi Shimon said, One who borrows and does not repay. One who borrows from another is like one who borrows from God, for it is written (Psalm 37:21) 'The wicked borrows and does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives.' Rabbi Elazar said, an evil heart. He said to them: I prefer the words of Elazar ben Arakh more than your words, for in his words your words are included.

In Oral Tradition, the wicked defaulted on their loans while the righteous paid back their obligations. If people were overtaxed to the extent that they could not pay back obligations, an imbalance of justice was created. To have non-retaliatory measures and to ensure that neither person has legal superiority regarding repaying debts was of the utmost importance.

9.9 Matthew 5:39 and Love

Matthew 5:39 presents the idea that one should love one's enemy. The instruction to 'love your enemy' embodies the essence of nonviolence towards another. Modern Christian pacifism developed from the various sources such as the Mennonites, Quakers and Anabaptists, and now is debated by theologians such as Yoder, Hauerwas, and Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr, who was a moralist and defender of just war, advocated realism.[675] Other

Christian pacifists believe that war itself should be avoided because of the inherent evil of hurting someone.[676] According to Swartley "[Matthew 5:39 is a] specific political response to centuries of violence and to the contemporary Zealots' call for violent revolution".[677] That one should love one's enemies, as recorded in Matthew 5:39, according to Donahue provides new insights into nonviolent resistance through love.[678]

Stassen and Gushee are in agreement with the argument advanced by Richard Hays that nonviolence is a testimony of Jesus.[679] Furthermore, they agree with William Swartley's argument that this univocal testimony also advocates proactive peacemaking, with positive initiatives, to overcoming evil by employing nonviolent means to make peace.[680] Love is to be extended to Jews and Gentiles. Borg contends:

> In the same context where Jesus spoke of the *Imitatio Dei* as compassion, he also spoke of loving one's enemies: 'You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor,' but I say to you, Love your enemies.' The quoted words, 'Love your neighbor,' come from the holiness code and were understood within contemporary Judaism to mean, 'Love your fellow member of the covenant,' that is, your fellow Israelite or compatriot. In this context, the

[675] Niebuhr teaches pacifism and that justice sometimes requires force and love. See Niebuhr's works such as *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Scribners, 1932), *Christianity and Power Politics* (New York: Scribners, 1940), and *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (New York: Scribners, 1953).

[676] Pacifist theologian John Howard Yoder advocated the avoidance of war as a political policy. Yoder writes: The Politics of Jesus, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); Ibid., *Varieties of Christian Pacifism* (Scottdale: Herald, 1992); Ibid., *When War Is Unjust* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001).

[677] Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War & Women*, 121. For a discussion of early Christian sword handling and violence, see N. Clayton Croy, "Sword Handling: The Early Christian Reception of Matthew 10:34," *Journal of the Bible & Its Reception* 6 (2019): 135–62.

[678] John Donahue, "The Good News of Peace," *The Way: Contemporary Christian Spirituality* 22 (1982): 98.

[679] Stassen and Gushee, *Kingdom Ethics*, 156.; Richard Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to Christian Ethics* (NY: Harper Collins, 1996).

[680] Williard Swartley, *Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 46. For more discussion on nonviolent resistance through love, see Katja Ekman, "Enemy Love and the Reinvention of Identity," *HTS Teologiese Studies – Theological Studies* 77 (2021).

> opposite of neighbor is clearly 'non-Israelite,' and so loving one's enemy must mean, 'Love the non-Israelite enemy,' including the Gentile occupiers.[681]

The Golden Rule does not appear in the Hebrew Scriptures, but is similar to Leviticus 19:18, "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord." In Judaism, the end one seeks must be just.[682] It is worth noting that there are no rankings of commandments within the Torah.[683] "Love thy neighbour" is mandated in Lev 19:18.[684] The value of loving someone is so important that in *Avot* 2:2 love qualifies one's deeds, "Let all your deeds be done for the sake of Heaven." *Avot* 3:12 elaborates, "Rabbi Ishmael says: Be submissive to the ruler and patient with oppression. Receive everyone with cheerfulness."

9.10 Matthew 5:21–49 and Jesus's Function in Mosaic Law

Similarities between Oral Law and Matthew may be discerned in the manner in which Jesus demonstrated solidarity with Mosaic Laws. The actions of Jesus upheld the tenets of the Mosaic law. Davies and Allison contend that an ethic for the entire Christian life may be composed from the way Jesus interpreted the Mosaic Laws in Matthew 5:21–49.[685] Powell contends that in Matthew 5 Jesus teaches peaceful obedience to Roman laws and observance

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[681] Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision*, 137.

[682] For further understanding on the Jewish concept from the sages on justice having a just means and a just end, see Lenn Evan Goodman, *Love Thy Neighbour as Thyself* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 22.

[683] See Klaus Berger, *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu: Ihr historischer Hintergrund im Judentum und im Alten Testament 1: Markus und Parallelen* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 40; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1972), 175–76; Christoph Burchard, "Das Doppelte Liebesgebot in der frühen christlichen Überlieferung," in *Der Ruf Jesu und die Antwort der Gemeinde: Exegetische Untersuchungen Joachim Jeremias zum 70. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 39–62, esp. 54, repr. in Burchard, *Studien zur Theologie, Sprache und Umwelt des neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 3–26.

[684] Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, "Love: Old Testament," In *The Anchor Bible dictionary, ed. David Freedom* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 375–8.

[685] W. D Davies and Dale C Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On The Gospel According To Matthew* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 566.

of Torah.[686] Sanders is in concert with Powell regarding how Jews understood Mosaic Law.[687]

Jesus's attitude to the Sabbath was influential in the world around him. Harry Joshua Leon suggests that outsiders to Judaism were influenced to observe Sabbath and that Greco-Roman Gentiles began to observe the Sabbath, taking the day off work.[688] As Borg observes, Sabbath and Festival observance was important to all Jews which would have created a community of people fully aware of the Mosaic laws and their implications in the community.[689] Jesus's sayings in the Sermon address a wide audience who would be aware of the Mosaic laws: however, the Mosaic laws were applicable to the Jews only. Vermes suggests that Jesus was concerned in his ministry with the Jews more than the Gentiles.[690] Being a society of people who studied the Torah daily, the people were very familiar with the text. It is noted by Jonathan G. Campbell that "the scriptures making up the canonical Torah were fixed in early post-exilic times."[691] Vermes even contends that the early followers of Jesus still followed Jewish customs of dress and kosher diets, as did Jesus.[692]

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[686] Mark Allan Powell, "Matthew and the Margins" (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000); Shaye J. D Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishna* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014).

[687] E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985), 90.

[688] Harry Joshua Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1960), 3. The Sabbath is a study more in-depth than this dissertation, for a list of the Greco-Roman references to the Sabbath, see the index of Menahem Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1984), 3:146. Sadducees only accepted the 5 books of Moses as authoritative; the Pharisees accepted the Prophets and Writings as well as the Pentateuch; however, they all agreed on the authoritative power of the Pentateuch.

[689] Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision*, 127–8.

[690] Geza Vermes, "From Jewish to Gentile," *Biblical Archaeology Review* (2012), 38:53.

[691] Jonathan G. Campbell, "4QMMT and the Tripartite Canon," *Journal of Jewish Studies*, (2000), 51: 184.

[692] Vermes, "From Jewish to Gentile," 54.

According to Saldarini, "In 1st century Judaism, interpretation of the law was a political act in which the control of society was at stake. Disagreements among groups involved substantial conflict over public laws and norms."[693] Some of the Mosaic laws could be seen as extreme and harsh. There are exclusions from killings such as Exodus 22:2 which allows a homeowner who kills a burglar to be not guilty of murder. Worth believes that by his embracing the rule of law in the courts, Jesus's teaching was in continuity with the Mosaic Law.[694] Jesus's teaching expanded existing Jewish law and did not diminish it.[695] John Oslyn-Siemiatkoski teaches that the teachings in the *Mishna Avot* are akin to how Jesus kept the sayings of Torah: Jesus's sayings were like those of the sages in *Mishna.* [696] Saldarini argues that not only did Jesus keep the sayings of Torah, his teachings were not 'new' concepts but an embodiment of the old ones.[697] Margaret MacDonald contends that later Christian development can be viewed as sectarian in nature.[698] Jesus was much like the people with whom he surrounded himself and it was future sectarianism that led to a departure from Jesus's teachings.

9.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter focuses concluding and drawing the distinction that Matthew 5:38–42 was influenced by Jewish thinking on non-violent resistance in Oral Traditions contemporary

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[693] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 124.

[694] Worth, *The Sermon on the Mount*, 224.

[695] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 125.

[696] John Oslyn-Siemiatkoski, "Moses Received the Torah at Sinai and Handed It On. Mishna Avot 1:1: The Relevance of the Written and Oral Torah for Christians," *Anglican Theological Review* 91 (2009), 463.

[697] Saldarini, *Matthew's Christian-Jewish Community*, 126.

[698] Margaret Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-Historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 34, 39.

to Jesus. These same traditions found their way into *Mishna Avot*. The Jewish audience of Jesus heard an authentically Jewish message. Jesus was accepted by the people as a leader.

The chapter asserts that the message of nonviolent resistance though was not targeted only at Jewish listeners. The purpose of the Sermon was to teach all people present about Jewish ethics and justice. It gives the listener a context to respond to an aggressor with an ethical and just alternative, through an authentically Jewish lens of a Jewish Jesus, and not a new religion.

The book of Matthew, the Sermon, and the portions connected with *Mishna Avot*, reflect the Jewish Wisdom of the surrounding Jewish community. This moral message of the rabbis surrounding Jesus was the heart of the Sermon on the Mount, that the Sermon and pacifism should be seen in a Jewish context and not Hellenism or Roman occupation. Roman occupation shaped and formed the Jewish response to violence. Peace and pacifism in the Jewish lens are the calls for nonviolence with justice and equality. Matthew and *Mishna Avot* are common in that the ethical response to poverty, hunger, persecution, the need of God, and pacifism are different than other cultures surrounding them. The Oral Law and Matthew 5:38-42 provided substantially different methods of responding to aggression: Romans crushed adversaries while Judaism and Jesus sought a third path of non-violence demanding justice and equality. Judaism was fighting for survival and the Wisdom Literature reflects this. *Lex Talionis* should be interpreted as resistance similarly with *M. Bava Kama* with equitable and measurable consequences and not physical retaliation.

The chapter suggests that Matthew 5:38-42 has wrongfully interpreted ‘slapping’ to be a doormat—that a follower of Jesus must submit instead of demand equality. The dissertation suggests that Jesus teaches that the response to slapping is not to be abused but to demand integrity and respect back from someone with wrongful power and authority over you. This is evident in *M. Bava Kama* 8:1—slapping should have an equitable response that

protects people from an abusive power. Roman Law empowered its subjects to prevent those in charge from taking advantage of the subjects in which military officers ruled over; thus, Jesus is showing people how to engage in exacting justice by ‘walking another mile’. The chapter concludes with love and nonviolence. Matthew 5:39 teaches to love; however, the dissertation shows how ‘loving your neighbour’ is not to take abuse from them. Love in Matthew 5:21–49 is an extension of the Mosaic laws and how people are to teach people within the community: love with ethics and justice demanding equality within a nonviolent context.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation finds that the intellectual and ethical principles of the Oral Law are evident in *Mishna Avot* and they provide a helpful background against which to understand Jesus's sayings recorded in Matthew 5:38–42. This dissertation has advanced evidence to support the supposition that Jesus's Jewish audience would have been familiar with much of the Oral Law that eventually found its way into *Mishna Avot*.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was following traditional Jewish religious thinking similar to the greater religious corpus of thought at his time. He is different from contemporary Jewish Sages cited in *Mishna Avot* in that he does not quote other Rabbis. In the Sermon on the Mount he aligns himself with the *Tanakh*. Other sayings of Rabbis at this time that are found in *Mishna Avot* are related to what Jesus taught and said, especially in the actions advocated by Jesus in the Sermon to promote nonviolent resistance rather than violent reactions. Nor does Jesus or the sages teach that one should become a victim to someone who has power over oneself. It is emphasised that in his teachings Jesus did not intend for someone to become a doormat or a victim to another person. Jesus followed and adhered to the religious laws of his day. Jesus similarly also adhered to the Roman laws of his era, all while applying the intellectual thought embodied in the Oral Law that eventually found its way into *Mishna Avot*. It is apparent that Jesus had similar ethical views to those expressed by the Sages in the discourse of the *Mishna Avot.*

The ethical implications for peace and pacifism in Matthew 5:38–42 require nonviolent response to oppression. Matthew 5:38–42 does not support a fully pacifist ideology. The Jewish people have always defended themselves from outside threats to their survival. The similarities between the Oral Law and Matthew illuminate how the actions of Jesus are consistent with various Oral Traditions, Mosaic Laws, and instruction given in the

Dead Sea Scrolls. These similarities in the Oral Traditions become apparent when considering Matthew 5:38–42 in regard to love, equality, and respect. This dissertation has provided evidence that when the rules and law of the Roman Empire were in conflict with *Mishna Avot,* Jesus's response was nonviolent but not completely pacifist. Jesus did not circumvent the Roman rules and Roman law and teach people to go against authority placed above people. Jesus's attitude, as seen in Matthew 5:38–42, was to resist in nonviolent ways.

In his teaching about 'slapping' and 'turning the other cheek' Jesus did not intend to escalate violence but rather to provide nonviolent solutions to violent situations. However, this does not mean that physical contact or actual violence is prohibited. The physical violence associated with ἀντιστῆναι must be within the Roman laws. The Jews who lived under Rome had to abide by Roman laws, and they were not exempt from the Roman laws dealing with violence between people.

This dissertation also finds that the Jewish courts of the first century could only deal with Jewish matters. This would limit the impact that Jewish law would have on conflicts between Jewish and non-Jewish people. The effect of the *lex talionis* in Roman law and in Mosaic law was to limit the response of retaliation and bring it to the courts. As a result of a changing view of *lex talionis,* nonviolent response aimed at legal equality was aligned more with Roman jurisprudence.

The peace and pacifist sayings of Matthew 5:38–42 built upon Oral Law and while people recognised these tenets, they understood that nonviolent response brought change. Jesus's *aggadah* on carrying a pack an extra mile taught people to seek equality with their oppressors. Carrying the pack an extra mile prevented people from abusing those over whom they had authority. It was a radical and nonviolent approach.

The Jews and Gentiles who lived in Israel at this time did not have full equality with one another. These people were oppressed economically, socially, and politically. Loving

one's enemy and responding to foes with nonviolence was part of the ethos and intellectual thought of the oral tradition known to those listening to the Sermon. The ethical principles of Jewish ideology and theology are prevalent in the *Mishna Avot* and evident in the Sermon, not necessarily in word-for-word form but in concept and theme. The ethical ideology found in *Mishna Avot* forms a bridge between Judaism and Matthew 5:38–42, showing a common ethos of nonviolent resistance shared between them. Jesus did not spark a revolution. Jesus's counterparts explored ethics and philosophy in the text as part of their response to violence towards people and to government.

This dissertation finds that although Jesus's sayings in Matthew 5:38–42 have been interpreted by some as a pacifist text supporting a theology of accepting (and even encouraging) abuse by 'turning the other cheek,' it is apparent that Jesus was not leading people to become proverbial doormats to stronger political regimes. Jesus called for an ethical and moral response to authority that gave justice to the oppressed. The Gospel of Matthew itself provides the best insight for understanding the first listeners to Jesus who may have been Galilean Jews. The Jews of the Galilean region suffered poverty. The Galilean region was impacted by Gentiles and the rise of Gentile Christianity. Those in Jesus's audience had a Jewish ethical understanding. They sought freedom from oppression, demanded equality under the law, and did not escalate violence into a rebellion. The Jewish ethical writings, such as *Mishna Avot*, provide an intellectual corpus in Judaism (and for a Jewish Jesus) that is not pacifist in nature but seeks an ethical response to oppression—no matter if the action committed was violent in nature. How people lived and responded were the primary ways in which they were judged; thus, the Jewish Galilean listeners to the Sermon in Matthew would have had a biblical knowledge grounded in and fashioned by the ideas of the era and an Oral Tradition that influenced how they received and responded to Jesus's words. The evidence suggests that the audience of the Sermon understood the

teachings of Jesus regarding nonviolence interpreted as resistance to authority. This form of resistance forced equality before the law to be imposed on people in conflicts as well as the people not aggravating the authorities in power over them. Jesus's audience would not have perceived him to be completely passive.

The evidence provided by both the Matthean account of the Sermon on the Mount and the Oral Law gives an indication of Jesus's teaching of resistance to authority. The evidence suggests a tense religious climate as Rome was diminishing religious freedoms. There was conflict between different Jewish sects such as the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. The people lived in poverty under a regime of oppression. They were highly taxed, and people like Zacchaeus were not esteemed in society.

The Temple cult was dominated by the Sadducean faction, and both the Pharisees and Essenes believed the Temple to have been corrupted by those same Sadducees. The views of each Jewish group became part of the ethical response to violence. The Sadducees did not believe in an afterlife. The belief that the Sadducees and the Pharisees each had regarding peace, violence, and government authority was influenced by their Sages; thus, there was not a universal theme to the views. The commonality of Jesus's ideology of peace between the Sages of the Pharisees and the Sadducees was the Biblical principles found in the Torah; thus, Jesus's *Aggadah* became his own interpretation as expressed in Matthew 5:38–42, based on the common themes.

The concept of repentance connects Jesus with *Mishna Avot.* The people perceived that the concept of repentance, as evidenced in the stories of both Jesus and John the Baptist being involved in a repentance ministry, are similar to *Mishna Avot,* and this connects his intellectual teachings with prominent Jewish scholarship of his time. The discontentment of the people with poverty, authority, and oppression became the driving force for Jewish people to oppose unethical authority over them. The Jewish people could choose a multitude

of responses to Jesus's Sermon and teaching; however, the people responded with overwhelming acceptance of Jesus, even at events such as his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt 21:1-11). The people could have chosen to become militant, but they did not. The people could have chosen not to follow Jesus, but they did not. This era of peace and nonviolent resistance did not last long after Jesus died. After Jesus, as people became militant in their demand for justice and freedom, Rome was very aggressive in their response to the Jewish people. The Jewish nation fought back violently, as did Rome, and the Jewish people suffered bitterly. Bar Kokhba, the false messiah and warrior who came after Jesus fought and died opposing Roman Rule. The First Jewish-Roman War of 66–73 CE was a violent response by the Jewish people and ended badly for the Jewish people. Jesus's approach would have been to utilise Roman governmental systems and laws—this is nonviolent resistance. The methods of violence that caused the revolutions caused death and suffering.

This dissertation also discovered that there were two messianic expectations from various lineages, and this determined how Jesus taught people and how people heard him. There were different views about a messianic lineage, as seen in the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish apocryphal writings. The messiah lineage from the Aaronic lineage would bring spiritual renewal within the Temple. The messiah from the Davidic lineage would be a militant king who would bring an end to the oppression. Jesus's teachings, as unique as they are, reflect the dual lineage of Jesus being from Aaron and David. In his ministry, he sought to restore the priestly line and the Davidic line; however, it may be some time before that is fulfilled in Christian eschatology. Consequently, the political and ethical thought of the people during the time of Jesus is reflected similarly in both Matthew 5:38–42 and the *Mishna Avot*, demonstrating that Jesus was practicing nonviolent resistance.

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